

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 31, 2023

The Honorable Joseph Biden  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to you with serious concern regarding media reports indicating you plan to nominate former Treasury Secretary Jack Lew to be the U.S. Ambassador to Israel. At a time when we should work on strengthening the U.S.-Israel relationship, this nomination has the potential to strain relations with our strongest ally and the only democracy in the Middle East. We strongly urge you to ensure that any nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Israel can and will improve relations between our two countries.

Our Ambassador to Israel should have a history of working cooperatively to further American interests in that country. However, former Secretary Lew was one of the chief architects of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Iran nuclear deal. This deal, which failed to constrain Iran's nuclear production, was one of the greatest U.S. foreign policy disasters of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, the country that suffered the most as a result of the Iran nuclear deal was Israel, as Iran has stated repeatedly it intends to use a nuclear weapon to destroy Israel. Despite the harm he has caused to American and Israeli national security, Lew is apparently being rewarded with an important ambassadorship.

Additionally, the U.S. Ambassador to Israel should not have a history of making provocative comments about the Israeli Prime Minister. Former Secretary Lew has frequently criticized Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and placed significant blame on Prime Minister Netanyahu for the well-documented poor relationship between former President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu. Elevating someone with this history to be the U.S. Ambassador to Israel will only weaken our relationship with Israel. Further, we have significant concerns about whether former Secretary Lew can work productively with Prime Minister Netanyahu and his government, given his history of casting unwarranted blame on the Prime Minister.

Lastly, former Secretary Lew has repeatedly supported President Obama's decision not to veto UNSC 2334 (2016), which condemned Israeli settlement constructions in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria. The United States has historically been Israel's ally on the U.N. Security Council; however, former Secretary Lew stated that he, "doesn't think it's a great thing for Israel to always have only the United States standing between it and condemnation." Without a doubt, personnel is policy, and nominating former Secretary Lew implicitly supports his view that it is acceptable for the United Nations to criticize Israel incessantly without defense.

Recently, Congress reaffirmed our commitment to our partnership with Israel with the passage of H.Con.Res. 57, and we believe this partnership will only become more important in the coming years. The United States and Israel must continue working together to combat Iran and Iranian-backed Palestinian terror groups, such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Iran has only become more emboldened in its pursuit of nuclear weapons and support for terrorism over the last few years. Israel requires a permanent ambassador who can promote cooperation between our two great nations on these and other critical issues.

Especially now, on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic ties between our two great democracies, it would be reckless and irresponsible to move forward with any nomination that could deteriorate relations between the U.S. and Israel. We urge you only to move forward with the nomination of a candidate who has demonstrated an ability to work collaboratively with and strengthen the critical relationship between our two nations.

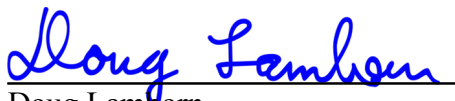
Sincerely,



Claudia Tenney  
Member of Congress



Max L. Miller  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Elise M. Stefanik  
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith  
Member of Congress



Carol D. Miller  
Member of Congress



Kat Cammack  
Member of Congress



Mark E. Green, MD  
Member of Congress

CC. The Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary of State  
CC. The Honorable Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor  
CC. The Honorable Barbara Leaf, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs