

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 26, 2012

The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Madam Secretary,

We write to express our concern regarding the recent increase in violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals in Honduras. We have long supported your efforts to respond to human rights violations and abuses of LGBT persons around the world. As you have said, “this effort is one of the most urgent and important human rights struggles of all times.” It appears, however, that our efforts in Honduras are failing.

Honduras is currently experiencing institutional breakdown, widespread drug trafficking, and judicial impunity, which have led to unprecedented levels of criminal violence. Of particular concern are recent reports which have indicated that members of the LGBT community have increasingly been victims of violent hate crimes. Therefore, we would like to know what steps you are taking to ensure that this violence will end, and what steps you are taking to ensure that the government of Honduras successfully resolves the cases of murdered LGBT individuals.

As the State Department’s 2011 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices reported, the Honduran law enforcement has been complicit in human rights abuses. The report states that “the Honduran police force had deep-seated and unaddressed corruption problems, and police officers targeted vulnerable persons, including LGBT people.” These problems persist. According to human rights organizations in Honduras, 70 LGBT Hondurans have been murdered since the June 2009 coup. Many of these cases have not been effectively investigated and remain unsolved. For example the report cites the case of Walter Trochez, which has been unresolved since 2009. The fact that these crimes continue to occur with impunity leads us to question whether the government of Honduras has the will or the ability to bring these perpetrators to justice.

Therefore, we call on you to urge the government of Honduras to take immediate steps to investigate and resolve these crimes. Given the level of U.S. support and assistance for the Honduran government, it is vital that we ensure they protect the human rights of all their citizens, especially vulnerable populations like the LGBT community.

In addition, we would like detailed information about the steps being taken to resolve cases like Walter Trochez’s. While we understand that the State Department has offered to aid the Special Victims Task Force—which was intended to bring to justice the

perpetrators of these cases of egregious violence against the LGBT community in Honduras—targeted violence continues unabated. Just last month another national LGBT leader, Erick Martínez Ávila was beaten and strangled to death. Mr. Martínez Ávila was a radio journalist and the first ever openly gay candidate to run for Congress in Honduras.

Finally, we request information about the ten LGBT murder cases that U.S. investigative and prosecutorial advisors helped the Special Victims Unit close. It is essential to know the names of the victims whose cases have been closed, and the outcome in each case, in order to ensure accountability for the resources the U.S. has allocated for the Special Victims Unit and for the Honduran LGBT community to know that these cases are being effectively prosecuted with U.S. assistance.

Given the pervasive threat facing LGBT persons in Honduras we urge you to respond with haste, so that together we can measure of the effectiveness of the government of Honduras in bringing accountability for the murders of LGBT Hondurans. This will help to guarantee that President Obama's directive to ensure all U.S. government agencies engaged overseas "respond swiftly to abuses against LGBT persons" is rigorously implemented.

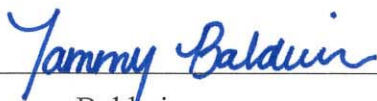
Sincerely,



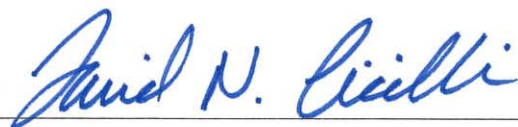
Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Barney Frank
Member of Congress



Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



David Cicilline
Member of Congress



Howard Berman
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress




Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



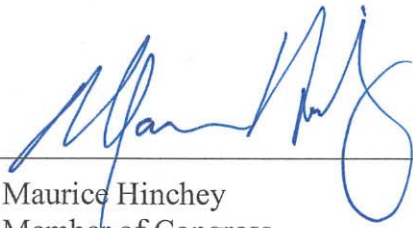
John Conyers
Member of Congress



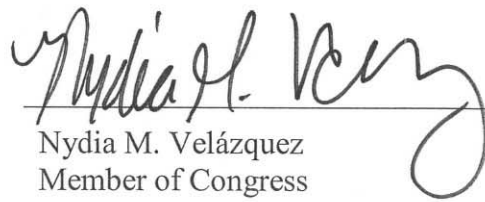
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



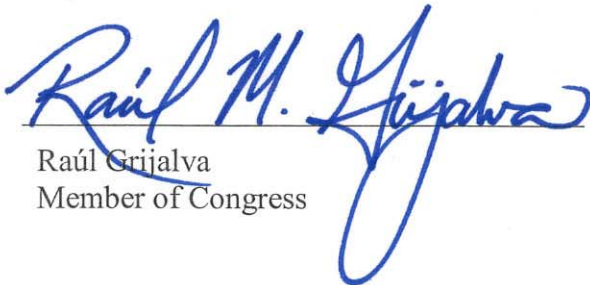
Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



Maurice Hinchey
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



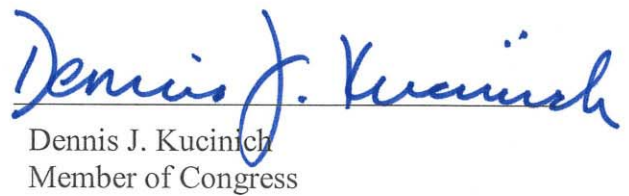
Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Lynn Woolsey
Member of Congress



Dennis J. Kucinich
Member of Congress



Jim Moran
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Michael Honda
Member of Congress



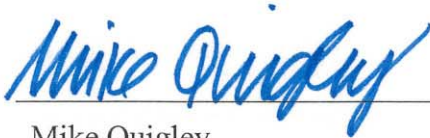
Edolphus Towns
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
Member of Congress



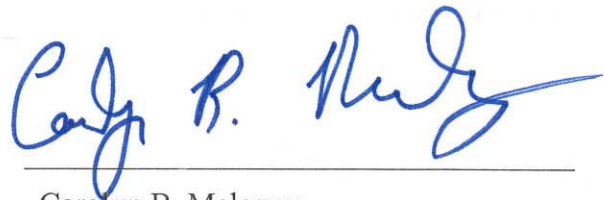
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress



Sam Farr
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Fortney "Pete" Stark
Member of Congress



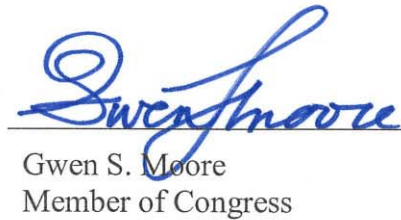
Frederica Wilson
Member of Congress



John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



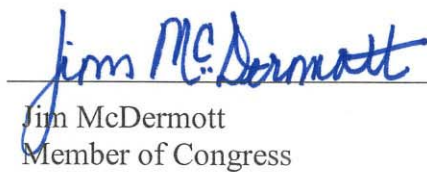
Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



George Miller
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



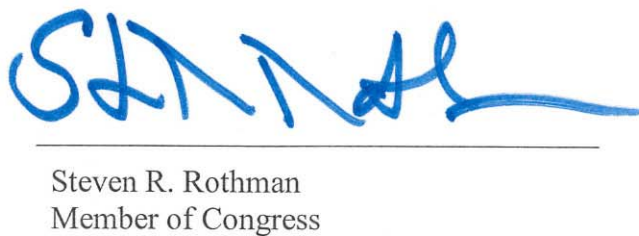
Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress



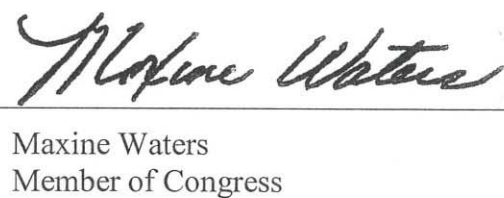
Bob Filner
Member of Congress



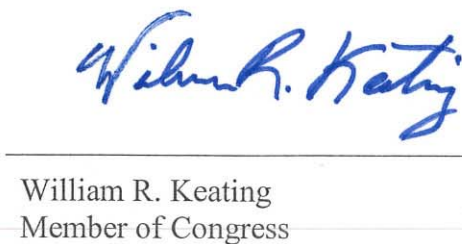
Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



Steven R. Rothman
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Martin Heinrich
Member of Congress



Steve Israel
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



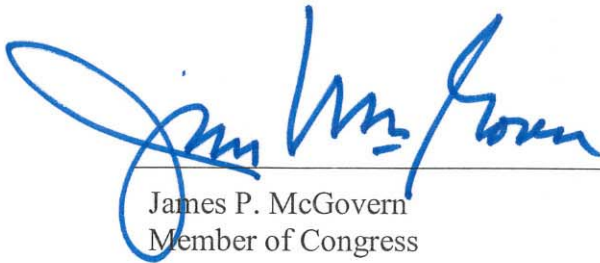
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Jim Langevin
Member of Congress



Hansen Clarke
Member of Congress



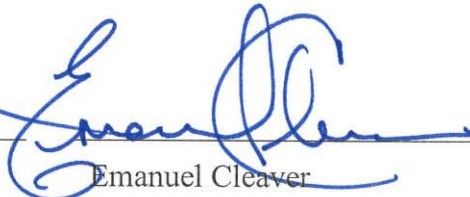
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



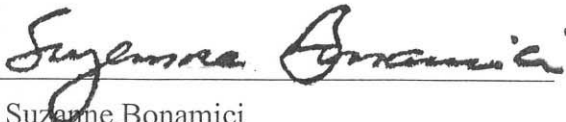
Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



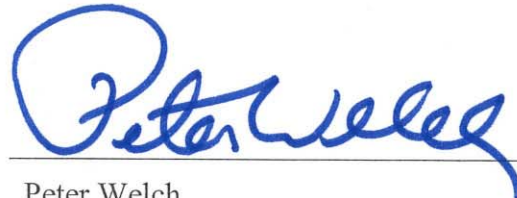
Janice Hahn
Member of Congress



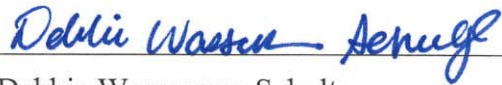
Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress



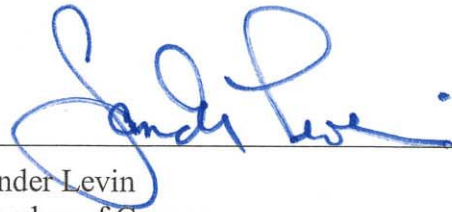
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



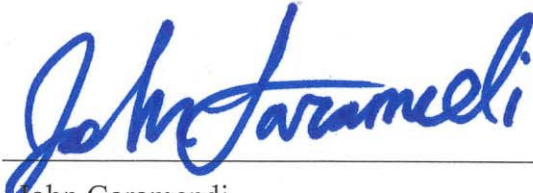
Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress




Sander Levin
Member of Congress



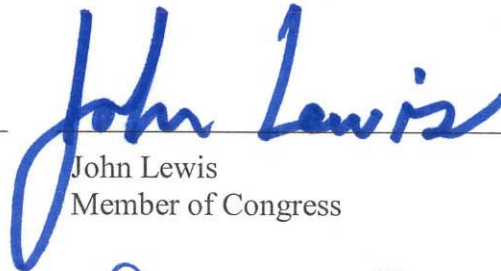
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress



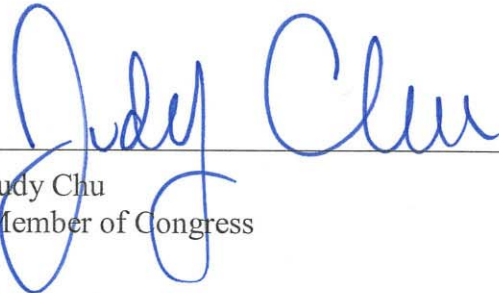
Jim Himes
Member of Congress



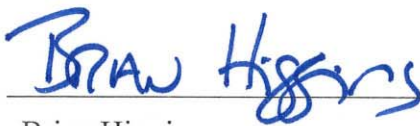
John Lewis
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



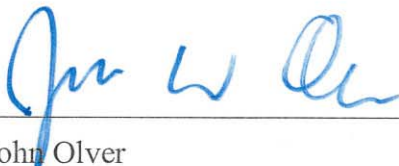
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



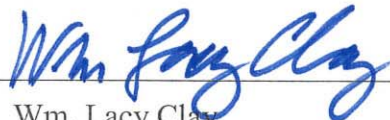
Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



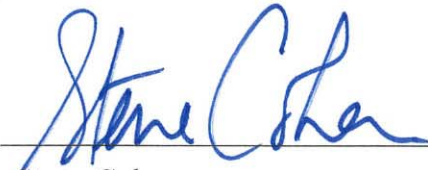
Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress



John Olver
Member of Congress



Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Laura Richardson
Member of Congress



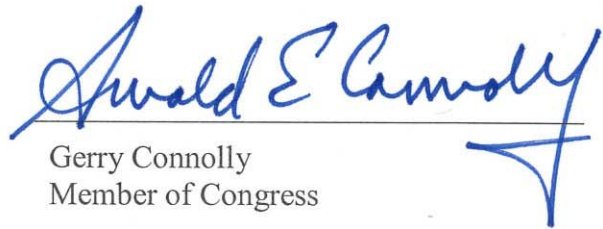
Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



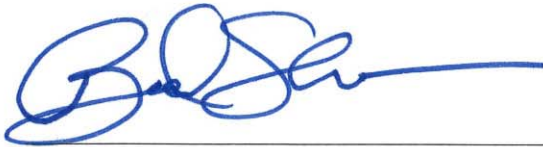
Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



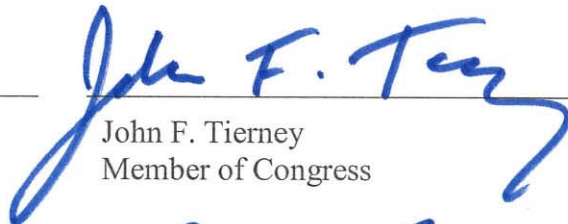
Lois Capps
Member of Congress



Gerry Connolly
Member of Congress



Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



John F. Tierney
Member of Congress



Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress



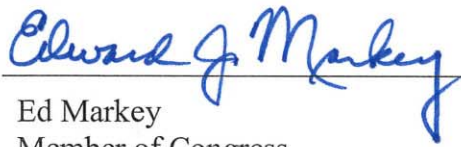
Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



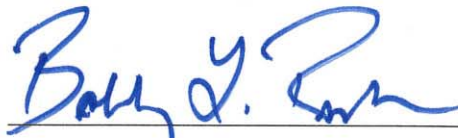
Ed Markey
Member of Congress



Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress