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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2202

January 14, 2005

Mr. Roger Bryant, Director
United States Office of the
IOM/Iraq Out of Country Voting Program

FACSIMILE:

Dear Mr. Bryant:

I represent a large population of Iraqi Americans who reside in Michigan, and have worked closely with them over the years on a number of important issues. The Iraq election is of great concern to them at this time. While they are energized by the opportunity to participate in out-of-country voting, they are deeply frustrated with the IOM/OCV Program decision as it relates to their community members in California. I am writing to urge you to give special attention to their appeal to establish additional polling sites in San Diego and Modesto.

With about 30,000 Iraqi expatriates living in San Diego, it is the third largest population center of Iraqi Americans in the nation, following Detroit and Chicago. Those in the San Diego area will face a difficult burden in traveling hundreds of miles to register, and then vote, in Los Angeles. Similarly, those living in California's Central Valley and San Francisco Bay area will have to travel at least 400 miles to participate in the election. This poses a major inconvenience that they should not have to overcome. It seems to me this population should be accommodated in a fair and reasonable way, and allowed access to voting in San Diego and Modesto.

I urge you to expand the number of US cities designated in the OCV Program to include San Diego and Modesto. I realize the time constraints, but I believe the concerns for the California community are quite valid. I hope every effort will be given to providing them with a realistic opportunity for voting in the Iraq election.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Carl Levin

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