



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

February 11, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer  
Majority Leader  
H-107, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James E. Clyburn  
Majority Whip  
H-329, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ben Ray Luján  
Assistant Speaker  
H-132, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Democratic Caucus Chairman  
B-245 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Hoyer, Whip Clyburn, Assistant Speaker Luján, and Chairman Jeffries:

We are honored to serve in the most diverse Congress in American history, alongside Members from many different backgrounds. We also are proud of the fact that Americans hold different opinions about our foreign policy. That said, we feel strongly that we cannot return to a time when it was considered fair game to question the motives, patriotism, and loyalty of some members of Congress.

As Jewish Members of Congress, we are deeply alarmed by recent rhetoric from certain members within our Caucus, including just last night, that has disparaged us and called into question our loyalty to our nation. We urge you to join us in calling on each member of our Caucus to unite against anti-Semitism and hateful tropes and stereotypes.

The recent accusations and insinuations about Jews and supporters of the Jewish State of Israel, are especially concerning because American Jews have long had to deal with such false accusations, often times from the highest levels of our government. In 1934, as reports of Nazi oppression of German Jews began to surface, Representative Louis McFadden read into the Congressional record excerpts from the infamous anti-Semitic tract “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.” These accusations and slurs can also be heard in the taped conversations of President Richard Nixon released in 2013.

Today, anti-Semites and white-nationalists on the fringes have embraced new and even more dangerous variations of the dual loyalty charge. We witnessed this in Charlottesville in 2017 as white supremacists and neo-Nazis openly chanted “Jews will not replace us.” They used our leaders’ rhetoric to justify their own definition of who is, and who is not, American. We have also witnessed

this hatred in the reprehensible words of Louis Farrakhan. And, most tragically, this hatred manifested in the murder of eleven worshippers at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh last fall by a man motivated by hate and age-old anti-Semitic tropes. According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), reported anti-Semitic incidents in the United States rose by 57% in 2017, the largest single-year increase on record. These same trends have appeared around the world.

In recent weeks, we have had conversations with multiple members of our Caucus who share our concerns about this rhetoric; we have also raised these concerns with Democratic leadership. We must speak out when any Member – Democrat or Republican – uses harmful tropes and stereotypes, levels accusations of dual loyalty, or makes reckless statements like those yesterday. All Members of Congress should reject anti-Semitism, just as we reject all forms of hatred, bigotry, and intolerance, and must denounce those who deny Israel’s right to exist, including terrorist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas.

We also wish to set the record straight regarding our Party’s history of support for our ally Israel and for a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on two states for two people. Israel is a proud and stable democracy with robust protections for minorities, located in a region prone to authoritarianism and violent extremism. As early as 1944, the Democratic Party Platform included language supporting “a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth” in the region, four years before President Harry S. Truman recognized the establishment of the modern State of Israel. Since then, Democratic Presidents and Members of Congress have been instrumental in supporting peace in the region and Israel’s security. However, the “Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions” (BDS) movement inherently denies the Jewish people’s 3,000-year-old connection to the land of Israel and seeks to delegitimize Israel and deny its right to exist as a Jewish state. Such positions are, at their core, anti-Semitic.

We cannot remain silent in the face of hateful speech or actions. We know what happens in our communities when leaders ignore or embrace unacceptable rhetoric. That is why we have an obligation to speak out against anti-Semitism and to vigorously confront, challenge, and defeat those who traffic in these harmful tropes and smears.

We hope that our Caucus will take swift action to address these issues in the coming days by reiterating our rejection of anti-Semitism and our continued support for the State of Israel.

Sincerely,



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Josh Gottheimer  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



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Elaine Luria  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS