



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Northern Great Lakes Synod

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Bishop Emeritus
1991-1999

Rev. Harry S. Andersen

Bishop Emeritus
1987-1991



March 19, 2014

Senator Ron Johnson
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Johnson:

Thank you for your service to our republic. Your efforts make a difference in our nation. Today, I have a concern and a request. The Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by The Lutheran World Federation in East Jerusalem is facing a major financial crisis.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has run Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) for over 65 years. AVH provides life-saving care (specifically, providing oncology care not available elsewhere in Gaza or the West Bank).

A large percentage of AVH patients are referred to AVH by the Palestinian Authority (PA). The PA has not paid their bills to AVH in 14 months. The debt is now 25 million USD for AVH and nearly 40 million USD in total for the East Jerusalem and some West Bank hospitals. The debt is increasing 1.5 million USD each month for AVH. AVH bears the largest burden of this debt because of the expensive nature of the care.

Two hundred million USD already has been appropriated by Congress to the PA and is now available for disbursement by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). We wish to request that 40-50 million USD of that amount be designated for humanitarian health care in East Jerusalem. This would help to cover the 25 million USD debt that AVH is now bearing.

Here is my request. Could you contact USAID urging them to designate a portion of the \$200 million for bills the Palestinian Authority has already incurred related to health care?

In addition to the life-saving care provided by AVH, it also plays an important role in Palestinian institution and capacity building. The Hospital's life-saving work also can help maintain a favorable atmosphere amongst Palestinians for a final status agreement between them and the Israelis.

Your efforts to help in this life-saving work would be appreciated greatly by Lutherans, fellow Christians and all people of good will. Can you help us?

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Skrenes, Bishop