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UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ROSA L. DELAURO

3RD DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

September 14, 2016

CO-CHAIR, DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND  
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FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION,  
AND RELATED AGENCIES

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Northwest  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

I write to urge you to sign the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA), which was passed out of both chambers of Congress on by voice vote.

This weekend, the nation paused to reflect upon the 3,000 lives lost fifteen years ago to the horrendous terror attacks on September 11, 2001. For the survivors and families left behind, we must continue to pursue justice by holding foreign actors who had any part in aiding or abetting terrorist fully accountable. Victims of the attacks on September 11, and their families, deserve the right to bring foreign actors before U.S. courts to answer the evidence.

JASTA makes relatively small changes to the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act (FSIA). Under FSIA, it has been historically understood that the tort exception to foreign sovereign immunity provides for jurisdiction in instances where foreign states aid in terrorism on American soil. However, recent lower court rulings on September 11-related litigation have created new precedence that foreign governments are protected by sovereign immunity. JASTA will insure that FSIA is interpreted as Congress has intended in cases arising from terrorist attacks in the United States.

I appreciate the concerns that your Administration has raised about retaliation abroad, however, JASTA is narrowly tailored to not apply to American activities in other countries. JASTA affirms U.S. laws rejecting equivalence between terrorism and military actions abroad.

JASTA ensures that families of Americans who have been harmed by terrorism have the tools to seek justice against foreign governments who are complicit in acts of terror. I therefore urge you to sign the legislation and give the families of September 11 victims tools to seek justice in court.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rosa L. DeLauro".

Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress