

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 17, 2019

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our concern regarding Iran's destabilizing activities in the Middle East. A lack of care at this point in time could result in our involvement in yet another tragic and expensive quagmire in the region. We do not believe your advisors fully appreciate the increasingly dangerous situation.

Make no mistake: The Iranian regime sponsors terrorism, develops prohibited missile technologies and abuses the human rights of its own citizens. But, historically, U.S. efforts at regime change in the Middle East have ended unpredictably at best, catastrophically at worst.

The increasingly bellicose stance adopted by select Administration officials since withdrawing from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has significantly escalated the risk of serious and potentially catastrophic conflict. Armed conflict with Iran would endanger the lives of our servicewomen and men, dramatically escalate our national debt, and exacerbate critical national security problems faced by the United States and its closest allies, including jeopardizing the security of Israel and dramatically worsening the regional refugee crisis.

Despite your long-standing position that engaging in wars in the Middle East would be detrimental to the security and prosperity of the United States, it appears your Administration is taking steps toward precisely that outcome. The US exit from the JCPOA and unilateral reinstitution of crippling sanctions, the recent designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist organization, and the movement of the USS Abraham Lincoln Strike Group into the Strait of Hormuz have already provoked a dangerous Iranian response. In the guise of ensuring the safety of the United States, these actions are a calculated effort by a pro-war faction in your Administration to provoke Iran into an incident that could be used as a justification for war.

Article I of the Constitution, however, places the power to declare war and authorize offensive military force solely with Congress. The current authorization for the use of military force (AUMF), passed by Congress in 2001, does not provide the authority to engage in military action against Iran.

The 2001 AUMF authorizes the President to "use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or

persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.” Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in recent testimony that “There is no doubt there is a connection between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Al-Qaeda, full stop.” This is false. The Al-Qaeda presence is incredibly small and not considered an Iranian proxy force working in coordination or at the behest of the government.

The 2001 AUMF is not a blanket authorization to use force or wage war whenever or wherever desired by the President of the United States, whomever that may be. Another long-term conflict in the Middle East would squander more precious American resources, to say nothing of the lives of our young women and men serving in the armed forces and provide numerous opportunities for our adversaries to exploit.

We write to both warn of the possible disastrous consequences of a conflict with Iran and to remind your Administration that you must come before Congress to seek a new AUMF before pursuing military action against Iran, not rely upon dubious assertions of authority under the 2001 AUMF.

Sincerely,




JIM HIMES
Member of Congress




AMI BERA
Member of Congress



DONALD S. BEYER, JR.
Member of Congress



JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress



JIM COOPER
Member of Congress



DEREK KILMER
Member of Congress



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DAVID TRONE
Member of Congress



SETH MOULTON
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LIZZIE FLETCHER
Member of Congress



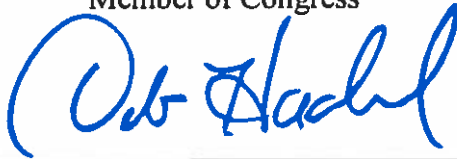
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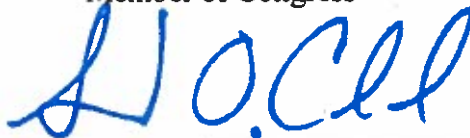
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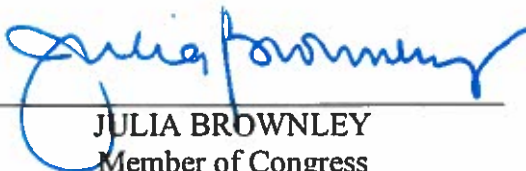
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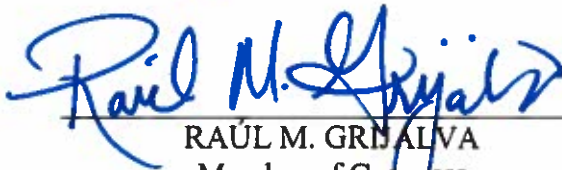
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PAUL D. TONKO
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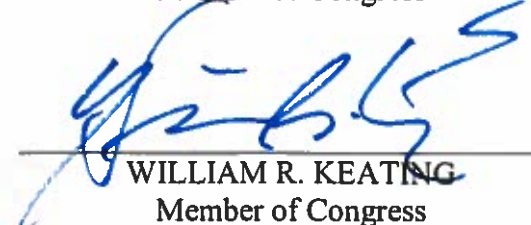
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ANDY LEVIN
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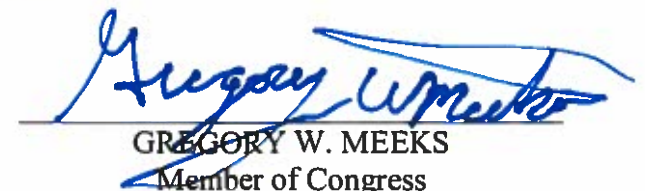
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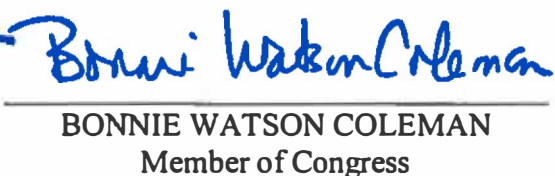


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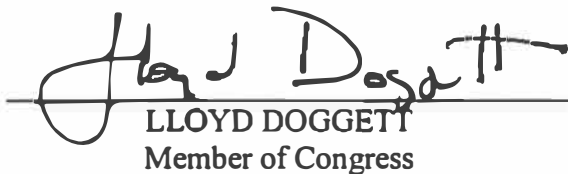
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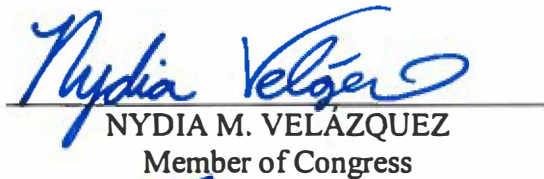

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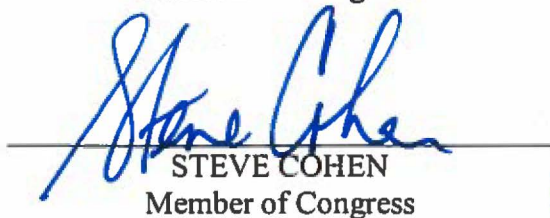

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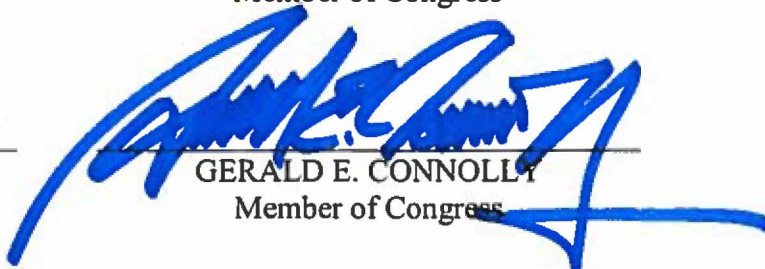

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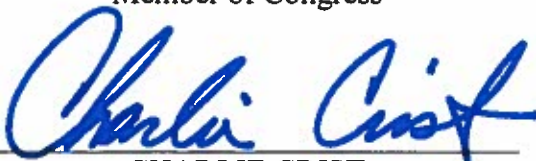
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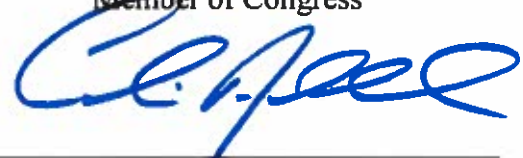
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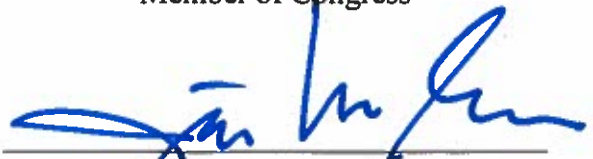
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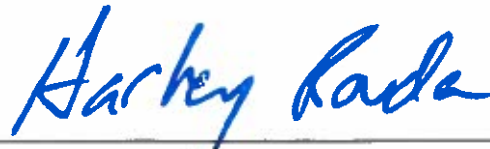
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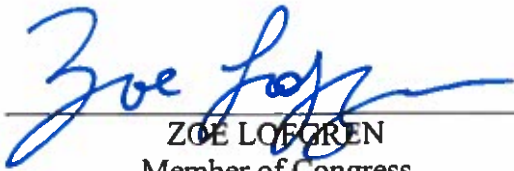
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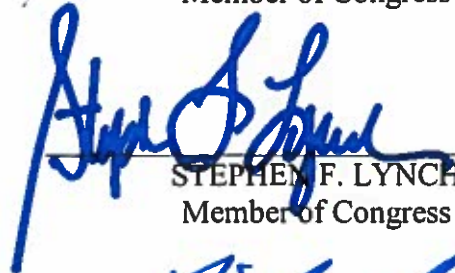
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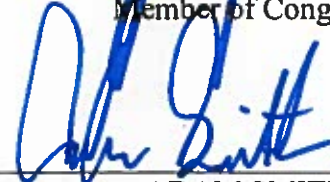
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Madeline Dean

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