

September 9, 2026

The Michigan Senate Contest
An Open Letter from Jewish-American Public Policy and Foreign Policy Specialists

As Jewish Americans who have been deeply engaged professionally on issues of public policy and international affairs in government, the private sector, the nonprofit community, and academia, we write to strongly support the election of Michigan Senate candidate Dr. Abdul El-Sayed.

Most Jewish Americans have values that align with Dr. El-Sayed's principled commitments that are the centerpiece of his campaign: access to healthcare as a right and not a privilege; economic security for all, including affordable housing and a tax system that asks more from the wealthy; and advocacy for civil rights and the rule of law. Dr. El-Sayed holds the view that government can be a force for good as it can help expand opportunities, protect rights, and advance well-being. Dr. El-Sayed's values and views are in the tradition of Michigan's most esteemed public figures, like Carl Levin, John Conyers, and Debbie Stabenow, among others.

Although most Jewish Americans can easily support Dr. El-Sayed's domestic agenda, his foreign policy positions and statements on Israel and Iran have been a concern for many. But his positions are much less outside the mainstream of the contemporary foreign-policy debate than some of the charged rhetoric surrounding his candidacy might suggest. Dr. El-Sayed has affirmed the importance of "equal rights to peace, dignity, and self-determination for Jewish Israelis and Palestinians alike," acknowledged the horror of October 7, condemned all forms of antisemitism, and been highly critical of Israel's war in Gaza and abuses in the West Bank. And while some of us may not share Dr. El-Sayed's position opposing U.S. arms transfers to Israel under current conditions, we recognize that he has consistently articulated that stance as part of a broader commitment to applying the same human rights and international law standards to every country.

Dr. El-Sayed also supported the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between Iran and the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, China, and the European Union (JCPOA), which sharply limited Iran's nuclear program. In 2018 President Trump withdrew the United States from the agreement and has now embarked on war with Iran that has failed to achieve any of the administration's stated objectives, has dramatically eroded U.S. power and influence in the region and the world, is causing multiple crises in the United States and the global economy, has caused injuries to more than 750 U.S. soldiers and deaths of some 18 service members, and has killed more than 1700 innocent Iranians, including schoolgirls.

When asked about the war, Dr. El-Sayed commented that "I'm never going to defend the Iranian regime. But I am going to defend the idea that we probably shouldn't be fighting wars we don't know how to get out of." Most Americans share this perspective, and we need voices like those of Dr. El-Sayed, who will bring prudence and sound judgment to the Senate on critical matters of war and peace.

Our opposition to Mike Rogers is nearly as important as our support for Abdul El-Sayed. Mr. Rogers strongly endorsed legislation last year that reduced Affordable Care Act coverage for millions of Americans, weakened Medicaid and cut food assistance to less affluent citizens, and provided tax breaks to the very rich. In a statement that is inexplicable in view of the legislation's impact on Americans who are working harder and earning less, he praised Donald Trump for delivering a "monumental victory for hard working families."

We are also deeply concerned and alarmed that Mr. Rogers has warmly and enthusiastically praised Donald Trump, and that Mr. Rogers has failed to publicly condemn or even criticize particularly bigoted and inflammatory statements about ethnic and national communities in the United States and abroad, as well as other actions by the president that have demonstrated shocking disregard for basic decency. As of September 2026, Mr. Rogers has been silent on President Trump's sweeping pardons and commutations for January 6 defendants and his order to dismiss pending cases, actions affecting more than 1,500 people charged or convicted in connection with the January 6 attack on the Capitol. This includes those convicted of the most heinous acts, causing grievous bodily harm to law enforcement officers.

This failure to condemn Donald Trump's flagrant misuse of the pardon power is disqualifying in itself. It also suggests that Mr. Rogers, if elected, would not be inclined to oppose any number of future presidential actions that risk further undermining our democracy. Moreover, Mr. Rogers' recent suggestion that retired or off-duty police officers serve as poll watchers in Detroit, coupled with his observation that while they could not wear uniforms, they could open their jackets so that their badges would be visible, suggests a tolerance for the kind of intimidation that we fear may characterize federal action in this November's elections.

Finally, and in contrast to Dr. El-Sayed's position, we believe that Mr. Rogers' vocal support of Donald Trump's decision to take our country to war in Iran reflects extraordinarily poor judgment. In February, Mr. Rogers strongly defended U.S. military action and months later, despite its costs and the continuing conflict, he maintained—without discernible evidence—that "we are better off today than we were when it started." Mr. Rogers and President Trump are among a decided minority of Americans who share that assessment.

For all these reasons, we encourage voters in Michigan to make Abdul El-Sayed your next senator.

Respectfully submitted,

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