

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 24, 2011

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to you with serious concerns about the pace of withdrawal of our American troops from Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. We applaud your announcement Wednesday of an initial withdrawal of 10,000 troops this year, but believe withdrawal should be dramatically accelerated. Like all Americans, we are deeply proud of the hard work and incredible sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform, and we know they are carrying out the mission in Afghanistan with dedication and extraordinary competence. Throughout this nearly ten-year military campaign, they have done all we have asked of them, and represented our nation's very best values and ideals.

But now, especially considering the recent death of Osama bin Laden, we believe the time has come to dramatically accelerate the reduction of our military presence in Afghanistan. We respectfully request that you accelerate your Administration's withdrawal plan so that the so-called "surge troops" who were deployed in 2009 be redeployed by the end of this calendar year; with the additional goal of developing a plan to bring all of our remaining troops home safely and honorably by the end of next year.

We remain convinced that an ongoing U.S. presence will do little to advance U.S. national security while continuing to take the lives of our brave military personnel. While the military has made gains in isolated areas, they are not sustainable given the nature of the Afghan government and the insurgency's sanctuary in Pakistan.

The American people have grown rightfully concerned about the cost and the wisdom of sustaining this mission, which reportedly costs U.S. taxpayers nearly \$8 billion a month. Many of us have travelled to Afghanistan and have learned how American taxpayers are supporting the construction of schools, roads, and bridges, and the training of police and military forces. Rather than spending billions per month constructing schools, bridges, roads and hospitals in Afghanistan, we believe the United States must make any such critical investments in our country first, and begin to close our own domestic budget gap. Moreover, as a recent Senate Foreign Relations Committee report reveals, the effectiveness of this generous assistance package, both for development and stabilization purposes, is very much in doubt.

The American people know that we can no longer afford to spend billions of dollars each month to try to build the nation of Afghanistan and to defeat a regenerating insurgency, which does not directly threaten the United States. We firmly believe that it is ultimately the responsibility of

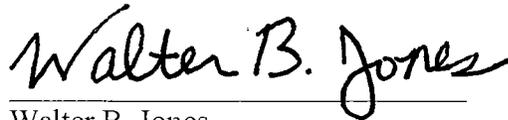
the Afghan people to build, operate, and maintain their own civilian and military operations. The long-term security interests of the United States, and stability in that region of the world, will only be advanced when the people of Afghanistan assume these responsibilities. The United States cannot maintain a presence there indefinitely. We need to focus our resources on rebuilding our own country; both addressing the urgent needs of our own people and beginning to close the federal deficit. On behalf of our constituents who have resoundingly expressed their opposition to our continued involvement in Afghanistan, we respectfully request that you give serious consideration to our sentiments on this issue.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



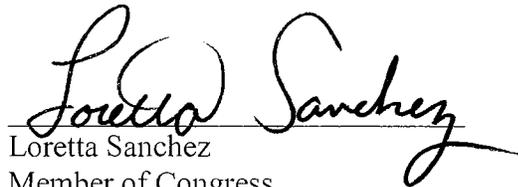
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



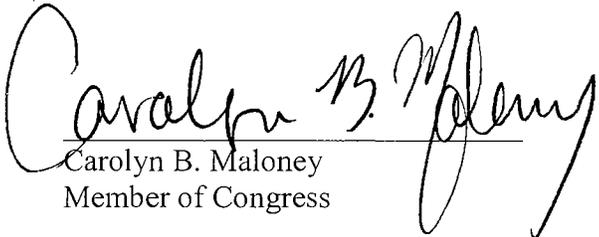
Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



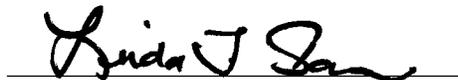
Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress



Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress



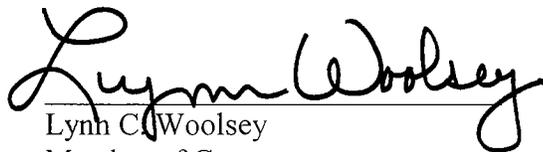
Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



John W. Olver
Member of Congress



Lynn C. Woolsey
Member of Congress



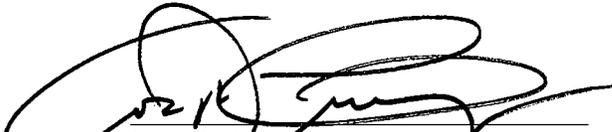
Barney Frank
Member of Congress

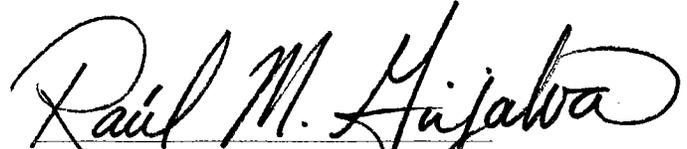


Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress


Laura Richardson
Member of Congress


Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress


Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress


Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress


James P. McGovern
Member of Congress


Fortney Pete Stark
Member of Congress


Mike Quigley
Member of Congress


Judy Chu
Member of Congress


Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

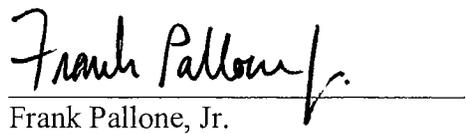

John Lewis
Member of Congress

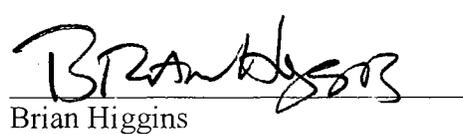

Hansen Clarke
Member of Congress


Barbara Lee
Member of Congress


Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

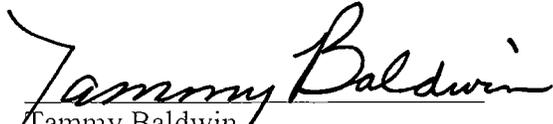

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

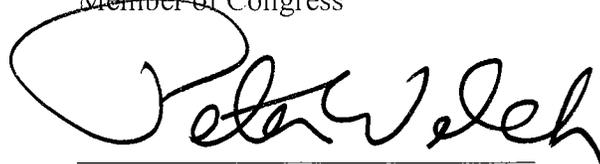

Frank Pallone, Jr.
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Brian Higgins
Member of Congress


Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress


Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

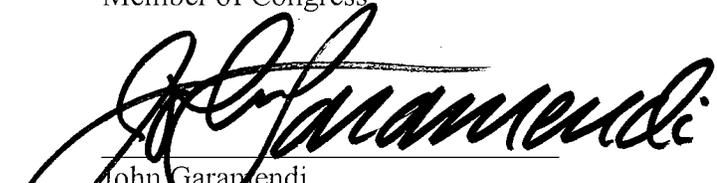

Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress

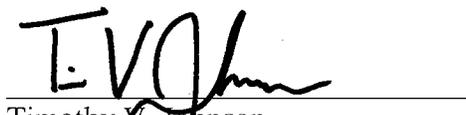

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

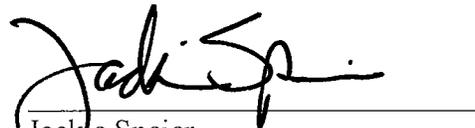

Bob Filner
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Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

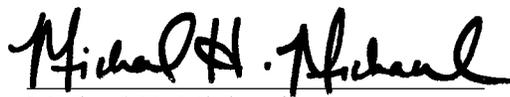

John B. Larson
Member of Congress


John Garabandi
Member of Congress

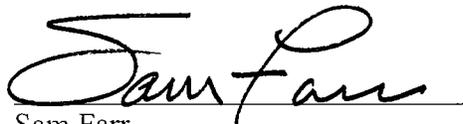

Timothy W. Johnson
Member of Congress

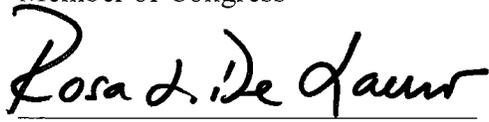

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

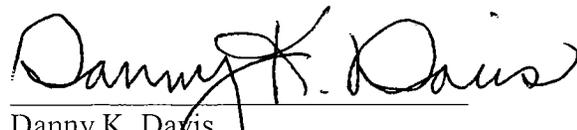

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

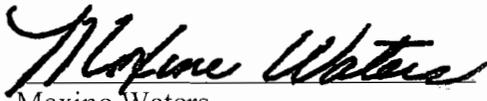

Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress


Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

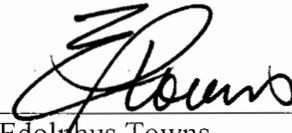

Sam Farr
Member of Congress


Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress


Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Edolphus Towns
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress