

BRAD R. WENSTRUP
2ND DISTRICT OHIO

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS'
AFFAIRS

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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

February 6, 2018

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President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

First and foremost, thank you for your leadership in formally withdrawing from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). I agree that their anti-Israel actions and sentiments threaten our longstanding ally, and counter steps taken to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace. In 2011, UNESCO voted to admit the Palestinian Authority into their organization, and just this past year, in 2017, the organization declared the West Bank city of Hebron a Palestinian World Heritage Site "in danger." The site, which includes the Tomb of the Patriarchs, is revered by Jews, Muslims, and Christians, and its designation as a Palestinian site ignores the site's Jewish history and importance. As we've seen, the Palestinian Authority's actions in UNESCO are a destabilizing force on peace negotiations and add volatility to an already unstable region. While the U.S., pursuant to federal law, has not contributed funds to UNESCO since 2011, formal withdrawal demonstrates U.S. leadership and resolve on behalf of our ally Israel.

That being said, the Department of State's announcement on withdrawal stated a U.S. commitment to "remain engaged with UNESCO as a non-member state in order to contribute U.S. views, perspectives and expertise...including the protection of world heritage, advocating for press freedoms, and promoting scientific collaboration and education." I understand that the Administration must now determine how they wish to remain involved with the organization and to what extent the U.S. will remain engaged.

Of particular interest to my district is the World Heritage List, and specifically the nomination of two tentative sites in Ohio. The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, including Newark Earthworks, Fort Ancient Earthworks, and the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, as well as Serpent Mound, both of which made the Department of Interior World Heritage Tentative List in 2008, are exemplary portrayals of American Indian culture in Ohio. I continue to hear from local chambers of commerce, large employers, small business owners, and involved citizens on the importance and value of these sites, and the benefit that World Heritage designation would bring to conserving and highlighting their cultural significance.

I understand that the two sites in my district are at very different stages in the application and nomination process; it is my hope that should the U.S. continue to partake in the nomination of World Heritage sites now and into the future, that you consider Hopewell Ceremonial

Earthworks and Serpent Mound, respectively. Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to your decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Brad R. Wenstrup". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the last name.

BRAD R. WENSTRUP
Member of Congress

CC: Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke