

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 15, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We write to express our growing concern with Iran's advancing nuclear program and continued failure to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors. As your administration continues to explore diplomatic options, Iran has been advancing its nuclear program to dangerous levels. At the same time, there is a strong bipartisan consensus in Congress that Iran must be prevented from ever acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.

Given Iran's actions, we ask that the U.S. lead an effort at the IAEA Board of Governors next time the agency meets and addresses its concerns with Tehran's actions. IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi has issued consistent warnings to the Board of Governors concerning Iran's refusal to answer questions regarding previously undisclosed nuclear activity and overall failure to comply with its Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) obligations. For several months, Iran has crippled the IAEA's monitoring capabilities by denying inspectors access to key nuclear sites—including a major centrifuge production facility. Iran narrowly avoided censure at the Board of Governors meeting in September after reaching an agreement with the IAEA to allow inspectors to service monitoring equipment. Since then, Iran has failed to fully carry out its obligations under the agreement. As a result, stop-gap measures to monitor Iran's nuclear activities are no longer "intact," according to Grossi. Yet the U.S. led no effort, and the Board took no action, to press Iran to change policy.

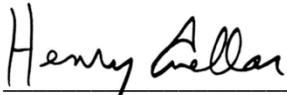
We agree with the statement made by Chargé d'Affaires Louis L. Bono on November 25 at the IAEA Board of Governors meeting, "It is imperative that the Board break the current pattern of Iran's eleventh-hour attempts to undercut Board unity and forestall Board action in the face of continued Iranian non-cooperation." Iran's continuous efforts to degrade monitoring capabilities and refusal to answer questions on undisclosed nuclear activity undermine the authority of the IAEA and the legitimacy of the NPT. These issues go far beyond the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and speak directly to Iran's compliance with the NPT and its safeguards agreement with the agency. The regime's inadequate efforts to resolve these violations while simultaneously expanding the quantity of near-weapons grade enriched uranium – drastically reducing its breakout capacity – clearly demonstrate Iran's disinterest in returning to compliance with its obligations under both the JCPOA and the NPT. In March, Grossi underscored the seriousness of Iran's increased enrichment levels noting that "a country enriching at 60 percent is a very serious thing — only countries making bombs are reaching this level."

Thus far, the new Iranian government has shown no willingness to cooperate with the international community and resolve these transgressions. It is vital that the United States lead the way in holding Iran accountable for its violations of international agreements and clearly demonstrate to the Iranians that there is a high price for intransigence. Unfortunately, the lack of action by the Board of Governors undermines

the United States' standing in talks with Iran. Without a show of resolve, Iran will likely assume that American desire to return to the JCPOA has outweighed its need to address the IAEA's concerns. We appreciate the administration's many statements expressing determination to ensure that Iran can never acquire nuclear weapons. However, we are of a collective mind that the issues raised by the IAEA must be resolved in order to verify if Iran is abiding by its commitments and not pursuing a covert nuclear weapons program. A nuclear agreement with Iran that fails to address these issues would be dangerously flawed.

We understand the administration may seek an extraordinary session of the IAEA Board of Governors before the end of the year to address the situation if Iran's non-cooperation persists. While we believe action should have been taken already, this is a welcome statement. The Administration must demonstrate clearly to the Iranians that there will be a high cost for continued refusal to cooperate with the IAEA. Such a move is vital to buttress diplomatic efforts and help prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

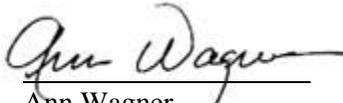
Sincerely,



Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress



Jodey Arrington
Member of Congress



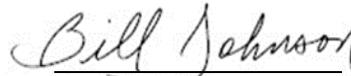
Ann Wagner
Member of Congress



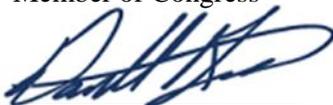
Tom Cole
Member of Congress



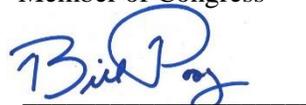
Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Bill Johnson
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Darrell Issa
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Bill Posey
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