

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 8, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We want to thank you for your leadership promoting the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals, including your Administration's appointment of Randy Berry as the first-ever Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBT Persons. We encourage you to continue efforts to ensure the human rights of all persons regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. We write to encourage you to take additional steps to ensure U.S. funds are not used to subsidize LGBT discrimination at home or abroad.

While we commend the Executive Order you issued on July 21, 2014 and believe this is important progress to protect against LGBT employment discrimination by contractors, we believe we must go further. The Executive Order does not apply to contractors hiring and doing business abroad. It does not apply to grantees. Moreover, the Executive Order does not prohibit those receiving U.S. funds from engaging in marketplace discrimination (*e.g.*, refusal of goods and services) against LGBT customers or suppliers.

U.S. foreign assistance is core to defending our national interests, creating stable, prosperous communities, and promoting human rights across the globe. The organizations that implement our assistance programs conduct invaluable work on a range of issues including global health, education, gender-based violence, and food security. LGBT individuals often represent those in most dire need of these services. Legally and socially sanctioned discrimination puts LGBT communities at high risk of diseases such as HIV/AIDS. LGBT youth are regularly thrown out of school and denied their right to education. During disasters it can be difficult for LGBT families to access emergency resources such as food aid. LGBT individuals, who are at heightened risk of violence in the best of circumstances, are particularly vulnerable when displaced or in refugee camps. In many countries, the criminalization attached to being LGBT means that people may be reluctant to seek care or other support, resulting in further suffering and violence. Given this reality, it is crucial that clear, consistent, and robust policies across the more than 20 agencies disbursing U.S. foreign assistance funds ensure non-discriminatory access to the benefits of those programs and services.

We are aware several individual agencies are working to close these gaps by developing policies to prohibit discrimination in service delivery by contractors and grantees receiving U.S. aid dollars. We welcome these efforts. We encourage you to make this an urgent, Administration-wide priority and coordinate across agencies to ensure a broad non-discrimination policy is implemented before the end of your Administration's tenure. In doing so, this would ensure LGBT people have access to the full range of services offered by U.S.-funded programs and would guarantee our foreign aid dollars are aligned with the values of promoting the human rights of marginalized people globally.

Again, thank you for your leadership on behalf of LGBT people worldwide. We look forward to partnering with you to make this important work a priority.

Sincerely,



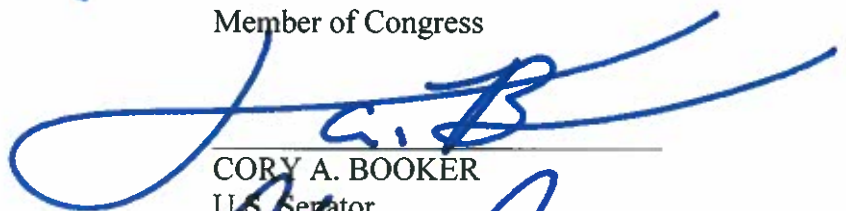
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U.S. Senator



ALAN LOWENTHAL
Member of Congress



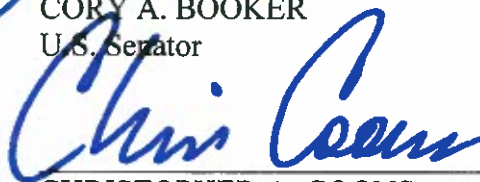
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CHRISTOPHER A. COONS
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RICHARD J. DURBIN
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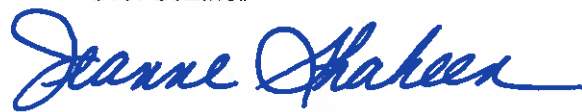
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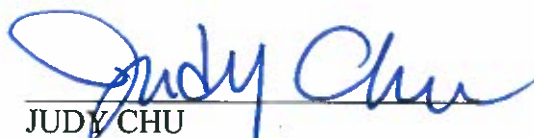
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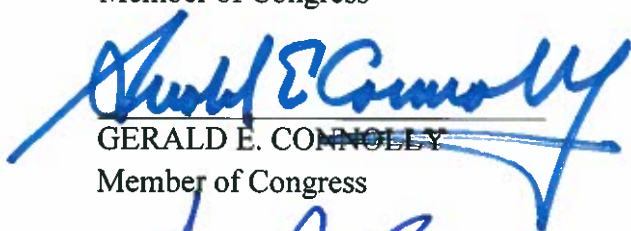
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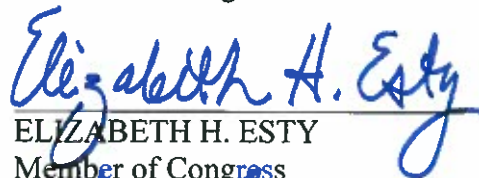
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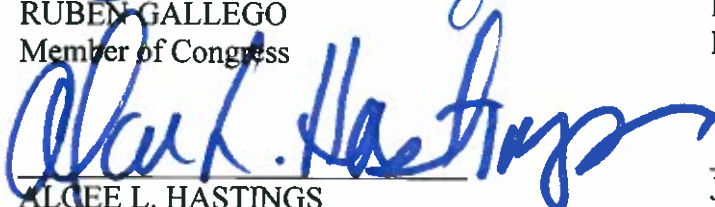
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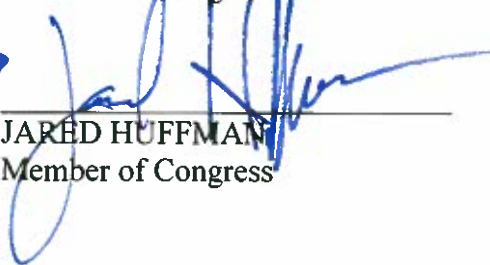
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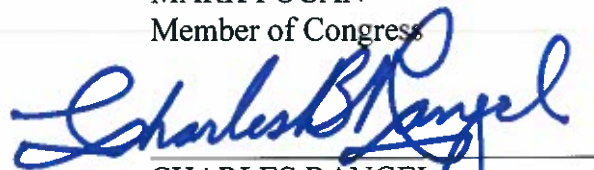

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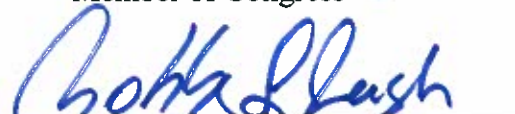

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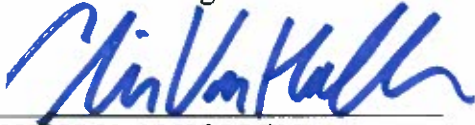
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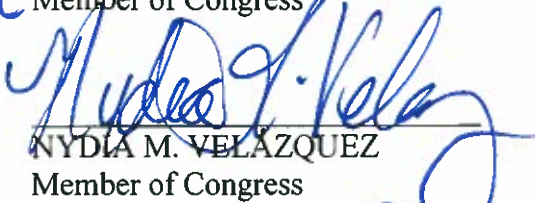
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