

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

May 1, 2007

The Honorable Elaine Chao, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Secretary Chao,

We are writing to express our opposition to the Department's decision to reduce the Women's Bureau budget under your operating plan for FY2007. It was Congress' intent under H. J. Res. 20 to maintain FY2006 funding levels for the Bureau; we are deeply concerned that the reduction you've proposed will have detrimental effects on critical initiatives to advance women in the workforce. As a result, we ask that you revise your operating plan to provide \$9,666,000 for the Women's Bureau in FY 2007, as Congress intended.

The Women's Bureau plays a critical role as the only federal agency devoted exclusively to the concerns of the 70 million women in the United States' labor force. Since 1920, the Women's Bureau has led the nation in representing and protecting the needs of wage-earning women. In recent years, the Bureau has advanced 21<sup>st</sup> century solutions to help women in economic transition obtain employment in high-growth, demand-driven occupations and take steps to improve their families' security and well-being. For example, through its grant program with the Women Work! network-the nation's only direct service delivery system specifically equipped to meet the needs of unemployed and underemployed women-the Bureau helps over 300,000 women each year to make sustainable transitions into paid work.

Under the Joint Resolution making continuing appropriations for FY 2007 (H. J. Res. 20), Congress allowed for a Women's Bureau budget at the FY 2006 level, so that the Bureau could continue to operate the Women Work! grant program and other critical initiatives for working women. We are very concerned that the Department's cut to the Bureau's already modest budget puts this important work in jeopardy.

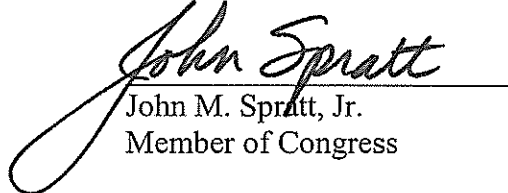
We are also concerned that your decision to reduce the Women's Bureau's budget suggests a dangerous pattern of disregard for needs of women in the United States' labor force. This action, viewed in combination with past attempts to diminish the Bureau-such as the near-elimination of Women's Bureau regional offices in 2001-calls into question the your commitment to expanding employment opportunities for women.


Secretary Chao, advancing women in the workforce must be among the top priorities of the Department of Labor. It is imperative that you fund the Women's Bureau at \$9,666,000, so that the Bureau can continue to support the Women Work! grant program and other critical initiatives to empower 21<sup>st</sup> century women workers to participate more fully in the American economy.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


  
Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress

  
John M. Spratt, Jr.  
Member of Congress

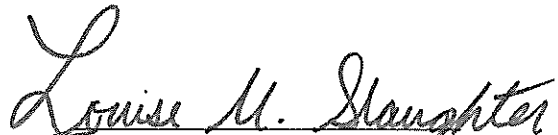
  
Lynn Woolsey  
Member of Congress


  
Howard L. Berman  
Member of Congress


  
Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress

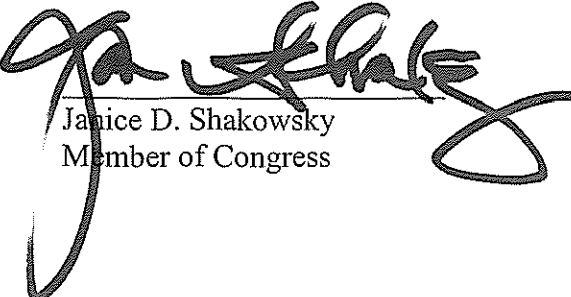
  
Mazie Hirono  
Member of Congress

  
Dennis Moore  
Member of Congress


  
Louise M. Slaughter  
Member of Congress


  
Hilda L. Solis  
Member of Congress

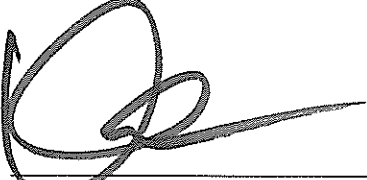
  
Doris O. Matsui  
Member of Congress


  
Janice D. Shakowsky  
Member of Congress


  
Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress

  
Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

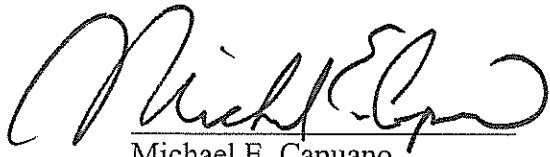
  
Rush D. Holt  
Member of Congress

  
David Wu  
Member of Congress

  
Thomas H. Allen  
Member of Congress

  
Chris Van Hollen  
Member of Congress

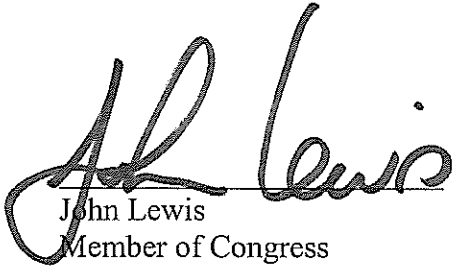
  
Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress



Michael E. Capuano  
Member of Congress



Raul M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



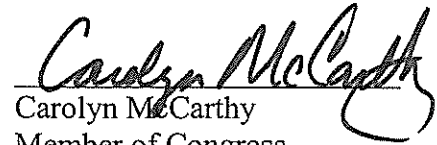
John Lewis  
Member of Congress



Sam Farr  
Member of Congress



James L. Oberstar  
Member of Congress



Carolyn McCarthy  
Member of Congress



Alan B. Mollohan  
Member of Congress



Susan Davis  
Member of Congress