

Baptist leaders support Iran framework

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WASHINGTON (BNG)—Leaders of the [Cooperative Baptist Fellowship](#), the American Baptist Churches USA and the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America are among four-dozen Christian leaders who voiced support for a framework agreement to prevent Iran from building nuclear weapons.

They signed onto a full-page ad in *Roll Call* paid for by [Sojourners](#), a Washington-based social justice ministry founded and led by author and public theologian Jim Wallis.

☒ Suzii PaynterUnder a political understanding with the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, Russia and Germany, Iran promised to make drastic cuts to its nuclear program in return for the gradual lifting of sanctions.

Supporters of the plan say it could end a 13-year nuclear standoff, and might be a turning point in normalizing Iran's relationship to the West, which has been adversarial since the country's Islamic revolution of 1979. Opponents in Congress view the deal as soft on Iran.

CBF Executive Coordinator Suzii Paynter, American Baptist General Secretary Roy Medley and LeDayne McLeese Polaski, executive director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship, joined other faith leaders in welcoming the framework agreement. The faith leaders said the framework path is better than alternatives of increasing sanctions or engaging in military strikes against Iran.

While diplomacy never is perfect, they said, the nation has a "moral obligation" to pursue peaceful paths to achieve the goal of preventing Iran

from becoming a nuclear-armed state before creating another U.S. war with a Muslim country.

"As Christian leaders, we are telling our political leaders: It is imperative that you pursue this agreement with integrity, commitment and perseverance," the ad says. "We will be praying for you."