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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

April 4, 2014

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The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write in regard to continued reports that sanctions are contributing to medicine shortages adversely impacting the people of Iran. As we seek to resolve our serious concerns with Iran's government, we must stand with the Iranian people—who largely hold positive views of the United States and seek an end to their country's isolation and government's repressive policies.

We strongly urge that your Administration take actions to ensure that sanctions do not contribute to shortages of medicine, food, and licensed humanitarian goods for the Iranian people. Such action could include the implementation an Executive Order to exempt medicine-related transactions from sanctions and/or by establishing a direct financial channel for such transactions.

We strongly support past efforts of your Administration to address this issue, including the issuance of a General License for medicine on October 2012 and Under Secretary for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman's comments to BBC Persian in May 2013 that the Treasury and State Departments would send teams to countries in order to clarify sanctions exemptions for medicine. We applaud the inclusion in the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) of an agreement to establish a financial channel for humanitarian transactions for Iranians and would request further information about the status of this effort.

Nevertheless, the problem of medical shortages in Iran has persisted. On January 28, CNN reported that sanctions have created shortages for American and European drugs that treat cancer, and that many Iranians must rely on the black market to obtain treatment. In recent weeks, thousands of prominent Iranians, including former reformist President Mohammad Khatami and notable Iranian artists, have participated in a letter-writing campaign to Ban Ki-Moon protesting the effect of sanctions in contributing to Iranian medical shortages.

As the legislative record makes clear, it is not Congress's intent to block or impede the export of medicine, food, or humanitarian goods to peoples living under the rule of sanctioned

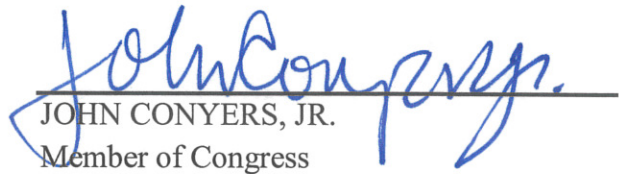
regimes. Under the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 (TSRA), the export of licensed medicines, medical devices, agricultural commodities, and food are exempt from sanctions. Congress has explicitly reaffirmed this policy in successive legislation authorizing sanctions on Iran, including the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010; the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act; and the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012. We note that, while congressional sanctions distinguish between sanctionable activities and exempt humanitarian transactions, certain executive order sanctions (EO 13224 and 13382), which affect all of Iran's largest banks, but do not make such a distinction.

We are eager to work with your Administration to take all necessary steps to ensure that licensed humanitarian goods are not prevented from reaching the people of Iran. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



JAMES P. MORAN
Member of Congress



JOHN CONYERS, JR.
Member of Congress



EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress



PETER A. DEFAZIO
Member of Congress



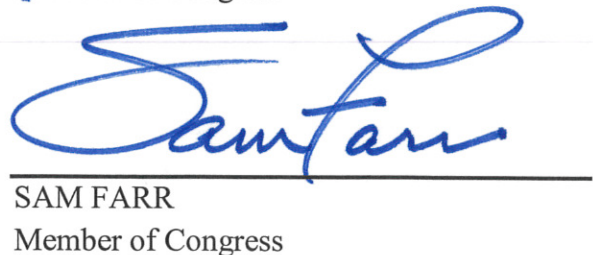
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KEITH ELLISON
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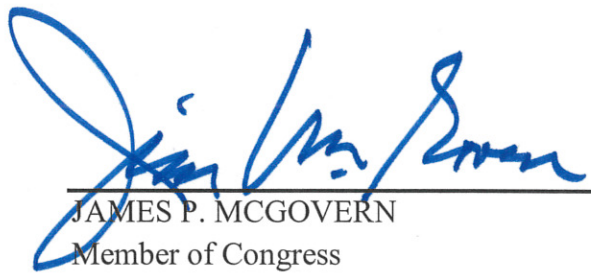
WILLIAM LACY CLAY
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SAM FARR
Member of Congress



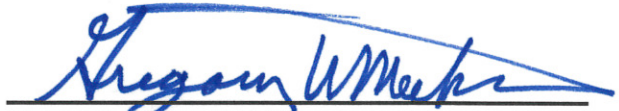
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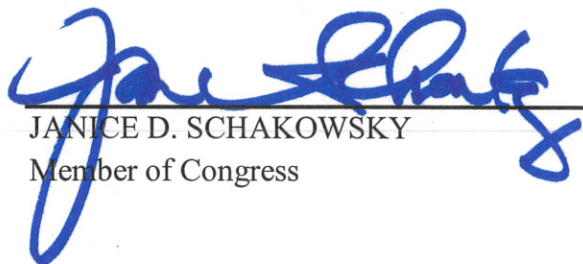
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