August 7, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500
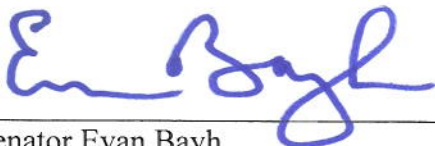
Dear Mr. President:

We write in support of your efforts to encourage Arab states to normalize relations with the State of Israel. In your June 4th address to the Muslim world, you highlighted the key role that Arab states can play in furthering the peace process and called on them to openly recognize Israel's legitimacy. Secretary Clinton underscored these remarks when she stated that Arab countries "have a responsibility to support the Palestinian Authority with words and deeds, to take steps to improve relations with Israel and to prepare their publics to embrace peace and accept Israel's place in the region." We applaud these comments and agree with you and Secretary Clinton that Arab states must do more to end their isolation of Israel.

Over the past few months Israel has taken concrete measures to reaffirm its commitment to advancing the peace process. Notably, Prime Minister Netanyahu has publically expressed support for the two-state solution and called for the immediate resumption of peace negotiations. We have also been encouraged by Israeli efforts to improve the daily lives of Palestinians, through measures such as removing roadblocks, assisting with economic development in the West Bank, and supporting the training of professional Palestinian Authority security personnel. These actions have demonstrated that Israel is willing to back up its words with concrete actions, even in the face of continuing threats to its security.

We encourage Arab leaders to take similar tangible steps to demonstrate their commitment to the peace process. Such steps could include ending the Arab League boycott of Israel, meeting openly with Israeli officials, establishing open trade relations with Israel, issuing visas to Israeli citizens, and inviting Israelis to participate in academic and professional conferences and sporting events. We also believe that Arab states must immediately and permanently end official propaganda campaigns which demonize Israel and Jews.

Given these facts, we would like to understand what steps you are urging Arab states to take and what your expectations are from Arab states in the coming weeks and months. We also hope that you will continue to press Arab leaders to consider dramatic gestures toward Israel similar to those taken previously by brave leaders like King Hussein of Jordan and Anwar El-Sadat of Egypt. Such gestures would send a powerful signal that Arab nations are committed to the peace process and could help usher in a new era of peace and security in the Middle East.

Respectfully,

Senator Evan Bayh

Senator James Risch

_____
Senator Harry Reid

_____
Senator Mitch McConnell

_____
Senator Byron L. Dorgan

_____
Senator David Vitter
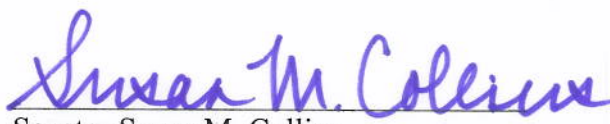
_____
Senator Joseph I. Lieberman

_____
Senator Jon Kyl
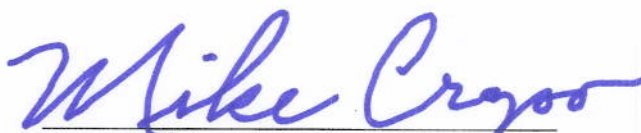
_____
Senator Ron Wyden

_____
Senator Susan M. Collins

_____
Senator Barbara A. Mikulski
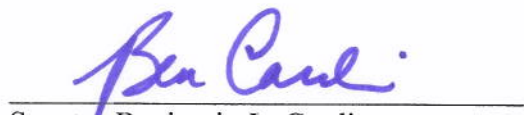
_____
Senator Mike Crapo

_____
Senator Charles E. Schumer

_____
Senator Tom Coburn

_____
Senator Benjamin L. Cardin

_____
Senator Mike Johanns
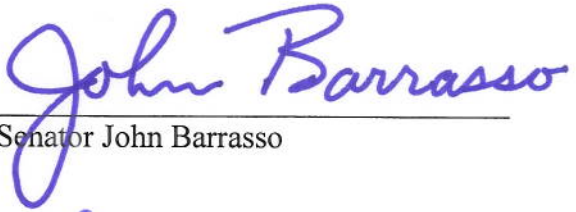
_____
Senator Mark Udall
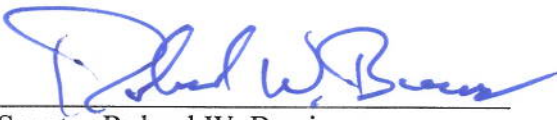
_____
Senator James M. Inhofe
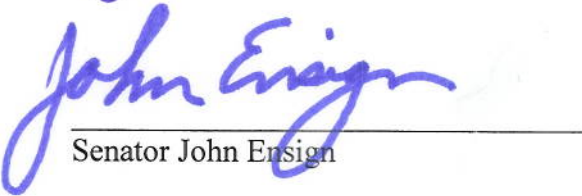
_____
Senator Robert P. Casey Jr.
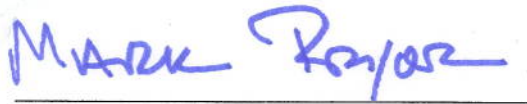
_____
Senator John Barrasso

_____
Senator Roland W. Burris

_____
Senator John Ensign
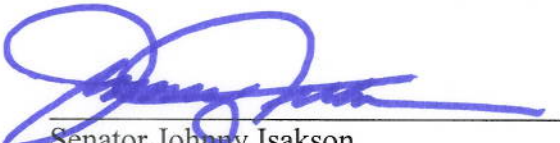
_____
Senator Mark L. Pryor

_____
Senator George V. Voinovich

_____
Senator Kent Conrad

_____
Senator Johnny Isakson

_____
Senator Mary L. Landrieu

_____
Senator Lindsey Graham

_____
Senator Richard J. Durbin
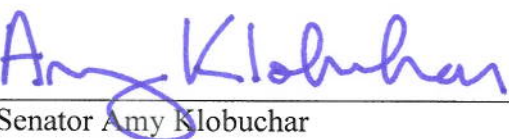
_____
Senator John Cornyn

_____
Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand

_____
Senator Jim DeMint
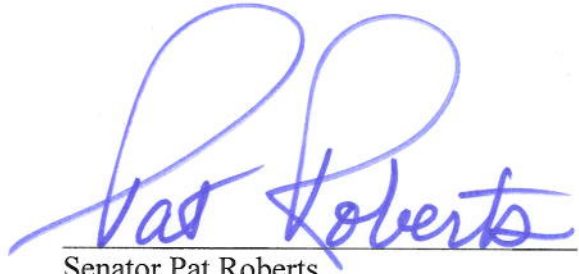
_____
Senator Amy Klobuchar

_____
Senator Richard Burr
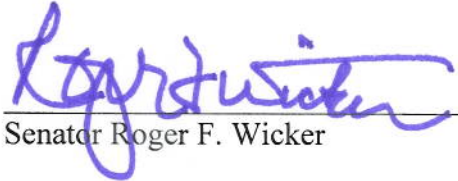
Senator Mark Begich
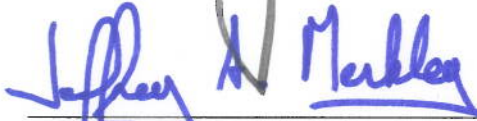
Senator Pat Roberts
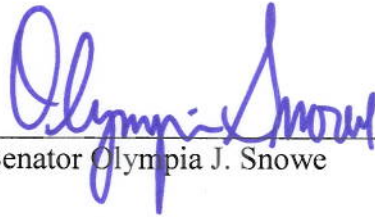
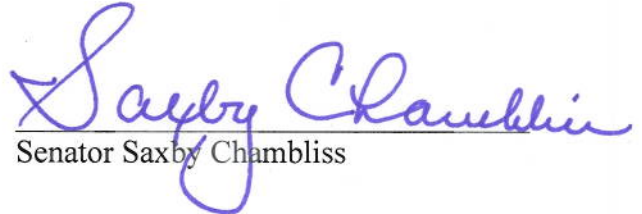Senator Mark R. Warner

Senator Roger F. Wicker

Senator Daniel K. Inouye

Senator Olympia J. Snowe

Senator Jeff Merkley
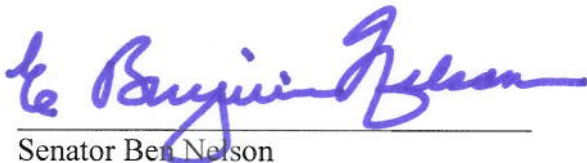
Senator Saxby Chambliss

Senator Blanche L. Lincoln

Senator John McCain

Senator Arlen Specter
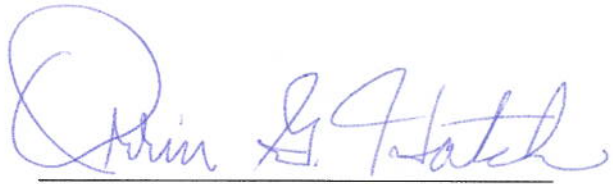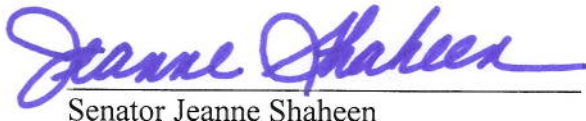
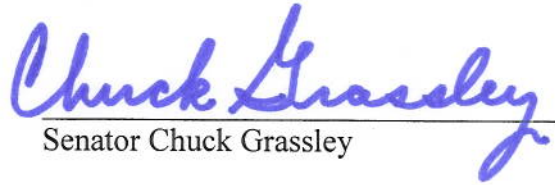Senator Michael B. Enzi

Senator Ben Nelson

Senator Christopher S. Bond

Senator John D. Rockefeller IV
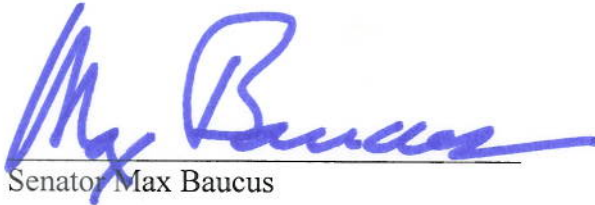
Senator Orrin G. Hatch
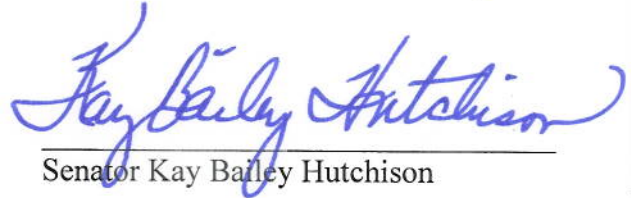
(signature)
Senator Jeanne Shaheen
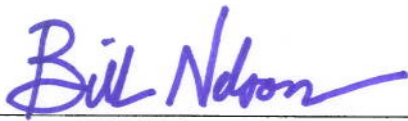
(signature)
Senator Chuck Grassley

(signature)
Senator Max Baucus

(signature)
Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison

(signature)
Senator Bill Nelson
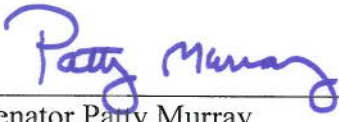
(signature)
Senator Sam Brownback

(signature)
Senator Maria Cantwell

(signature)
Senator Mel Martinez

(signature)
Senator Patty Murray
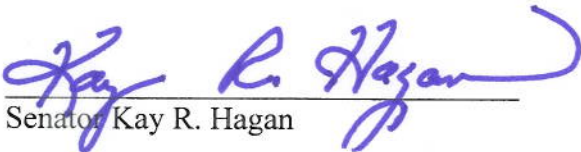
(signature)
Senator Jeff Sessions
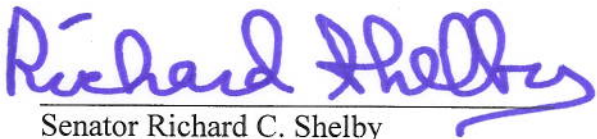
(signature)
Senator Barbara Boxer

(signature)
Senator John Thune

(signature)
Senator Kay R. Hagan

(signature)
Senator Richard C. Shelby

(signature)
Senator Daniel K. Akaka

(signature)
Senator Lisa Murkowski
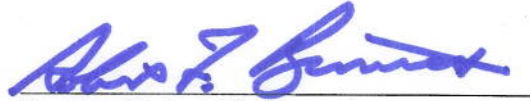
_____
Senator Michael F. Bennet
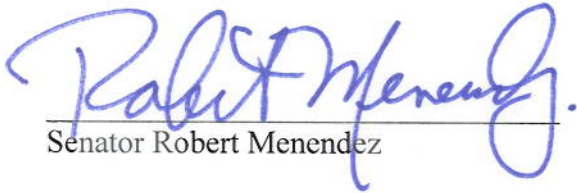
_____
Senator Jim Bunning

_____
Senator Tim Johnson

_____
Senator Robert F. Bennett

_____
Senator Robert Menendez