Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 21, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Since the beginning of your presidential transition, Americans from all walks of life have been touched by your pledge to govern from the center, and by your vow to be a president for all Americans. We are writing to respectfully urge you to build on this foundation by withdrawing your pledge to sign the so-named Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), which would in one tragic act overturn virtually all pro-life laws nationwide, and by refusing to support legislation that incrementally enacts the FOCA agenda by rescinding or weakening existing pro-life laws piece by piece.

On January 22, our nation will mark the 36th anniversary of the tragic *Roe v. Wade* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. Since *Roe v. Wade*, many laws – including laws to prevent federal taxpayer funding for abortion – have been enacted to mitigate the effects of the decision on unborn babies and their mothers. We hope that you would support the continuation of these laws and would oppose initiatives such as FOCA, which is more radical than the *Roe v. Wade* decision.

Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, recently warned FOCA "would deprive the American people in all fifty states of the freedom they now have to enact modest restraints and regulations on the abortion industry, [and] coerce all Americans into subsidizing and promoting abortion with their tax dollars." It would "have lethal consequences for prenatal human life [and] an equally destructive effect on the freedom of conscience of doctors, nurses and health care workers whose personal convictions do not permit them to cooperate in the private killing of unborn children," threatening health care institutions and charities throughout the country, he noted. Enacting FOCA or overturning existing policies would have the same effect. We ask that you reject this divisive agenda.

During the campaign you talked about reducing abortions. The Freedom of Choice Act would do the opposite. By overturning laws that require parental notification or consent before a minor girl obtains an abortion, the abortion rate will increase. A recent study by Dr. Michael J. New showed that when a state enacts a parental involvement law, the minor abortion rate falls by 19 to 31 percent.

Also, advocates on both sides of the abortion debate agree that longstanding provisions that restrict funding for abortions reduce the number of abortions dramatically. A recent study by Heather D. Boonstra appearing in the Guttmacher Policy Review showed that 18 to 35 percent of Medicaid patients who would have had an abortion carry their babies to term when

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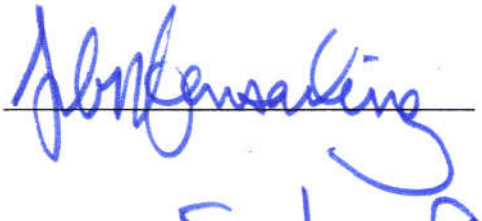
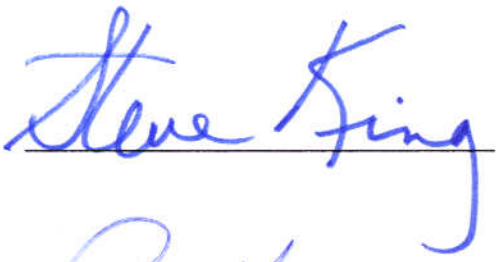
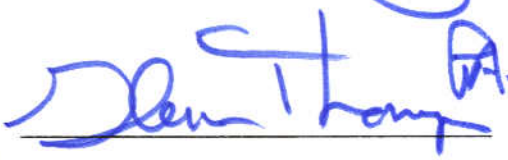
Medicaid will not pay for their abortion. Restrictions on funding for abortion save lives and protect the consciences of millions of Americans who do not want their tax dollars to be used to destroy innocent human life.

You have expressed a desire to be a president for all Americans, and to use your presidency to promote initiatives that bring Americans together, rather than drive them apart. We recognize it will not always be easy for you to do this. However, too much is at stake for this divisive and destructive legislation to move forward and life-saving laws to be rolled back. We respectfully urge you to withdraw your pledge to sign FOCA, and that you pledge not to sign legislation that incrementally enacts FOCA by rescinding existing pro-life laws and legal protections.

Sincerely,



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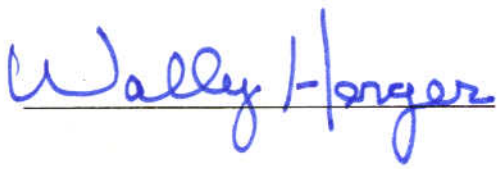

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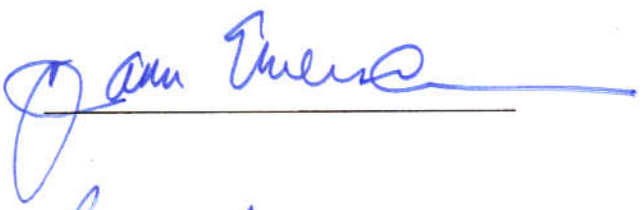

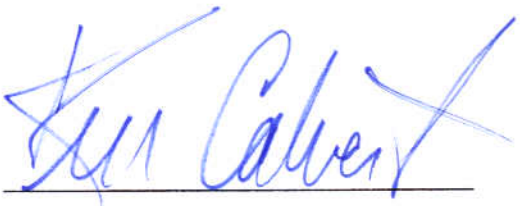

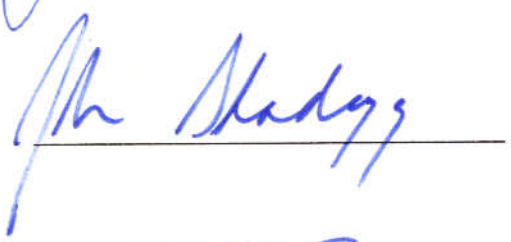

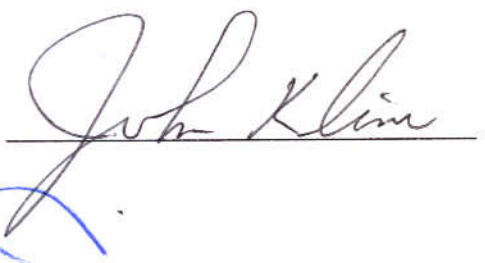

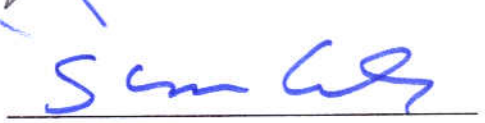

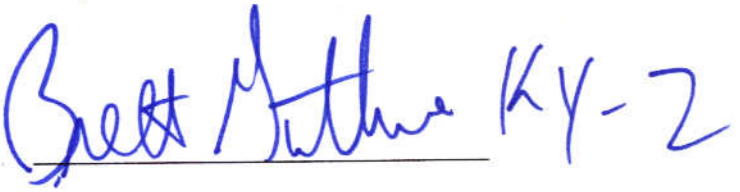
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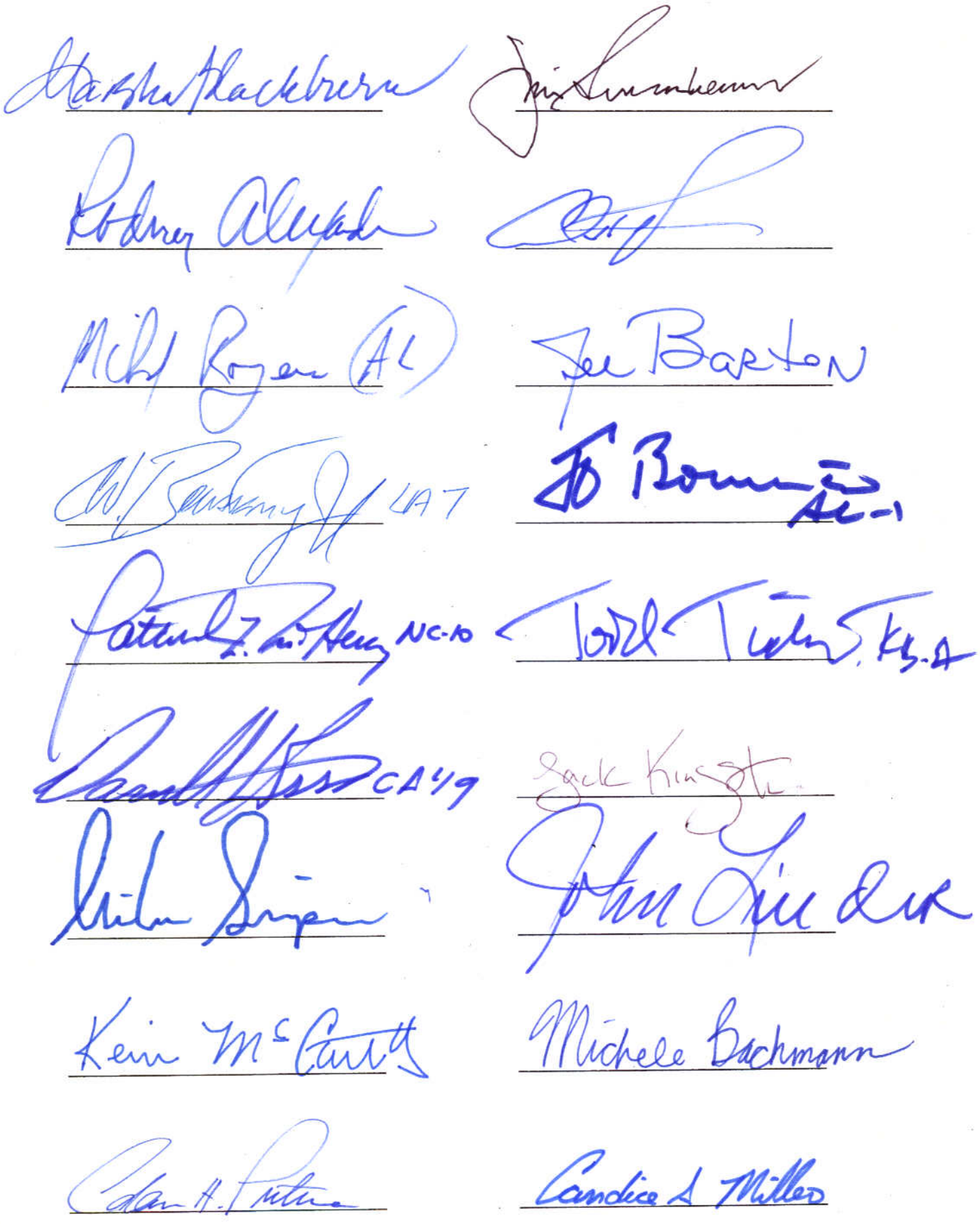

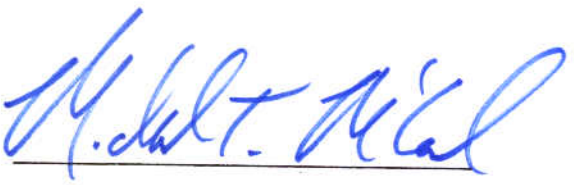

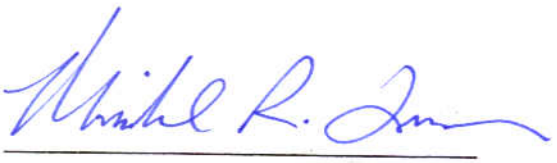

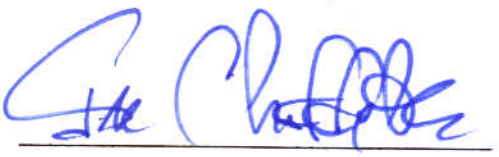

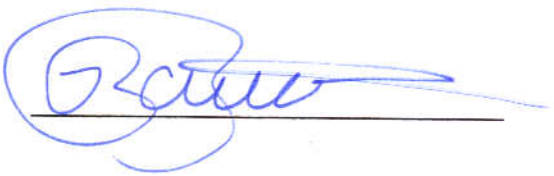

Ralph M. Hall