

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 24, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing regarding our deep concern over the continued lack of settlement of the conflict over Western Sahara. We urge the Administration to provide the leadership needed to resolve this conflict through the holding of a free, fair, and transparent referendum for self-determination.

As you may know, there is a long history of support for this referendum in the U.S. Congress, particularly reflected in the unanimously passed legislation (H.Res. 245) of the 105th Congress which expressed support for a free, fair, and transparent referendum in which genuine Sahrawi people vote. The United Nations Security Council has continued to uphold the right of self-determination. Sadly, the continued delay of this referendum has brought disunity among countries in North Africa and could cause instability in this region. In addition, the delay has caused terrible suffering for the Sahrawi refugees who have lived in refugee camps since 1975, continuing to hope for the actualization of the 1991 promise of a referendum for self-determination held by the United Nations.

In light of the recent Autonomy Plan offered by the Government of Morocco, we are concerned that it is a violation of international law by denying the right to self-determination for the Sahrawi people. The right to self-determination is a founding principle on which our own country was built, and it is vital that we uphold this principle both in theory and in practice.

This month, the United Nations Security Council is scheduled to debate the reauthorization and/or extension of MINURSO, the UN peacekeeping mission in Western Sahara. After more than a decade and over at least \$500 million being spent, there is still no resolution to this conflict. In light of MINURSO's failure to hold a referendum, to resolve the conflict, and to include human rights monitoring as part of the mission, perhaps it is time for the Administration to reconsider whether United States taxpayers should continue to finance a failed UN operation.

Mr. President, in light of U.S. efforts to combat terrorism around the world, it is in our nation's best interest, as well as in the interest of peoples of other nations, to encourage, promote, and uphold fundamental human rights as well as democracy; this includes the right of the people of Western Sahara to decide their future. It is only through a democratic process that provides a just and lasting solution that there will be peace and stability in North Africa. Further, a

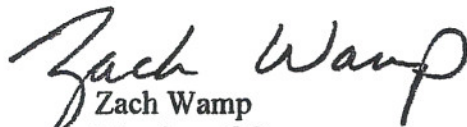
democratic process will provide a signal to the broader Middle East and North African region that there are successful alternatives to violence in the pursuit of national aspirations.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to hearing from you and to continuing to work with you to bring this significant matter to a peaceful and just close.

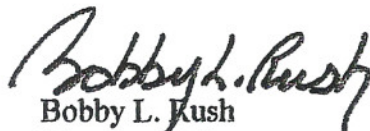
Sincerely,



Joseph R. Pitts
Member of Congress


Donald M. Payne
Member of Congress



Zach Wamp
Member of Congress

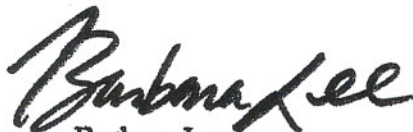

Diane E. Watson
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



Trent Franks
Member of Congress

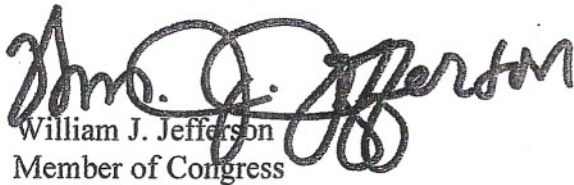

Al Green
Member of Congress


Barbara Lee
Member of Congress


Wayne T. Gilchrest
Member of Congress


Lynn Woosley
Member of Congress


Hank Johnson
Member of Congress




William J. Jefferson
Member of Congress



Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress



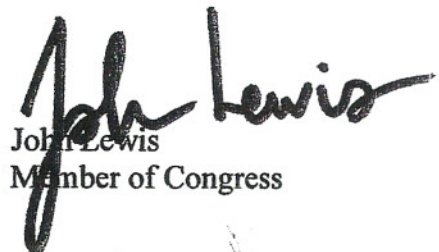
Peter Hoekstra
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



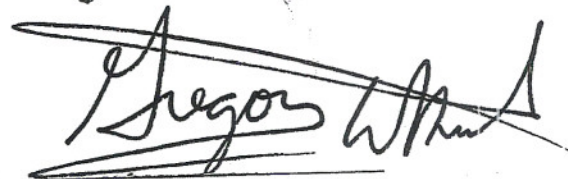
Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



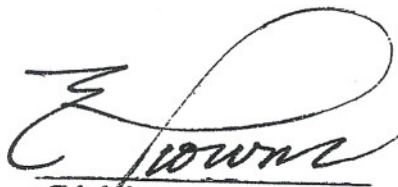
John Lewis
Member of Congress




Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



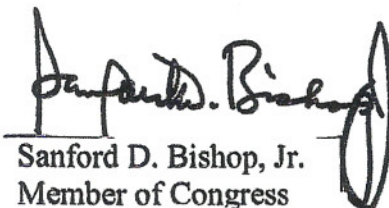
Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



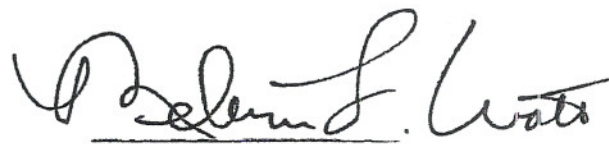
Edolphus Towns
Member of Congress




Robert C. Scott
Member of Congress



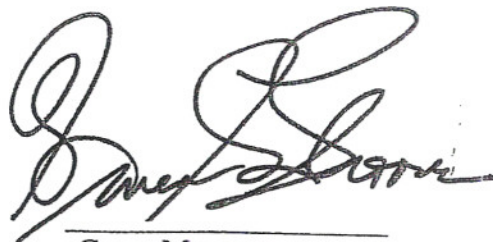
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



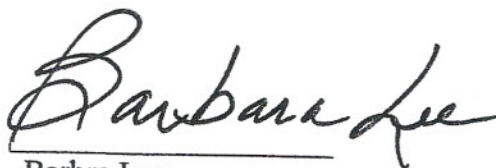
Melvin L. Watt
Member of Congress



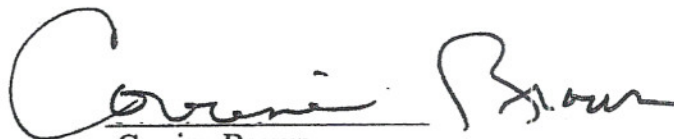
Sheila Jackson-Lee
Member of Congress



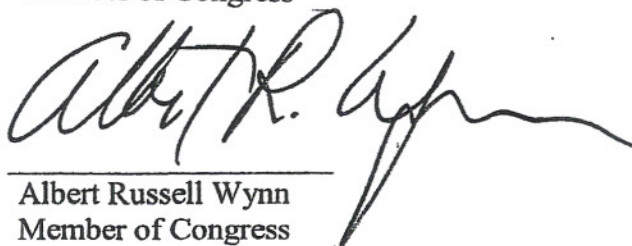
Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Barbra Lee
Member of Congress



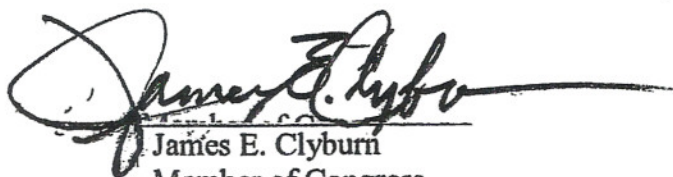
Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



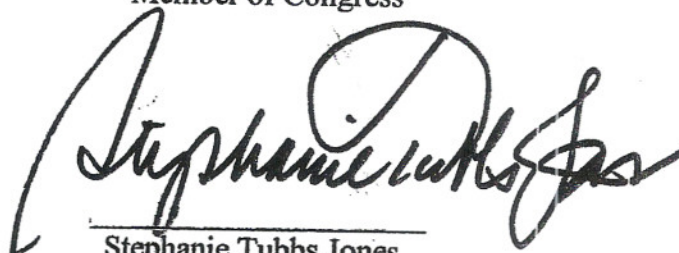
Albert Russell Wynn
Member of Congress



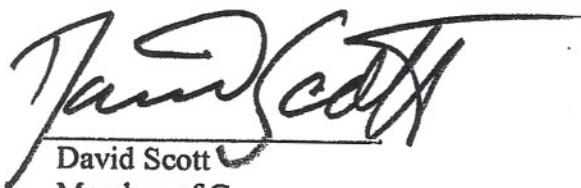
Diane E. Watson
Member of Congress



James E. Clyburn
Member of Congress



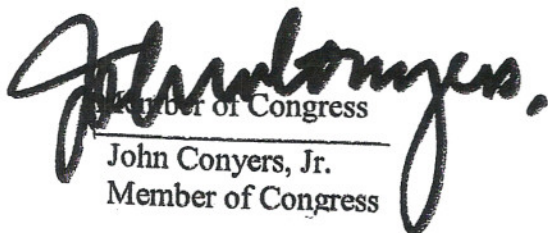
Stephanie Tubbs Jones
Member of Congress



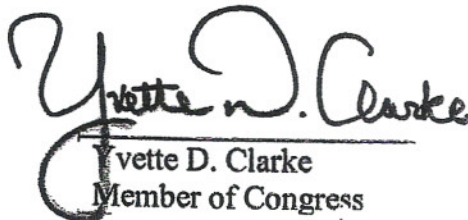
David Scott
Member of Congress



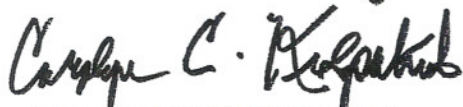
Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



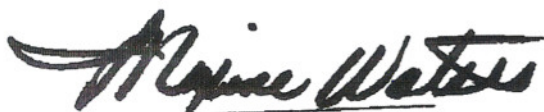
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Carolyn C. Kilpatrick
Member of Congress



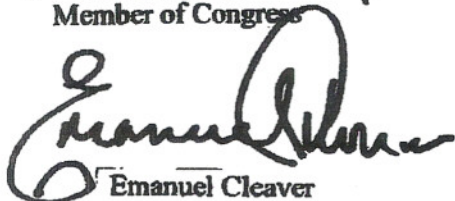
Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



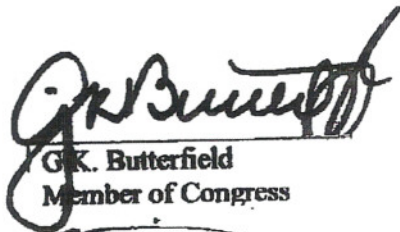
Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



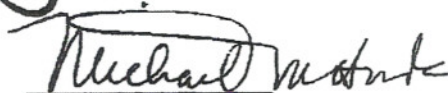
Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Michael Michaud
Member of Congress



Dana Rohrabacher
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State
The Honorable Stephen Hadley, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
The Honorable Zalmay Khalilzad, Permanent U.S. Representative to the United Nations