

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 24, 2023

To the Protesters Defending Israeli Democracy:

As Members of Congress and friends of Israel, we write to voice our support and admiration for the groundswell of pro-democracy activism in Israel in recent months. Through peaceful protests and strikes, you have delayed the advancement of Prime Minister Netanyahu's extreme plan to eviscerate the independence of the Israeli judiciary, and we're hopeful that through continued activism, you will stop it once and for all.

Along with so many of you and with our own constituents, we've watched with dismay as the governing coalition has forged ahead with judicial overhaul legislation that would do profound harm to Israel's democratic institutions. The legislation gives the governing coalition control over critical judicial appointments, enables the Knesset to overturn Supreme Court decisions with a simple majority vote, ends judicial review of Israel's Basic Laws by the Supreme Court, and sharply curtails the Court's ability to review other laws. If enacted, this proposal would virtually eliminate the checks and balances that are crucial to maintaining a healthy democracy.

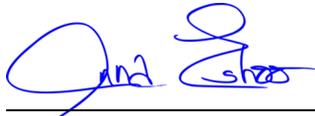
We're deeply concerned that this legislation will corrode Israel's democratic character and, in doing so, strain the critical relationship between Israel and the United States. Since Israel's founding in 1948, the American people have consistently embraced Israel as the only democracy in the Middle East and supported close cooperation between our two countries. This cooperation has been rooted in our shared democratic values such as individual freedoms, human rights, and the rule of law. The judicial overhaul legislation will undermine these shared principles that form the foundation of our strong economic, diplomatic, and security partnerships.

An independent judiciary is a key element of democracy, and one that is essential to protecting the rights of minorities and marginalized communities. The undermining of the Israeli judiciary's independence is likely to threaten the civil liberties and religious freedom of all residents of Israel, including Israel's Palestinian Arab citizens. Additionally, weakening the Supreme Court will render it unable to constrain further entrenchment of the occupation of the West Bank, and in particular, the confiscation of Palestinian property and "regularization" of settlement outposts that are illegal under both Israeli and international law. Not only will this lead to devastating consequences for Palestinian civilians, it is also likely to exacerbate tensions in the region, further undermine the viability of a two-state solution, and jeopardize the progress made by the Abraham Accords.

As Israel celebrates the 75th anniversary of its founding, we proudly stand with you, the Israeli non-violent, pro-democracy movement, as you fight to preserve Israel's democratic character and ensure that the rule of law prevails. While we confront challenges to our democracy at home, we admire the fortitude you have shown in facing down efforts to erode Israeli democracy. We

share your belief that a strong, vibrant democracy with an independent judiciary is essential to Israel's future success and the success of the U.S.-Israel relationship. We also share your hope that the Netanyahu government will listen to the concerns of its citizens, the military, and the international community, and abandon this dangerous legislation.

Sincerely,



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



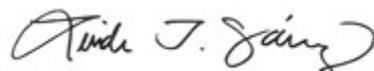
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



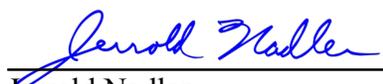
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



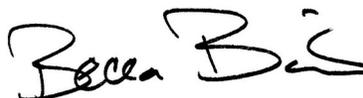
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



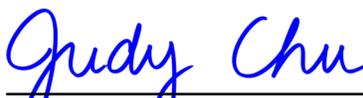
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



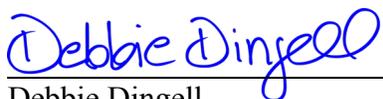
Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



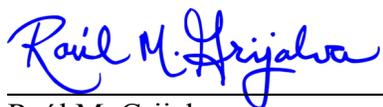
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



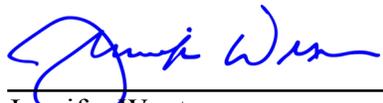
Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress