

Sign Bipartisan Letter Urging Renewed Efforts to Prevent a Nuclear-Armed Iran

Deadline COB Wednesday, July 17

Current Cosigners: Dent, Price, Petri, Cohen, Bass, Blumenauer, Bordallo, Campbell, Capps, Clay, Coble, Connolly, Conyers, Danny Davis, DeFazio, DelBene, Dingell, Doggett, John Duncan, Edwards, Ellison, Farr, Fitzpatrick, Garamendi, Grijalva, Grimm, Hanna, Holt, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Jones, Kaptur, Lee, Lewis, McCollum, McDermott, McGovern, Meeks, George Miller, Moore, Moran, Nugent, Pastor, Rahall, Roybal-Allard, Runyan, Rush, Sablan, Bobby Scott, Takano, Glenn Thompson, Mike Thompson, Tierney, Tonko, Welch, Yarmuth

Dear Colleague:

On June 14, the Iranian people elected Hassan Rouhani president, overcoming repression and intimidation by the Iranian government to cast their ballots in favor of reform.

This is not the first time that Iran has elected a president on a platform of moderation and reform, and history advises us to be cautious about the prospects for meaningful change. The Iranian government's actions in the months ahead will certainly speak louder than Dr. Rouhani's words.

Even so, given the stakes involved for the United States, Israel, and the international community, it would be a mistake not to test whether Dr. Rouhani's election represents a genuine opportunity for progress toward a verifiable, enforceable agreement that prevents Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. We must also be careful not to foreclose the possibility of such progress by taking provocative actions that could weaken the newly elected president's standing relative to Iran's hardliners, who oppose his professed "policy of reconciliation and peace."

We invite you to join us in sending the attached letter to President Obama urging him to reinvigorate U.S. diplomatic efforts to ensure Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon. The letter does not take a position on whether current sanctions should be strengthened or relaxed, nor does it take a position on the potential use of military force by the United States or its allies. We know our colleagues hold different views on these sensitive issues, but we should all be able to agree on the need for a renewed diplomatic push as part of our broader strategy toward Iran.

If you would like to sign or have questions about this letter, do not hesitate to contact George McElwee with Rep. Dent (5-6411) or Asher Hildebrand with Rep. Price (5-1784).

Sincerely,

CHARLES DENT
Member of Congress

DAVID PRICE
Member of Congress

July XX, 2013

Dear President Obama:

As Members of Congress who share your unequivocal commitment to preventing a nuclear-armed Iran, we urge you to pursue the potential opportunity presented by Iran's recent presidential election by reinvigorating U.S. efforts to secure a negotiated nuclear agreement.

As you know, on June 14 the Iranian people elected Hassan Rouhani president with over 50 percent of the vote in the first round, overcoming repression and intimidation by the Iranian government to cast their ballots in favor of reform. Dr. Rouhani campaigned on the promise to "pursue a policy of reconciliation and peace" and has since promised "constructive interaction with the outside world." As Iran's former lead nuclear negotiator, he has also publicly expressed the view that obtaining a nuclear weapon would run counter to Iran's strategic interests and has been critical of the nuclear "extremism" of outgoing President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

We are mindful of the limitations of the Iranian presidency within the country's political system, of the fact that previous Iranian presidents elected on platforms of moderation have failed to deliver on promised reforms, and of the mixed signals that Dr. Rouhani himself has sent regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions. It remains to be seen whether his election will indeed bring significant change with regard to Iran's relations with the outside world. His government's actions will certainly speak louder than his words.

Even so, we believe it would be a mistake not to test whether Dr. Rouhani's election represents a real opportunity for progress toward a verifiable, enforceable agreement on Iran's nuclear program that ensures the country does not acquire a nuclear weapon. In order to test this proposition, it will be prudent for the United States to utilize all diplomatic tools to reinvigorate ongoing nuclear talks. In addition, bilateral and multilateral sanctions must be calibrated in such a way that they induce significant and verifiable concessions from Iran at the negotiating table in exchange for their potential relaxation.

We must also be careful not to preempt this potential opportunity by engaging in actions that delegitimize the newly elected president and weaken his standing relative to hardliners within the regime who oppose his professed "policy of reconciliation and peace." Likewise, it will be critical for the United States to continue its efforts to foster unprecedented international cooperation on this issue so that the international community remains united in its opposition to Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon.

We look forward to working with your administration on this important issue in the months ahead.

Sincerely,