

Keith Ellison

for U.S. Congress

*To The Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers (MAP)
On the Occasion of Your 11th Annual Peace Celebration*

November 14, 2006

Dear friends,

First, thank you.

We just won a major victory. I got into the 5th Congressional District race because of my deep-seated belief that the War in Iraq specifically, and the Bush Administration's foreign policies generally, were wrong. You have been my friends, allies, my support.

We all put a lot of work into this election – and we prevailed. But we did much more than that. We showed that we are stronger when we join together to work on common goals rather than divide and conquer. We showed that people who believe everyone counts, and that peace should be the guiding principle of our nation, are in the majority. These are things of which we should be very proud.

Second, my regrets.

I wish I could be with you on this occasion – MAP's 11th Annual Peace Celebration. You are an inspiration: disparate groups coming together around things you all believe in... things like global solutions to global problems; respect for that globe as our home; a better future for all people through education, democracy, and responsible stewardship of resources; dialogue even when it's difficult; justice. We have Catholics and Lutherans alongside Presbyterians and Universalists; we have grandmothers alongside students; we have veterans alongside old war protesters. Enjoy the evening with each other.

Third, get back to work.

I don't know about you, but I'm a little tired after a grueling campaign. I enjoyed every minute of it, but I could use a couple more days off.

Nevertheless, our work really begins now. There is little doubt that the 110th Congress will be more receptive to our messages than the one that's packing up their offices right now. But we must still work very hard to ensure the right things happen.

We must get out of Iraq now. The U.S. military presence is the biggest impediment to peace; there is no doubt about this any longer. It's time for us to disengage militarily, bring aboard those who can actually help make and keep peace, and re-engage diplomatically.

Our leaders must once again embrace the U.S.'s diplomatic role elsewhere in the Middle East. The template set forth by the Roadmap for Peace still provides the best hope for achieving a two-state solution and lasting settlement for the Israeli and Palestinian people. We must re-engage here.

We must prevent further nuclear proliferation. North Korea and Iran should not have nuclear weapons. The U.S. has to accept the role our current administration played in bringing them to where they are, but it's most important that we go forward focused on ensuring the world remains safe from nuclear aggression.

We need to work for fair trade policies. Our nation needs a different approach to the global economy, a sort of New Deal that protects jobs and democracy here and contains specific mechanisms to raise wages and living standards in trading partner nations. In Congress I intend to be one of the prime movers for such change.

We are going to put the common good back at the center of what we do. I may be in Washington, but my priorities are with you. We have to work together; I look forward to it and hope you do, too.

See you soon,



Keith