

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 8, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write as supporters of a strong U.S.-Israel relationship who seek to protect the viability of a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We wish to commend your administration's efforts to deescalate heightened tensions in Israel and the West Bank, as well as share our deep concern regarding the planned changes to the structure of the Israeli judiciary, the fragile security situation in the West Bank, and the threat of partial or full annexation of areas that would most certainly be part of a future Palestinian state. We urge you to use all diplomatic tools available to prevent Israel's current government from further damaging the nation's democratic institutions and undermining the potential for two states for two peoples.

The proposals to grant members of the Knesset control over judicial appointments, eliminate judicial review of legislation, and permit the legislature to overturn Supreme Court decisions would jeopardize Israeli democracy, which in turn would undermine the very foundation of the U.S.-Israel relationship. Stripping the judiciary of its check on the governing coalition would empower far-right lawmakers seeking to entrench settlement of the West Bank and advance a pro-annexation agenda, undermining the prospects for a two-state solution and threatening Israel's existence as a Jewish and democratic state. As Israel has seen massive and sustained protests against the plans, it is crucial that the Israeli government live up to the democratic ideals on which it was founded and avoid a constitutional crisis. As you have stated, "the genius of American democracy and Israeli democracy is that they are both built on strong institutions, on checks and balances, on an independent judiciary." We could not agree more.

We are also deeply alarmed by the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the West Bank and the potential for sustained violence, and we applaud your administration's recent attempts to stabilize the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority, teetering on financial collapse, has lost much of its popular legitimacy and effective control of many northern Palestinian cities, such as Jenin and Nablus, to extremist groups. In response to increased and credible terrorist threats in the West Bank, the Israeli Defense Forces have executed raids in Palestinian cities targeting members of armed militia groups, oftentimes leading to civilians being caught in the crossfire. Inclusive of settler attacks, more than 60 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank so far this year, a pace that is on track to surpass last year's record-breaking casualties.

Palestinian violence against Israelis also has increased recently with a number of horrifying attacks, including the killing of Jewish worshipers and children in East Jerusalem. We condemn these killings and have repeatedly criticized actions by Palestinian leaders and organizations, including incitement, acts of terror, and payments to the families of terrorists, that harm Israelis, exacerbate the conflict, and put a negotiated resolution to the conflict further out of reach. We are profoundly concerned that the recent violence and increased tensions could spiral into a major conflict, despite the recent steps taken. U.S. Central Intelligence Agency Director

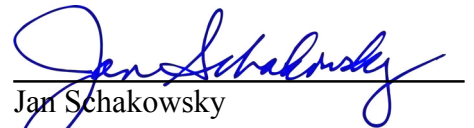
William J. Burns recently warned that Israel appears to be on the brink of confronting a third intifada. The political and security vacuum in the West Bank is a serious threat to Israeli and Palestinian civilians alike.

In this fragile and combustible moment, consistent and sustained U.S. diplomatic leadership is critical to preempt counterproductive unilateral actions and prevent violent escalations. As committed supporters of the U.S.-Israel relationship, we commend your administration's firm opposition to actions that imperil the future of a two-state solution. The recent joint statement with our NATO allies and the signing of a United Nations Security Council Presidential Statement are important demonstrations of the U.S.' commitment to opposing settlement expansion, such as the new plans to build thousands of settlement units and retroactively legalize more than a dozen illegal outposts. With the Knesset on the cusp of stripping the judiciary's check over the current government, we urge you to make clear that the U.S. will firmly oppose any moves toward annexation that the Israeli government may pursue as a result. We thank you for your work and again urge you to use all diplomatic tools at your disposal to address this grave situation. We look forward to supporting you in this effort.

Sincerely,



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



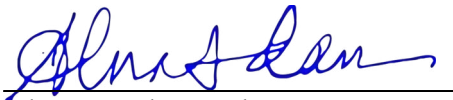
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



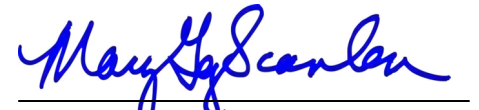
Mark Takano
Member of Congress




Steve Cohen
Member of Congress




Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress




Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress




Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



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




Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



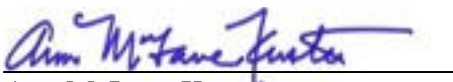
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster
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Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



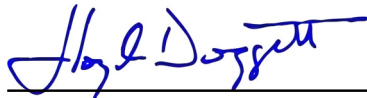
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



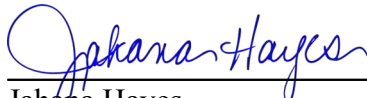
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress




Lloyd Doggett
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Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



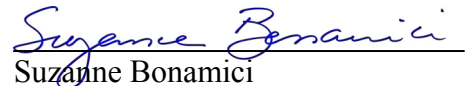
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



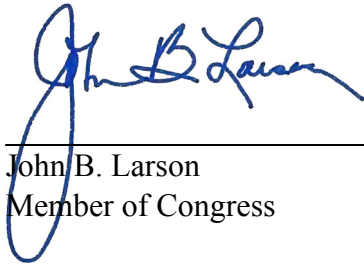
Teresa Leger Fernández
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Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



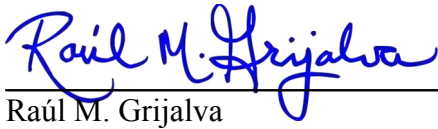
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



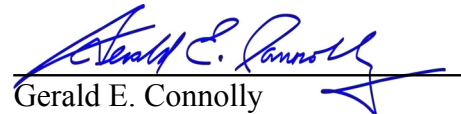
John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



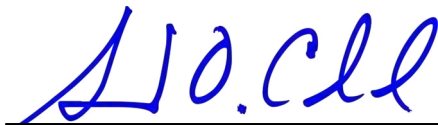
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



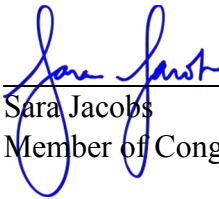
Sydney Kamlager-Dove
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Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress




Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress

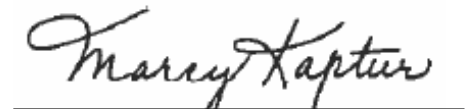

Sara Jacobs
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Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress


Diana DeGette
Member of Congress


Mark DeSaulnier
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Chrissy Houlahan
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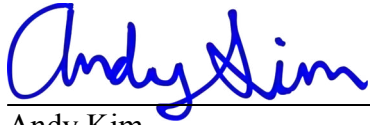

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress


Becca Balint
Member of Congress


Katie Porter
Member of Congress


Jill Tokuda
Member of Congress

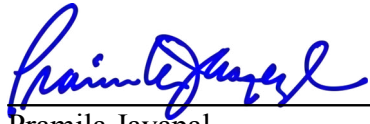

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Andy Kim
Member of Congress



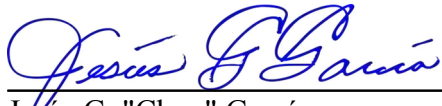
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



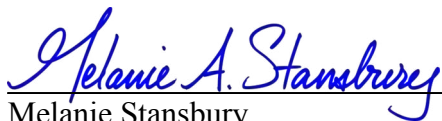
Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



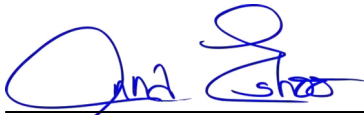
Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



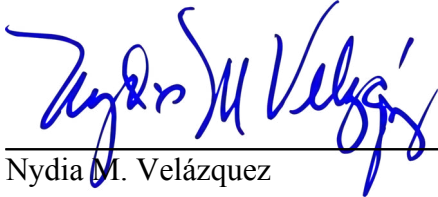
Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



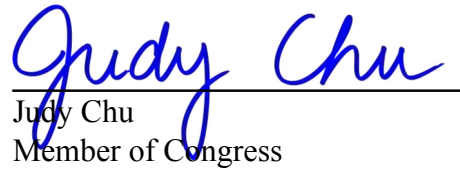
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Marie Gluesenkamp Perez
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



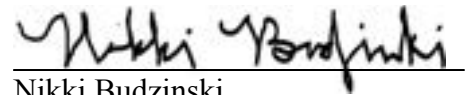
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski



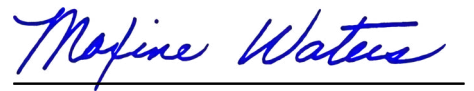
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



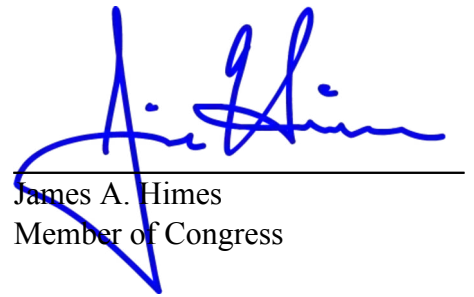
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



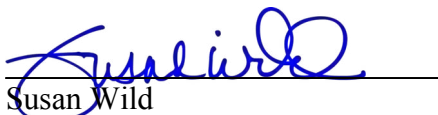
Maxine Waters
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Andrea Salinas
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James A. Himes
Member of Congress



Susan Wild
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



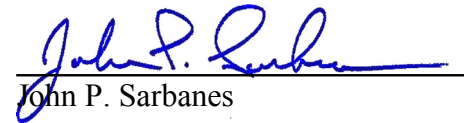
Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



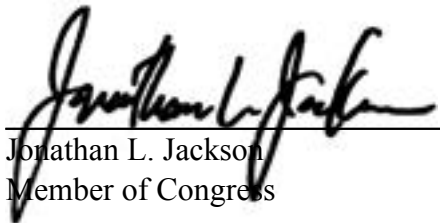
John P. Sarbanes
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Emilia Strong Sykes
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Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



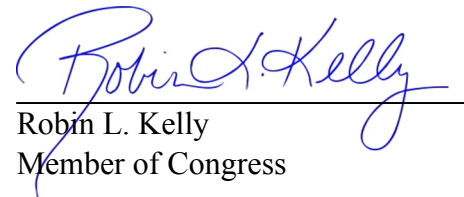
Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



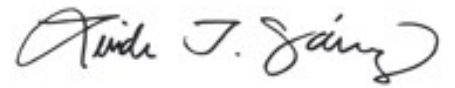
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress




Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



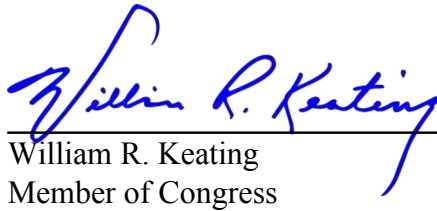
Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress