

United States Senate

16 November 2016

Chairman Bob Goodlatte
House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member John Conyers
House Judiciary Committee
2426 Rayburn House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers,

Thank you for taking the time to thoroughly evaluate and consider the Judgement Fund Transparency and Terrorism Financing Prevention Act. This important legislation is a protection of American taxpayer interests against the threats of international terrorism and it is necessary to reassert Congress' power of the purse in the face of Executive Branch overreach.

As you are aware, Senator Deb Fischer and I introduced the Judgement Fund Transparency and Terrorism Financing Prevention Act in July of this year in light of the appalling transfer of \$1.7 billion in taxpayer monies by the Obama Administration to the Islamic Republic of Iran. While \$400 million of total \$1.7 billion was taken out of a DOD escrow account, \$1.3 billion was withdrawn from the taxpayer-funded Judgement Fund, which is administered by the Treasury Department.

The Obama Administration has made clear that the Islamic Republic of Iran is the world's foremost state-sponsor of terrorism.¹ Hence, it is clearly an egregious abuse of executive authority over Treasury's Judgement Fund to pay out more than a billion dollars of taxpayer funds to the world's largest state-sponsor of terrorism – and in cash, no less, which is untraceable.

While we cannot track exactly where the total \$1.7 billion in cash to Iran has gone, we do know that the Iran's Guardian Council in May 2016 approved a budget which directed the central bank to redirect the exact amount President Obama gave the Iranians, \$1.7 billion, to the Iranian military.² The American people clearly did not intend for their money to be used in this way, so it is necessary for lawmakers to exercise their authority over all federal spending to limit such abuses from occurring in the future, regardless of the political party in the White House.

What this legislation does is two simple things.

First, it provides an added layer of transparency over all payouts from Treasury's Judgement Fund so that taxpayers know when, what, and why their government uses their money to settle lawsuits brought against it.

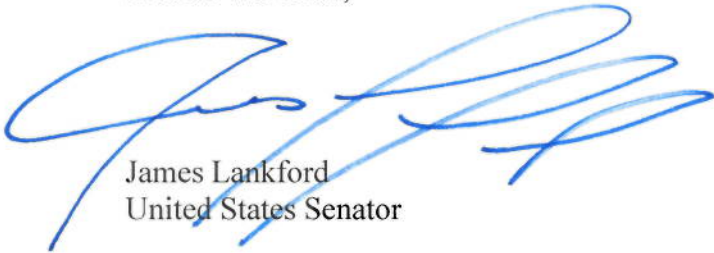
¹ "Country Reports on Terrorism 2015," Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257513.htm>

² Saeed Ghasseminejad, "Iran Doubles Down on its Military Budget," Foundation for Defense of Democracies, <http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/saeed-ghasseminejad-iran-doubles-down-on-its-military-budget/>

Additionally, because President Obama used the authority to disburse taxpayer funds to the world's largest state-sponsor of terrorism, the bill prohibits any payments being made out of the Judgement Fund to any state-sponsor of terrorism. This is a commonsense measure that will protect American taxpayers against irrational and wasteful uses of their hard-earned dollars.

Thank you again for using your platform to ensure American taxpayer's investment in their government is used appropriately and transparently.

In God We Trust,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Lankford', is written over the typed name and title.

James Lankford
United States Senator