

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 22, 2015

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write to express our strong opposition to your commitment to waive a newly-enacted reform to the Visa Waiver Program that was clearly intended to cover individuals who have traveled to Iran in the past five years. Congress recently passed this bipartisan reform to the Visa Waiver Program to preserve the program's legitimate travel uses, while ensuring that individuals who pose a heightened terror and security risk to the United States receive appropriately-tailored security screening. While we understand that Iranian officials have expressed their anxieties to you that this new provision could undermine business opportunities in Iran by international investors, it is beyond belief that those concerns would supersede a newly-enacted U.S. law designed to protect the American people from terrorism.

The Visa Waiver reform law, which passed the House of Representatives with near-unanimous support and was subsequently included in legislation signed by the President, clearly denies eligibility for the Visa Waiver Program to individuals who have traveled to a country that is "designated by the Secretary of State under section 6(j) of the Export Administration Act of 1979, or any other provisions of law, as a country, the government of which has repeatedly provided support of acts of international terrorism." Surely, this provision applies to Iran, which has been designated by the U.S. Department of State as a State Sponsor of Terror for over twenty years.

The facts here are simple: Iran remains one of the world's leading State Sponsors of Terror, and a new U.S. law – which passed Congress in a bipartisan fashion and was signed by President Obama on December 18, 2015 – states that individuals who have traveled to such a country are not eligible for the Visa Waiver Program. Instead, if nationals of the 38 Visa Waiver Program participating countries have recently visited Iran and wish to travel to the United States, they must follow the procedures that apply to travelers in the rest of the world. This simply means that these individuals undergo the screening traditionally required to receive a visa, and must obtain a visa from a U.S. consulate abroad before entering the United States.

There is no legitimate justification to create a special exemption for Iran from an anti-terrorism and security law that was specifically designed to include Iran. Iran does not get to veto U.S. security measures. Therefore, it is imperative that the Obama Administration enforce the law with respect to the new, bipartisan anti-terror reforms in the Visa Waiver Program and not create a special carve-out for Iran.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Dold
Member of Congress



David Joyce
Member of Congress



Ron DeSantis
Member of Congress



Mark Walker
Member of Congress



Todd Young
Member of Congress



David Rouzer
Member of Congress



Sean Duffy
Member of Congress




Kevin Brady
Member of Congress



Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress



John Fleming, M.D.
Member of Congress


Lynn Jenkins, CPA
Member of Congress

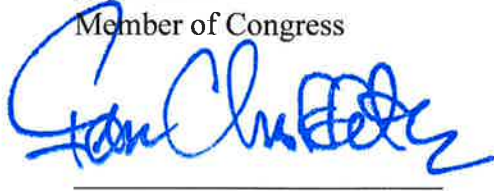

Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress


Ryan Costello
Member of Congress

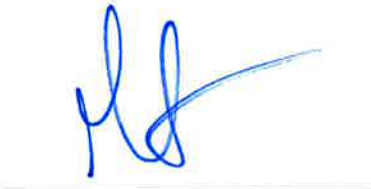

Ann Wagner
Member of Congress


Bill Flores
Member of Congress











cc:
Secretary Jeh Johnson, Department of Homeland Security