April 28, 2017

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232 U.S. Capitol Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan:

We write to you with a sense of urgency and ask that the U.S. House of Representatives immediately begin a serious debate on the use of military force (AUMF) against the Islamic State and express that the President must seek approval from Congress before taking any further military action against the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad. As you know, we represent a diverse group of political views, but on this matter we are united. We believe that Congress has an important role to play, and based on current events, such a debate should occur as soon as possible.

For too long, the United States has conducted military operations against the Islamic State under the justification of the outdated 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF). The U.S. has steadily escalated its role and military presence against the Islamic State forces in Syria and Iraq, including additional deployments over the past two months. It is past time for the House to debate and vote on an AUMF that defines the purpose, nature and limits of U.S. military engagement against the Islamic State.

Furthermore, the U.S. has now carried out its first direct military action against the Syrian regime since the country's civil war began six years ago, again without any authorization by Congress. We believe the President must present a strategy and seek the approval of Congress before any additional military action is taken against the Syrian regime.

We know that you share our respect for the prerogatives, rights and obligations of the Congress as defined under Article I of the Constitution. Congress cannot continue to remain silent and ignore its responsibilities under the Constitution. Engaging in these debates is the minimum we owe the American people and our brave men and women in uniform.

Sincerely,

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Tom Cole
Member of Congress
Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Walter B. Jones  
Member of Congress

Eliot L. Engel  
Member of Congress

Thomas Massie  
Member of Congress

John Lewis  
Member of Congress

Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress

John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

Ted S. Yoho, D.V.M.  
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Louise M. Slaughter  
Member of Congress

Peter J. Visclosky  
Member of Congress

Niki Tsongas  
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress

José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragan  
Member of Congress

Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Member of Congress

Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

Colleen Hanabusa  
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress

Carol Shea-Porter  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

Ron Kind  
Member of Congress

Justin Amash  
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress