

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 29, 2013

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We join you and the international community in expressing unequivocal condemnation over the news that chemical weapons were reportedly used by the government of Syria.

While we understand that as Commander in Chief you have a constitutional obligation to protect our national interests from direct attack, Congress has the constitutional obligation and power to approve military force, even if the United States or its direct interests (such as its embassies) have not been attacked or threatened with an attack. As such, we strongly urge you to seek an affirmative decision of Congress prior to committing any U.S. military engagement to this complex crisis.

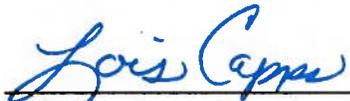
While the ongoing human rights violations and continued loss of life are horrific, they should not draw us into an unwise war—especially without adhering to our own constitutional requirements. We strongly support the work within the United Nations Security Council to build international consensus condemning the alleged use of chemical weapons and preparing an appropriate response; we should also allow the U.N. inspectors the space and time necessary to do their jobs, which are so crucial to ensuring accountability.

As elected officials, we have a duty to represent the will and priorities of our constituents, consistent with the Constitution we all swore to uphold and defend. Before weighing the use of military force, Congress must fully debate and consider the facts and every alternative, as well as determine how best to end the violence and protect civilians. We stand ready to work with you.

Sincerely,



BARBARA LEE  
Member of Congress



LOIS CAPPS  
Member of Congress



MICHAEL HONDA  
Member of Congress



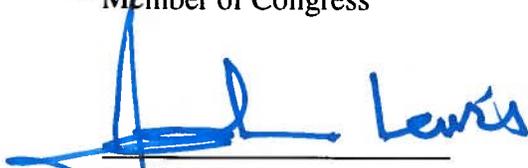
ZOE LOFGREN  
Member of Congress



JACKIE SPEIER  
Member of Congress



BETO O'ROURKE  
Member of Congress



JOHN LEWIS  
Member of Congress



PETER DEFAZIO  
Member of Congress



ROBIN KELLY  
Member of Congress



MARK POCAN  
Member of Congress



RAUL M. GRIJALVA  
Member of Congress



MICHAEL MICHAUD  
Member of Congress



PETER WELCH  
Member of Congress



CHELLIE PINGREE  
Member of Congress



STEPHEN F. LYNCH  
Member of Congress



NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ  
Member of Congress



LLOYD DOGGETT  
Member of Congress



JARED HUFFMAN  
Member of Congress



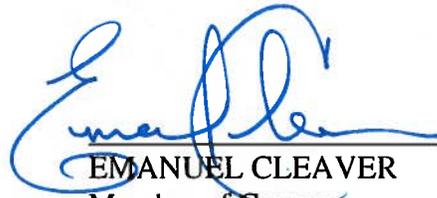
JANICE HAHN  
Member of Congress



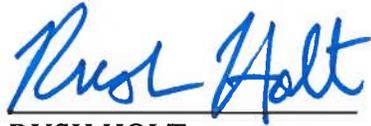
SAM FARR  
Member of Congress



TULSI GABBARD  
Member of Congress



EMANUEL CLEAVER  
Member of Congress



RUSH HOLT  
Member of Congress



SHEILA JACKSON-LEE  
Member of Congress



JIM MCDERMOTT  
Member of Congress



SUZANNE BONAMICI  
Member of Congress



EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON  
Member of Congress



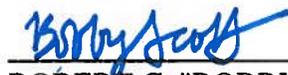
JOSÉ E. SERRANO  
Member of Congress



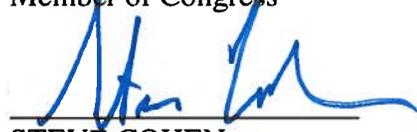
GEORGE MILLER  
Member of Congress



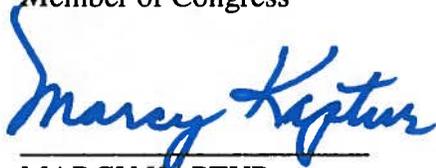
DONNA F. EDWARDS  
Member of Congress



ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT  
Member of Congress



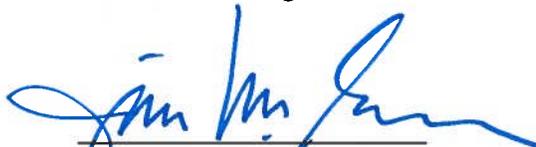
STEVE COHEN  
Member of Congress



MARCY KAPTUR  
Member of Congress



ALCEE L. HASTINGS  
Member of Congress



JAMES P. MCGOVERN  
Member of Congress



DANNY K. DAVIS  
Member of Congress

*Marcia L. Fudge*

MARCIA L. FUDGE  
Member of Congress

*Judy Chu*

JUDY CHU  
Member of Congress

*Bobby Rush*

BOBBY RUSH  
Member of Congress

*Dave Loebsack*

DAVE LOEBSACK  
Member of Congress

*Jan Schakowsky*

JAN SCHAKOWSKY  
Member of Congress

*Yvette D. Clarke*

YVETTE CLARKE  
Member of Congress

*Rick Nolan*

RICK NOLAN  
Member of Congress

*Eleanor Holmes Norton*

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON  
Member of Congress

*Charles B. Rangel*

CHARLES RANGEL  
Member of Congress

*Alan Lowenthal*

ALAN LOWENTHAL  
Member of Congress

*Donna M. Christensen*

DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN  
Member of Congress

*Carolyn B. Maloney*

CAROLYN MALONEY  
Member of Congress

*Henry Waxman*

HENRY WAXMAN  
Member of Congress

*Diana DeGette*

DIANA DEGETTE  
Member of Congress

*Keith Ellison*

KEITH ELLISON  
Member of Congress

*Niki Tsongas*

NIKI TSONGAS  
Member of Congress



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JOHN YARMUTH  
Member of Congress



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JULIA BROWNLEY  
Member of Congress