

ProLiteracy Policy Update

A publication of ProLiteracy Worldwide

May 2006

House of Representatives Even Start Update

Here's an update on activity in the House of Representatives regarding Even Start, including two House "Dear Colleague" Letters seeking to restore or increase funding Even Start for fiscal year 2006. There is no further action required on your part to secure additional signatures for these letters, but please continue to indicate your support for restoring the funding in any contacts that you make with your Senators and Representatives. The final appropriations bills are still a long way off.

36 Members of the House (the current list can be found below) have signed onto the Dear Colleague letter circulated by Reps. Platts, Simmons, Hinchley, and Thompson. **The letter is scheduled to go to the decision makers on the House Appropriations Full and Subcommittees on Thursday, May 4th.**

Signatures on Platts Even Start Letter: (UPPERCASE for Republicans)

Abercrombie, Neil (D-HI)
Baldwin, Tammie (D-WI)
Boren, Dan (D-OK)
Carson, Julia (D-IN)
Case, ED (D-HI)
Conyers, John (D-MI)
Costa, Jim (D-CA)
Cuellar, Henry (D-TX)
Davis, Danny (D-IL)
DENT, CHARLIE (R-PA)
Doggett, Lloyd (D-TX)
Etheridge, Bob (D-NC)
Evans, Lane (D-IL)
FOLEY, MARK (R-FL)
Hinchey, Maurice (D-NY)
Hinojosa, Ruben (D-TX)
KUHL, RANDY (R-NY)
Lewis, John (D-GA)
Maloney, Carolyn (D-NY)
Marshall, Jim (D-GA)
McCarthy, Carolyn (D-NY)
McDermott, Jim (D-WA)
McGovern, James (D-MA)
MCHUGH, JOHN (R-NY)
Michaud, Michael (D-ME)
Moore, Dennis (D-KS)

Owen, Major (D-NY)
Payne, Donald (D-NJ)
PLATTS, TODD (R-PA)
Pomeroy, Earl (D-ND)
Reyes, Silvestre (D-TX)
SIMMONS, ROB (R-CT)
SULLIVAN, JOHN (R-OK)
Tauscher, Ellen (D-CA)
Thompson, Bennie (D-MS)
Woolsey, Lynn (D-CA)

The second letter, circulated by Reps. Kildee and Miller, has been completed and sent to the Appropriations Sub-Committee on Education and the Workforce. 64 Representatives have signed on. The letter is attached below.

Please remember to thank your Representative if she/he has signed on. Thank you for all the work that you do to advocate for adult literacy in your community.

Marsha L. Tait
Senior Vice President

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 11, 2006

Dear Colleague,

Please join us in sending the attached letter in support of \$225 million for the William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program. The Even Start Program serves approximately 50,000 families nationwide and is the only federal education program that focuses specifically on parents and their children learning literacy skills together.

Studies show that a child's ability to thrive is closely linked with his or her parent's education level. By teaching both parents and children literacy skills, Even Start helps parents to further their own education, improve their chances of employment, become a better parent, and, most importantly, improve their child's chance of success in school.

The Administration's budget request has proposed the elimination of funding for Even Start for the past four consecutive years. Fortunately, Congress has understood the importance of this program and restored funding. However, the fiscal year 2006 House Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Appropriations bill cut Even Start funding by 56%. Further reducing funding for Even Start will leave thousands of families without vital literacy services.

We hope that you will join us in supporting a \$225 million funding level for the William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program. To add your name to this letter, please contact Becky Braunstein (Representative Platts) at 5-5836 or becky.braunstein@mail.house.gov or Terra Sabag (Representative Hinchey) at 5-6335 or terra.sabag@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



TODD RUSSELL PLATTS
Member of Congress



MAURICE D. HINCHEY
Member of Congress



ROB SIMMONS
Member of Congress



BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Member of Congress

MAJORITY MEMBERS:

HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON, CALIFORNIA,
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TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, PENNSYLVANIA
PATRICK J. TIBERI, OHIO
RIC KELLER, FLORIDA
TOM OSBORNE, NEBRASKA
JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA
JON C. PORTER, NEVADA
JOHN KLINE, MINNESOTA
MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE, COLORADO
BOB INGLIS, SOUTH CAROLINA
CATHY McMORRIS, WASHINGTON
KENNY MARCHANT, TEXAS
TOM PRICE, GEORGIA
LUIS G. FORTUÑO, PUERTO RICO
BOBBY JINDAL, LOUISIANA
CHARLES W. BOUSTANY, JR., LOUISIANA
VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA
THELMA D. DRAKE, VIRGINIA
JOHN R. "RANDY" KUHL, JR., NEW YORK



COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2181 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

MAJORITY (202) 225-4527

MINORITY (202) 225-3725

<http://edworkforce.house.gov>

April 27, 2006

MINORITY MEMBERS:

GEORGE MILLER, CALIFORNIA, SENIOR
DEMOCRATIC MEMBER

DALE E. KILDEE, MICHIGAN
MAJOR R. OWENS, NEW YORK
DONALD M. PAYNE, NEW JERSEY
ROBERT E. ANDREWS, NEW JERSEY
ROBERT C. SCOTT, VIRGINIA
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CAROLYN McCARTHY, NEW YORK
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DAVID WU, OREGON
RUSH D. HOLT, NEW JERSEY
SUSAN A. DAVIS, CALIFORNIA
BETTY McCOLLUM, MINNESOTA
DANNY K. DAVIS, ILLINOIS
RAUL M. GRIJALVA, ARIZONA
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, MARYLAND
TIM RYAN, OHIO
TIMOTHY H. BISHOP, NEW YORK

The Honorable Ralph Regula
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David R. Obey
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Regula and Ranking Member Obey:

We are writing to urge you to restore funding to the Even Start Family Literacy Programs at the Fiscal 2005 level of \$225 million.

For the past several years, the President has recommended eliminating the Even Start Family Literacy program, using the results of its Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) questionnaire as a central justification. Earlier this month, the effectiveness of PART as a budget tool was questioned by the Majority Staff Director of the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Government Management, Finance and Accountability.

As reported by GovExec, the Majority Staff Director noted that Even Start

“...was originally established by Congress to boost adult reading levels, but its PART evaluation is based largely on the number of participants who obtain general equivalency degrees. As a result, the program received an ineffective rating in 2002 and OMB recommended that its funding be zeroed out.” (*GovExec, OMB program assessments viewed as flawed budget tool, April 4, 2006*)

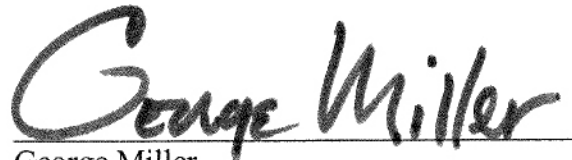
Meanwhile, over half of the Even Start programs in the county—including 20 of the only 28 programs serving the Native American community—will face termination by July 1, 2006 because of the budget decisions based on the PART analysis.

The Even Start Family Literacy Program is a comprehensive family literacy program, which serves both parents and young children who are most in need. The programs provide adult education, parenting education, early childhood education, and interactive parent and child literacy activities. More than 40 million adults have basic literacy skills or limited proficiency in English that interferes with their ability to participate fully in work, family and community activities. Current funding, which includes Even Start and other programs, reaches only 2.8 million of these adults each year, and thousands more are on waiting lists.

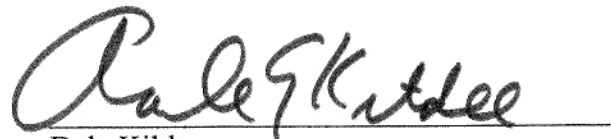
Given this new information, we believe it is imperative to revisit the Even Start funding request and to restore funding for this effective and successful program—as demonstrated by several independent analyses.

Thank you for your consideration of this emergency request.

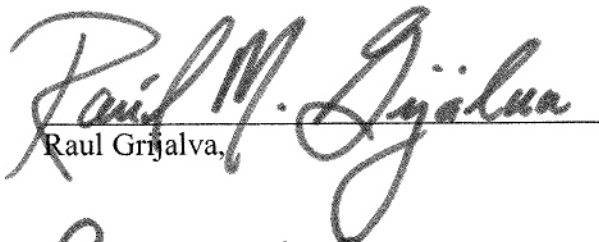
Sincerely,



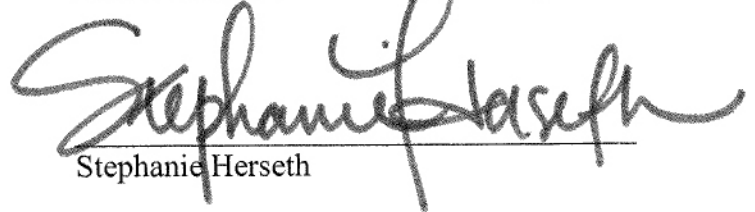
George Miller
Senior Democratic Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce



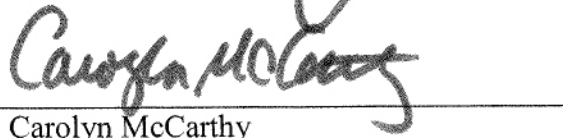
Dale Kildee
Senior Democratic Member
Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness



Raul Grijalva



Stephanie Herseth



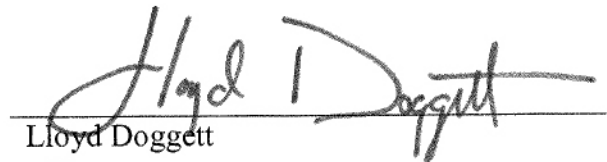
Carolyn McCarthy



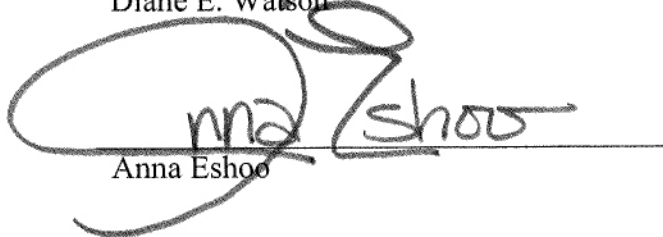
Ed Case



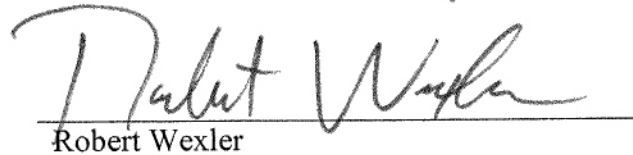
Diane E. Watson



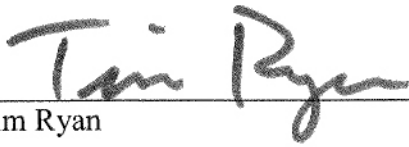
Lloyd Doggett



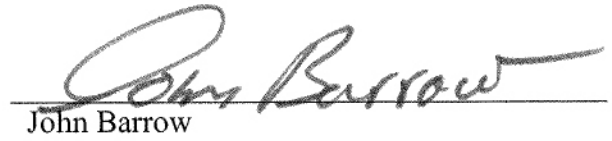
Anna Eshoo



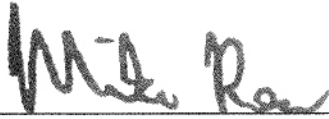
Robert Wexler



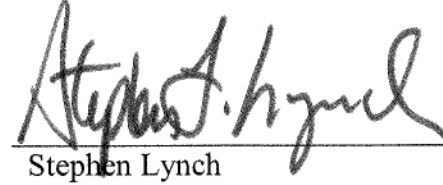
Tim Ryan



John Barrow



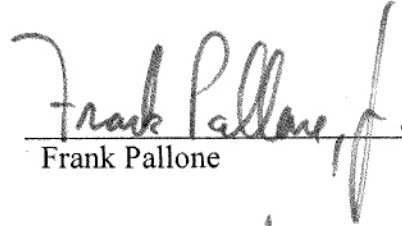
Mike Ross



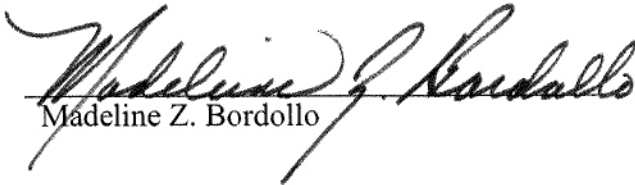
Stephen Lynch



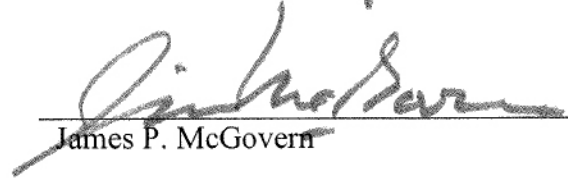
Charles Gonzalez



Frank Pallone



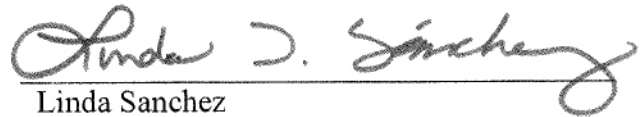
Madeline Z. Bordollo



James P. McGovern



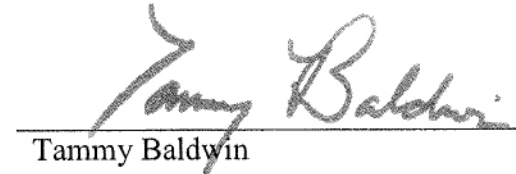
John Larson



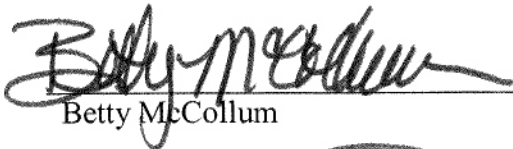
Linda Sanchez



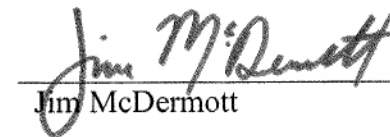
Rush Holt



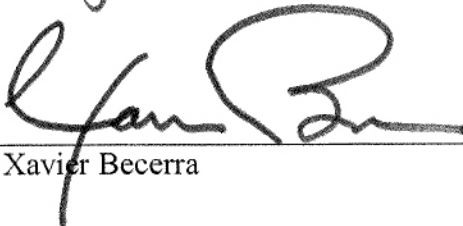
Tammy Baldwin



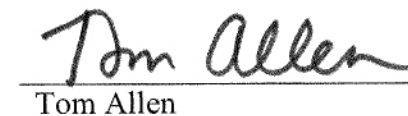
Betty McCollum



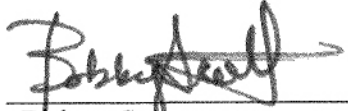
Jim McDermott



Xavier Becerra



Tom Allen



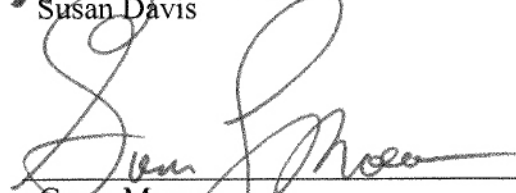
Robert Scott



Susan Davis



Henry Cuellar



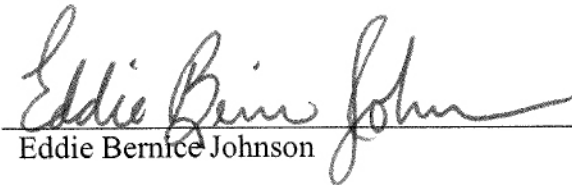
Gwen Moore



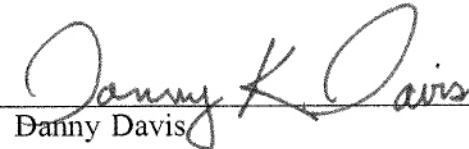
Chris VanHollen



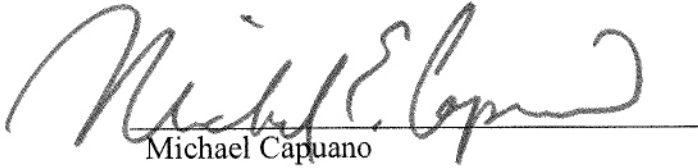
Neil Abercrombie



Eddie Bernice Johnson



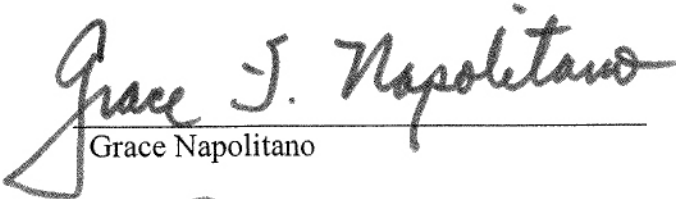
Danny Davis



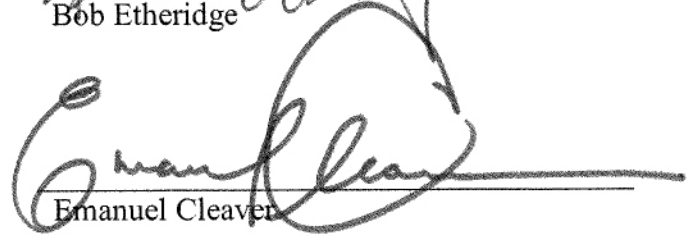
Michael Capuano



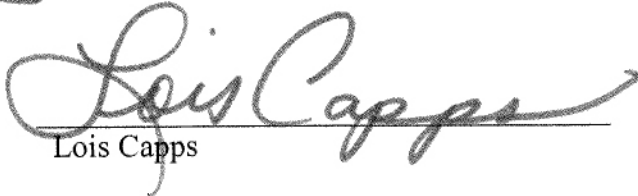
Bob Etheridge



Grace Napolitano



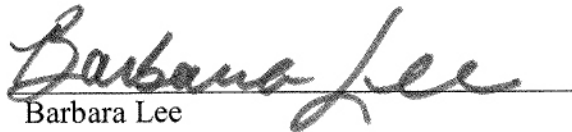
Emanuel Cleaver



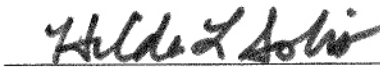
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Michael Honda



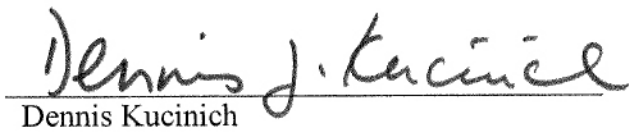
Barbara Lee



Hilda Solis



Dennis Moore



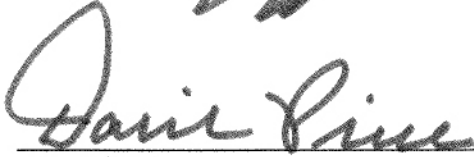
Dennis Kucinich



William Jefferson



Eleanor Holmes Norton



David Price



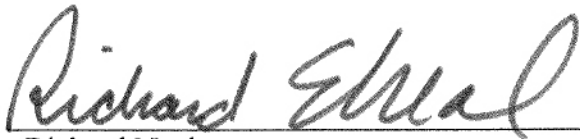
Donald Payne



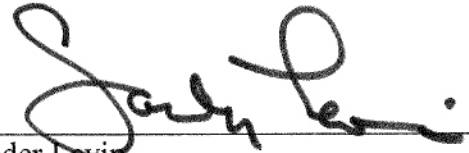
Elijah Cummings



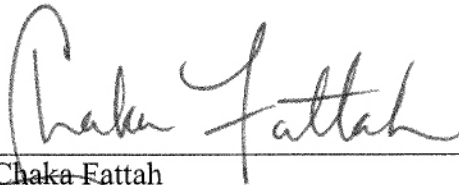
Lynn Woolsey



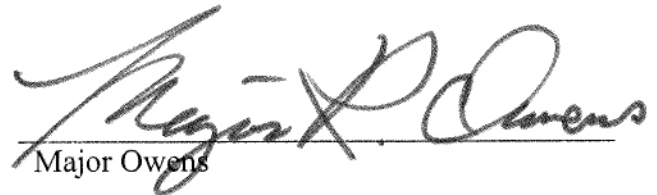
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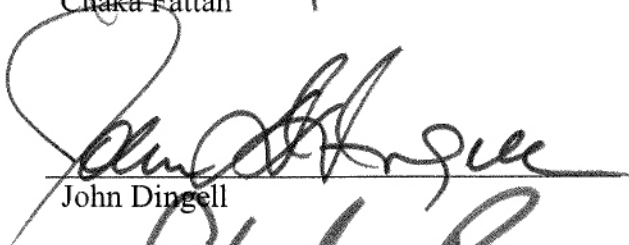
Sander Levin



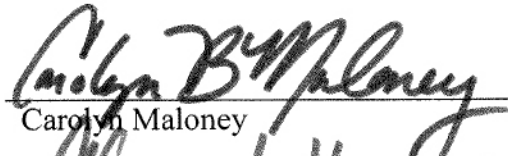
Chaka Fattah



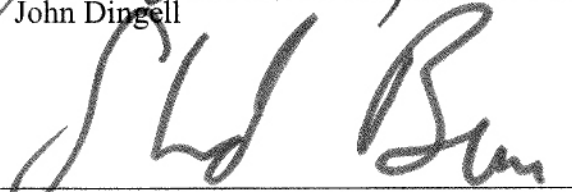
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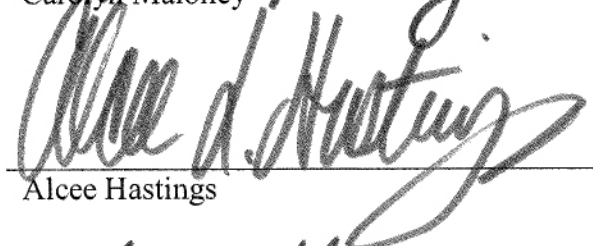
John Dingell



Carolyn Maloney



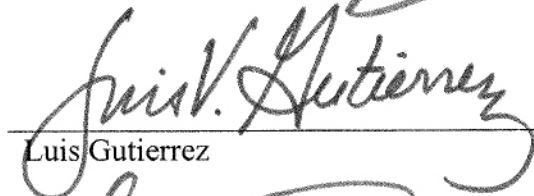
Sherrod Brown



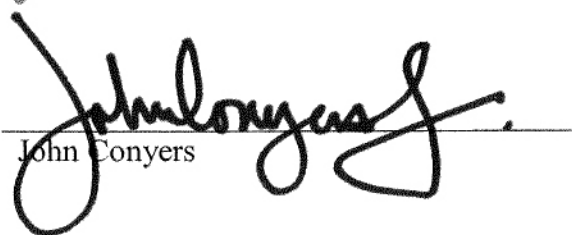
Alcee Hastings



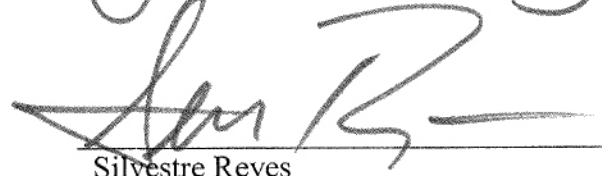
James Oberstar



Luis Gutierrez



John Conyers



Silvestre Reyes

Mike McIntyre

Mike McIntyre

Bill Delahunt

William Delahunt

Ruben Hinojosa

Ruben Hinojosa

Solomon P. Ortiz

Solomon Ortiz