

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 9, 2023

His Excellency Isaac Herzog
President of the State of Israel
Hanassi Street
Jerusalem, Israel 92188

His Excellency Benjamin Netanyahu
Prime Minister of the State of Israel
3 Kaplan Street, POB 187
Kiryat Ben Gurion
Jerusalem, Israel 91919

His Excellency Yair Lapid
Leader of the Opposition of the State of Israel
The Knesset
Kiryat Ben Gurion
Jerusalem, Israel 91950

Dear President Herzog, Prime Minister Netanyahu and Leader of the Opposition Lapid:

We write to you as Jewish Members of the U.S. Congress to express our profound concern about proposed changes to Israel's governing institutions and legal system that we fear could undermine Israeli democracy and the civil rights and religious freedoms it protects.

Each of us takes great pride in the historic ties and special bonds between the United States and Israel. Since the United States became the first nation to recognize the nascent State of Israel in 1948, our shared values—a commitment to democracy chief among them—have been the bedrock of our extraordinary relationship. Israel is one of our most important strategic allies and we share common security interests and a commitment to the pursuit of stability and peace in the region and the world. Together, we are a central part of the family of democratic nations—those countries governed by the rule of law, and whose sustained strength is in the division of governing power and robust checks and balances.

We recognize that, as a vibrant democracy, Israel and its citizens alone have the right to establish and refine their governing institutions, and that people across the political spectrum have elements they want to change. We also appreciate that pursuing government reform, including changes to the judiciary, are legitimate exercises in governing. It is neither our intention, nor our purpose, to prescribe how Israel should refine or reform its system of government. As Members of Congress committed to the enduring U.S.-Israel relationship, we have worked tirelessly across the aisle in Congress and with Israeli governments of all stripes to strengthen the ties between our nations. While maintaining that commitment, we feel it is both appropriate and necessary for us to share our concerns about the possible, even likely, potential impacts of the changes currently being debated in the Knesset.

The overhaul being proposed that passed on first reading appears to imbue the Knesset with supreme power, unchecked by the Supreme Court. If carried out to their fullest extent, these changes could fundamentally alter the democratic character of the State of Israel. A tenet of modern democracies is protections for those citizens with minority status, whether political, ethnic, or religious. We are deeply concerned about the

impact these changes would have on people and groups not in the majority, including Reform, Conservative, Modern Orthodox and Reconstructionist Jewish populations in Israel.

The mutually beneficial relationship between our two countries is as expansive as it is strong, rooted in our shared values and common commitment to democratic government. America and the American Jewish community are closely watching and hope that the reforms being considered in Israel will maintain the Jewish, democratic heart of the nation and preserve the separation of powers and protection of minority rights that are the essence of vibrant democracies around the world.

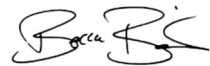
As members of the Jewish diaspora and friends of Israel, we are heartened by President Herzog's calls for compromise, and we call on the government to suspend its efforts to pass the bills. We urge all parties to come together to fully consider the potential implications of the changes being debated in the Knesset and to negotiate fairly and openly so that a broadly acceptable resolution can be reached and Israel can continue to be the flourishing beacon of democracy we have long admired.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



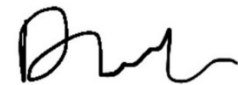
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



David Cicilline
Member of Congress



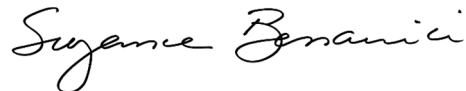
Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress



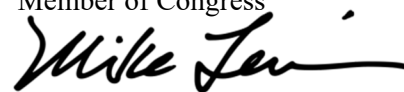
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

/s/

Sara Jacobs
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Mike Levin
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