

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 6, 2018

The Honorable Rex Tillerson
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

We welcome your remarks during your February 12th visit to Egypt that the United States “supports a transparent and credible electoral process, and all citizens being given the right and the opportunity to participate freely and fairly.” The Egyptian people should have the right to vote for their next President without fear. We are concerned that recent developments— such as the intimidation and detention of all credible opposition candidates and the restrictive environment for non-governmental organizations and media— will make it impossible for the Egyptian people to participate in a legitimate democratic exercise. In a further escalation, the Egyptian government in recent days has advanced legal cases against opposition figures, who believe they are being denied a real choice in the election and are calling for a boycott.

It is therefore vital that you continue to speak publically and convey messages privately on the importance of credible elections so that not only the Egyptian government, but also the Egyptian people, understand that the United States stands for democratic governance and fundamental freedoms. As Egypt’s second electoral cycle under its new constitution approaches, it is critical that the government fulfill its commitment to the Egyptian people by ensuring that elections are free, fair, and credible.

We believe that Egypt remains a critical strategic partner of the United States. We support your Department’s efforts to seek out opportunities for increasing security cooperation to address Egypt’s legitimate security challenges, and U.S. support for Egypt’s economic recovery and growth. However, absent progress on the political front, we fear that Egypt’s security and economic gains will not be sustainable in the medium to long term. And, unfortunately, the current policies of the Egyptian government are chilling civil society, targeting non-violent political opposition, and further exacerbating concerns regarding the judicial process and rule of law.

On January 23, State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert stated that, “We support a timely and credible electoral process and believe it needs to include the opportunity for citizens to participate freely in Egyptian elections. We believe that that should include addressing restrictions on freedom of association, peaceful assembly, and also expression.”


We hope that these messages were underscored during your meetings in Cairo, and we look forward to a response from you that includes your frank assessment of whether the current electoral process is timely and credible, and whether all Egyptian citizens will be able to participate freely. We also welcome your assessment as to the broader human rights situation in Egypt, including the rights of Egyptians to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and


expression. Moreover, we hope to better understand your Department's posture toward Egypt's elections, such as whether a statement on the electoral process will be issued following the elections.


The Egyptian people are entitled to determine their own destiny, including selecting their political leadership without fear or intimidation of their government. We hope you will be a private and public advocate for their rights, which is fully consistent with our values and in U.S. strategic interests.

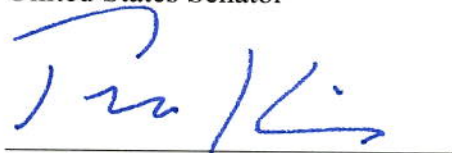
Sincerely,

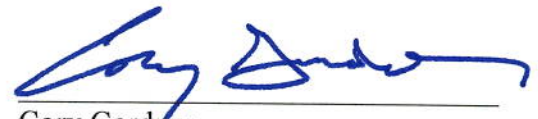

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United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator

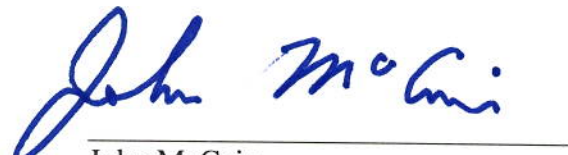

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

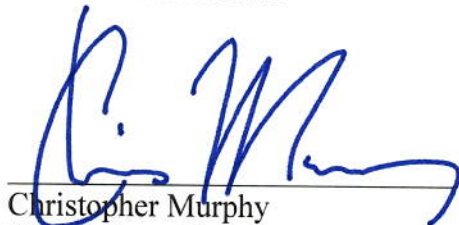

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United States Senator


Tim Kaine
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Christopher Murphy
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