

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 3, 2017

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you carry out the responsibilities of the Office of the President, we in the Congress stand ready to work with you to ensure that America remains a leader in advocating for democracy and human rights. We urge your administration to make these issues a priority.

As you know, America has long been a leader in supporting individual rights. It was more than 240 years ago that the Founding Fathers declared that all are created equal and endowed with inalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These principles have successfully formed the backbone of the American experiment in self-government. The rights the Founders recognized are not by any means solely “American,” but rather are universal. Being fortunate to enjoy these freedoms ourselves, we have the moral imperative to promote democracy and human rights across the globe.

At a Senate Foreign Relations Committee subcommittee hearing earlier this year titled “Democracy and Human Rights: The Case for U.S. Leadership” human rights activists shared their stories of living under oppressive regimes. They made clear that they believe that the United States has a critical role to play in safeguarding the fundamental rights of all people.

A world that is more democratic, respects human rights, and abides by the rule of law strengthens the security, stability, and prosperity of America. History has demonstrated time-and-again that free societies are more likely to be at peace with one another. Constitutional democracies are also less likely to fail and become breeding grounds for instability, terrorism, and migration.

Democratic nations that respect good governance and the rights of their own citizens are also more likely to be economically successful, and to be stable and reliable trade and investment partners for the United States. Our economic partnerships with Japan, Germany, Taiwan, the Republic of Korea, and numerous other nations’ today stand as testament to the wisdom of far-sighted U.S. policy that seeks to develop good governance and strong democratic institutions as necessary enablers for strong economic partnerships as well.

As we have seen over the past decade, there is a creeping authoritarian resurgence across the globe, against which we are the bulwark for individual rights and freedoms. America, since its founding, has led this fight, not just for the rights of Americans found in the Constitution, but for the rights of all.

By elevating democracy and human rights to a prominent place on your foreign policy agenda you can make a measurable difference and make America safer, more prosperous, and more secure. There is longstanding and deep bipartisan Congressional commitment to advancing freedom around the world, just as Republican and Democratic administrations for decades have supported democracy and human rights, and we look forward to working with you on this important cause.

We ask that, as you continue to formulate your foreign and defense policies, you put the promotion of democracy and human rights front-and-center as a primary pillar of America's approach abroad. As we move forward with the process of holding confirmation hearings for your nominees to key foreign policy positions we will be assessing their commitment to uphold these important American values as they carry out our nation's foreign policy.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
U.S. Senator



Todd Young  
U.S. Senator



Edward J. Markey  
U.S. Senator



Cory Gardner  
U.S. Senator



Robert Menendez  
U.S. Senator



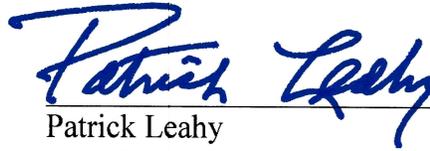
Susan M. Collins  
U.S. Senator



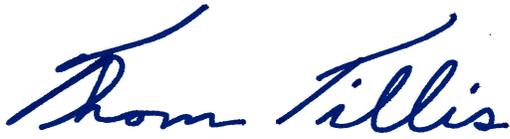
Richard J. Durbin  
U.S. Senator



Roger F. Wicker  
U.S. Senator



Patrick Leahy  
U.S. Senator



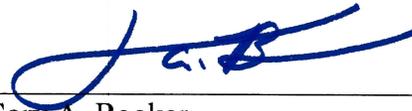
Thom Tillis  
U.S. Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
U.S. Senator



Lisa Murkowski  
U.S. Senator



Cory A. Booker  
U.S. Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
U.S. Senator