

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2023

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Lee
Ranking Member
State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Lee:

We deeply appreciate the Committee's continuing support for the Biden Administration's decision to reengage with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), including its inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2023 bill of additional funding for food assistance to refugees in the West Bank and Gaza. As US United Nations Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield recently noted to the Subcommittee, "UNRWA provides needed services to the most desperate people among the Palestinians."

Like other reengagements with the United Nations (UN) system, the Department of State's strategic partnership with UNRWA is clearly demonstrating the benefits of US financial support. As the Committee begins development of the Fiscal Year 2024 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee appropriation legislation, we write to respectfully request robust funding levels to the Migration, Refugee Assistance (MRA) account and inclusion of the following report and bill language:

1. Department of State—Title III, Migration and Refugee Assistance (report language)

"United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) – The Committee again commends the administration for its decision to resume humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, including its reengagement through UNRWA. The Committee is pleased that US government support for UNRWA has accelerated the Agency's ongoing efforts to gain further operational efficiencies, enhancing its accountability and oversight bodies, streamlining its management and human resources practices, and the expansion of its mission to include all of the United Nation's humanitarian principles - humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Funding in this bill for the Migration Refugee Assistance account provides sufficient amounts to fund UNRWA at a level no less than provided in 2017. The Committee notes the importance of such levels particularly given the deteriorating security and economic conditions in the Agency's fields of operation."

2. Department of State—Title VII, "MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA" (Bill)

"Of the funds appropriated by this Act under the heading "Economic Support Fund" not less than \$259,000,000 shall be made available, following consultation with the Committees on Appropriations, for assistance for the West Bank and Gaza to—

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- (1) implement community-based programs that provide for basic human needs, such as food, water, health, shelter, protection, education, and livelihoods, and that promote peace and development; and
- (2) support payments to the East Jerusalem Hospital Network”

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield told UN Security Council members in February, “At this moment of heightened tensions, we must be sure to support UNRWA, which serves as a lifeline to Palestinians and plays an important stabilizing role in the region.” Four out of the Agency’s five fields of operation are in crisis; ranging from the aftermaths of a terrible natural disaster, a seriously deteriorating security situation, and unprecedented financial and economic collapse. Continuing UNRWA’s critical humanitarian and human development mission on behalf of Palestinian refugees requires more, not less levels of US support.

We appreciate your consideration of our request and look forward to working with you in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

André Carson

André Carson
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib

Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress


Veronica Escobar

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

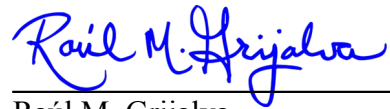
Stephen F. Lynch

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

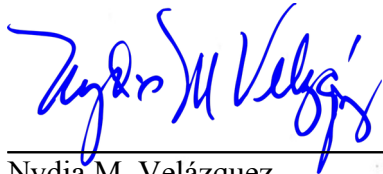
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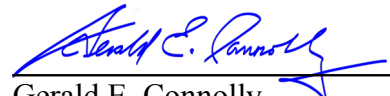
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
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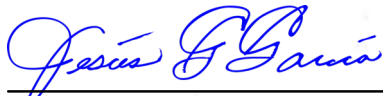
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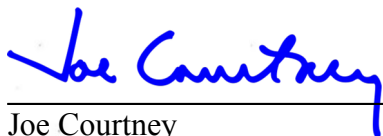
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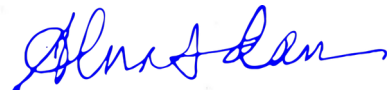
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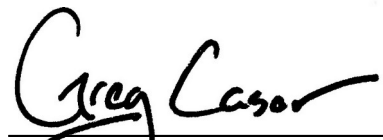
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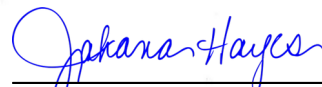
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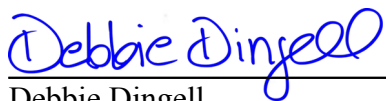
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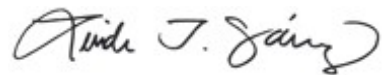
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