

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

June 3, 2009

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama,

As you prepare to host leaders from the Middle East and to make a major address in Egypt in the coming weeks, we write to support the course you are charting for American policy in the Middle East. Specifically, we applaud your intention to provide strong American leadership to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian and broader Arab-Israeli conflicts.

Resolving these conflicts, and in particular, finally implementing a two-state solution, is essential for American interests in the Middle East and around the world. Many of America's critical national goals – from addressing Iran and withdrawing from Iraq to defeating Al-Qaeda and pushing back against extremism – will be well-served by addressing this core issue, not to mention the positive impact it will have on our standing around the world.

We share your conviction that a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an essential cornerstone of Middle East stability. As friends of Israel, we believe that an end to the conflict is critical to Israel's long-term security and survival as a Jewish and a democratic state, and we are steadfastly committed to its realization. We also believe that America best serves our historic friendship with Israel when it is actively working to de-escalate conflict and advance peace, and that our relationships throughout the Arab and Muslim world will be strengthened through a negotiated agreement that ends the conflict.

However, demographic trends, continued violence, settlements, escalating tensions in Jerusalem, and other changes on the ground all threaten the window of opportunity for the two-state solution. From the first day of your administration, you recognized the urgency of the situation and made pursuit of peace in the Middle East a priority.

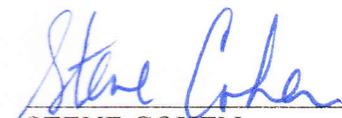
Unfortunately, Israelis and Palestinians have not been able to achieve peace on their own, and we therefore share your belief that American leadership is essential to achieving meaningful progress. Left to themselves, the parties have been unable to make the necessary progress toward ending the conflict, and an American helping hand is now needed to bridge those gaps. The appointments of Senator Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State and former Senator George Mitchell as Special Envoy, both of which we strongly commend, sent the powerful message that you recognized the need for immediate engagement in the region.

It is also important to note that building Palestinian capacity in the economic and security sectors and building transparent institutions of self-governance are important goals, deserving of American support and central to the future success of a Palestinian state. Rather than preconditions for statehood, these are goals that can be effectively realized over time once a Palestinian state has been created, with extensive international assistance, involvement, and oversight particularly in the security arena.

Finally, we believe that strong consideration should be given to pursuing a regional, comprehensive approach to resolving the conflict, such as the Arab Peace Initiative. This would guarantee the full recognition of Israel and normal relations between Israel and the Arab and Muslim countries – from Indonesia to Morocco – including all twenty-two Arab states.

Peace between Israel and all its neighbors is a paramount interest of the United States, Israel, and the Arab world. We thank you for the efforts you have made so far to achieve it, and we stand ready to support you in pursuit of this challenging goal.

Sincerely,

  
STEVE COHEN  
Member of Congress

  
CHARLES BOUSTANY  
Member of Congress

  
RUSS CARNAHAN  
Member of Congress

  
NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
Member of Congress

  
BRIAN BAIRD  
Member of Congress

  
TAMMY BALDWIN  
Member of Congress

  
TIM BISHOP  
Member of Congress

  
EARL BLUMENAUER  
Member of Congress

  
BRUCE BRALEY  
Member of Congress



LOIS CAPPS  
Member of Congress



MICHAEL CAPUANO  
Member of Congress



ANDRÉ CARSON  
Member of Congress



YVETTE CLARKE  
Member of Congress



WILLIAM LACY CLAY  
Member of Congress



GERRY CONNOLLY  
Member of Congress



JOHN CONYERS  
Member of Congress



JIM COOPER  
Member of Congress



DANNY DAVIS  
Member of Congress



GEOFF DAVIS  
Member of Congress



SUSAN DAVIS  
Member of Congress



PETER DeFAZIO  
Member of Congress



WILLIAM DELAHUNT  
Member of Congress



JOHN DINGELL  
Member of Congress



LLOYD DOGGETT  
Member of Congress



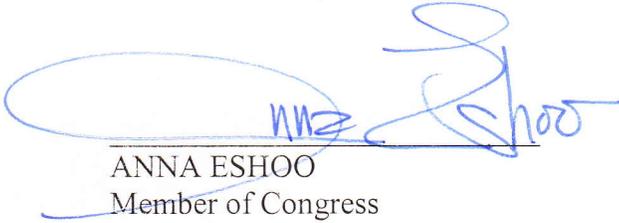
MIKE DOYLE  
Member of Congress



DONNA EDWARDS  
Member of Congress



KEITH ELLISON  
Member of Congress



ANNA ESHOO  
Member of Congress



SAM FARR  
Member of Congress



CHAKA FATTAH  
Member of Congress



BOB FILNER  
Member of Congress



BILL FOSTER  
Member of Congress



MARCIA FUDGE  
Member of Congress



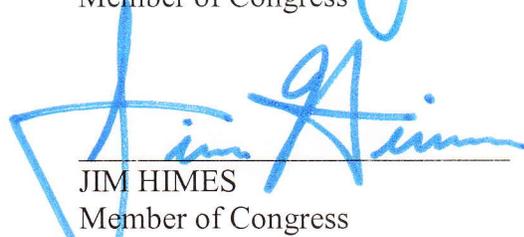
BART GORDON  
Member of Congress



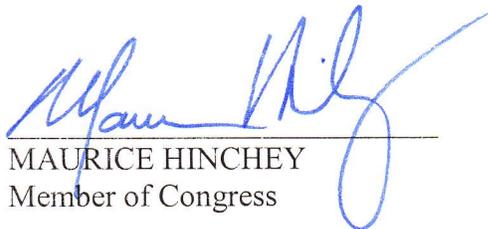
RAUL GRIJALVA  
Member of Congress



DEBORAH HALVORSON  
Member of Congress



JIM HIMES  
Member of Congress



MAURICE HINCHEY  
Member of Congress



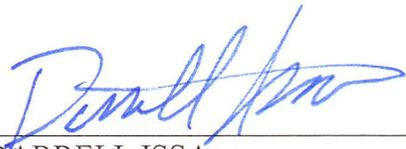
RUSH HOLT  
Member of Congress



MICHAEL HONDA  
Member of Congress



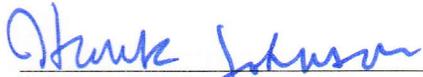
BOB INGLIS  
Member of Congress



DARRELL ISSA  
Member of Congress



SHEILA JACKSON LEE  
Member of Congress



HENRY JOHNSON  
Member of Congress



STEVE KAGEN  
Member of Congress



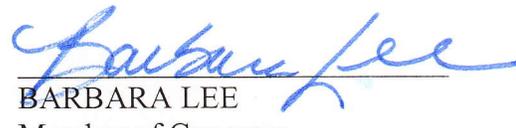
MARCY KAPTUR  
Member of Congress



MARY JO KILROY  
Member of Congress



DENNIS KUCINICH  
Member of Congress



BARBARA LEE  
Member of Congress



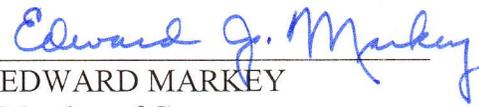
DAVE LOEBSACK  
Member of Congress



DAN MAFFEI  
Member of Congress



BETSY MARKEY  
Member of Congress



EDWARD MARKEY  
Member of Congress



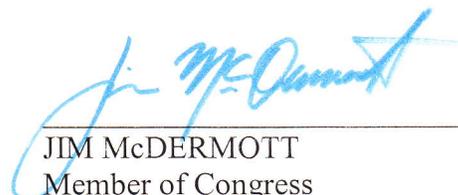
ERIC MASSA  
Member of Congress



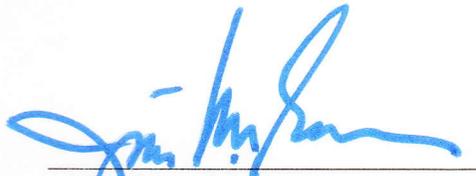
MICHAEL McCAUL  
Member of Congress



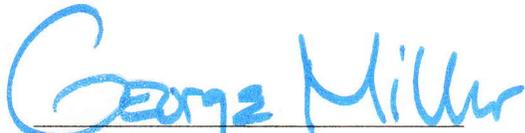
BETTY McCOLLUM  
Member of Congress



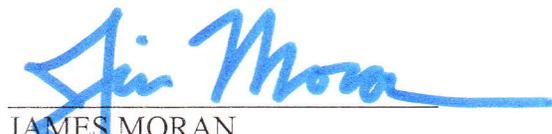
JIM McDERMOTT  
Member of Congress

  
JAMES McGOVERN  
Member of Congress

  
MICHAEL MICHAUD  
Member of Congress

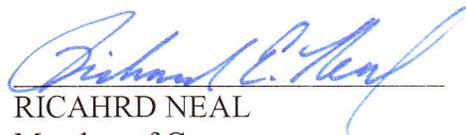
  
GEORGE MILLER  
Member of Congress

  
DENNIS MOORE  
Member of Congress

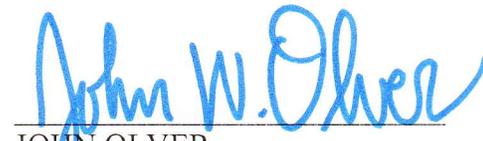
  
JAMES MORAN  
Member of Congress

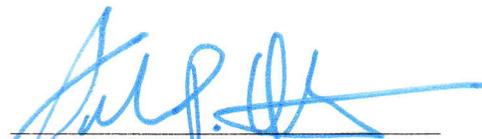
  
CHRISTOPHER MURPHY  
Member of Congress

  
SCOTT MURPHY  
Member of Congress

  
RICAHRD NEAL  
Member of Congress

  
GLENN NYE  
Member of Congress

  
JOHN OLVER  
Member of Congress

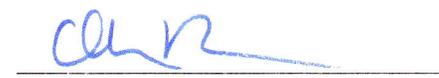
  
SOLOMON ORTIZ  
Member of Congress

  
BILL PASCRELL  
Member of Congress

  
DONALD PAYNE  
Member of Congress

  
ED PERLMUTTER  
Member of Congress

  
TOM PERRIELLO  
Member of Congress

  
CHELLIE PINGREE  
Member of Congress



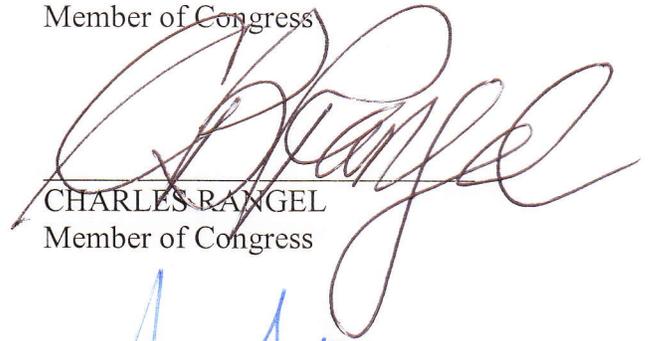
JARED POLIS  
Member of Congress



DAVID PRICE  
Member of Congress



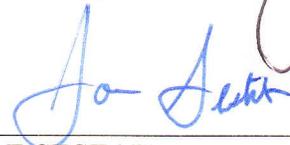
NICK RAHALL  
Member of Congress



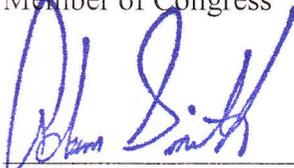
CHARLES RANGEL  
Member of Congress



TIM RYAN  
Member of Congress



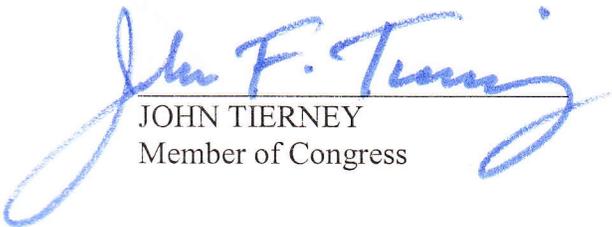
JOE SESTAK  
Member of Congress



ADAM SMITH  
Member of Congress



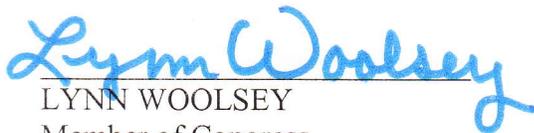
FORTNEY STARK  
Member of Congress



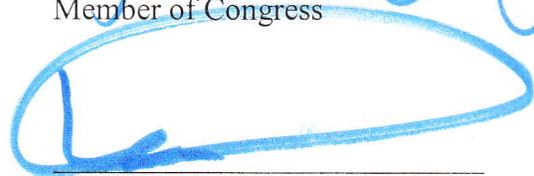
JOHN TIERNEY  
Member of Congress



NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ  
Member of Congress



LYNN WOOLSEY  
Member of Congress



DAVID WU  
Member of Congress



JOHN YARMUTH  
Member of Congress