April 15, 2011

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to you as a newly elected member of the House of Representatives and I wish to add my voice in support of clemency for Jonathan Pollard. As Americans we are united in the fundamental belief that "Justice, only justice, shall you pursue" (Deuteronomy 16:20), which rests at the core of our moral principles and system of justice.

Mr. Pollard is currently serving his 26th year of a life sentence after pleading guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit espionage - passing classified information to an ally without intent to harm the United States. I certainly do not condone his crime, nor do I underestimate the gravity of the offense. But it is patently clear that the sentence was, and remains, terribly disproportionate and (as several federal judges have noted) constitutes a gross miscarriage of justice.

I recently returned from visiting Mr. Pollard in prison and after more than two and a half decades in prison, his health is declining. He has repeatedly expressed remorse for his actions, and by all accounts has served as a model inmate. If Mr. Pollard were to be granted clemency he would be united with his wife, Esther, in Israel where he has vowed to live the remainder of his life in peace.

Commuting his sentence to time served would be a wholly appropriate exercise of your power of clemency, as well as a matter of basic fairness and American justice. It would also represent a clear act of compassion and reconciliation – a sign of hope much needed in today's world of tension and turmoil.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,

Michael Grimm
Member of Congress
13th District of New York