

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 1, 2021

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write today to express our strong opposition to your administration's proposal to reopen the U.S. consulate general in Israel's eternal capital, Jerusalem, that would provide separate diplomatic outreach to the Palestinians.

Reopening the U.S. consulate general in Jerusalem would be inconsistent with the *Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995* (Public Law 104-45) by promoting division of Jerusalem. This would be unacceptable, shameful, and wrong. The *Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995* that you supported during your time in the U.S. Senate expressed U.S. policy that "Jerusalem should remain an undivided city in which the rights of every ethnic and religious group are protected...Jerusalem should be recognized as the capital of the State of Israel." This law received overwhelming bipartisan support with a vote of 93-5 in the U.S. Senate and 374-37 (with 5 voting present) in the U.S. House of Representatives. After repeated presidential waivers since 1995, the Trump Administration implemented this bipartisan law by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital in 2017, opening the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem in 2018, and merging the U.S. consulate general in Jerusalem with the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem in 2019. This third action formally brought the United States into compliance with the *Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995* by moving the U.S. Ambassador to Israel's official residence to Jerusalem.

Your proposal would also be inconsistent with the strong bipartisan support that has been reaffirmed in recent years for the *Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995*. The U.S. Senate unanimously passed a resolution by a vote of 90-0 in June 2017 commemorating the 50th anniversary of Israel's reunification of Jerusalem during the Six Day War that "reaffirms the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-45) as United States law, and calls upon the President and all United States officials to abide by its provisions."

Your administration would create a misguided situation in which the U.S. would essentially have two separate diplomatic missions in Israel's capital, including the U.S. Embassy to Israel along with the consulate general for outreach to the Palestinians whose government is based in Ramallah. The U.S. consulate general in Jerusalem that was established in 1844 was not intended to serve as an outreach office to the Palestinians in Israel's capital. It was only in more recent years that the U.S. consulate general became an outreach office that circumvented the U.S. Ambassador to Israel, reported to the State Department in Washington, D.C, and had jurisdiction over the eastern part of Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Trump Administration fixed this ill-advised situation with the merger but maintained outreach to the Palestinians by establishing the Palestinian Affairs Unit (PAU) within the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. In addition to being inconsistent with U.S. law, it would be entirely unnecessary to reopen the U.S. consulate general in Israel's capital.

Reopening the U.S. consulate general in Jerusalem would also reward and turn a blind eye to the Palestinian Authority engaging in the real obstacles to peace, such as refusing to recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State, supporting terrorism through incitement to violence and providing payments to terrorists and their families, encouraging discriminatory boycotts, divestments, and sanctions (BDS) against Israel, and facilitating an illegitimate International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation for false charges against Israel, to name just a few examples.

Finally, we urge you to respect our close ally Israel's opposition to the reopening of the U.S. consulate general in Jerusalem, especially since Israel's cooperation is essential. Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett reportedly expressed opposition when visiting the U.S. in August 2021 which has been publicly reiterated by Israel's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid. In May 2021, then Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu stated he was against your proposal as well.

We urge you to therefore not pursue reopening the U.S. consulate general in Israel's eternal capital, Jerusalem.

Sincerely,



Lee Zeldin
MEMBER OF CONGRESS




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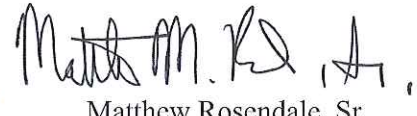

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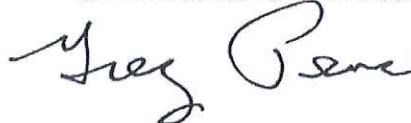

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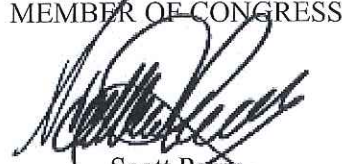

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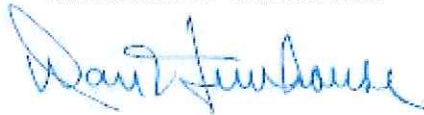

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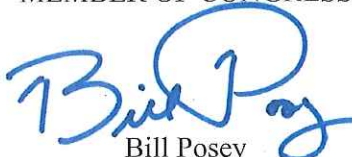

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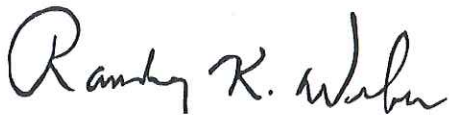
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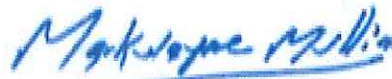
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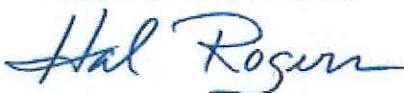
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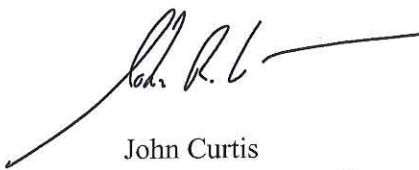
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