

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 2, 2016

The Honorable John F. Kerry  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry,

As Members of Congress who have been deeply engaged on U.S.-Colombia relations, we write to commend you for your strong support of the Colombian peace process and for keeping the U.S. Special Envoy on Colombia's peace process engaged in negotiations to further refine the peace accords as a result of the recent plebiscite. As you well know, it is important that these final adjustments to the accords be made in a timely manner, while the government-FARC ceasefire remains firm.

We are encouraged by how quickly competing sectors have moved forward a plan to navigate the next steps of defining, revising, and re-negotiating the existing accords. We respectfully urge all parties in this process to maintain the central focus on the needs of victims as expressed and defined by the victims themselves. Input from victims proved to be a transformative experience for the government and guerrilla negotiating teams. New actors in this dialogue – and potentially in direct negotiations – have not undergone this same transformative experience nor engaged directly with the scores of victims who formally presented their stories and cases to the negotiators.

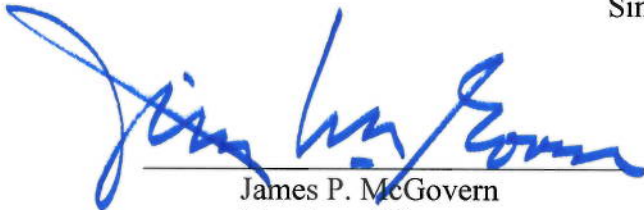
At the same time, understanding how slender the margin that defeated the plebiscite was, we respectfully counsel putting Colombia's greater good ahead of party or point of view, in the discussions surrounding adjustments to the existing peace accords. The goal should be to broaden consensus in favor of the agreement. We would offer the same advice were the YES campaign to have triumphed by so insubstantial a degree. We recognize that Colombia is working in uncharted territory, but it is important not to tarry in finding agreement and completing a final accord accepted by all parties. Colombia will find it difficult to achieve its goals as a modern state in the absence of a peace accord and the more inclusive social and economic progress promised through its successful implementation.

Mr. Secretary, we urge you, Special Envoy Aronson and all relevant Administration officials to encourage those at the Colombian negotiating table to safeguard the advances made on behalf of victims, women, Afro-Colombians, Indigenous Peoples and other minorities in the existing peace accords. The chapters and provisions addressing the accords' impact on these groups appropriately identified and responded to the specific and extreme adverse effects these members of Colombian society suffered during decades of conflict. The negotiators addressed these harms with measures tailored to each group's specific needs and circumstances, especially in the areas of reconciliation, reparations, restorative justice, political participation and economic development. Such recognition and measures are both historic and unprecedented, and provide

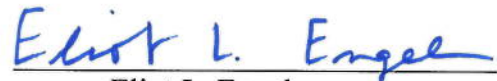
an important model to other nations engaged in conflict resolution. We believe they are critical to Colombia's ability to successfully end the conflict and implement a lasting peace.

We admire the strong and capable leadership demonstrated by President Santos in the aftermath of the October 2<sup>nd</sup> plebiscite. We also recognize that all parties and sectors, including the FARC and the proponents of the NO campaign, have expressed a willingness to review in good faith possible changes to the original accords in order to generate a broader consensus in support of the overall accords. We encourage the State Department to remain engaged in providing support and credible, creative counsel so that Colombia may achieve a final peace agreement without delay.

Sincerely,



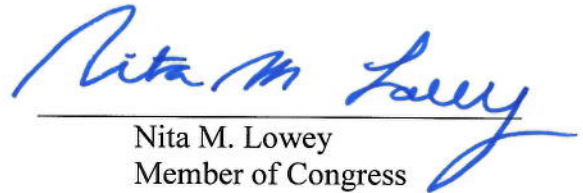
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



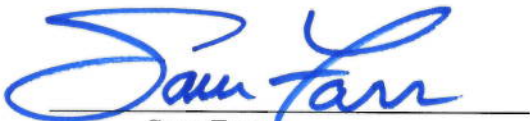
Eliot L. Engel  
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress




Nita M. Lowey  
Member of Congress



Sam Farr  
Member of Congress



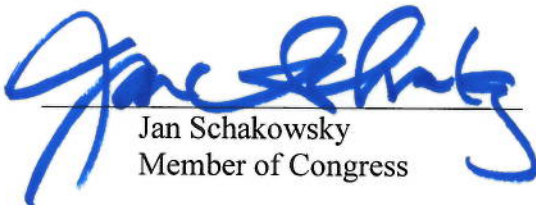
Sander M. Levin  
Member of Congress



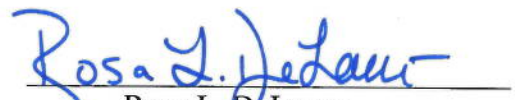
John Lewis  
Member of Congress



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



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress