

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 19, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We applaud your decision to travel to Israel so early in your second term as president. Your upcoming trip will offer you the opportunity to meet with the leaders of Israel's new government and to reaffirm the unshakeable bond between our two nations. In your meetings in Jerusalem and Ramallah later this month, we hope that you will reaffirm your commitment to working closely with the new government of Israel.

As you may know, in May 2011, the Senate passed S.Res.185: a resolution reaffirming the commitment of the United States to a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The bipartisan resolution was cosponsored by 90 Senators. Palestinian efforts to bypass direct negotiations with Israel by taking unilateral steps for international recognition are, in our view, unacceptable. When you meet with Palestinian leaders, you should make clear that the pathway for peace is through unconditional direct negotiations between both the Israelis and Palestinians and that the United States vigorously opposes any Palestinian efforts to circumvent direct negotiations.

It is important to re-emphasize that the United States will not tolerate efforts to isolate or delegitimize Israel. During your first term, you and your administration actively stood by Israel at the UN and other agencies to try to block such efforts. It is critical that you now make clear that our relationship with the Palestinians will be jeopardized by seeking action against Israel at the International Criminal Court.


We encourage you to also stress the importance of the Palestinian Authority's close security cooperation with Israel. If peace is to be possible, the Palestinian Authority also needs to confront the recent surge in violence in the West Bank, cease all anti-Israel incitement and renounce Hamas until it unequivocally meets the three Quartet requirements.

We believe that by espousing these principles during your historic trip, you will reaffirm the United States' commitment to enhancing Israeli security, improving the prospect for peace with the Palestinians and furthering our own interests in this troubled region of the world.

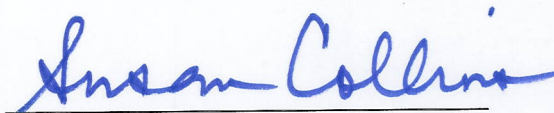
We are strongly committed to the restart of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. However, we also recognize that the violence and chaos that has sprung up in Syria, Yemen, North Africa, and Egypt, including insecurity along the Sinai Peninsula, are not related to the peace process.

As you pursue peace in the Middle East in the long-run, we hope that your agenda will identify policy solutions to address the urgent and important threats facing Israel and the United States today. We also hope that you will reiterate the United States' support for Israel, her right to defend herself, and the Iron Dome project. In such a tumultuous region of the world, and during such challenging times, a strong relationship between our two countries has never been more important. Israel has challenging times ahead. Israel needs our unwavering commitment now more than ever.

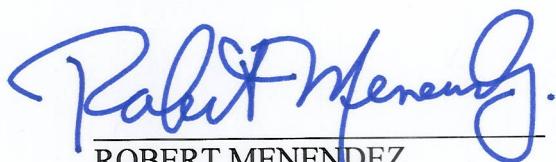
Sincerely,



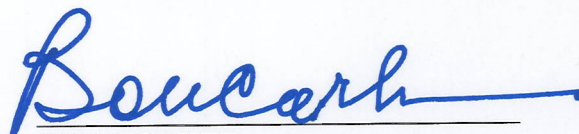
BEN CARDIN
United States Senator



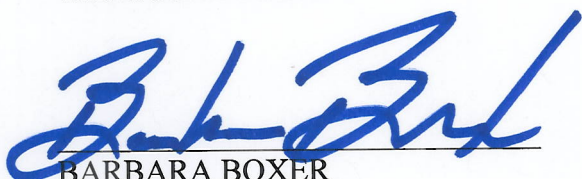
SUSAN M. COLLINS
United States Senator



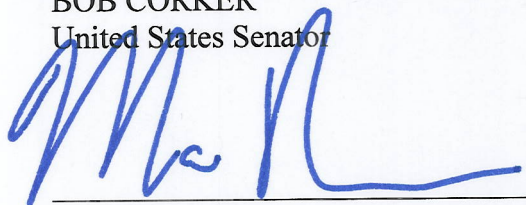
ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator



BOB CORKER
United States Senator



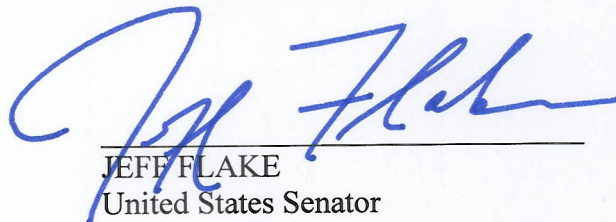
BARBARA BOXER
United States Senator



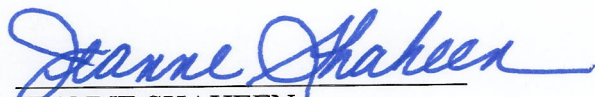
MARCO RUBIO
United States Senator



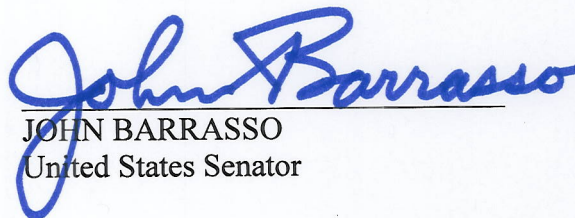
ROBERT P. CASEY, JR
United States Senator



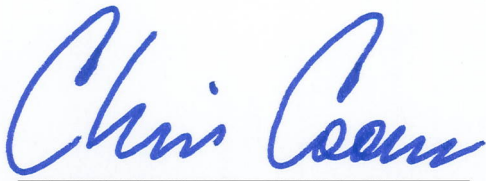
JEFF FLAKE
United States Senator



JEANNE SHAHEEN
United States Senator



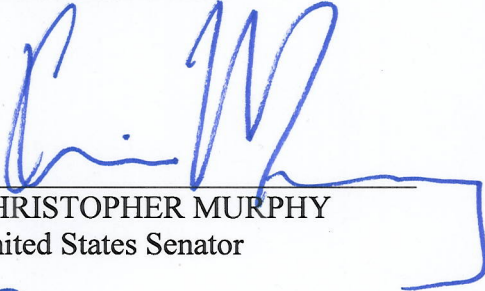
JOHN BARRASSO
United States Senator



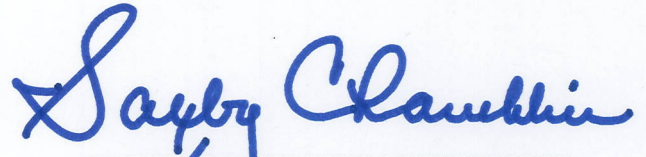
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS
United States Senator



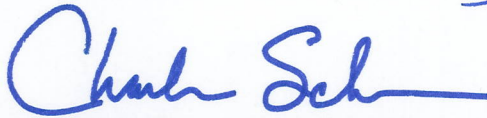
MITCH McCONNELL
United States Senator



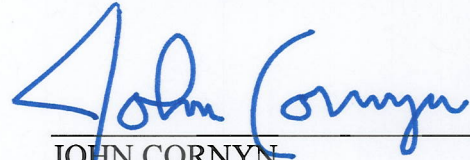
CHRISTOPHER MURPHY
United States Senator



SAXBY CHAMBLISS
United States Senator



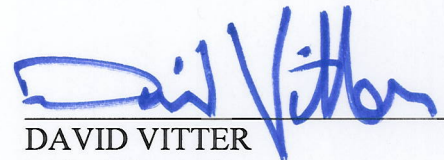
CHARLES E. SCHUMER
United States Senator



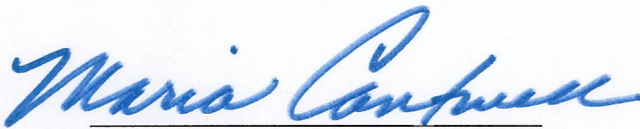
JOHN CORNYN
United States Senator



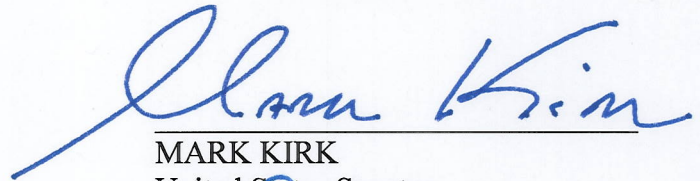
DEBBIE STABENOW
United States Senator



DAVID VITTER
United States Senator



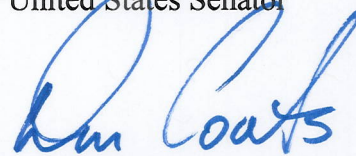
MARIA CANTWELL
United States Senator



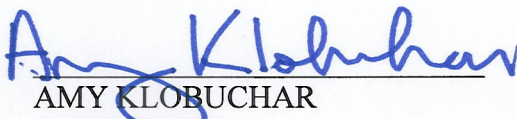
MARK KIRK
United States Senator



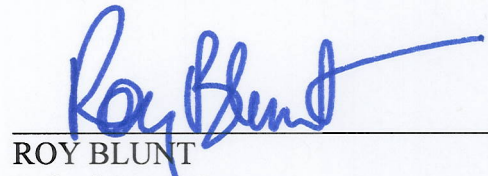
BARBARA A. MIKULSKI
United States Senator



DANIEL R. COATS
United States Senator



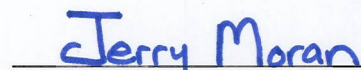
AMY KLOBUCHAR
United States Senator



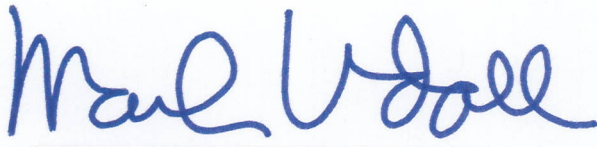
ROY BLUNT
United States Senator



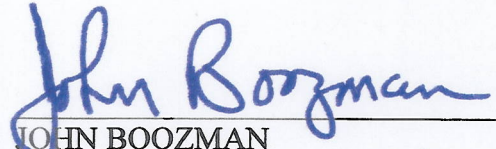
SHELDON WHITEHOUSE
United States Senator



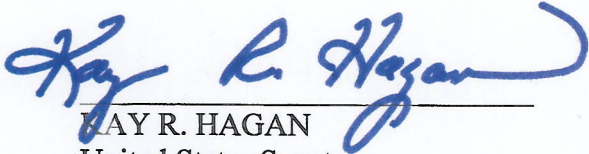
JERRY MORAN
United States Senator



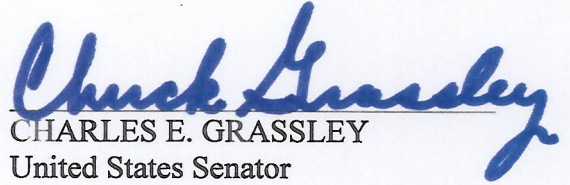
MARK UDALL
United States Senator



JOHN BOOZMAN
United States Senator



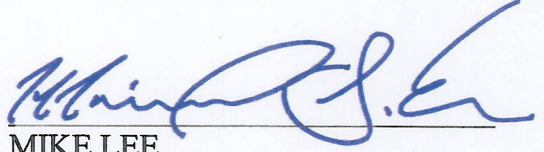
KAY R. HAGAN
United States Senator



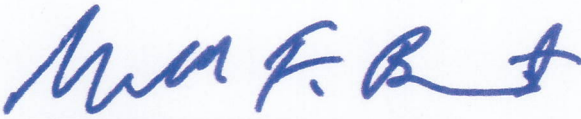
CHARLES E. GRASSLEY
United States Senator



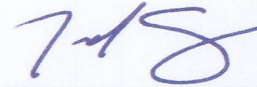
MARY L. LANDRIEU
United States Senator



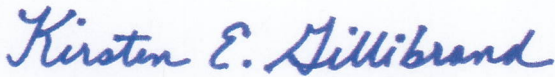
MIKE LEE
United States Senator



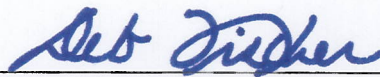
MICHAEL F. BENNET
United States Senator



TED CRUZ
United States Senator



KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND
United States Senator



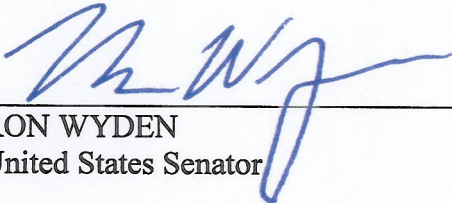
DEB FISCHER
United States Senator



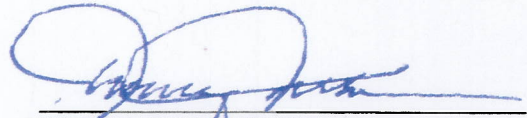
JOE MANCHIN
United States Senator



THAD COCHRAN
United States Senator



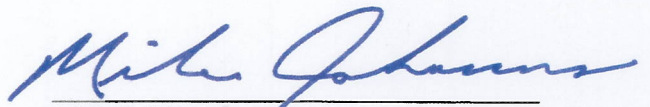
RON WYDEN
United States Senator



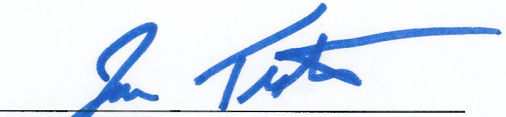
JOHNNY ISAKSON
United States Senator



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senator



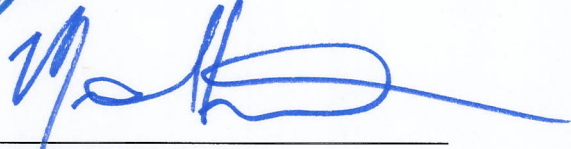
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United States Senator



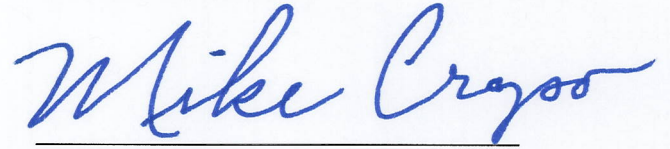
JON TESTER
United States Senator



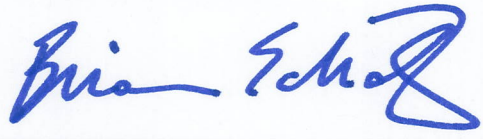
RICHARD BURR
United States Senator



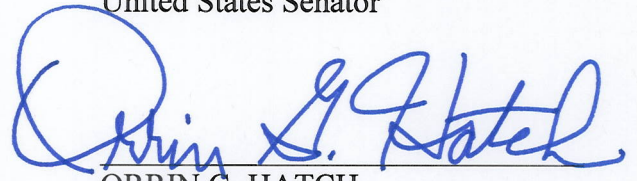
MARTIN HEINRICH
United States Senator



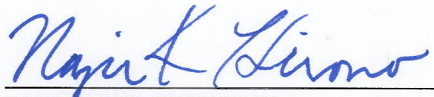
MIKE CRAPO
United States Senator



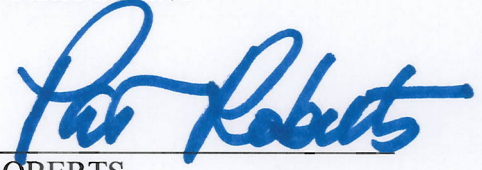
BRIAN SCHATZ
United States Senator



ORRIN G. HATCH
United States Senator



MAZIE K. HIRONO
United States Senator



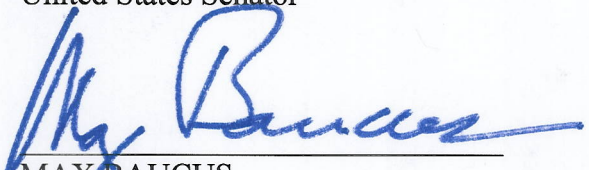
PAT ROBERTS
United States Senator



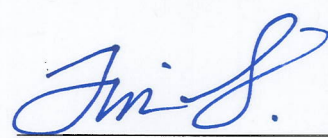
AL FRANKEN
United States Senator



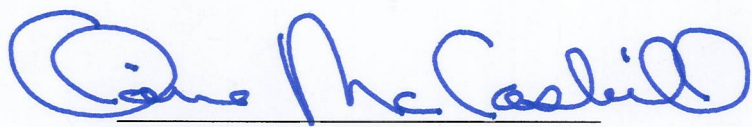
LISA MURKOWSKI
United States Senator



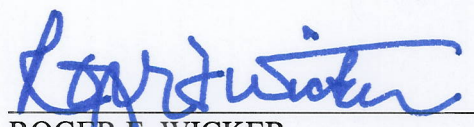
MAX BAUCUS
United States Senator



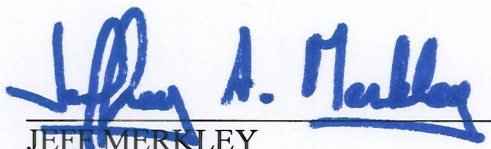
TIM SCOTT
United States Senator



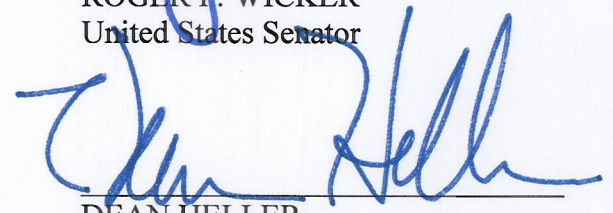
CLAIRE McCASKILL
United States Senator



ROGER F. WICKER
United States Senator



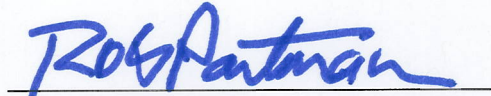
JEFF MERKLEY
United States Senator



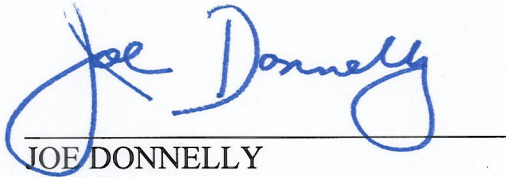
DEAN HELLER
United States Senator



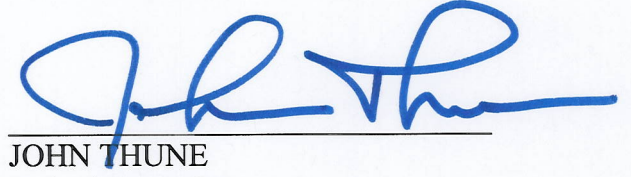
MARK BEGICH
United States Senator



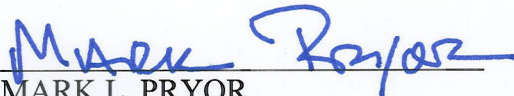
ROB PORTMAN
United States Senator



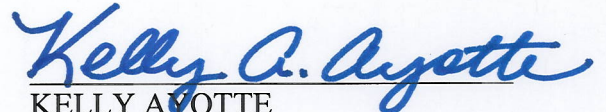
JOE DONNELLY
United States Senator



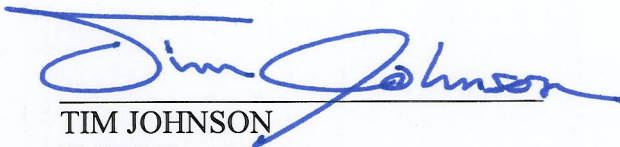
JOHN THUNE
United States Senator



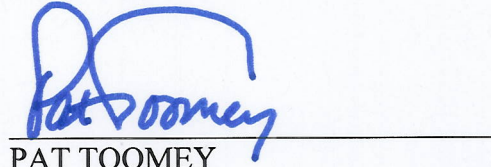
MARK L. PRYOR
United States Senator



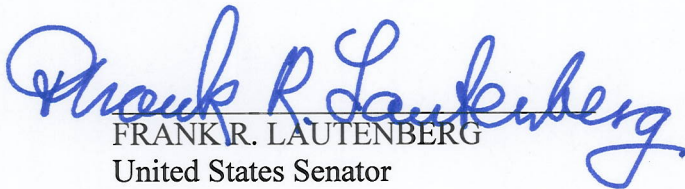
KELLY AYOTTE
United States Senator



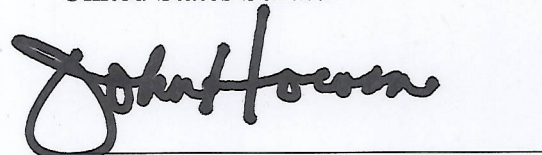
TIM JOHNSON
United States Senator



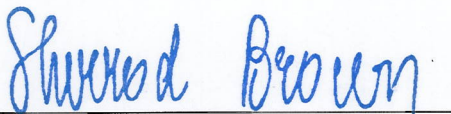
PAT TOOMEY
United States Senator



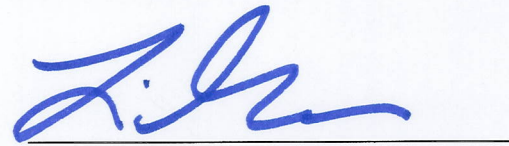
FRANK R. LAUTENBERG
United States Senator



JOHN HOEVEN
United States Senator



SHERROD BROWN
United States Senator



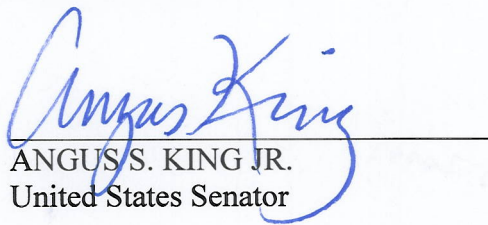
LINDSEY GRAHAM
United States Senator



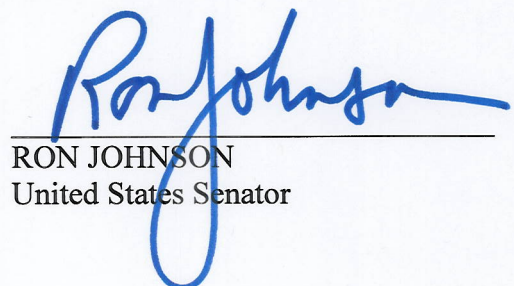
MARK WARNER
United States Senator



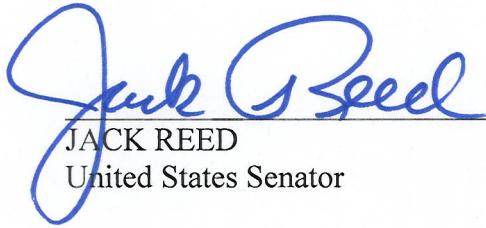
JEFF SESSIONS
United States Senator




ANGUS S. KING JR.
United States Senator



RON JOHNSON
United States Senator



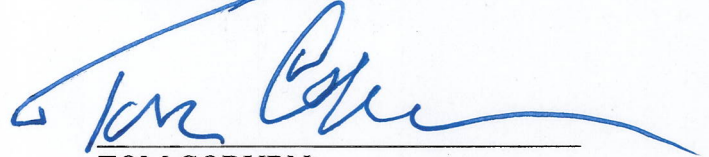
JACK REED
United States Senator



LAMAR ALEXANDER
United States Senator



RAND PAUL
United States Senator



TOM COBURN
United States Senator