# Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 20, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to you to ask that you withdraw your nomination of Mr. George Tsunis, Esq. to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway.

As a founding member of NATO, Norway is a key partner to the U.S. in the areas of trade, energy, and national security. Trade with Norway totaled $16 billion in 2012. Norway also plays a critical role in energy development and security, serving as the world's second largest exporter of natural gas and seventh largest exporter of oil. Norway has also provided support to U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

During his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in January, Mr. Tsunis exhibited an embarrassing lack of knowledge of Norway including admitting he has never visited the country, insulting part of the coalition government, and being unable to answer even a basic question about new opportunities for cooperation between our two countries. Mr. Tsunis further demonstrated this ignorance by believing that Norway, as a monarchy, has a president. His ill-informed comments deeply offended several Norwegian officials and have caused many to doubt his ability to serve as an effective ambassador.

In the wake of Russian aggression in the region, it is important that we nominate a knowledgeable U.S. Ambassador with a deep understanding of Norway's culture and political-system. It is imperative that the U.S. Ambassador to Norway be a respected individual capable of the great responsibility the position requires. The answers provided by Mr. Tsunis clearly demonstrate that he is unqualified for this position and may damage an important international bond if confirmed.

Mr. President, we believe that you would serve the Norwegian-American community well by withdrawing Mr. Tsunis's name and nominating somebody that will help our relationship continue to grow and thrive.

Sincerely,

Erik Paulsen
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

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