

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 18, 2010

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

Dear Mr. President,

We write to add our voices to our bipartisan Senate colleagues and convey our strong support for the Administration's decision to conduct a comprehensive review of United States policy on landmines. The Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held recently in Cartagena, Colombia, makes this review particularly timely. It is also consistent with your commitment to reaffirm U.S. leadership in solving global problems and with your remarks in Oslo when you accepted the Nobel peace Prize: "I am convinced that adhering to standards, international standards, strengthens those who do, and isolates and weakens those who don't."

These indiscriminate weapons are triggered by the victim, and even those that are designed to self-destruct after a period of time (so-called "smart" mines), pose a risk of being triggered by U.S. forces or civilians, such as a farmer working in the fields or a young child. It is our understanding that the United States has not exported anti-personnel mines since 1992, has not produced anti-personnel mines since 1997, and has not used anti-personnel mines since 1991. We are also proud that the United States is the world's largest contributor to humanitarian demining and rehabilitation programs for landmine survivors.

In the ten years since the Convention came into force, 158 nations have signed, including the United Kingdom and other ISAF partners, as well as Iraq and Afghanistan which, like Colombia, are parties to the Convention and have suffered thousands of mine casualties. The Convention has led to a dramatic decline in the use, production, and export of anti-personnel mines.

We note that our NATO allies have addressed their force protection needs in accordance with their obligations under the Convention. We are also mindful that anti-personnel mines pose grave dangers to civilians, and that avoiding civilian casualties and the anger and resentment that result has become a key priority in building public support for our mission in Afghanistan. Finally, we are aware that anti-personnel mines in the Korean DMZ are South Korean mines, and that the U.S. has alternative munitions that are not victim-activated.

We believe the Administration's review should include consultations with the Departments of Defense and State as well as retired senior U.S. military officers and diplomats, allies such as Canada and the United Kingdom that played a key role in the negotiations on the Convention, Members of Congress, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and other experts on landmines, humanitarian law and arms control. We are confident that through a

thorough, deliberative process the Administration can identify any obstacles to joining the Convention and develop a plan to overcome them as soon as possible.

We look forward to hearing from you on plans for the review.

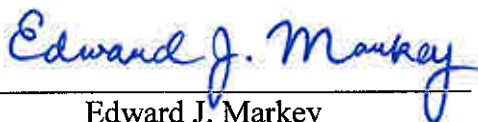
Sincerely,



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



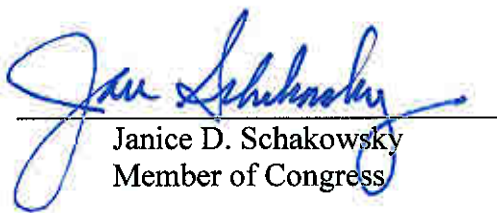
Darrell E. Issa
Member of Congress



Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress



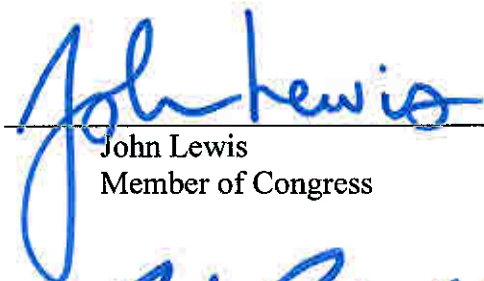
Bob Filner
Member of Congress



Janice D. Schakowsky
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Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress



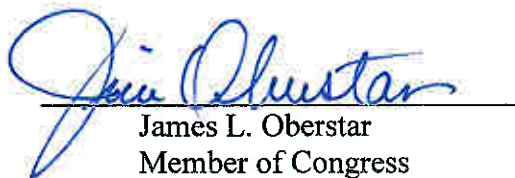
John Lewis
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Rosa L. DeLauro
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Nick J. Rahall II
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James L. Oberstar
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Collin C. Peterson
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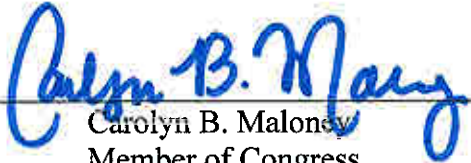
Pete Stark
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



James P. Moran
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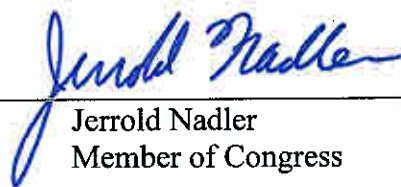
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Lloyd Doggett
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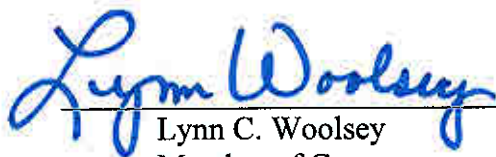
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
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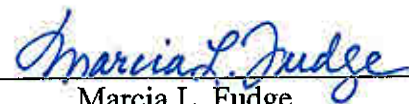


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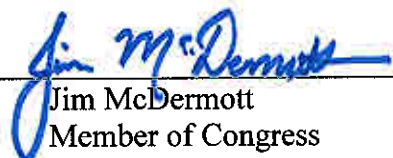

Peter A. DeFazio
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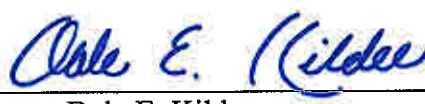

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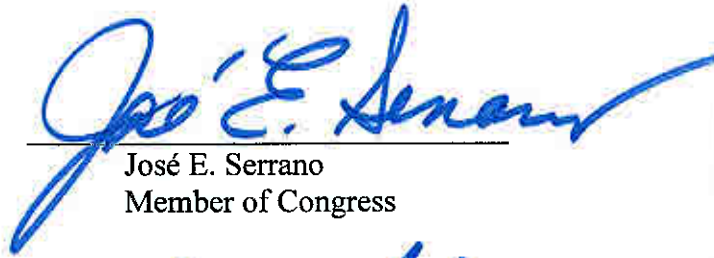

Dale E. Kildee
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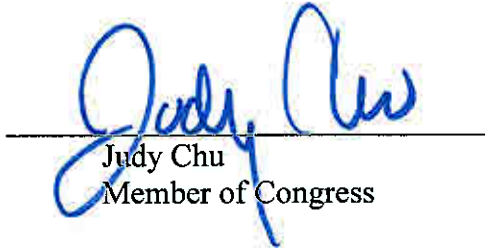

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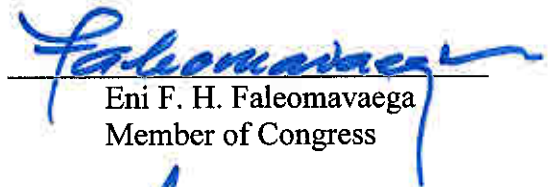
Rush D. Holt
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Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



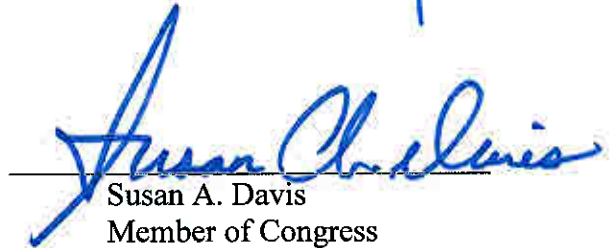
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John Garamendi
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