

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 14, 2019

Mr. Baxter Hunt  
Chargé d'Affaires  
Embassy of the United States of America  
Av. Andrés Bello 2800  
Las Condes  
Santiago, Chile 7550006

Dear Mr. Hunt:

In light of the ongoing protests across Chile, we are writing to urge you to publicly emphasize to the Chilean government the importance of protecting human rights, avoiding confrontational rhetoric and actions, and encouraging the de-escalation of tensions through constructive political dialogue.

As you are aware, over the past few weeks Chile has experienced its largest protests since the end of the brutal military dictatorship that ruled the country from 1973 to 1990. Set off by an increase in Santiago's public transit fares this past October, protests have grown to include more than one million Chileans, or approximately 6% of the population. The protestors have taken to the streets, in largely peaceful protests, to voice their opposition to economic austerity measures and to call for structural social and economic changes to lessen Chile's inequality, which is among the highest of any industrialized nation in the world.

In response to the protests, the Chilean government has deployed military forces, imposed curfews in multiple cities for the first time since the return of democracy, and declared a state of emergency. At least 19 individuals have reportedly died in the protests so far. And according to Chile's National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), more than 580 individuals have been injured, while 2,600 individuals have been detained, including hundreds of minors. These are deeply troubling developments for Chile, which has worked diligently to strengthen civil society and human rights protections as part of its democratic transition.

The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR), led by former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet, recently sent a team to Chile to investigate allegations of violence by members of state security forces. The gravity of the situation is reflected in OHCHR's swift response to alleged human rights violations, as well as in Chilean President Sebastián Piñera's recent decision to cancel the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum and the Conference of the Parties Summit, both of which were scheduled to be held in Santiago this year.

While we understand the need to ensure security in response to destructive acts of violence and vandalism that have occurred on the sidelines of the protests, we are alarmed by President

Piñera's statement—made while announcing his decision to declare a state of emergency—that Chile is “at war” against the largest protests in its recent history. Despite some recent encouraging signs, we are concerned that the dangerous lack of trust between government officials and protestors will continue to grow as a result of the Chilean government's actions and rhetoric so far.

We recognize that your role, as our nation's top representative in Chile, is a particularly sensitive one. We believe that it is imperative for our country to demonstrate respect for the Chilean people's sovereignty over their internal affairs, particularly in light of the history and continuing influence of Chile's 1973 military coup and resulting military dictatorship, and the role that the United States government played in those events. Like you, we are committed to carrying forward the close alliance that U.S. administrations of both parties have built with successive Chilean governments following Chile's return to democracy.

It is precisely because of our belief in the partnership and friendship between the peoples of Chile and the United States—and our governments—that we are asking you to affirm the importance of defending the fundamental right of Chileans to protest and express their concerns peacefully and free from harm. We urge you to publicly meet with Chile's civil society groups to hear their concerns and to demonstrate support for addressing the country's challenges through dialogue. Finally, we ask that you serve as a voice for mediation and calm in the midst of the turmoil and repression that has gripped Chile over these past few weeks.

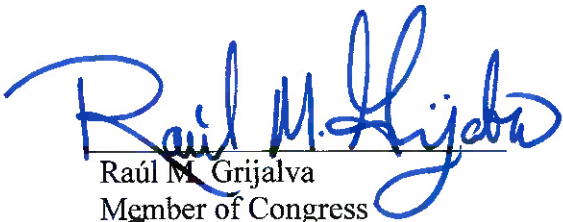
Thank you for your consideration of this matter and for your service. We hope to work alongside you in defense of the rights, dignity, and security of the Chilean people.

Sincerely,



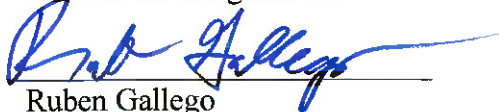
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SUSAN WILD  
Member of Congress



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Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



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Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress



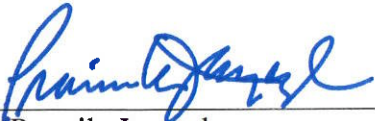
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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

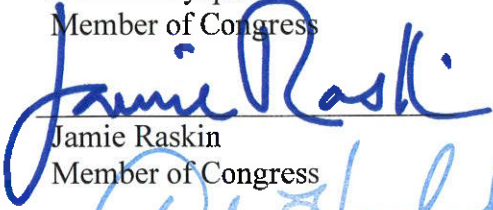


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Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



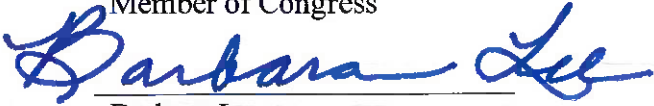
Pramila Jayapal  
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Jamie Raskin  
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Deb Haaland  
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Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



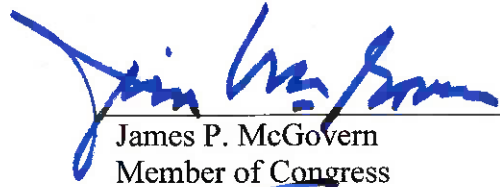
Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress



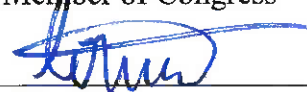
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



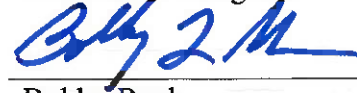
James P. McGovern  
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Adriano Espaillat  
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Ilhan Omar  
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Bobby Rush  
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Betty McCollum  
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