

[46 key lawmakers sign anti-Palestinian incitement letter](#)

By Jordan Fabian - 03/31/11 04:01 PM ET

A bipartisan congressional letter condemning Palestinian incitement of violence against Israel gained 46 signatures from key members of Congress, according to a list of signers obtained by The Hill.

The letter, circulated by Reps. Steve Rothman (D-N.J.) and Steve Austria (R-Ohio) and first obtained by The Hill, urges President Obama to pressure the Palestinian Authority to to eradicate terrorist elements, join peace negotiations with the Israelis and root out "all vestiges of incitement."

Twenty-seven senators endorsed a companion letter in the upper chamber.

The letter, which began circulating two weeks ago, comes in response to a terror attack on a Jewish family living in the West Bank and a bombing at Jerusalem's central bus station, both of which occurred this month.

Organizers circulated the letter to members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the House Appropriations Foreign Operations subcommittee, two panels that play a key role in overseeing Israel-Palestinian peace negotiations. Large majorities of both panels signed the letter.

J Street, an alternative Israel lobby, objected to the tone of the letter, saying that while it is appropriate to protest instances of Palestinian incitement, its sole focus on Palestinian activity instead of incorporating Israeli problems is unhelpful to renewing peace negotiations between the two sides.

"This letter falls short of that goal, containing material omissions and misrepresentations of fact and presenting a biased and inaccurate picture of the current status of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," the group said in a statement.

Before the Rothman-Austria letter was released, J Street had helped organize a letter on aid to Israel and the Palestinians, which Reps. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) and Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.) circulated.

That letter urges a more even-handed approach and gained many more signers: 116 members, almost all of whom are Democrats.

But a Democratic aide who helped organize the Rothman-Austria letter explained that it is intended to be more limited in scope and that J Street's opposition to it helped attract more signers than organizers anticipated.

"J Street did not get a majority of these two committees and this letter did," said the aide, who requested anonymity. "The fact that J Street attacked the letter helped get more members of Congress to sign on."

The aide noted that Schakowsky, a lead signer of the J Street letter, also endorsed the Rothman-Austria letter. In total, eight J Street signers also endorsed the Rothman-Austria letter.

J Street did not immediately respond to a request for further comment.

Below is the list of members who signed the letter from Rothman and Austria (asterisk denotes members who also signed J Street letter):

House Foreign Affairs Committee Republicans:

Chris Smith, New Jersey

Dan Burton, Indiana

Dana Rohrabacher, California

Donald Manzullo, Illinois

Ed Royce, California

Steve Chabot, Ohio

Mike Pence, Indiana

Joe Wilson, South Carolina

Connie Mack, Florida

Michael McCaul, Texas

Ted Poe, Texas

Gus Bilirakis, Florida

Jean Schmidt, Ohio

Bill Johnson, Ohio

David Rivera, Florida

Tom Marino, Pennsylvania

Jeff Duncan, South Carolina

Renee Ellmers, North Carolina

House Foreign Affairs Committee Democrats:

Gary Ackerman, New York

Brad Sherman, California

Eliot Engel, New York

Russ Carnahan, Missouri\*

Albio Sires, New Jersey

Ted Deutch, Florida

Dennis Cardoza, California

Ben Chandler, Kentucky\*

Brian Higgins, New York

Chris Murphy, Connecticut\*

Frederica Wilson, Florida\*

William Keating, Massachusetts

House Appropriations Foreign Ops subcommittee Republicans:

Frank Wolf, Virginia

Tom Cole, Oklahoma

Mario Diaz-Balart, Florida

Charles Dent, Pennsylvania

Steve Austria, Ohio

House Appropriations Foreign Ops subcommittee Democrats:

Nita Lowey, New York, Ranking Member

Jesse Jackson, Jr., Illinois\*

Adam Schiff, California\*

Steve Rothman, New Jersey

Others:

Shelley Berkley, D-Nevada

Patrick Tiberi, R-Ohio

Gary Peters, D-Michigan

Henry Waxman, D-California\*

Robert Dold, R-Illinois

Jan Schakowsky, D-Illinois\*

Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Washington