President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We all hope that nuclear negotiations succeed in preventing Iran from ever developing a nuclear weapons capability. For diplomacy to succeed, however, we must couple our willingness to negotiate with a united and unmistakable message to the Iranian regime.

We believe, as you do, that the pressure from economic sanctions brought Iran to the table, and that it must continue until Iran abandons its efforts to build a nuclear weapon. We also agree pressure will intensify if Iran violates the interim agreement, uses the talks simply as a delaying tactic, or walks away from the table.

For twenty years, Congress has consistently focused attention on the threat of the Iranian program and taken the lead in initiating sanctions. Congress has repeatedly stated that preventing an Iranian nuclear capability is a key goal of U.S. foreign policy. Nine separate pieces of sanctions legislation have passed Congress since 1996. We appreciate your continued commitment to preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons and your efforts to implement the sanctions, which isolated and pressured the regime into negotiations.

We believe that Congress has a continuing role to play to improve the prospects for success in the talks with Iran. As these negotiations proceed, we will outline our views about the essential goals of a final agreement with Iran, continue oversight of the interim agreement and the existing sanctions regime, and signal the consequences that will follow if Iran rejects an agreement that brings to an end its nuclear weapons ambitions.

We write now to express our support for the following core principles we believe are consistent with your administration’s positions, and urge you to insist on their realization in a final agreement with Iran:

- We believe that Iran has no inherent right to enrichment under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

- We believe any agreement must dismantle Iran’s nuclear weapons program and prevent it from ever having a uranium or plutonium path to a nuclear bomb.

- We believe Iran has no reason to have an enrichment facility like Fordow, that the regime must give up its heavy water reactor at Arak, and that it must fully explain the questionable activities in which it engaged at Parchin and other facilities.
• We believe Iran must fully resolve concerns addressed in United Nations Security Council resolutions, including any military dimensions of its nuclear program.

• We believe Iran must also submit to a long-term and intrusive inspection and verification regime to achieve the goal described in the Joint Plan of Action of “reaffirm[ing] that under no circumstances will Iran ever seek or develop any nuclear weapons.”

• Finally, we believe Iran must not be allowed during these negotiations to circumvent sanctions. We view this period as one fraught with the danger of companies and countries looking to improve their commercial position in Tehran, especially given recent reports of rising purchases of Iranian oil. Iran cannot be allowed to be open for business. As you have stated, we must come down on those who are undermining sanctions “like a ton of bricks.”

We also believe that any agreement with Iran that could lead to the proliferation of nuclear weapons or nuclear enrichment programs in the region should be rejected.

As you have said, Congress has always been a partner in presidential efforts to impose economic sanctions on Iran. Should an acceptable final agreement be reached, your administration will need to work together with Congress to enact implementing legislation to provide longer term sanctions relief beyond existing waiver authorities — either through suspension, repeal or amendment of statutory sanctions. Should negotiations fail or Iran violate the Joint Plan of Action, Congress will need to ensure that the legislative authority exists to rapidly and dramatically expand sanctions. We need to work together now to prepare for either eventuality.

Most importantly, Iran must clearly understand the consequences of failing to reach an acceptable final agreement. We must signal unequivocally to Iran that rejecting negotiations and continuing its nuclear weapon program will lead to much more dramatic sanctions, including further limitations on Iran’s exports of crude oil and petroleum products.

Mr. President, the negotiations with Iran are likely to be arduous. We look forward to working with you on a bipartisan basis to protect America and our allies by preventing Iran from ever developing or building nuclear weapons.

Sincerely,

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Lindsey Graham
United States Senator
Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator

Mark L. Pryor  
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

John Walsh  
United States Senator

Heidi Heitkamp  
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator

Pat Roberts  
United States Senator

Rob Portman  
United States Senator

Mike Crapo  
United States Senator

Patrick J. Toomey  
United States Senator

John Boozman  
United States Senator

Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator

Mike Johanns  
United States Senator

Dean Heller  
United States Senator
Joe Donnelly
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator

Cory Booker
United States Senator

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Tim Scott
United States Senator

Jeff Sessions
United States Senator

David Vitter
United States Senator

John Hoeven
United States Senator

Richard Burr
United States Senator

Ron Johnson
United States Senator

Jerry Moran
United States Senator

Chuck Grassley
United States Senator
Al Franken
United States Senator

Johnny Isakson
United States Senator

Christopher Murphy
United States Senator

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Mark Udall
United States Senator

Michael B. Enzi
United States Senator

Claire McCaskill
United States Senator

Thad Cochran
United States Senator

Jon Tester
United States Senator

Ted Cruz
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Mike Lee
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

John Cornyn
United States Senator

Lamar Alexander
United States Senator

John Thune
United States Senator
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Tom Coburn
United States Senator

Roy Blunt
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Deb Fischer
United States Senator

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator

 Saxby Chambliss
United States Senator

Richard Shelby
United States Senator

John Barrasso
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Tom Udall
United States Senator

Marco Rubio
United States Senator