

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 23, 2016

President Janet Napolitano
Office of the President
University of California
1111 Franklin St., 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear President Napolitano:

As members of California's congressional delegation, we write regarding the University of California's contract negotiations with its postdoctoral scholars (postdocs) who are represented by UAW 5810. Specifically, we urge you to reach a settlement that ensures strong protections for postdocs.

With doctoral degrees and expertise in specific areas, postdocs add tremendous value to the University of California. However, we are concerned that certain obstacles undermine the University's ability to attract and retain the most promising and accomplished scholars, especially women and people of color. For example, postdocs earn low wages, receive short appointments, and may even suffer from abusive conduct, threatening workforce stability. Additionally troubling is that female postdocs are too often disadvantaged in the workplace after having children or subjected to sexual harassment.

Still, the University can make meaningful progress on recruiting and retaining talented scientists by strengthening labor protections and benefits in the current contract negotiations. For example, we urge you to provide subsidies to reimburse the steep child care costs faced by postdocs, many of whom spend up to 30 percent of their salary on childcare. The University should also provide its postdocs eight weeks of paid parental leave, the same amount that the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health (NIH) provide their postdoctoral fellows working at the University of California. These types of family-friendly policies have proven successful in retaining female employees in private businesses and at universities.

Additionally, we urge you to commit to fair pay for postdocs commensurate with their educational experience and the value added to the University. After announcing new overtime rules, NIH Director Francis Collins and Labor Secretary Thomas Perez wrote, "We agree with a number of leaders in biomedical science who have...[argued] that postdoctoral fellows are generally paid salaries that do not adequately reflect their advanced education and expertise."¹ We strongly echo Collins and Perez's support for higher salaries.

¹ Collins, Francis and Thomas Perez, "Fair Pay for Postdocs: Why We Support New Federal Overtime Rules," *Huffington Post*, 2016 May 17, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/francis-s-collins-md-phd/fair-pay-for-postdocs-why_b_10011066.html.

We believe that these ideas will help the University of California to attract and retain the best researchers, particularly women and people of color. We encourage you to consider them in your negotiations with UAW 5810. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



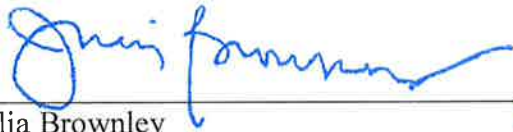
Lois Capps
Member of Congress



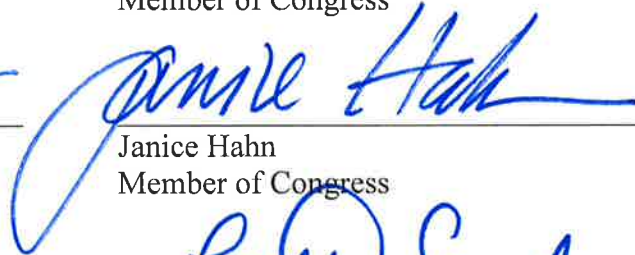
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



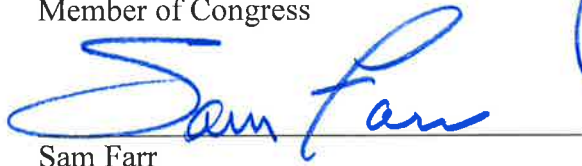
Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress



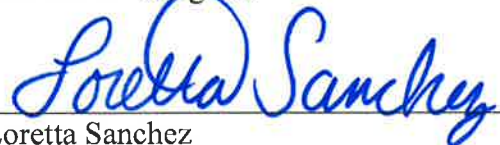
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



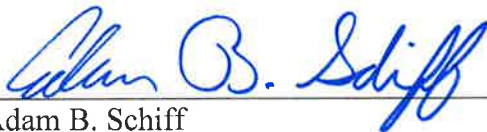
Janice Hahn
Member of Congress



Sam Farr
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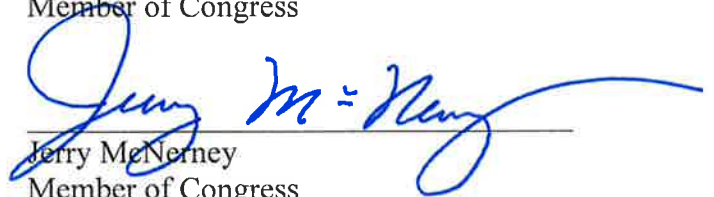
Adam B. Schiff
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Alan Lowenthal
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Judy Chu
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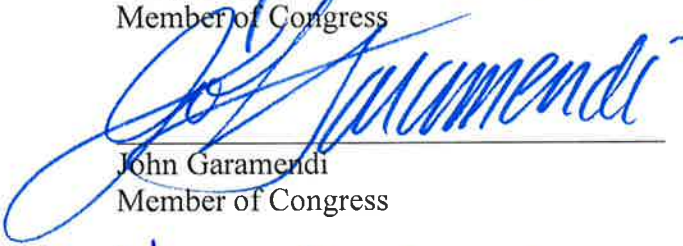
Jerry McNerney
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Tony Cárdenas
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Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



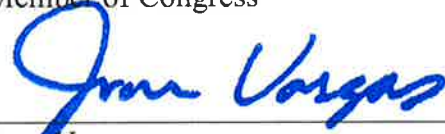
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Mark DeSaunier
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Lucille Roybal-Allard
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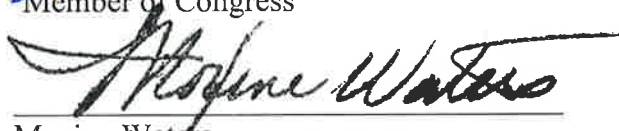
Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



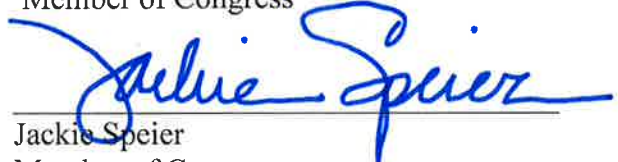
Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



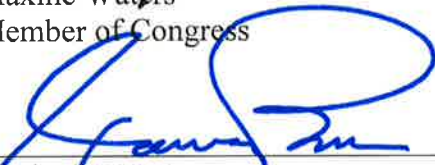
Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
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Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress



Pete Aguilar
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