



Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Patricia Jursik, District 8

AN OPEN LETTER TO SENATOR RON JOHNSON

The Honorable Ron Johnson
U.S. Senator
517 East Wisconsin Avenue
Suite 408
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Senator Johnson,

I strongly object to your having signed the letter that was sent to the Iranian Government in the midst of negotiations by the executive branch to stop Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. You did not represent me or the many people who pray for peace in the Middle East. An agreement to keep Iran from developing nuclear weapons is imperative, and the actions of you and 46 of your Republican colleagues only served to undermine that goal.

Please know my comments are partially informed by a semester-long study group through Sacred Heart Seminary in 2013. We explored the history of relations between religious groups as they affect the State of Israel and the Holy Land. This study culminated with a trip to Israel and included sessions at the Hartman Institute, a well-respected inter-religious study organization, and three days of seminars at Yad Vashem.

I applauded Pope Francis for his gesture last summer of going first to the newly built Separation Barrier that separates Palestinians from Jews. Only later did the Pope visit the Western Wall, a holy site for Jews, Christians and Muslims. The Pope understood the symbolism of his gesture. To have first kissed this wall of separation was the Pope's nod to the Palestinian suffering. Anyone visiting the Western Wall goes through security that rivals the security screens in American airports. This security is symbolic too; the three religions comprised of the children of the same Creator have yet to find ways to resolve their sibling rivalries without violence.

Your hawkish ways are not helpful in the search for peace. While I do not pretend to be privy to the complicated negotiations that are taking place at your level or that of the Secretary of State, I do know that these talks are filled with historic rivalries, jealousies and claims to rights that remain unresolved throughout the centuries. Your petty political actions demean the very office to which you have been elected and denigrates your oath of office. Please desist from embarrassing the people of the State of Wisconsin by interfering with the clear mandate of the executive branch.

Sincerely,

Patricia Jursik
Milwaukee County Supervisor, Dist. 8