

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 24, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520-0099

Dear Madam Secretary:

We are writing at the outset of a new Congress to acknowledge your leadership in responding to human rights abuses targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals around the world. Indeed, your personal commitment to the issue was evident in your Pride address last June, when you reminded us all that “human rights are gay rights and gay rights are human rights.” As this new Congress sets out its foreign affairs and LGBT agendas, we hope you will continue to build on that commitment. In an effort to understand and better support the State Department’s work on these issues, we seek updates on some of the steps that you have previously outlined and look forward to working with you to situate this agenda within our country’s broader human rights, public diplomacy and international development priorities.

In the wake of the tragic murder of David Kato, a prominent LGBT human rights defender in Uganda, the importance of the State Department’s engagement on these issues cannot be more evident. David Kato’s work to champion human rights in Uganda was heroic, and his decision to challenge a tabloid that printed the names, photos and addresses of “alleged homosexuals” under the headline “Hang Them” was incredibly brave since his own name and face were on the cover. The Supreme Court of Uganda ruled in his favor, finding a violation of his privacy and ordering compensation and an injunction. The other two plaintiffs in that case have also faced security threats. The Administration’s strong statements following David Kato’s brutal murder, and noting recent murders of LGBT activists in Honduras, were important, and we commend you for your ongoing efforts to push for effective investigations and prosecutions in those cases. In that context, we would appreciate more detail on what assistance, if any, the United States is providing to the governments of Uganda and Honduras in those investigations.

In your Pride speech last June, you noted that “our regional bureaus are working closely with our embassies on [LGBT issues]. The Bureau of African Affairs has taken the lead by asking every embassy in Africa to report on the conditions of local LGBT communities. And I’m asking every regional bureau to make this issue a priority.” Could you provide additional details on the steps taken by the Bureau of African Affairs and by the other regional bureaus to respond to these issues with a systematic plan for engagement that is tailored to each region?

In that same speech, you noted that “we are elevating our human rights dialogues with other governments and conducting public diplomacy to protect the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and

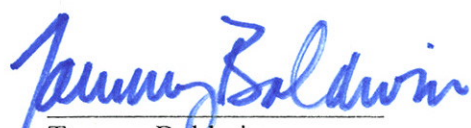
transgender persons.” Could you highlight what that means in practice in terms of public engagement by our embassies and by the State Department in Washington, and what the Department is doing to prepare our diplomats for the conduct of this dialogue?


You also noted that the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor has announced new grants to provide emergency aid to human rights defenders abroad who are at risk because of their work. We commend such front-line human rights support, including for those defending the human rights of the LGBT community. In addition, you stated that the U.S. would work to protect LGBT individuals who flee their homes or countries. We would appreciate more information on the progress made by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration to achieve this goal, as well as on resettlement procedures for LGBT refugees who face imminent danger.

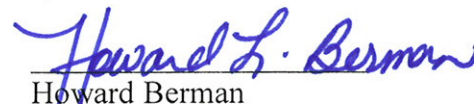
Finally, in previous correspondence with Congress, you have noted that the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor has established a task force on LGBT issues to enhance interdepartmental and interagency coordination. We would be interested to hear more on this process, and what efforts have been made to integrate these issues within the strategic planning process at the State Department and at the interagency level.

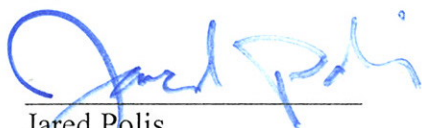
Again, we commend you on your leadership on this human rights issue. We recognize the effort of the State Department this past December to restore a reference to the targeted killings of individuals based on their sexual orientation in a UN human rights resolution on extrajudicial executions at the General Assembly, as well as specific reporting on these issues in the annual human rights report. We look forward to working with you to ensure that same level of committed diplomatic engagement in all regions of the world.

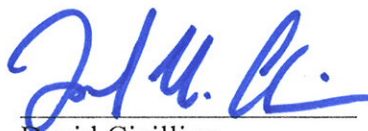
Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress

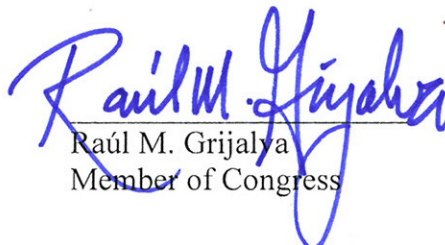

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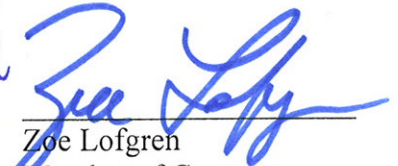
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Member of Congress


Sam Farr
Member of Congress

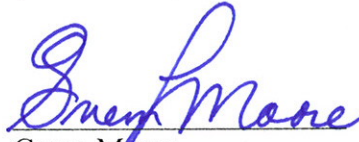
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Member of Congress

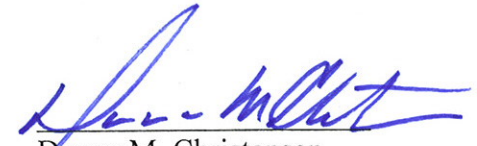

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Member of Congress


Doris O. Matsui
Member of Congress


Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

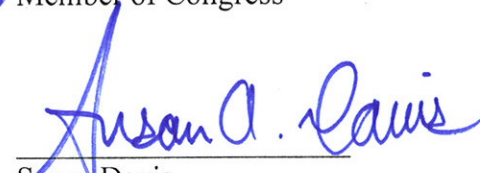

Laura Richardson
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

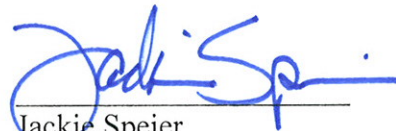

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