

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 14, 2014

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We appreciate your efforts to promote the basic human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals throughout your Administration, especially in your 2011 “Presidential Memorandum on International Initiatives to Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons.” We write to express our desire that you include in your Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Budget Request robust funding directed to support efforts to further protect the human rights of LGBT individuals around the world.

The protection of fundamental human rights is a cornerstone of American democracy and our relations with foreign countries. We believe that when people are targeted for violence and persecution their basic human rights are violated. About 80 countries explicitly outlaw same-sex relations with the threat of imprisonment, fines, and, in some countries, even death. Recently, disturbing efforts to target LGBT people and their families have passed and been signed into law in several countries around the world. Singling out LGBT people for criminalization, discrimination, and violence harms not only individuals but entire families, communities, and countries.

Since the 2011 Memorandum, there has been significant progress toward the inclusion of human rights of LGBT individuals in U.S. foreign aid programs run by the State Department and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). For example, this year we celebrated the appointment of the first Senior LGBT Coordinator at USAID, the highest Administration position to focus on the human rights of LGBT individuals. We were also pleased to see USAID release a strategic document entitled, “LGBT Vision for Action: Promoting and Supporting the Inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Individuals.” This Vision invests in building local civil society capacity and leveraging educational and messaging programs to reduce discrimination, stigmatization, and violence.

For our foreign diplomacy and development programs to be most effective, we must not only establish a vision, but we must also commit the full strength of additional resources toward effective implementation of our plan. We look forward to working with you as you continue to protect the human rights of LGBT individuals and hope you will request sufficient resources for the comprehensive implementation of the USAID LGBT Vision for Action as well as your own Memorandum of 2011.

Sincerely,



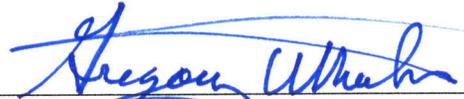
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Eliot L. Engel
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Alan S. Lowenthal
Member of Congress



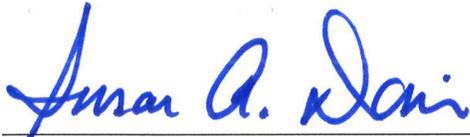
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Mark Takano
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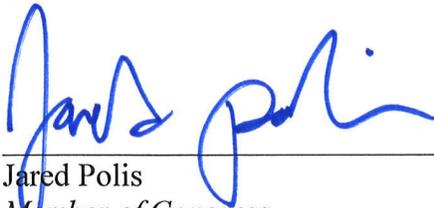
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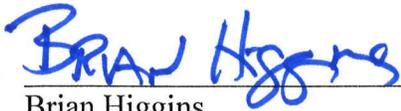
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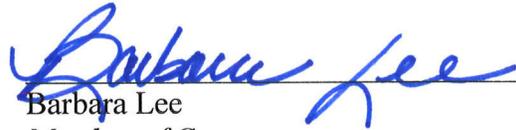
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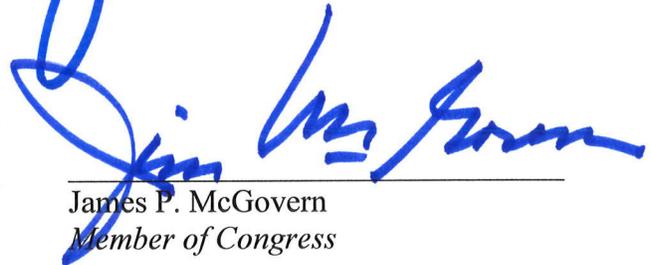
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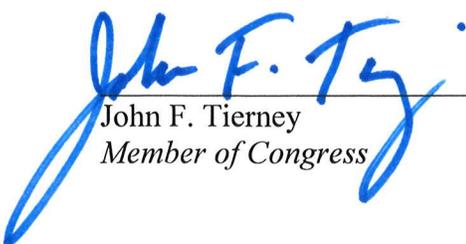
Derek Kilmer
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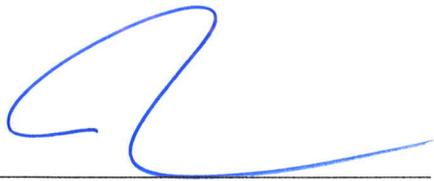
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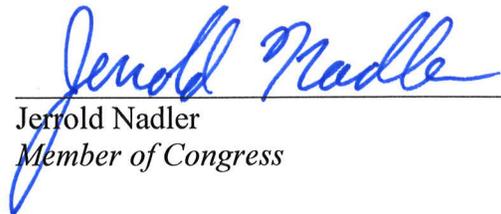
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James A. Himes
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Carolyn B. Maloney
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Jerrold Nadler
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Niki Tsongas
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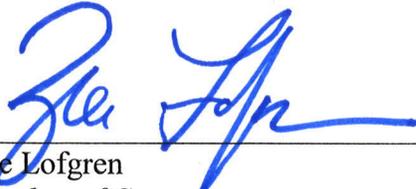
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Member of Congress



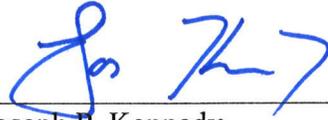
Jackie Speier
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Patrick Murphy
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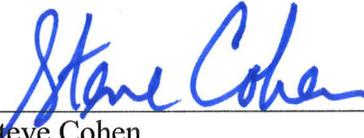
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



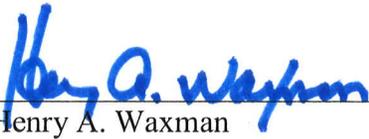
Joseph P. Kennedy
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Adam B. Schiff
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Steve Cohen
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Henry A. Waxman
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Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

CC:

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