

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

Statement of Principles

By *Fifty-Five* Catholic Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives

As Catholic Democrats in Congress, we are proud to be part of the living Catholic tradition -- a tradition that promotes the common good, expresses a consistent moral framework for life and highlights the need to provide a collective safety net to those individuals in society who are most in need. As legislators, in the U.S. House of Representatives, we work every day to advance respect for life and the dignity of every human being. We believe that government has moral purpose.

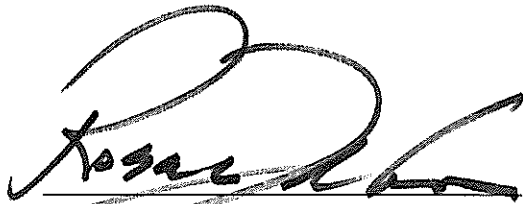
We are committed to making real the basic principles that are at the heart of Catholic social teaching: helping the poor and disadvantaged, protecting the most vulnerable among us, and ensuring that all Americans of every faith are given meaningful opportunities to share in the blessings of this great country. That commitment is fulfilled in different ways by legislators but includes: reducing the rising rates of poverty; increasing access to education for all; pressing for increased access to health care; and taking seriously the decision to go to war. Each of these issues challenges our obligations as Catholics to community and helping those in need.

We envision a world in which every child belongs to a loving family and agree with the Catholic Church about the value of human life and the undesirability of abortion – we do not celebrate its practice. Each of us is committed to reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies and creating an environment with policies that encourage pregnancies to be carried to term. We believe this includes promoting alternatives to abortion, such as adoption, and improving access to children's healthcare and child care, as well as policies that encourage paternal and maternal responsibility.

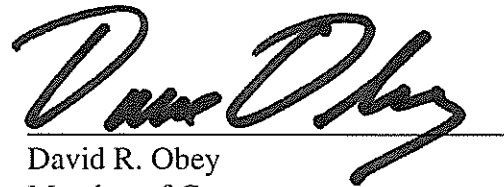
In all these issues, we seek the Church's guidance and assistance but believe also in the primacy of conscience. In recognizing the Church's role in providing moral leadership, we acknowledge and accept the tension that comes with being in disagreement with the Church in some areas. Yet we believe we can speak to the fundamental issues that unite us as Catholics and lend our voices to changing the political debate -- a debate that often fails to reflect and encompass the depth and complexity of these issues.

As legislators, we are charged with preserving the Constitution, which guarantees religious freedom for all Americans. In doing so, we guarantee our right to live our own lives as Catholics, but also foster an America with a rich diversity of faiths. We believe the separation of church and state allows for our faith to inform our public duties.

As Catholic Democrats who embrace the vocation and mission of the laity as expressed by Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*, we believe that the Church is the "people of God," called to be a moral force in the broadest sense. We believe the Church as a community is called to be in the vanguard of creating a more just America and world. And as such, we have a claim on the Church's bearing as it does on ours.



Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress



David R. Obey  
Member of Congress



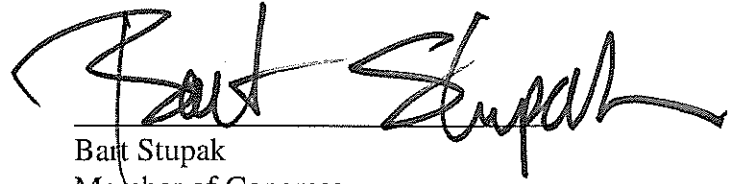
Wm. Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress



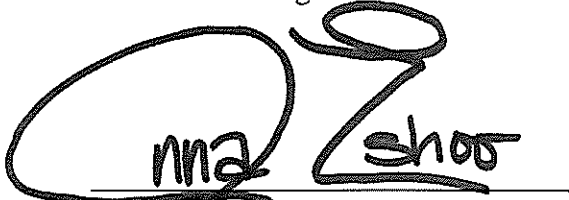
Hilda L. Solis  
Member of Congress



James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress



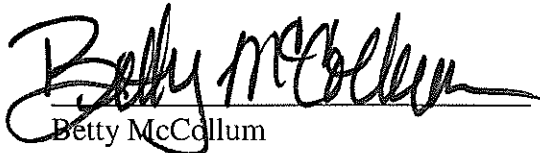
Bart Stupak  
Member of Congress



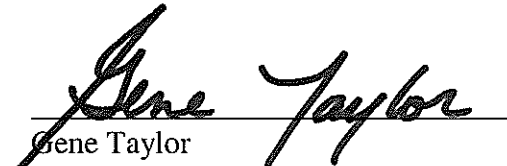
Anna Eshoo  
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell  
Member of Congress



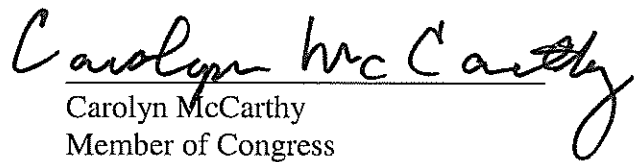
Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress



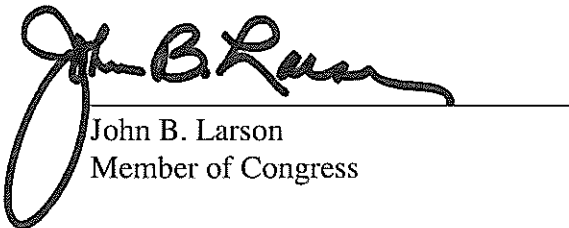
Gene Taylor  
Member of Congress



Raul M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



Carolyn McCarthy  
Member of Congress



John B. Larson  
Member of Congress



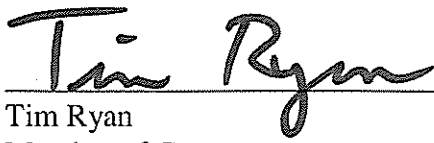
Ed Pastor  
Member of Congress



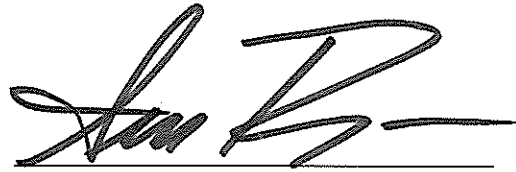
Joe Baca  
Member of Congress



William Delahunt  
Member of Congress



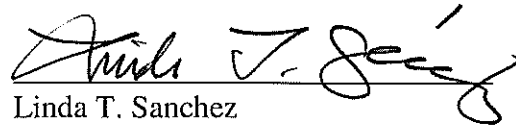
Tim Ryan  
Member of Congress



Silvestre Reyes  
Member of Congress



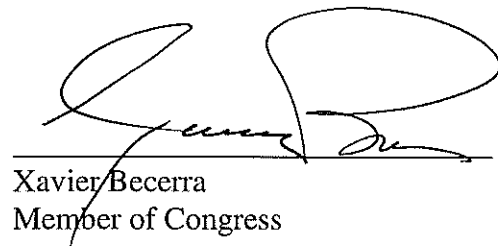
Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sanchez  
Member of Congress



Charles A. Gonzalez  
Member of Congress



Xavier Becerra  
Member of Congress



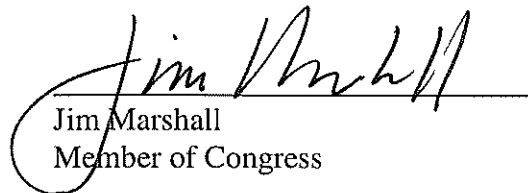
Diane Watson  
Member of Congress



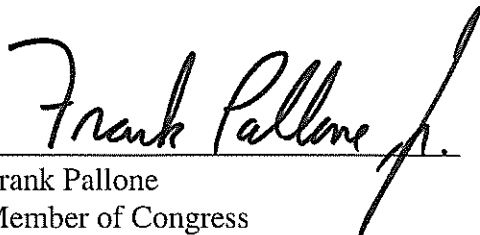
Michael H. Michaud  
Member of Congress



Nydia Velazquez  
Member of Congress




Jim Marshall  
Member of Congress

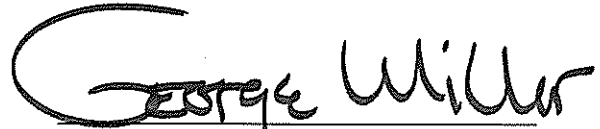



Frank Pallone  
Member of Congress




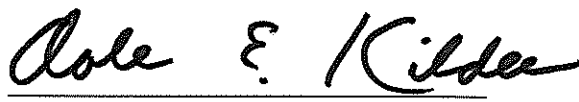
John T. Salazar  
Member of Congress

  
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress


  
George Miller  
Member of Congress


  
Tim Holden  
Member of Congress

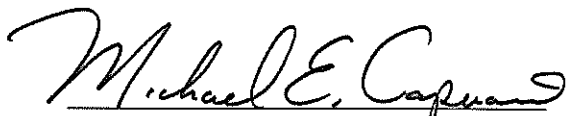
  
James L. Oberstar  
Member of Congress

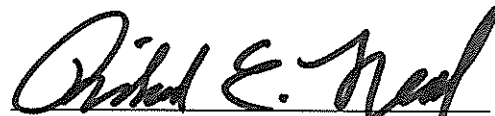
  
Dale E. Kildee  
Member of Congress


  
Patrick J. Kennedy  
Member of Congress


  
Cynthia McKinney  
Member of Congress

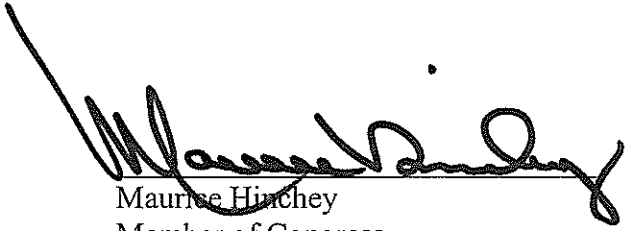
  
James P. Moran  
Member of Congress

  
Michael Capuano  
Member of Congress

  
Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress

  
Mike Doyle  
Member of Congress

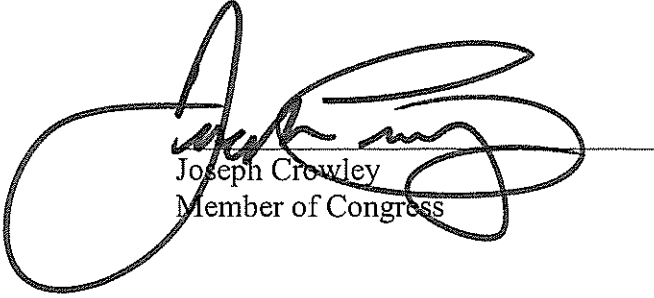
  
Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Maurice Hinchey  
Member of Congress



Dennis A. Cardoza  
Member of Congress



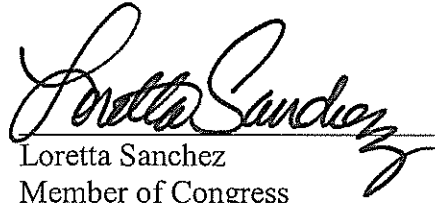
Joseph Crowley  
Member of Congress



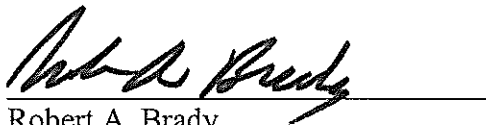
Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



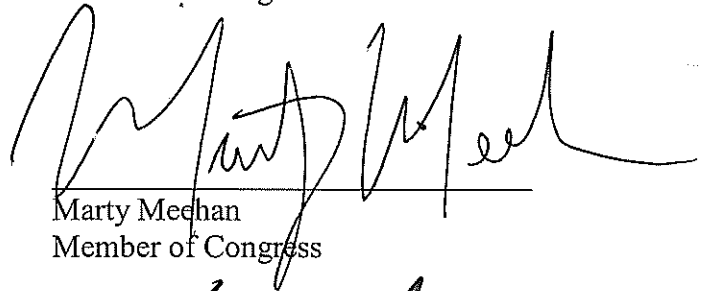
Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Member of Congress



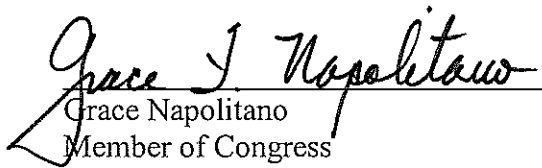
Loretta Sanchez  
Member of Congress



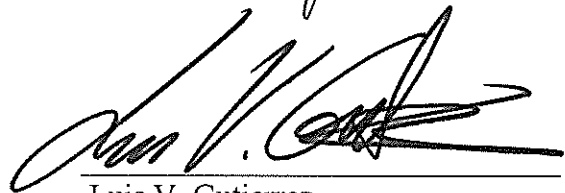
Robert A. Brady  
Member of Congress



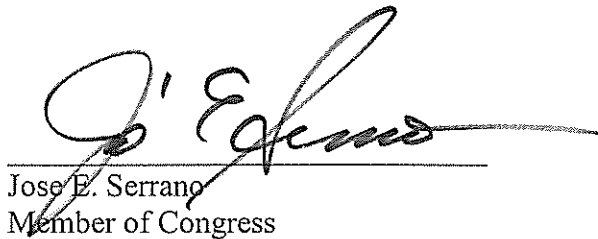
Marty Meehan  
Member of Congress



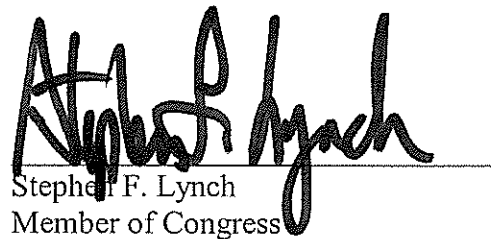
Grace Napolitano  
Member of Congress



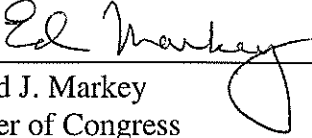
Luis V. Gutierrez  
Member of Congress




Jose E. Serrano  
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

  
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Edward J. Markey  
Member of Congress

  
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Nancy Pelosi  
Member of Congress

  
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Lane Evans  
Member of Congress