



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

May 16, 2016

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. President:

I write in response to your administration's April 8, 2016, letter regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — more colloquially known as the Iran deal — requesting that Texas “review” its economic sanctions against Iran. Because the Iran deal is fundamentally flawed and does not permanently dismantle Iran's nuclear capability, Texas will maintain its sanctions against Iran. Further, because your administration has recklessly and unilaterally removed critical sanctions, I have called on the Texas Legislature to strengthen the Iran sanctions that Texas already has in place.

I strongly oppose the Iran deal because it undermines the national security of the United States and its strategic allies abroad — especially our most important Middle East ally, Israel. Entering into an agreement with a country that consistently calls for “death to America” and repeatedly articulates anti-Semitic policies is short-sighted and ignores geopolitical realities. Expecting Iran to actually adhere to the deal is equally foolhardy. The Iranian regime has consistently and blatantly flouted the terms of previous international agreements, and indeed, on multiple occasions since the Iran deal was finalized, it has conducted long-range ballistic missile tests in defiance of existing U.N. resolutions.

The Iran deal does not eliminate Iran's ability to obtain a nuclear warhead — much less completely and permanently dismantle its nuclear capability. Even while complying with the so-called Plan of Action, Iran retains enriched uranium and uranium centrifuges. Remarkably, your administration's April 8 letter even acknowledges Iran's ability to acquire a nuclear weapon in as little as one year.

In exchange for an empty and unreliable promise, your administration has unshackled Iran's lucrative energy sector and has unilaterally removed additional sanctions that have helped keep Iran in check. Further, your administration has released billions of dollars to Iran that can now be misused to sponsor acts of terror against Israel, the United States and our allies.

Not surprisingly, your administration was able to implement the Iran deal only through the use of false pretenses. Since your letter arrived, multiple news outlets have reported that one of your chief national

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security advisors has admitted to leveraging creative storytelling techniques to deceive the American public regarding the details of the Iran deal. Engaging in a manipulative propaganda campaign to implement the Iran deal makes an already substantively bad deal all the more untenable.

Given all the flaws that are inherent in the Iran deal, Texas is absolutely committed to maintaining its sanctions against Iran. The Texas Prohibition on Investment in Iran Act currently bans state pension and retirement systems from investment in Iran or entities that do business with Iran. But there is more that Texas can — and will — do.

As you may already be aware, during a meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu in January, I announced that I would seek legislation that would strengthen Texas' existing sanctions against Iran by:

- Prohibiting local government entities in the state of Texas from investing in Iran or entities conducting business with Iran;
- Requiring all Texas state entities — not just state pensions — to follow Texas' divestiture policy; and
- Closing additional loopholes in Texas' current divestiture statute.

I understand the April 8 letter as an attempt to fulfill another misguided promise you made in the Iran deal — to convince states to lift their own sanctions. Congress already made clear that state and local sanctions play a vital role in controlling Iran when it passed the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010. Now more than ever, Texas agrees. As a strong supporter of Israel, I am committed to doing everything in my power to oppose this misguided deal with Iran. Accordingly, not only will we not withdraw our sanctions, but we will strengthen them to ensure Texas taxpayer dollars are not used to aid and abet Iran.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greg Abbott
Governor

DH/gsd:kt