Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Room 7148
Washington, DC 20016

November 18, 2011

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We write to affirm our strong support for the current United States law which prohibits U.S. contributions to the United Nations or any associated organization that awards the Palestinian Authority the same standing as full member states.

When the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) scheduled a vote on October 31st to award full member-state status to the Palestinian Authority, it did so knowing that it risked losing future contributions from the United States. Nevertheless, the vote occurred and the Palestinian Authority was for the first time granted full membership status in an organization sponsored by the United Nations.

It defies logic that UNESCO would willingly forgo nearly one-quarter of its budget for which the U.S. is responsible in exchange for awarding the Palestinian Authority full membership status. It is even more troubling that UNESCO would make a decision that will do nothing to help the prospects for genuine peace between Israel and the Palestinians, which can only be achieved through negotiations between the parties involved and not by fiat.

UNESCO has made its choice.

The only recourse for the United States is to stand by existing law and defund the organization. Anything short of this would send an unfortunate message to other international organizations considering similar actions that the U.S. is not to be taken seriously. It would likewise send the troubling message to Israel and other allies that the U.S. is unreliable. I appreciate the willingness expressed publicly in recent days by the Department of State to support existing law and encourage you to maintain this policy going forward.

Sincerely,

Jeff Flake
Member of Congress

Francisco Canseco
Member of Congress

Chris Smith
Member of Congress

Dan Burton
Member of Congress

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Randy Forbes
Member of Congress

Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress

Leonard Lance
Member of Congress

Scott Garrett
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Doug Lamborn
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Member of Congress

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