Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 11, 2012

The Honorable Eric Holder
U.S. Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 5111
Washington, D.C. 20530-0009

Dear Attorney General Holder:

We write you concerning the growing threat of "SWAT-ting" and its costly ramifications. These crimes occur when individuals call emergency dispatchers under the guise of another person's name with fraudulent claims, causing local law enforcement to swarm the home of innocent Americans. SWAT-ting first arose in 2002, but as technology and the Internet has expanded, the dangers of SWAT-ting are also on the rise.

Investigators have concluded that the majority of SWAT-ting cases utilize voice over Internet (VOIP) connections between the suspect's computer and a distant telephone network, and then dialing 911. This enables the suspect to falsify their identifying information, such as their telephone number and address, and make it nearly impossible for emergency dispatchers to identify or track the true origin of the call, or even pin-point calls from VOIP connections.

Some of these calls involve embellished schemes, including armed suspects and hostages, and in some instances, the caller claims that he has just killed someone. Moreover, the caller knowingly uses the identifying information of another person, who is usually an adversary of the caller. This elaborate hoax is all done with the goal of having law enforcement swarm the home of the caller's foe, which only incites fear in and tarnishes the reputation of an innocent person.

Even worse, SWAT-ting is quickly becoming a scare tactic used against political bloggers, essentially stifling those bloggers' First Amendment rights. Just last month, a popular blogger in the state of Georgia, Erick Erickson, became the latest victim of SWAT-ting. During the Erickson's family dinner, sheriff's deputies were dispatched to Erickson's home after receiving a 911 call reporting an accidental shooting that appeared to have come from Erickson's address. Fortunately, Erickson previously alerted police to SWAT-ting tactics; however, numerous similar scenarios have ended with guiltless victims held at gunpoint.

While none of the SWAT-ting victims have incurred physical harm from these hate filled ploys, we are gravely concerned that future victims may not find themselves so lucky. Plus, when law

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enforcement officers are responding to SWAT-ting claims, resources are diverted from those truly in need--all of this because of differences in political ideology.

Differences of opinion should enrich our lives, not divide us. Each American has the right to freely express his or her ideas and should not be subject to fear tactics like SWAT-ting, which run counter to the liberty that forms the bedrock of our great nation. These crimes are not to be tolerated and necessitate thorough examination at every level.

We urge you to hold true to those promises and work to ensure that criminals using fear in hopes to prevent others from exercising their First Amendment rights are held to the highest standard of the law. To this end, we implore you to thoroughly review each of these cases, determine whether any federal laws have been breached, and prosecute those crimes accordingly.

Sincerely,

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Rep. Bob Goodlatte

Rep. Jim Jordan

Rep. Morgan Griffith

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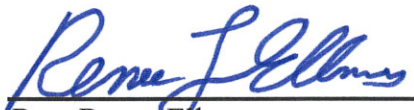

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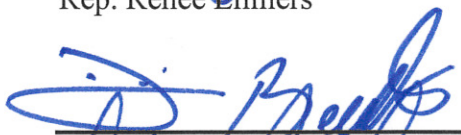
Rep. Leonard Lance



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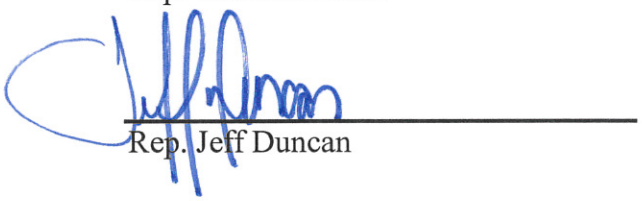

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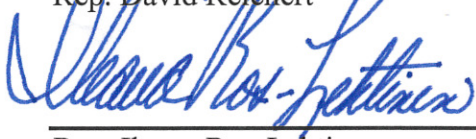
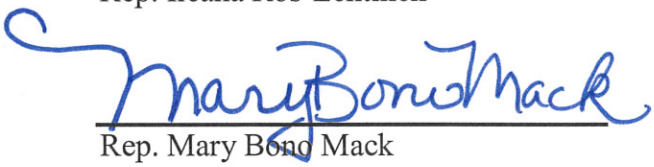


Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Rep. Jamie Herrera Beutler



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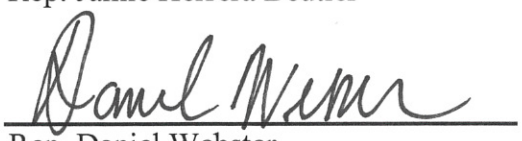

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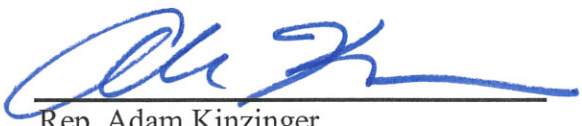

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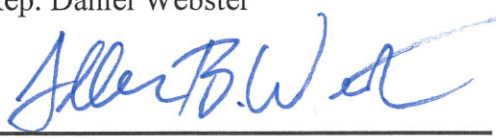

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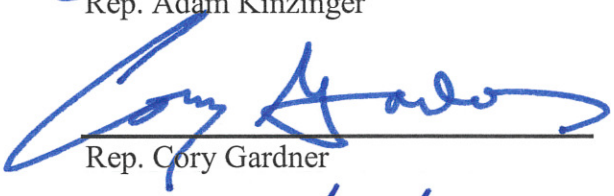

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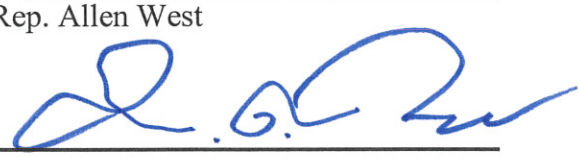

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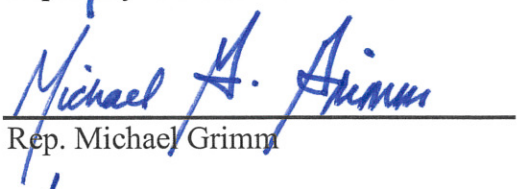

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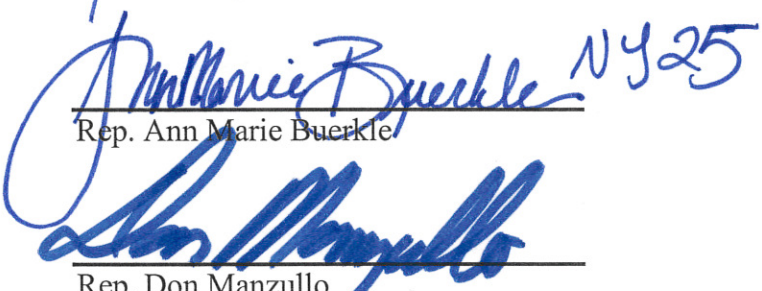

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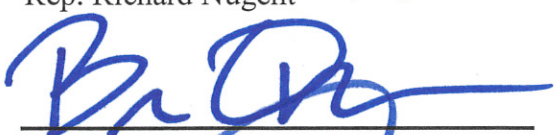

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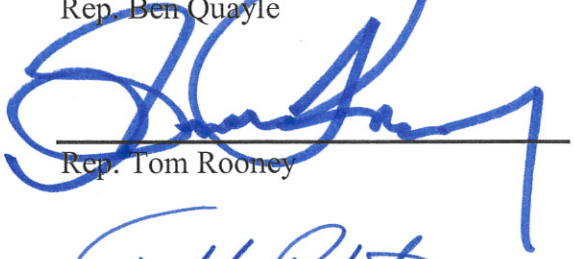

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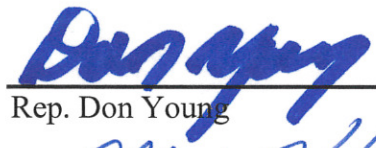

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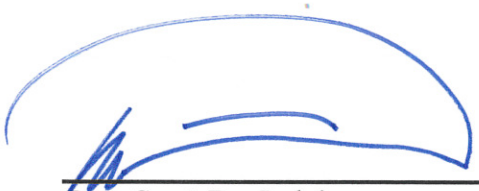

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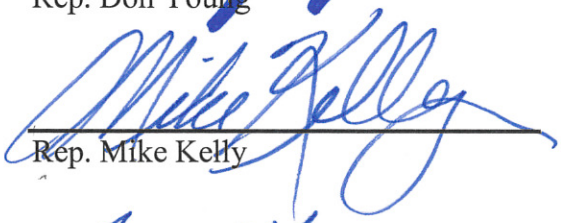

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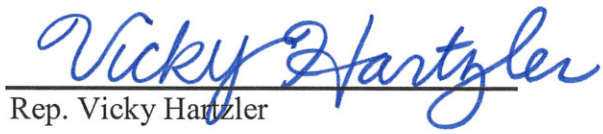

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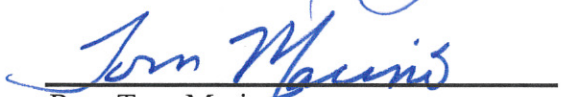

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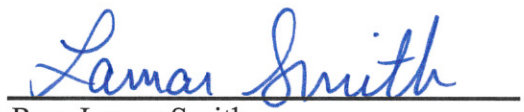

Rep. Lamar Smith

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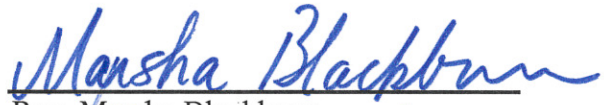

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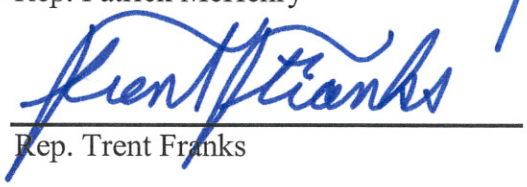

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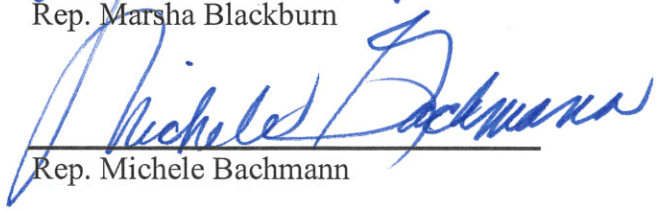

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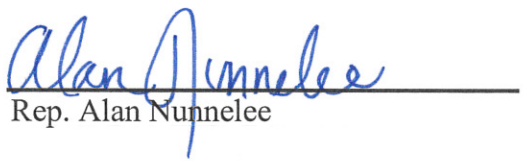

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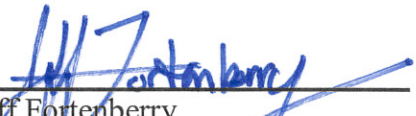

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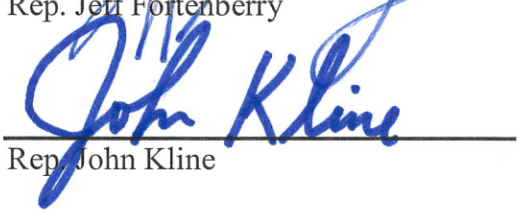
Rep. Candice Miller



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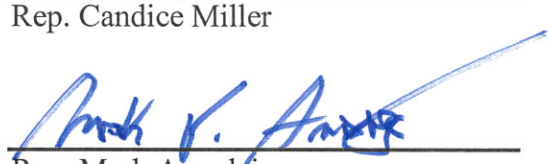

Rep. Mark Amodei

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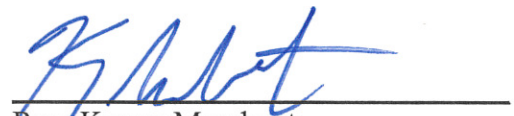
Rep. Sue Myrick

Rep. Austin Scott



Rep. Kenny Marchant

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Rep. Lynn Westmoreland

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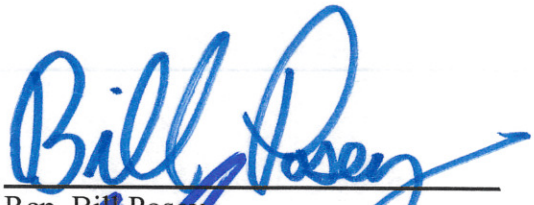
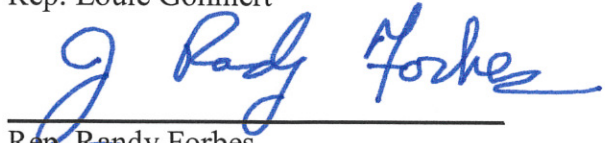


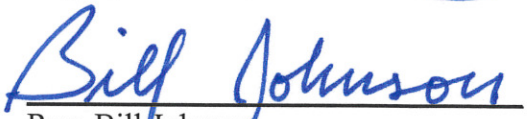
Rep. Bill Posey

Rep. Louie Gohmert

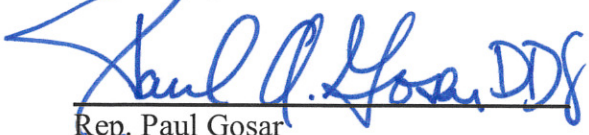
Rep. Quico Canseco



Rep. Randy Forbes



Rep. Bill Johnson



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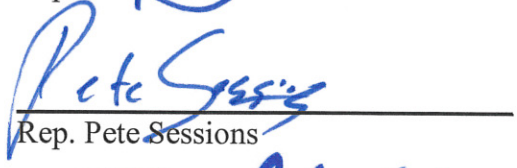

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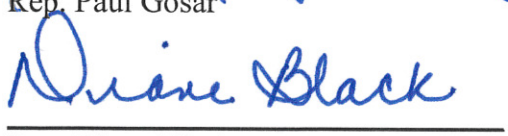

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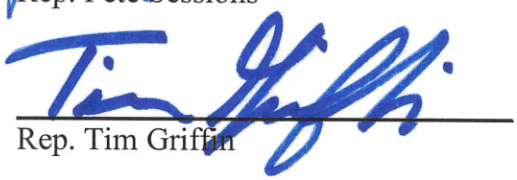

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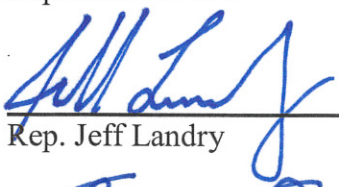

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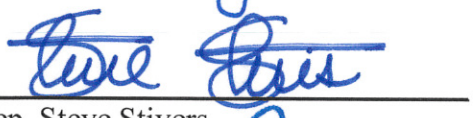
Rep. Walter B. Jones



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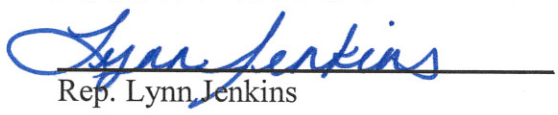

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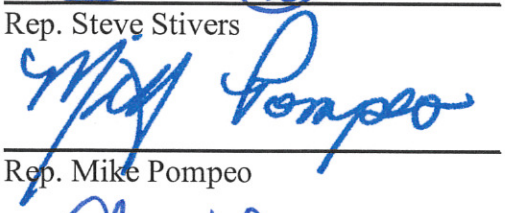

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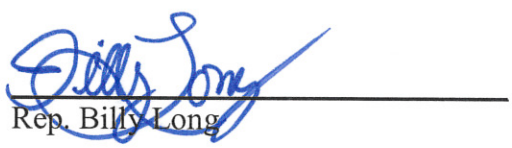

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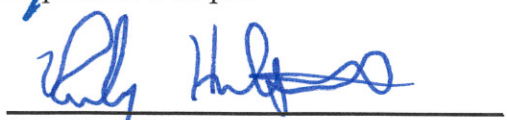

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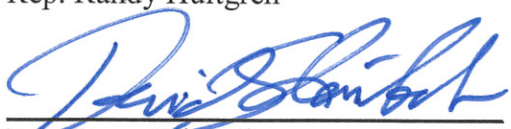
Rep. Steve Scalise



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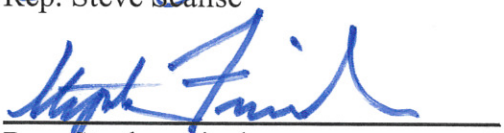

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Rep. Jack Kingston

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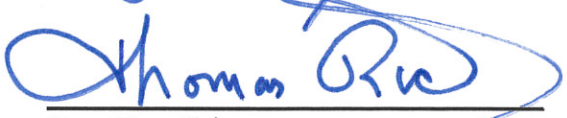

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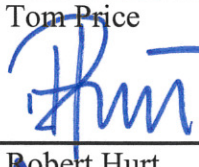

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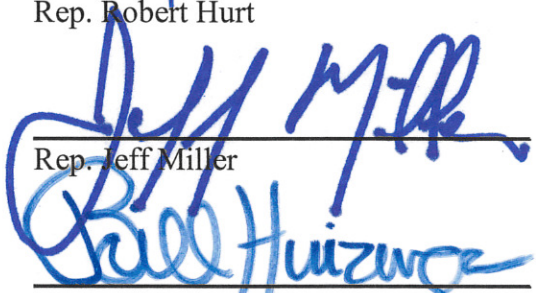

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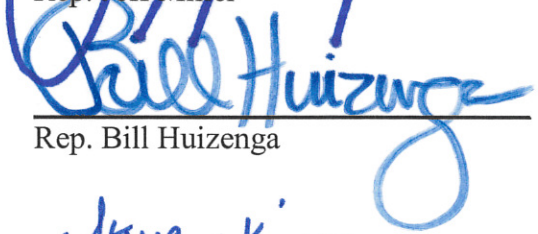

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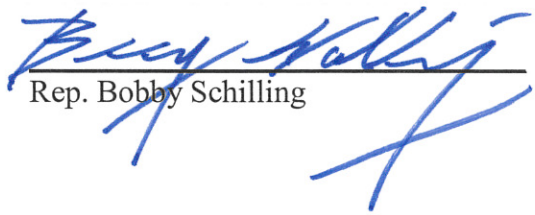

Rep. Bobby Schilling