

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 18, 2015

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker of the House
H-232 U.S. Capitol Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner:

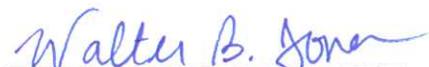
Last week President Barack Obama submitted a formal proposal asking Congress to approve an authorization for the use of military force (AUMF) against Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). **As the House of Representatives considers this request, we respectfully ask you to commit to allowing a full debate on the House floor, including an open amendment process.** We owe it to the troops who may be called on to perform this mission, to their families, and to the taxpayers who will be asked to pay for it, to give all members every opportunity to fully debate and shape the substance of this bill on the floor.

As James Madison said: "The power to declare war, including the power of judging the causes of war, is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature." Determining whether to exercise this power to send our brave men and women in uniform into harm's way is the most consequential decision a member of Congress must make. Given the gravity of the question at hand, restricting the ability of the people's representatives to offer amendments to the bill and to fully debate the issue would be inappropriate.

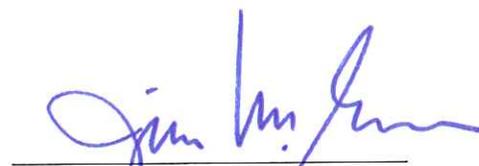
When Congress last considered an AUMF in 2002, the rule governing debate made only two amendments in order, and both were amendments in the nature of a substitute. Repeating this closed process would be a grave mistake. Among other things, it would effectively restrict the ability to offer amendments to modify the AUMF to only those members serving on the committee of jurisdiction (i.e. the House Foreign Affairs Committee). As a result, the other 90 percent of the House would be blocked from having any influence on the substance of the bill.

While members have a wide variety of opinions on a potential AUMF, we should all agree that on this issue, more so than any other, the full House must be allowed to work its will. Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Walter B. Jones (NC-3)



James P. McGovern (MA-2)

Thomas Massie

Thomas Massie (KY-4)

Barbara Lee

Barbara Lee (CA-13)

John J. Duncan Jr.

John J. Duncan, Jr. (TN-2)

Gerald E. Connolly

Gerald E. Connolly (VA-11)

Ted Poe

Ted Poe (TX-2)

Ann Kirkpatrick

Ann Kirkpatrick (AZ-1)

Bill Posey

Bill Posey (FL-8)

John B. Larson

John B. Larson (CT-1)

Curt Clawson

Curt Clawson (FL-19)

Earl Blumenauer

Earl Blumenauer (OR-3)

Raul R. Labrador

Raul Labrador (ID-1)

Stephen F. Lynch

Stephen F. Lynch (MA-8)

Justin Amash

Justin Amash (MI-3)

Jim Cooper

Jim Cooper (TN-5)

Mark Sanford

Mark Sanford (SC-1)

John Garamendi

John Garamendi (CA-3)

Michael E. Capuano
Michael E. Capuano (MA-7)

Gwen Graham
Gwen Graham (FL-2)