

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

October 28, 2014

Léon Kengo Wa Dondo
President, Senate
Palais du Peuple, Kinshasa

Aubin Minaku
Speaker, National Assembly

c/o Dr. Faida Matifu
Ambassador to the United States
Democratic Republic of Congo
1726 M Street NW, Suite 601
Washington, DC 20036

Dear President Kengo and Speaker Minaku:

We the undersigned members of the United States (U.S.) Congress send greetings to you and the members of the National Assembly and the Senate. We value the good relationship between our two countries, and hope that the United States of America and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) will continue to work together on issues of mutual concern. As fellow legislators, we also understand and respect your commitment to serving the needs of the constituents you have been elected to represent.

We understand that your government has been engaged in a year-long process to strengthen your country's intercountry adoption process. We share your concern that this process be as protective of the children as possible. At the same time we recognize how vital it is for children living without the love and protection of a family to be placed with an appropriate family as quickly as possible. As Parliament considers the agenda for this legislative session, we ask that legislation to strengthen the adoption process be a top priority.

We are concerned about the welfare of the hundreds of Congolese children who have been legally adopted under Congolese law by U.S. citizens but who are unable to depart the DRC even though they possess valid visas to immediately enter the U.S. Some of these children have remained separated from their legal parents for over a year waiting for this final departure permission from the DRC. Tragically, some of these children have died while waiting for exit permission, and others are very ill and need immediate medical attention. We hope that you will agree that swift action is necessary to prevent further loss of innocent lives and the continued suffering and distress for the children and their legal parents.

We are aware of your concerns about the integrity of the DRC intercountry adoption process, and we respect your duty to discern how to protect the best interests of Congolese children. For this reason, we reiterate our April 17, 2014 offer to President Kabila and Prime Minister Ponyo to

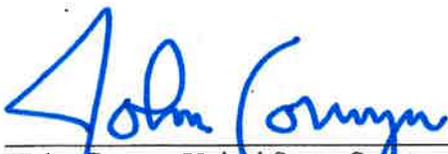
support your government's efforts to follow up on the well-being of Congolese children adopted by U.S. citizens and to work together to ensure that intercountry adoptions between our countries continue to be conducted in an ethical, transparent manner.

As lawmakers, we wish to assure you that U.S. law protects all children in our country, regardless of their country of birth or citizenship. For example, for 40 years the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) has provided our states with support to improve their child protective services, ensuring that communities are able to prevent, assess and treat cases of child abuse and neglect. CAPTA sets high standards that have helped greatly in ensuring that all incidents of abuse or neglect are reported in a consistent manner and has enabled us to provide better protection and assistance to children experiencing abuse or neglect.

The U.S. Congress has also enacted many laws that prohibit trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation of any children in the U.S., regardless of their country of birth. The laws also impose stiff penalties, up to life imprisonment or death, for those convicted of committing such horrible crimes. With respect to intercountry adoptions, Congress has passed two laws in the past 15 years which have strengthened our internal systems for overseeing and managing international adoption service providers. These two laws, the Intercountry Adoption Act (P.L. 106-279) and the Intercountry Adoption Universal Accreditation Act (P.L. 112-276), together require that all U.S. adoption service providers be accredited through a rigorous review process which holds them to high ethical and performance standards. These changes have resulted in a sharp decline in the number of adoption service providers because only those who meet these high standards are allowed to operate in the U.S.

In conclusion, we remain committed to ensuring that federal laws in the U.S. continue to protect all children against abuse and neglect, and to appropriately punish any persons who violate these laws. We respectfully request that the Congolese National Assembly and Senate prioritize legislation that strengthens the Congolese intercountry adoption process. This legislation would ensure that intercountry adoptions of Congolese children can be completed in an honest, ethical manner, and that the children who are currently waiting to be united with their legal parents can finally benefit from living with the security of a permanent, loving family.

Sincerely,



John Cornyn, United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar, United States Senator



Mitch McConnell, United States Senate
Minority Leader



John A. Boehner, U.S. Representative



Bob Corker, United States Senator



Robert Menendez, United States Senator



Edward R. Royce, U.S. Representative



Christopher H. Smith, U.S. Representative



Charles Grassley, United States Senator



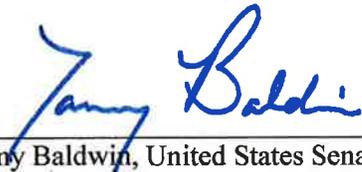
Karen Bass, U.S. Representative



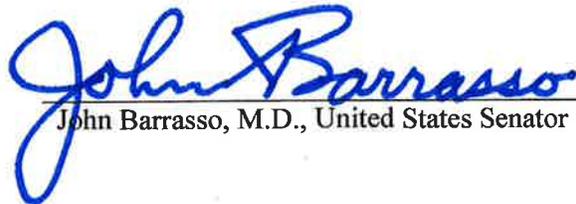
Lamar Alexander, United States Senator



Kelly Ayotte, United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin, United States Senator



John Barrasso, M.D., United States Senator



Mark Begich, United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal, United States Senator



Roy Blunt, United States Senator



John Boozman, United States Senator



Barbara Boxer, United States Senator



Sherrod Brown, United States Senator



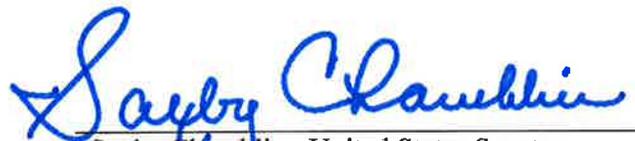
Richard Burr, United States Senator



Maria Cantwell, United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr. United States Senator



Saxby Chambliss, United States Senator



Dan Coats, United States Senator



Susan Collins, United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons, United States Senator



Mike Crapo, United States Senator



Ted Cruz, United States Senator



Joe Donnelly, United States Senator


Michael B. Enzi, United States Senator


Dianne Feinstein, United States Senator


Deb Fischer, United States Senator


Jeff Flake, United States Senator


Al Franken, United States Senator

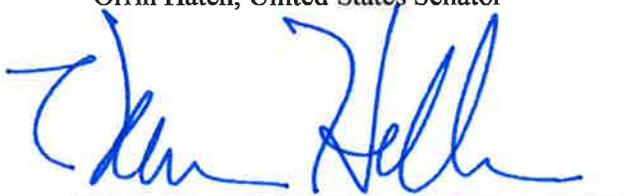

Kirsten Gillibrand, United States Senator


Kay Hagan, United States Senator


Tom Harkin, United States Senator


Orrin Hatch, United States Senator


Heidi Heitkamp, United States Senator


Dean Heller, United States Senator


John Hoeven, United States Senator


James Inhofe, United States Senator


Johnny Isakson, United States Senator



Mike Johanns, United States Senator



Ron Johnson, United States Senator



Tim Johnson, United States Senator



Angus King, United States Senator



Mark Kirk, United States Senator



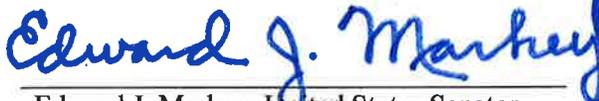
Mary Landrieu, United States Senator



Carl Levin, United States Senator



Joe Manchin, United States Senator



Edward J. Markey, United States Senator



Claire McCaskill, United States Senator



Jeff Merkley, United States Senator



Jerry Moran, United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski, United States Senator



Christopher Murphy, United States Senator



Patty Murray, United States Senator



Bill Nelson, United States Senator



Rand Paul, M.D., United States Senator



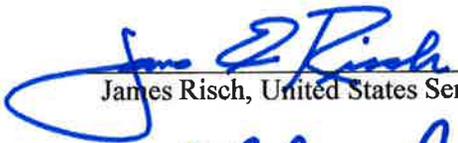
Rob Portman, United States Senator



Mark Pryor, United States Senator



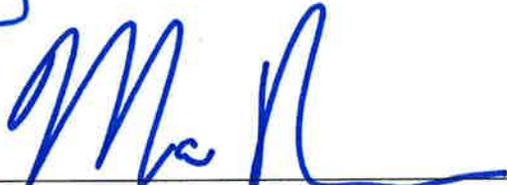
Jack Reed, United States Senator



James Risch, United States Senator



Pat Roberts, United States Senator



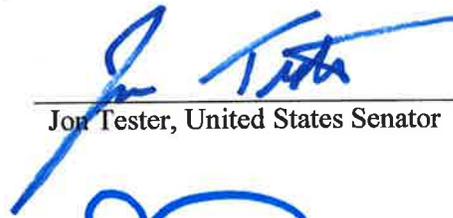
Marco Rubio, United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen, United States Senator



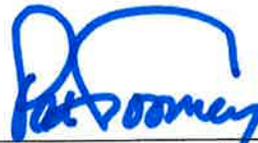
Debbie Stabenow, United States Senator



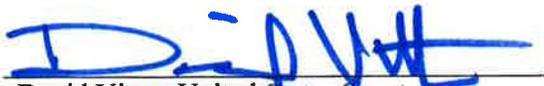
Jon Tester, United States Senator



John Thune, United States Senator



Pat Toomey, United States Senator


David Vitter, United States Senator


John Walsh, United States Senator


Mark Warner, United States Senator

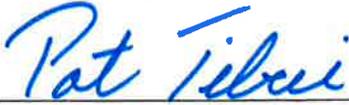

Elizabeth Warren, United States Senator


Sheldon Whitehouse, United States Senator


Roger Wicker, United States Senator


Ron Wyden, United States Senator


Tim Scott, United States Senator



Patrick Tiberi, U.S. Representative



Mike Pompeo, U.S. Representative



Cynthia M. Lummis, U.S. Representative



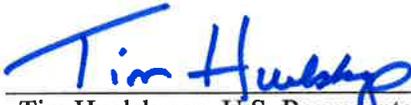
John J. Duncan, U.S. Representative



Bill Posey, U.S. Representative



Scott Perry, U.S. Representative



Tim Huelskamp, U.S. Representative



Jim Renacci, U.S. Representative



Michael T. McCaul, U.S. Representative



Ann McLane Kuster, U.S. Representative



Cathy McMorris Rodgers, U.S. Representative



Steve Daines, U.S. Representative



Marsha Blackburn, U.S. Representative



Robert Pittenger, U.S. Representative



James Lankford, U.S. Representative



Charles J. "Chuck" Fleischmann, U.S. Representative



Thomas Massie, U.S. Representative



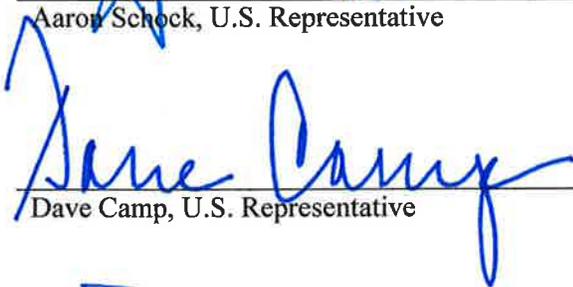
Suzan DelBene, U.S. Representative



Aaron Schock, U.S. Representative



Peter King, U.S. Representative



Dave Camp, U.S. Representative



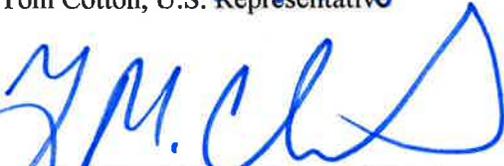
Marc Veasey, U.S. Representative



Tom Cotton, U.S. Representative



Joyce Beatty, U.S. Representative



Tom McClintock, U.S. Representative



Ann Wagner, U.S. Representative



Suzanne Bonamici, U.S. Representative



Phil Gingrey, M.D., U.S. Representative



George Holding, U.S. Representative



Austin Scott, U.S. Representative



Steve Stivers, U.S. Representative



Vicky Hartzler, U.S. Representative

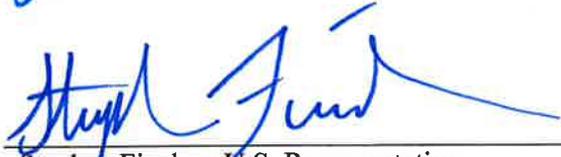

Kay Granger, U.S. Representative

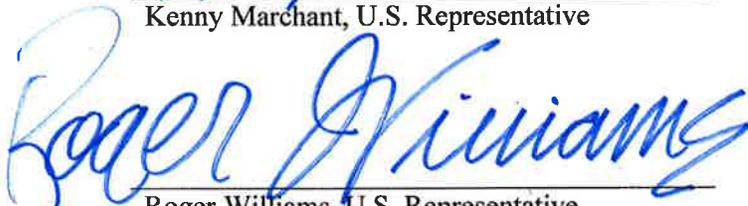

Bill Flores, U.S. Representative

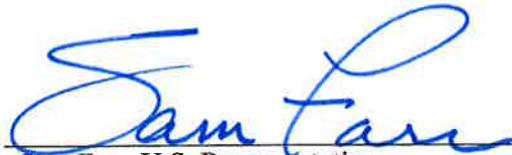

Kevin Cramer, U.S. Representative


Jim McDermott, U.S. Representative


Kenny Marchant, U.S. Representative


Stephen Fincher, U.S. Representative


Roger Williams, U.S. Representative


Sam Farr, U.S. Representative


Dave Reichert, U.S. Representative


Jaime Herrera Beutler, U.S. Representative


Sean P. Duffy, U.S. Representative


Bill Huizenga, U.S. Representative


Brad Wenstrup, U.S. Representative


Tim Griffin, U.S. Representative


Paul Ryan, U.S. Representative

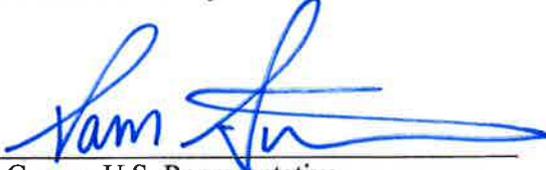

Jim Costa, U.S. Representative



Luke Messer, U.S. Representative



Chellie Pingree, U.S. Representative



Sam Graves, U.S. Representative



Alan Nunnelee, U.S. Representative



Andy Barr, U.S. Representative



John Larson, U.S. Representative



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Reid Ribble, U.S. Representative



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Susan A. Davis, U.S. Representative



Diane Black, U.S. Representative



Billy Long, U.S. Representative



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Beto O'Rourke, U.S. Representative



Mike Michaud, U.S. Representative



Marlin Stutzman, U.S. Representative



Collin C. Peterson, U.S. Representative



Rick Larsen, U.S. Representative



Stephen F. Lynch, U.S. Representative



Peter DeFazio, U.S. Representative



Greg Walden, U.S. Representative



Ed Whitfield, U.S. Representative



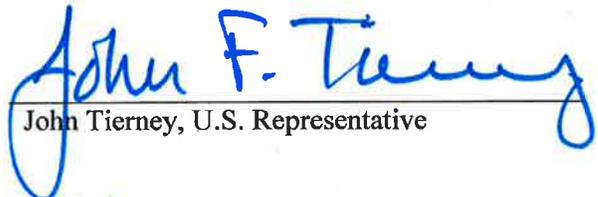
Howard Coble, U.S. Representative



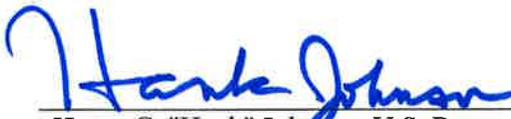
Jason Smith, U.S. Representative



Pete Sessions, U.S. Representative



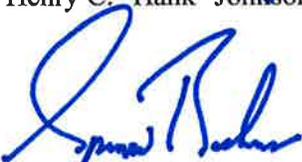
John Tierney, U.S. Representative



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, U.S. Representative



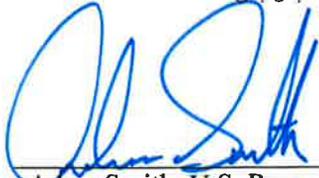
Keith Ellison, U.S. Representative



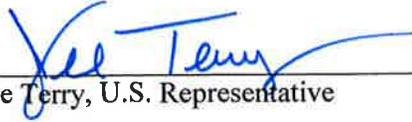
Spender Bachus, U.S. Representative



James P. Moran, U.S. Representative



Adam Smith, U.S. Representative



Lee Terry, U.S. Representative



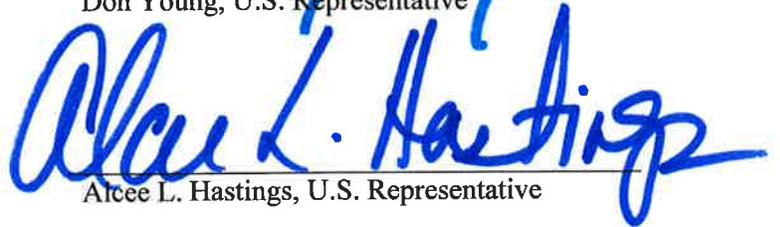
Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, U.S. Representative



Don Young, U.S. Representative



Patrick McHenry, U.S. Representative



Alcee L. Hastings, U.S. Representative



Charles Rangel, U.S. Representative



Jack Kingston, U.S. Representative



Mike Fitzpatrick, U.S. Representative



David Jolly, U.S. Representative



Lamar Smith, U.S. Representative



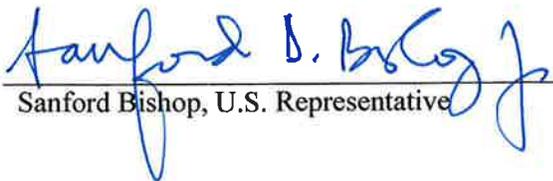
Adam Schiff, U.S. Representative



Michele Bachmann, U.S. Representative



Mike McIntyre, U.S. Representative



Sanford Bishop, U.S. Representative



Trent Franks, U.S. Representative



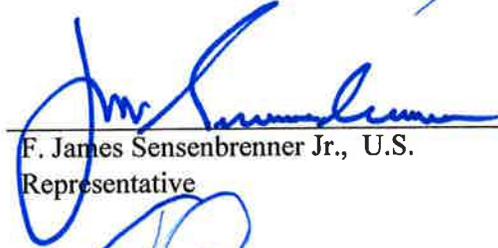
John Kline, U.S. Representative



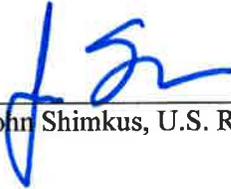
Blaine Luetkemeyer, U.S. Representative



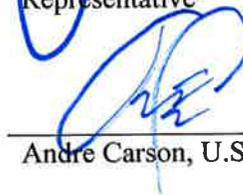
Richard Nolan, U.S. Representative



F. James Sensenbrenner Jr., U.S.
Representative



John Shimkus, U.S. Representative



Andre Carson, U.S. Representative



Eddie Bernice Johnson, U.S. Representative

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United States Senate

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Tammy Baldwin, United States Senator
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Mark Begich, United States Senator
Richard Blumenthal, United States Senator
Roy Blunt, United States Senator
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Barbara Boxer, United States Senator
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Maria Cantwell, United States Senator
Robert P. Casey, Jr. United States Senator
Saxby Chambliss, United States Senator
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Jerry Moran, United States Senator
Lisa Murkowski, United States Senator
Christopher Murphy, United States Senator
Patty Murray, United States Senator
Bill Nelson, United States Senator
Rand Paul, M.D., United States Senator
Rob Portman, United States Senator
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Jack Reed, United States Senator
James Risch, United States Senator
Pat Roberts, United States Senator
Marco Rubio, United States Senator
Tim Scott, United States Senator
Jeanne Shaheen, United States Senator
Debbie Stabenow, United States Senator
Jon Tester, United States Senator
John Thune, United States Senator
Pat Toomey, United States Senator
David Vitter, United States Senator
John Walsh, United States Senator
Mark Warner, United States Senator
Elizabeth Warren, United States Senator
Sheldon Whitehouse, United States Senator
Roger Wicker, United States Senator
Ron Wyden, United States Senator

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Michele Bachmann, U.S. Representative
Spencer Bachus, U.S. Representative
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Joyce Beatty, U.S. Representative
Sanford Bishop, U.S. Representative
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Marsha Blackburn, U.S. Representative
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Keith Ellison, U.S. Representative
Sam Farr, U.S. Representative
Stephen Fincher, U.S. Representative
Mike Fitzpatrick, U.S. Representative
Charles J. "Chuck" Fleischmann, U.S. Representative
Bill Flores, U.S. Representative
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Jaime Herrera Beutler, U.S. Representative
George Holding, U.S. Representative
Michael M. Honda, U.S. Representative
Tim Huelskamp, U.S. Representative
Bill Huizenga, U.S. Representative
Eddie Bernice Johnson, U.S. Representative
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, U.S. Representative
David Jolly, U.S. Representative
Peter King, U.S. Representative
Jack Kingston, U.S. Representative
John Kline, U.S. Representative
Ann McLane Kuster, U.S. Representative
James Lankford, U.S. Representative
Rick Larsen, U.S. Representative
John Larson, U.S. Representative
Billy Long, U.S. Representative
Blaine Luetkemeyer, U.S. Representative
Cynthia M. Lummis, U.S. Representative
Stephen F. Lynch, U.S. Representative
Kenny Marchant, U.S. Representative
Thomas Massie, U.S. Representative
Michael T. McCaul, U.S. Representative
Tom McClintock, U.S. Representative
Jim McDermott, U.S. Representative
Patrick McHenry, U.S. Representative
Mike McIntyre, U.S. Representative
Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, U.S. Representative
Cathy McMorris Rodgers, U.S. Representative
Mark Meadows, U.S. Representative
Luke Messer, U.S. Representative

Mike Michaud, U.S. Representative
James P. Moran, U.S. Representative
Richard Nolan, U.S. Representative
Alan Nunnelee, U.S. Representative
Beto O'Rourke, U.S. Representative
Scott Perry, U.S. Representative
Collin C. Peterson, U.S. Representative
Chellie Pingree, U.S. Representative
Robert Pittinger, U.S. Representative
Mike Pompeo, U.S. Representative
Bill Posey, U.S. Representative
Charles Rangel, U.S. Representative
Dave Reichert, U.S. Representative
Jim Renacci, U.S. Representative
Reid Ribble, U.S. Representative
Edward R. Royce, U.S. Representative
Paul Ryan, U.S. Representative
Adam Schiff, U.S. Representative
Aaron Schock, U.S. Representative
Austin Scott, U.S. Representative
F. James Jr. Sensenbrenner, U.S. Representative
Pete Sessions, U.S. Representative
John Shimkus, U.S. Representative
Adam Smith, U.S. Representative
Christopher H. Smith, U.S. Representative
Jason Smith, U.S. Representative
Lamar Smith, U.S. Representative
Steve Stivers, U.S. Representative
Marlin Stutzman, U.S. Representative
Lee Terry, U.S. Representative
Patrick Tiberi, U.S. Representative
John Tierney, U.S. Representative
Chris Van Hollen, U.S. Representative
Marc Veasey, U.S. Representative
Ann Wagner, U.S. Representative
Greg Walden, U.S. Representative
Brad Wenstrup, U.S. Representative
Ed Whitfield, U.S. Representative
Roger Williams, U.S. Representative
Don Young, U.S. Representative