

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 7, 2009

The Honorable David R. Obey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-218, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Chair
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations
HB-26, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Chair Lowey:

As friends of Israel, we urge you to fully support President Obama's Fiscal Year 2009 Supplemental Appropriations request for aid to the Palestinian people. This assistance is vital to fostering security and stability in the Middle East, and to achieving the President's vision of a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians.

President Obama has charted a new course for our country's diplomacy in the Middle East, one rooted in active engagement and openness. We believe that this is the appropriate policy, and that it will help Israel to achieve peace with her neighbors, will reduce extremism and violence, and will ultimately bring stability to the region. Rapid and complete approval of the President's current request will demonstrate significant congressional support both for achieving these goals and for the President's policy.

Conditions on the ground in the Palestinian territories are deteriorating daily and the \$900 million aid request is urgently needed. The request includes the desperately needed humanitarian assistance for Gaza and the West Bank, as well as aid for the West Bank to support education and social services, promote economic growth, and support governance and the rule of law. It also includes vital assistance for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank, as well as aid to Egypt to improve security on the Gaza border.

In addition, this request provides an opportunity for our diplomats, including Special Envoy for Middle East, Senator George Mitchell, to engage with a potential unity government in pursuit of a two-state solution. We believe that American diplomacy must be allowed to robustly pursue this goal, and as Secretary

of State Hillary Clinton recently stated in testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, "We think it is not only in the best interests of the Palestinians that they have a sovereign state but that it's absolutely critical to Israel's security that we proceed on this path."

Approving this request as submitted will be an important demonstration of our country's commitment to Middle East peace, security for Israel, and concern for the welfare of the Palestinian people. We strongly urge you to support President Obama's Middle East policy by moving to fully approve this request as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



KEITH ELLISON

Member of Congress



LOIS CAPPS

Member of Congress



BOB FILNER

Member of Congress



DAVID PRICE

Member of Congress



NEIL ABERCROMBIE

Member of Congress



BRAIN BAIRD

Member of Congress



TAMMY BALDWIN

Member of Congress



MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

Member of Congress

ANDRÉ CARSON
Member of Congress

YVETTE CLARKE
Member of Congress

JOHN CONYERS
Member of Congress

WILLIAM DELAHUNT
Member of Congress

JOHN D. DINGELL
Member of Congress

SAM FARR
Member of Congress

CHAKA FATTAH
Member of Congress

RAUL M. GRIJALVA
Member of Congress

SHEILA JACKSON LEE
Member of Congress

DENNIS J. KUCINICH
Member of Congress

BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress



GEORGE MILLER

Member of Congress



JAMES MORAN

Member of Congress



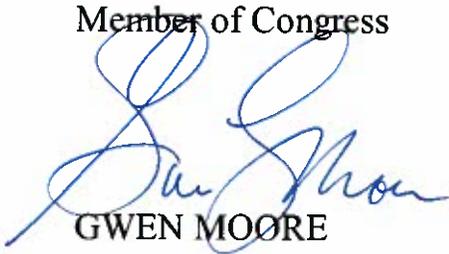
JARED POLIS

Member of Congress



NICK RAHALL

Member of Congress



GWEN MOORE

Member of Congress

CC: The Hon. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives
The Hon. Steny Hoyer, House Democratic Majority Leader