

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 2, 2009

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to express our opposition to your decision to expand our involvement in the war in Afghanistan, which may well undermine our ability to address the threat to our country posed by al Qaeda's global network.

We appreciate your thoughtful deliberation on this topic and commend you for saying when you will begin to reduce our large-scale military presence in Afghanistan. But we cannot support your decision to prolong and expand a risky and unsustainable strategy in the region. While we support ongoing civilian engagement in Afghanistan and counterterrorism efforts in the region, we do not believe more American lives should be risked to support an illegitimate, corrupt government fighting what is largely a civil war.

Sending more troops to Afghanistan is unlikely to help, and could hurt, our efforts to address Al Qaeda's safe haven in Pakistan. Moreover, al Qaeda and its affiliates are located in Yemen, Somalia, North Africa and other places around the world. Rather than investing so many of our resources in Afghanistan, we should pursue a comprehensive, global counterterrorism strategy.

We are concerned that the military objectives your administration has identified may not be achievable and that a troop build-up could be counterproductive. There is a serious danger that the ongoing, large-scale U.S. military presence will continue to provoke greater militancy in the region and further destabilize both Afghanistan and nuclear-armed Pakistan. The pursuit of unrealistic nation-building goals is making it harder to isolate members of al Qaeda from those who do not have an international terrorist agenda.

We remain very concerned about the additional strain this announced deployment will place on our uniformed men and women, their families and their communities. In spite of the military's best efforts, suicide and post-traumatic stress rates continue to soar. The ability of individual service members and their units to rest, recuperate, retrain and re-equip themselves for

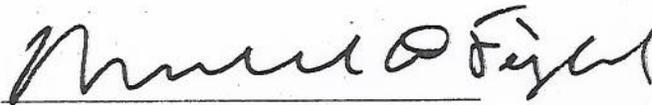
redeployment is stretched beyond its limits. Finally, our ability to care for the wounded is severely over-burdened.

We are also extremely concerned about the costs of your decision. At a time when our country faces record deficits, and many Americans are struggling to make ends meet, it simply does not make sense to spend tens of billions of dollars to escalate our military involvement in Afghanistan.

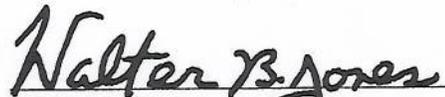
We respectfully urge you to reconsider your decision. In addition, we request that you not send any additional troops to Afghanistan until Congress has enacted appropriations to pay for the cost of such an increase, and that you propose reductions in spending to pay for the cost of any military operations in Afghanistan.

A decision of this magnitude should not be made without the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress. History has shown that our national security is often best served when the political branches work together to form a consensus on major strategic decisions. Congress should vote on whether to continue an armed nation-building campaign in Afghanistan that has already cost the lives of over eight hundred brave American men and women and hundreds of billions of dollars.

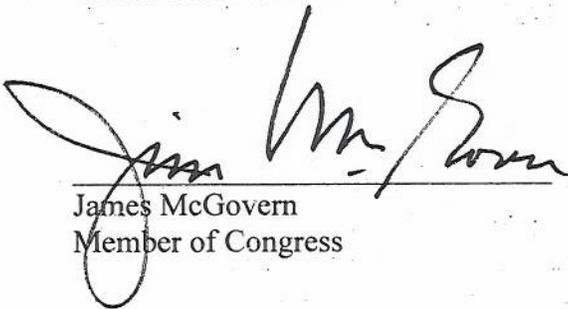
Sincerely,



Russell D. Feingold
United States Senator



Walter Jones
Member of Congress



James McGovern
Member of Congress