Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 2, 2025

The Honorable David Valadao
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on the
Legislative Branch
U.S. House of Representatives
HT-2, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adriano Espaillat
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on the
Legislative Branch
U.S. House of Representatives
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Valadao and Ranking Member Espaillat:

We are writing to urge you to provide funding for the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) in the Fiscal Year 2026 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill. For more than two decades the OTA provided relevant, unbiased technical and scientific assessments for Members of Congress and staff. Today, a restored OTA would offer policy makers the tools to tackle and understand new technological developments and their public policy implications.

The OTA is still authorized, but the office was defunded in 1995, stripping Congress of a valuable resource that understood both emerging technologies as well as the intricacies of the legislative process and the needs of policy makers. The OTA is unique in that its mission enables it to conduct in-depth analysis with extensive input from external experts providing forward-looking and comprehensive assessment of new technologies.

In its absence, the need for the OTA has only grown. Thirty years after OTA was defunded, Congress is grappling with questions around how to encourage innovation while minimizing the potential harms of new technologies. While valuable efforts to expand the capabilities of the Government Accountability Office and Congressional Research Service have improved access to information, the unique value the OTA has historically provided demonstrates the significant persisting gaps in Congress' intellectual armory. A restored OTA would help Congress develop thoughtful, targeted policy around emerging technologies, including autonomous vehicles and face recognition. As complex advances in science and technology continue, Congress should have access to OTA's thorough and nonpartisan analysis to help us find the right path forward.

In the last year it operated, the total budget for the OTA was $23 million, but the savings that the OTA has created for the federal government have far exceeded that amount. Recommendations from a study on computer upgrades at the Social Security Administration led to a savings of over $350 million, and studies on the Synthetic Fuel Corporation led to its repeal, saving the federal government tens of billions of dollars.

Funding the OTA is a wise investment for the future. In Fiscal Year 2020, the House Appropriations Legislative Branch subcommittee included $6 million in initial funding to re-establish OTA and this funding passed out of committee by voice vote. Unfortunately, it was not included in the final appropriations package that was signed into law. We ask that you continue your efforts to restore funding for OTA to begin rebuilding the office with $6 million in appropriated funding for Fiscal Year 2026. These funds will better prepare Congress to account for emerging technologies in the legislative process and allow us to make informed policy decisions.

Thank you for your consideration and your leadership.
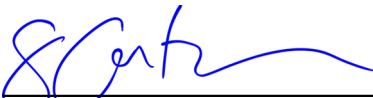
Sincerely,

MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress
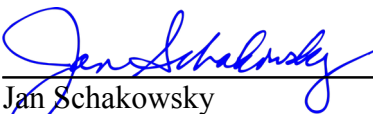
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress
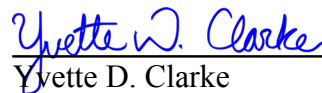
Sean Casten
Member of Congress
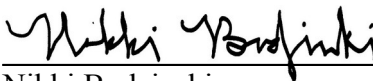
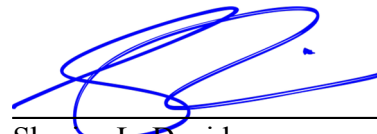Bill Foster
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Jan Schakowsky
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Nikki Budzinski
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Sharice L. Davids
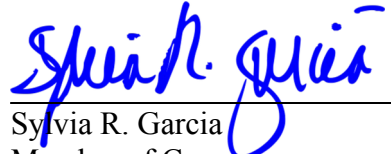Member of Congress

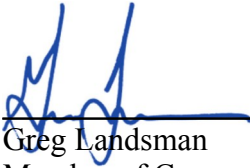Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress
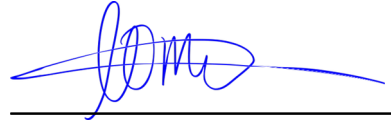
Eleanor Holmes Norton
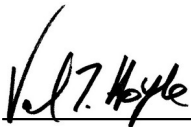Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia
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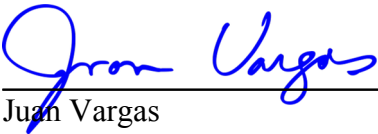
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Ilhan Omar
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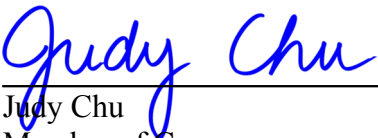
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Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress
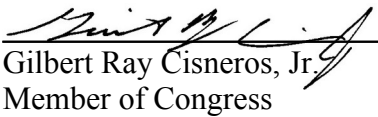
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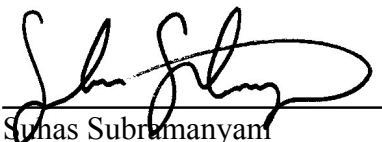
Rick Larsen
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