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Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 29, 2006

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madame Secretary,


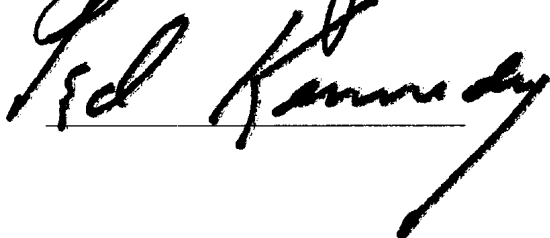
Recently, noted Western Sahara pro-democracy leader, Aminatou Haidar, came to Washington to describe to Members of Congress, representatives of international human rights organizations and officials at the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor the mistreatment that she and others have endured as a result of their nonviolent support of a referendum for self-determination.

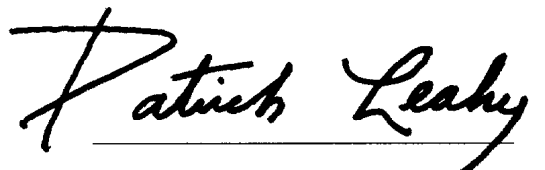
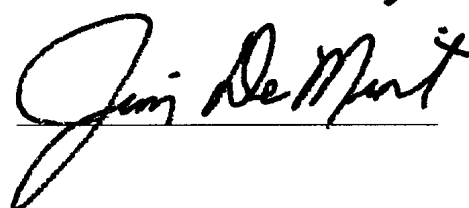
We are informed that efforts to expand the United Nations' mandate in the Western Sahara to include human rights have been opposed by the Government of France. We believe such an expansion is urgently needed, and we respectfully request the Department to vigorously pursue this matter with French authorities. We also ask that you urge the Moroccan Government to respect the rights of free expression and association of the people of the Western Sahara, and to end the excessive use of force by Moroccan security forces and the wrongful detention of individuals like Ms. Haidar.

The situation in the Western Sahara will remain unresolved until its people can freely, democratically, and peacefully determine its future through a referendum. In the meantime, it is essential that the United States makes every effort to ensure that Morocco, a major recipient of U.S. economic and military assistance, respects human rights.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Norma Fiegel

Ronald Payne

Zach Wemp

Ed Royce

Barbara Lee

John Boozman

Betty McCollum

Ashley Jackson Lee

Wayne T. Gilchrest

Cobby L. Lust

Chris Smith

Chaka Fattah

Shirley E. Watson

Robin Hayes

Joseph Pitts

Julia Carson

Bennie A. Thompson

Dan Rostenkowski

Robert B. Adkitt
