

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 15, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to express our concern regarding the ongoing detention and alleged mistreatment of women's rights defenders wrongfully imprisoned in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We are deeply troubled by reports that some of the activists have been subjected to torture and abuse while in custody. In keeping with the Administration's stated priorities of upholding U.S. values and protecting national security, we urge you to publicly and privately press Saudi Arabia's senior government officials to respect the fundamental human rights and freedoms of all Saudi citizens and to immediately release the women's rights activists.

Saudi Arabia has consistently been categorized by Freedom House and other human rights organizations as one of the worst violators of political rights and civil liberties, particularly for women. The most blatant recent example of this was the assassination of *Washington Post* journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October 2018. However, in May 2018, Saudi officials rounded up and arrested Saudi women's rights activists on charges such as acting as agents of hostile foreign powers and undermining the security of Saudi Arabia. The crackdown continued in April 2019, when individuals with ties to currently jailed women activists and those supportive of social reforms were arrested. The crimes of these women and men were nothing more than exercising their fundamental right to peacefully protest their government's repressive policies on issues pertaining to the right to drive, the male guardianship system, and the right to participate in elections. Many of those detained have yet to be indicted and there have been reports of some of the women being tortured by senior Saudi officials, including beatings, sleep deprivation, electric shocks, waterboarding, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and threats of murder.

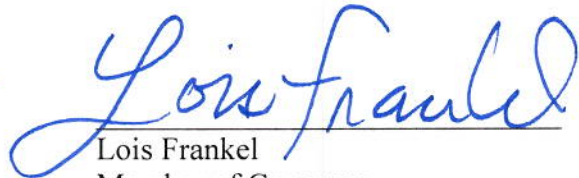
The strategic partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia is in our national security interest. However, the government of Saudi Arabia's continued human rights abuses risk threatening that partnership and our critical work to confront many regional challenges. Therefore, we urge you to raise, both publicly and privately, the issue of the Saudi women's rights activists and urge for their immediate and unconditional release at the highest levels of the Saudi government until they are all free.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you to advance human rights in Saudi Arabia and ensure a more cooperative bilateral relationship.

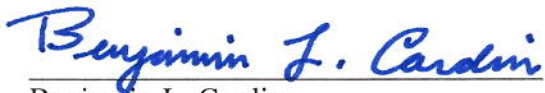
Sincerely,



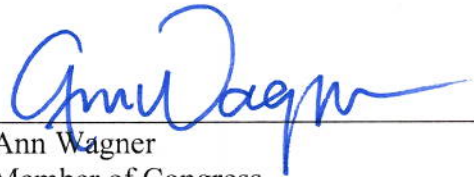
Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Benjamin L. Cardin
U.S. Senator



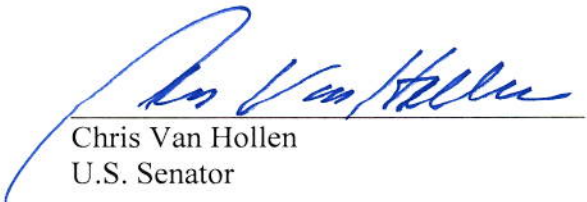
Ann Wagner
Member of Congress



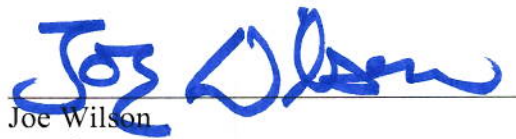
Susan M. Collins
U.S. Senator



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
U.S. Senator



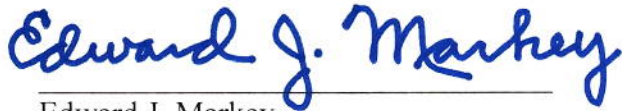
Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



Jerry Moran
U.S. Senator



Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



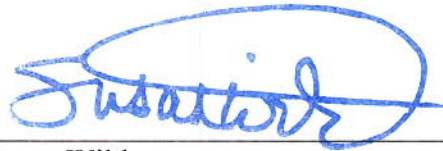
Edward J. Markey
U.S. Senator



Andy Levin
Member of Congress



Todd Young
U.S. Senator



Susan Wild
Member of Congress




Jeanne Shaheen
U.S. Senator



David Trone
Member of Congress



Cory Gardner
U.S. Senator



Ted Lieu
Member of Congress



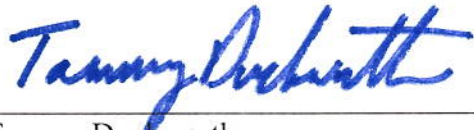
Tim Kaine
U.S. Senator



Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



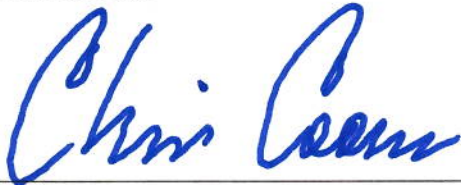
Ben Sasse
U.S. Senator



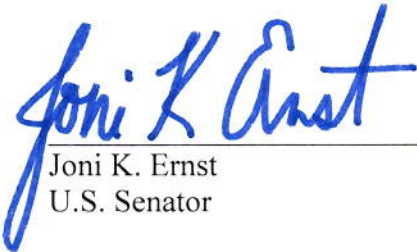
Tammy Duckworth
U.S. Senator



Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senator



Christopher A. Coons
U.S. Senator



Joni K. Ernst
U.S. Senator