To the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate:

As economists, we write to support the plan before Congress dealing with the financial crisis. We are well aware that the proposed intervention entails very large sums and considerable risk for American taxpayers, albeit upside as well as downside risk.

Ours is a mixed, private-public economic system. Even in normal times, our government is heavily involved in the economy and holds a considerable claim on the private sector via the tax system. That said, none of us would counsel government arrangements of the proposed type in normal times. Today's situation is far from normal. Nor, unfortunately, is it unprecedented.

Our country has weathered significant financial crises over the years. It will weather this one as well. The main lesson learned from prior crises is that timely and aggressive government intervention can restore confidence and galvanize the private sector to take mutually reinforcing and economically beneficial actions. This ability of the government to set the economy on a healthy path makes the proposed intervention much less risky than would otherwise seem to be the case.

We call upon all members of Congress to support this important legislation knowing full well that doing so is neither easy nor guaranteed of success. *

Signed by*

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* We are signing as individuals and not as representatives of our organizations, which are mentioned for identification purposes only.