

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 18, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to convey our strong support for the Administration's decision to conduct a comprehensive review of United States policy on landmines. The Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held last December in Cartagena, Colombia, makes this review particularly timely. It is also consistent with your commitment to reaffirm U.S. leadership in solving global problems and with your remarks in Oslo when you accepted the Nobel Peace Prize: "I am convinced that adhering to standards, international standards, strengthens those who do, and isolates and weakens those who don't."

These indiscriminate weapons are triggered by the victim, and even those that are designed to self-destruct after a period of time (so-called "smart" mines) pose a risk of being triggered by U.S. forces or civilians, such as a farmer working in the fields or a young child. It is our understanding that the United States has not exported anti-personnel mines since 1992, has not produced anti-personnel mines since 1997, and has not used anti-personnel mines since 1991. We are also proud that the United States is the world's largest contributor to humanitarian demining and rehabilitation programs for landmine survivors.

In the ten years since the Convention came into force, 158 nations have signed including the United Kingdom and other ISAF partners, as well as Iraq and Afghanistan which, like Colombia, are parties to the Convention and have suffered thousands of mine casualties. The Convention has led to a dramatic decline in the use, production, and export of anti-personnel mines.

We note that our NATO allies have addressed their force protection needs in accordance with their obligations under the Convention. We are also mindful that anti-personnel mines pose grave dangers to civilians, and that avoiding civilian casualties and the anger and resentment that result has become a key priority in building public support for our mission in Afghanistan. Finally, we are aware that anti-personnel mines in the Korean DMZ are South Korean mines, and that the U.S. has alternative munitions that are not victim-activated.

We believe the Administration's review should include consultations with the Departments of Defense and State as well as retired senior U.S. military officers and diplomats, allies such as Canada and the United Kingdom that played a key role in the negotiations on the Convention, Members of Congress, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and other experts on landmines, humanitarian law and arms control.

We are confident that through a thorough, deliberative review the Administration can identify any obstacles to joining the Convention and develop a plan to overcome them as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



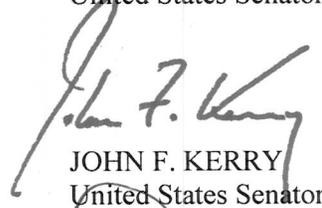
PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator



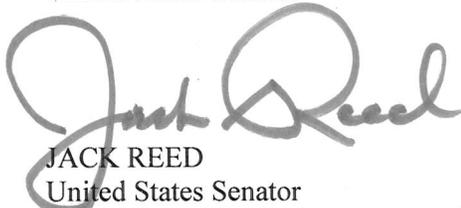
GEORGE V. VOINOVICH
United States Senator



RICHARD G. LUGAR
United States Senator



JOHN F. KERRY
United States Senator



JACK REED
United States Senator



ORRIN G. HATCH
United States Senator



DANIEL K. INOUE
United States Senator



CARL LEVIN
United States Senator



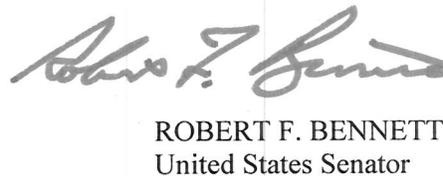
OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
United States Senator



CHARLES E. SCHUMER
United States Senator



JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN
United States Senator



ROBERT F. BENNETT
United States Senator



JEFF BINGAMAN
United States Senator



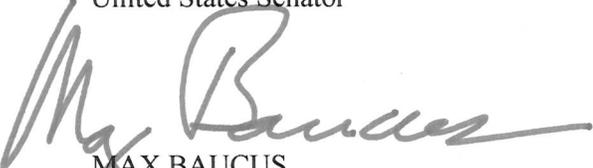
DIANNE FEINSTEIN
United States Senator



SUSAN M. COLLINS
United States Senator



BEN NELSON
United States Senator



MAX BAUCUS
United States Senator



LISA MURKOWSKI
United States Senator



JUDD GREGG
United States Senator



ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator



ARLEN SPECTER
United States Senator



BARBARA A. MIKUSLI
United States Senator



SHELDON WHITEHOUSE
United States Senator



CHRISTOPHER J. DODD
United States Senator



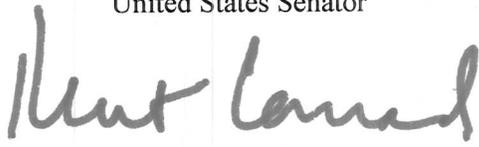
HARRY REID
United States Senator



SHERROD BROWN
United States Senator



BENJAMIN L. CARDIN
United States Senator



KENT CONRAD
United States Senator



MIKE CRAPO
United States Senator



BILL NELSON
United States Senator



RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senator



PATTY MURRAY
United States Senator



RON WYDEN
United States Senator



BLANCHE L. LINCOLN
United States Senator



BYRON DORGAN
United States Senator



MARK WARNER
United States Senator



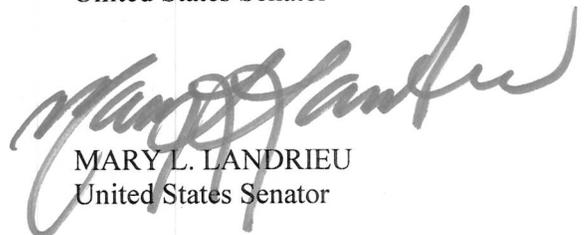
EVAN BAYH
United States Senator



GEORGE S. LEMIEUX
United States Senator



MICHAEL F. BENNET
United States Senator



MARY L. LANDRIEU
United States Senator



RUSSELL D. FEINGOLD
United States Senator



TIM JOHNSON
United States Senator



MARIA CANTWELL
United States Senator



THOMAS R. CARPER
United States Senator

HERB KOHL
United States Senator

KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND
United States Senator

ROBERT C. BYRD
United States Senator

FRANK R. LAUTENBERG
United States Senator

JON TESTER
United States Senator

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, IV
United States Senator

EDWARD E. KAUFMAN
United States Senator

DANIEL K. AKAKA
United States Senator

MARK L. PRYOR
United States Senator

KAY R. HAGAN
United States Senator

TOM UDALL
United States Senator

JEANNE SHAHEEN
United States Senator

CLAIRE MCCASKILL
United States Senator

AL FRANKEN
United States Senator

MARK UDALL
United States Senator

JEFF MERKLEY
United States Senator



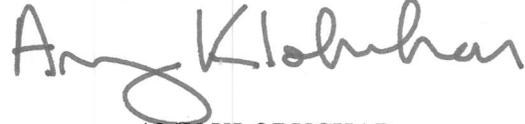
DEBBIE STABENOW
United States Senator



ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.
United States Senator



MARK BEGICH
United States Senator



AMY KLOBUCHAR
United States Senator



TOM HARKIN
United States Senator



BARBARA BOXER
United States Senator



ROLAND W. BURRIS
United States Senator



BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator