

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 6, 2017

Chairman John Culberson
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Capitol, Room H-310
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member José Serrano
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Serrano:

We thank you for your leadership in ensuring Congress supports federal law enforcement with the resources they need while stewarding our constituents' hard-earned tax dollars. As the Committee works with your Senate counterparts to negotiate a final government funding package for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, we respectfully ask that you include language to curb the Department of Justice's adoptive forfeiture policy in the final FY2018 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations bill.

During the consideration of H.R. 3354, the Make America Secure and Prosperous Appropriations Act, the House acted to advance the most significant federal legislative actions to limit civil forfeiture in years. On September 12, 2017, the House of Representatives unanimously supported a series of amendments to block the Department of Justice from reinstating its policy of adoptive forfeiture and circumventing state limitations on civil asset forfeiture. These amendments, which were adopted by voice vote, were championed by a diverse group of lawmakers and supported by a broad coalition of organizations, including the American Conservative Union, the Institute for Justice, the NAACP, and the ACLU.

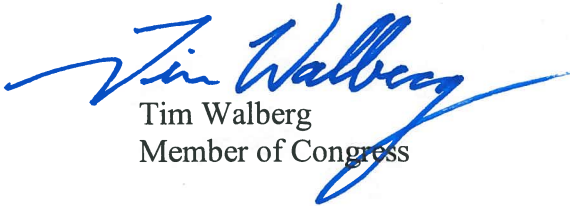
A federally adopted forfeiture occurs when a state or local law enforcement agency seizes property allegedly tied to a criminal act and requests a federal agency take the seized asset and forfeit it under federal law. In 2015, then-Attorney General Eric Holder imposed certain limits on adoptive forfeiture. Regrettably, the Department of Justice reversed this policy in July and announced an expansion of the civil asset forfeiture program.

In recent years, we have learned of a growing number of instances across the United States where the government has confiscated property from citizens and small businesses without any criminal conviction, or even criminal charges. The current civil forfeiture system is ripe for abuse, and has undermined the constitutional rights of far too many Americans. In response, 24 States and the District of Columbia have adopted reforms to their forfeiture laws. Unfortunately, the Department of Justice's reinstatement of adoptive forfeiture undermines these State laws and continues to threaten the due process rights of innocent Americans.

Our nation was founded on the principles of due process and property rights, and Congress must vigorously defend these values. We cannot accept a system where the government continues to seize innocent people's property. Therefore, as you finalize a spending package for fiscal year

2018, we respectfully request the inclusion of language that prevents the reinstatement of adoptive forfeitures.

Sincerely,



Tim Walberg
Member of Congress




Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Justin Amash
Member of Congress



John Conyers
Member of Congress



Warren Davidson
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Darrell Issa
Member of Congress



Brendan Boyle
Member of Congress



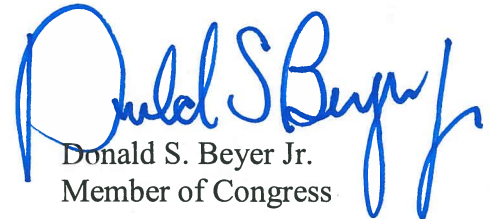
Jason Lewis
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



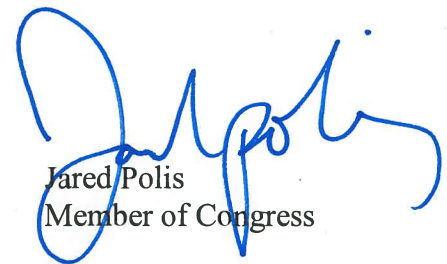
Raúl Labrador
Member of Congress



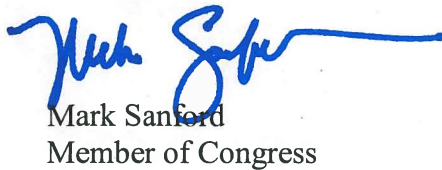
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



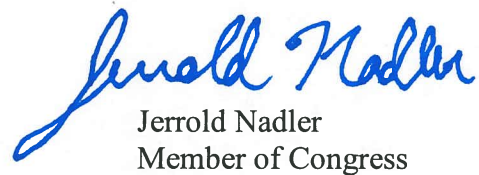
Mike Bishop
Member of Congress



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Mark Sanford
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



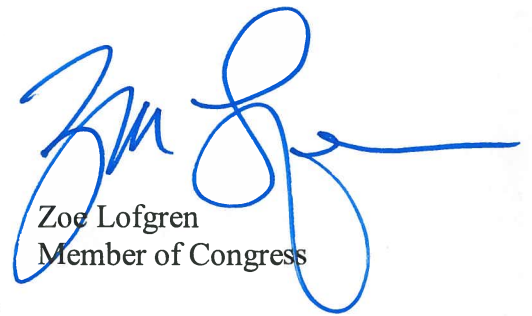
Tom Emmer
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



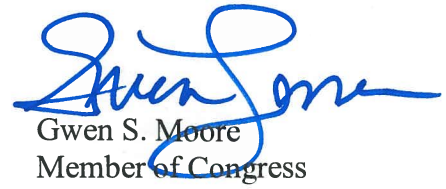
Don Young
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress