

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 11, 2023

The Honorable Rashad Hussain
U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Ambassador Hussain,

As co-chairs of the Senate and House Abraham Accords Caucuses, we write to request that the Office for International Religious Freedom initiate interfaith dialogue programming between Abraham Accords member countries, potential Abraham Accord countries, and the United States. Interfaith dialogues foster mutual trust, dispel harmful perceptions, and help promote sustainable peace and cooperation in the region. We commend the United States' contribution to the Negev Forum Education and Tolerance Working Group. To build on the momentum of the Abraham Accords, we urge you to promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue and support religious freedom among Abraham Accords member countries.

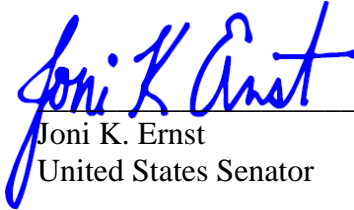
The Middle East is the birthplace of all three Abrahamic religions, faiths practiced by billions worldwide. We applaud the efforts initiated by a number of U.S. partners in the Middle East who are pursuing religious freedom initiatives and which are seeking cultural understanding across faith traditions. However, persecution and discrimination of religious groups persist throughout the region. The Abraham Accords have the potential to anchor Middle Eastern security cooperation, economic prosperity, and cultural exchange grounded in mutual understanding. Specifically, increased interfaith dialogue will further diplomatic, cultural, and economic cooperation between the diverse peoples of the region. The second paragraph of the Abraham Accords Declaration, signed by the United States, states "we encourage efforts to promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue to advance a culture of peace among the three Abrahamic religions and all humanity." We ask you to commit to putting this declaration into practice by supporting interfaith dialogue programs within signatory and potential signatory countries of the Abraham Accords.

Specifically, we request that you pursue the following actions:

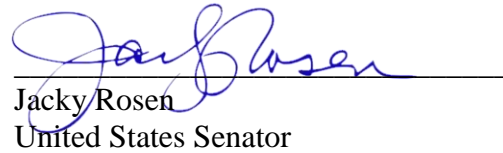
1. Issue new funding opportunity announcements or requests for proposals to support interfaith dialogue between Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Abraham Accords signatory countries and potential signatory countries and then issue such grants.
2. Provide us, by March 1st, 2023, with a briefing on the State Department's actions to "promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue" in the Middle East as called for in the Abraham Accords Declaration.

We look forward to your prompt response.

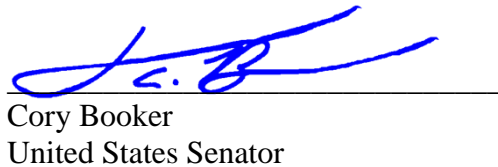
Sincerely,



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



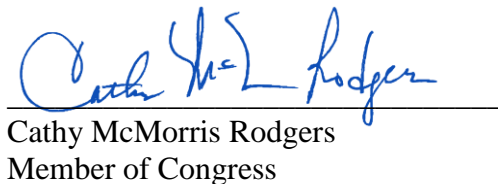
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Cory Booker
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress



David Trone
Member of Congress



Ann Wagner
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary of State
The Honorable Wendy Sherman, Deputy Secretary of State
The Honorable Uzra Zeya, Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy,
and Human Rights
The Honorable Barbara Leaf, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs
Dr. Dafna Ran, Director of the Office of Foreign Assistance