

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 3, 2018

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Mark Green
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International
Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Secretary Pompeo and Administrator Green:

As the Administration considers its policy towards Gaza, we urge you to release funds for existing programs and projects that could immediately benefit Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip as well as restore U.S. support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). As you know, as a result of Congressional passage of the Taylor Force Act, none of these funds could be used to directly benefit the Palestinian Authority or Hamas, but instead must be used to help the people most in need in Gaza.

While we are disappointed that the Administration has thus far been unable to restart peace talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians, we welcome any good faith effort to alleviate the suffering of innocent civilians in Gaza. To that end, we urge you to immediately release the more than \$230 million in FY17 funding for economic and humanitarian aid that will expire by the end of the year.

That funding includes, but is not limited to:

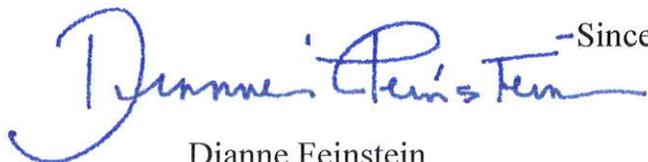
- \$17 million for the United Nations World Food Programme for direct food assistance to the nearly 40% of Gaza's population who are food insecure;
- \$36 million for Envision Gaza 2020, which aims to increase the self-sufficiency of Gaza's neediest families by providing immediate food assistance and employment opportunities;
- \$34 million for Gaza 2020 Health Matters, which aims to increase health access and improve the quality of emergency and essential health services in Gaza;
- \$15 million for USAID's Early Grade Reading program, which aims to improve literacy and education outcomes; and
- \$7 million for program assessments and evaluations to ensure that our limited foreign assistance dollars are spent effectively.

Additionally, we urge the Administration to resume its support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which provides education, health care, food, and other critical assistance to meet the humanitarian needs of millions of Palestinian refugees in the Palestinian Territories and in neighboring countries. Today, UNRWA has a \$217 million shortfall due in large part to the Administration's decision to cut U.S. support by nearly \$300 million last year.

If the Administration does not urgently restore U.S. funding, UNRWA will likely be forced to further reduce the vital services it provides in Gaza. Specifically, UNRWA:

- May not be able to reopen 575 schools by September for more than 270,000 students in the Gaza Strip, where 75 percent of the population is younger than 25 years old;
- May be forced to cut the medical services it provides at 22 health centers in Gaza, further exacerbating the territory's lack of adequate medical care;
- May further reduce its cash for work program, which if fully funded, benefits 20,000 Palestinians;
- May be forced to lay off up to 12,000 Palestinians who directly work for the agency, increasing Gaza's unemployment rate, which exceeds 40 percent.

In 2012, the United Nations warned that by 2020 Gaza would be unlivable. Last year, due to the territory's continued decline and mismanagement, the UN said that day may have already come. The continued lack of robust U.S. funding for urgent humanitarian and other assistance to Gaza is not only detrimental to the health and survival of Palestinians, but exacerbates conditions that drive the population into the arms of the terrorist group Hamas. We strongly believe that the Administration must reverse course and help to alleviate the suffering in Gaza, and we encourage you to seriously consider the programs above.

 -Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



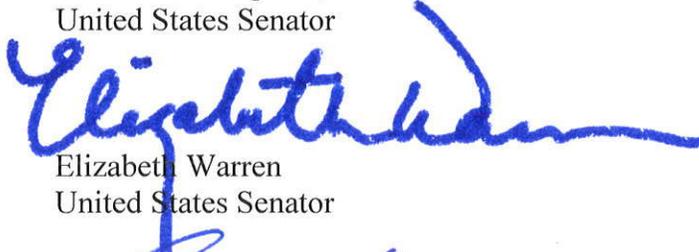
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator