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April 23, 1988

Ms. Sarah Rogers
47 Bartlett Avenue
Arlington, Massachusetts 02174

Dear Ms. Rogers:

Thank you for writing to convey your thoughts about continuing aid to the contras.

As you may know, I supported the Democratic package for contra aid when it was presented as the only alternative to a Republican package. I supported this legislation only to prevent the Republican substitute -- which allowed for the continuation of military aid and parts for aircraft -- from receiving consideration on the House floor. As a result of that vote, the Democratic aid package, which would have provided only humanitarian assistance for the contra forces, became the final bill for members to consider.

I voted against that package, as I have always voted against contra aid, because I believe the Nicaraguan people have a right to determine their own government. Six years of U.S.-backed civil war have accomplished nothing. Therefore, I believe the Nicaraguans should be given the chance to determine their own future through diplomacy.

Aid to the contras, rather than discouraging the Soviet Union's influence in Central America, only seems to urge that nation's government to send more weapons. Supplying the contras not only stimulates Soviet involvement, but it also justifies repressive measures by the Sandinistas as a defense tactic.