

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 15, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary:

As the United Nations (U.N.) Human Rights Council (HRC) prepares to begin its session on March 1st, we urge you to work at the HRC to establish an independent human rights monitor on Iran.

The upcoming session of the HRC marks the sixth session since Iran's June 2009 elections. While Iran has a long history of human rights abuses, those disputed elections spawned one of the largest popular democracy movements of the 21st Century, and unleashed a subsequent campaign of brutal, systematic human rights violations by Iran's government. This government-sanctioned repression continues to this day, yet the HRC has failed to take any concrete measures to address the situation.

In January 2011 alone, Iran executed at least 83 people, including individuals rounded up in post-election protests and charged with enmity against God. Human rights defenders, lawyers, and pro-democracy activists continue to be targeted for repression and intimidation by the government.

State-sponsored persecution of religious minorities persists, including the sentencing last year of seven Baha'i leaders to ten years in prison. And three American hikers languished in prison for over a year before being charged, and two remain detained to this day. It is long past time for the HRC to take action to establish a human rights monitor on Iran.

Establishing an independent U.N. human rights monitor charged with

monitoring and reporting on Iran's human rights violations is an important effort to provide some protection for Iran's human rights and democracy movement. You will remember that from 1984 to 2002, an independent human rights monitor on Iran was in place, and some measurable progress was achieved on human rights over that time. However, this mandate has not been renewed since 2002 and since then the situation in Iran has deteriorated.

It is important that the United States work through multilateral institutions to ensure Iran upholds its international human rights obligations. We commend the Administration's efforts to engage the international community regarding human rights violations. However, human rights violations by the Iranian government continue unabated. The efforts of the HRC have yet to result in the extension of meaningful protections to the groups and persons being persecuted there.

There is bipartisan support in Congress for the Administration's commitment to advance human rights causes in Iran. We believe it is essential that U.S. membership on the HRC be utilized this March to take an overdue step to address Iran's human rights crisis by reestablishing an independent human rights monitor to observe and report on the grave situation in the country.

Thank you for your consideration.

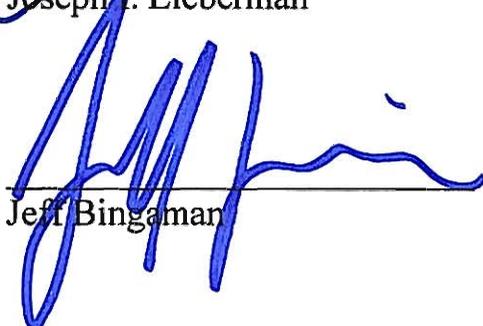
Sincerely,



Joseph I. Lieberman



Carl Levin



Jeff Bingaman



Patrick J. Leahy



Kirsten E. Gillibrand

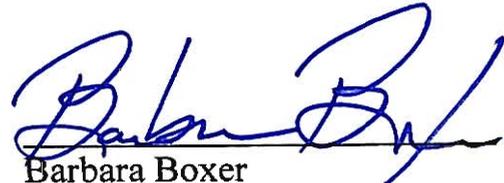


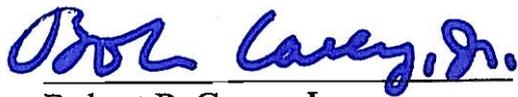
Mark Begich


Sheldon Whitehouse

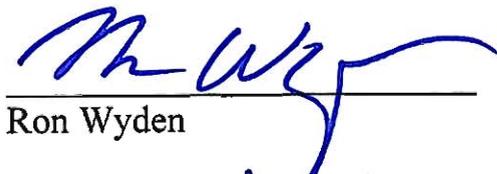

Al Franken


Claire McCaskill


Barbara Boxer

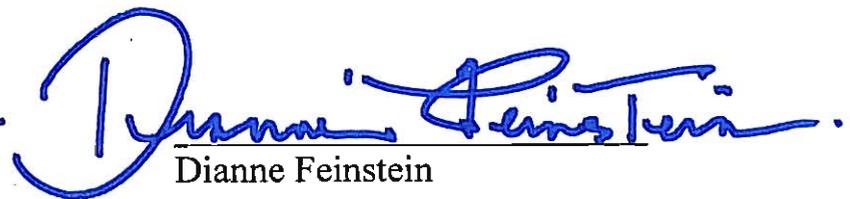

Robert P. Casey, Jr.

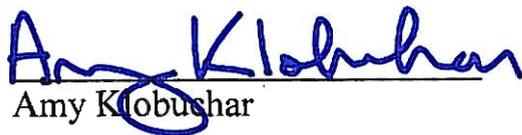

Richard J. Durbin

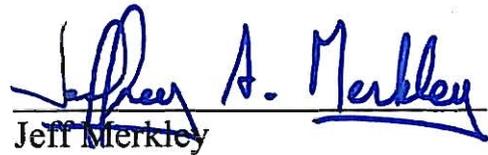

Ron Wyden


Frank R. Lautenberg

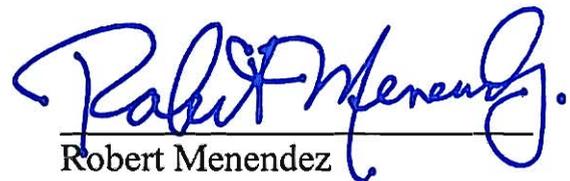

Mark Udall


Dianne Feinstein


Amy Klobuchar


Jeff Merkley


Benjamin L. Cardin


Robert Menendez


Richard Blumenthal


Bill Nelson


Debbie Stabenow


Tom Udall