

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 21, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C., 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to express our strong disagreement with the State Department's decision to reverse decades of bipartisan U.S. policy on Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank by repudiating the 1978 State Department legal opinion that civilian settlements in the occupied territories are "inconsistent with international law." This announcement, following the administration's decision to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem outside of a negotiated agreement; its closure of the Palestinian mission in Washington, D.C. and U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem; and its halting of aid Congress appropriated to the West Bank and Gaza, has discredited the United States as an honest broker between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, severely damaged prospects for peace, and endangered the security of America, Israel, and the Palestinian people.

U.S. administrations from both parties have followed the 1978 guidance because settlement expansion into the occupied West Bank makes a contiguous Palestinian state inviable, jeopardizing Israel's future as a secure, democratic homeland for the Jewish people. The State Department's unilateral reversal on the status of settlements, without any clear legal justification, therefore has offered a tacit endorsement of settlements, their expansion, and associated demolitions of Palestinian homes. In addition, one day after the Department's decision, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu moved to advance a bill to annex the Jordan Valley. As annexation and the United States' approval thereof would destroy prospects for a two-state solution and lead to a more entrenched and possibly deadlier conflict, this decision erodes the security of both Israel and the United States.

This State Department decision blatantly disregards Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which affirms that any occupying power shall not "deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." In ignoring international law, this administration has undermined America's moral standing and sent a dangerous message to those who do not share our values: human rights and international law, which have governed the international order and protected U.S. troops and civilians since 1949, no longer apply. If the U.S. unilaterally abandons international and human rights law, we can only expect a more chaotic and brutal twenty-first century for Americans and our allies, including the Israeli people.

Given these serious implications, we strongly urge you to reverse this policy decision immediately.

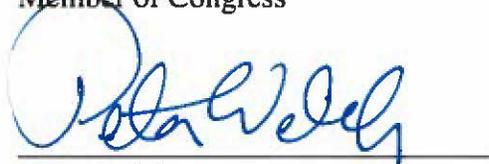
Sincerely,

  
Andy Levin  
Member of Congress

  
Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

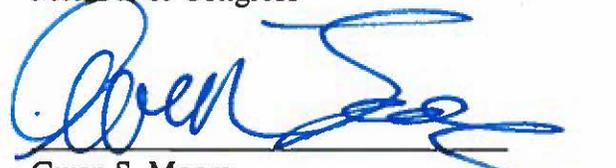
  
John Yarmuth  
Member of Congress

  
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

  
Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

  
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

  
David Price  
Member of Congress

  
Gwen S. Moore  
Member of Congress

  
Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

  
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

  
Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress

  
Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress

  
Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

  
Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress



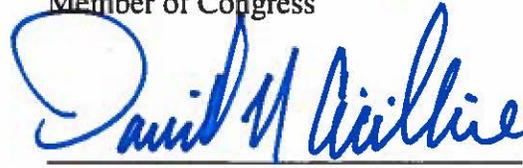
Deb Haaland  
Member of Congress



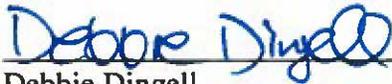
Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



David Cicilline  
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



Katie Porter  
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



Mark Takano  
Member of Congress



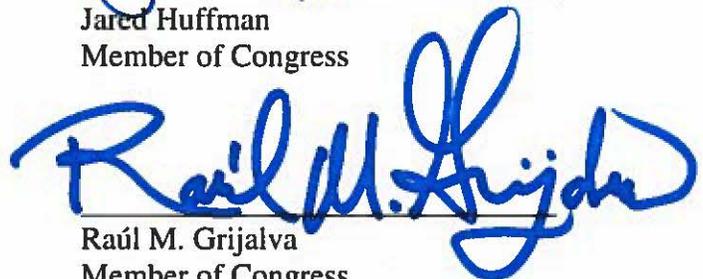
Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



Mike Doyle  
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress



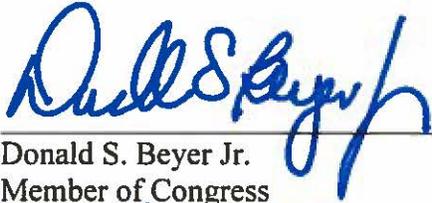
Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress



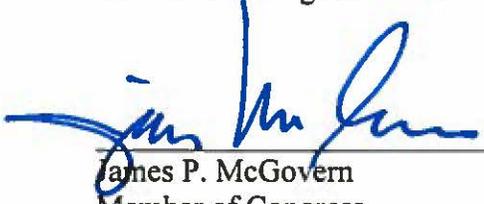
Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



Denny Heck  
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



Bill Foster  
Member of Congress



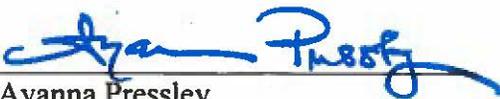
Andy Kim  
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress



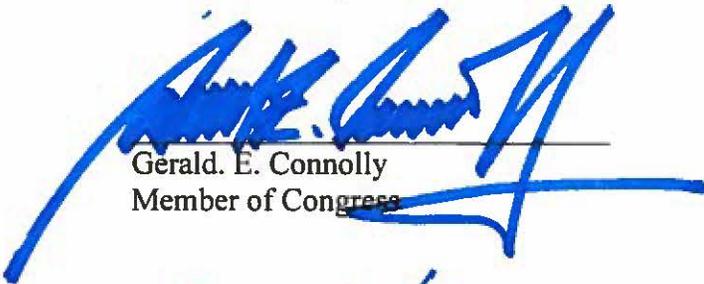
Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



Rosa DeLauro  
Member of Congress



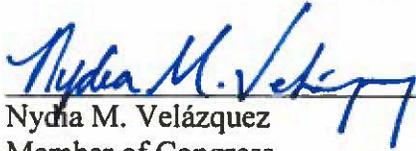
TJ Cox  
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon  
Member of Congress



Pete Aguilar  
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



Ed Perlmutter  
Member of Congress



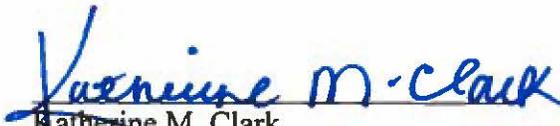
Jason Crow  
Member of Congress



Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress



Katherine M. Clark  
Member of Congress



Scott Peters  
Member of Congress

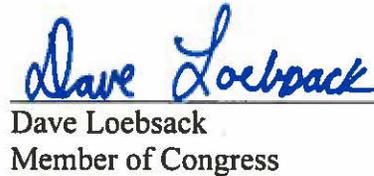
  
Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress

  
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress

  
Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress

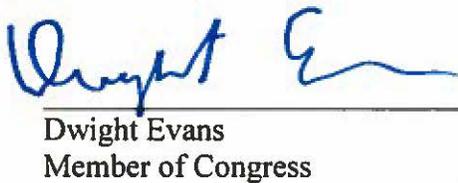
  
Brenda L. Lawrence  
Member of Congress

  
G. K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress

  
Dave Loebsack  
Member of Congress

  
Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress

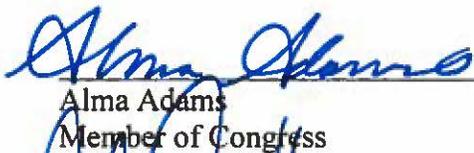
  
Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress

  
Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress

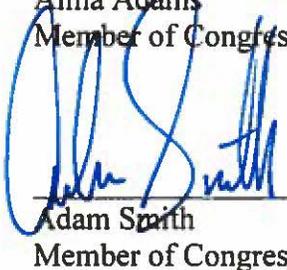
  
Karen Bass  
Member of Congress

  
Jennifer Wexton  
Member of Congress

  
Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress

  
Alma Adams  
Member of Congress

  
Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Member of Congress

  
Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

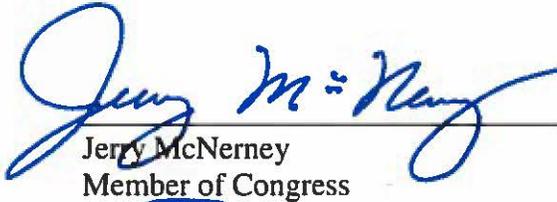
  
Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress



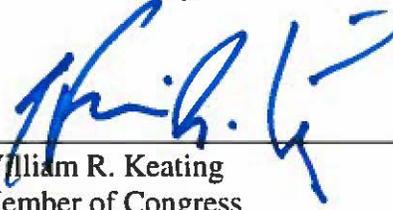
Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress



Joseph D. Morelle  
Member of Congress



Ron Kind  
Member of Congress



William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



Dan Kildee  
Member of Congress



James E. Clyburn  
Member of Congress



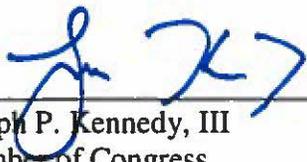
Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress



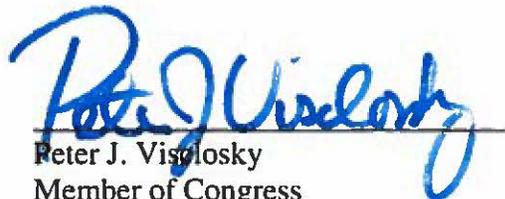
Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress



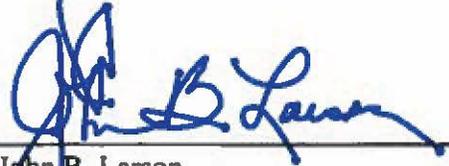
Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress



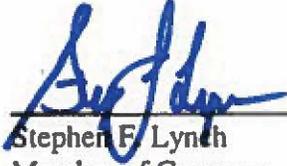
Peter J. Visclosky  
Member of Congress



Cedric L. Richmond  
Member of Congress



John B. Larson  
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress



André Carson  
Member of Congress



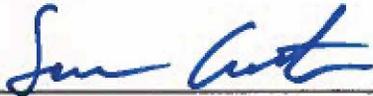
Anthony Brown  
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress



John Lewis  
Member of Congress



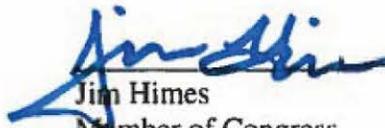
Sean Casten  
Member of Congress



Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress



Jim Himes  
Member of Congress