



One Hundred Sixteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

July 31, 2020

The Honorable Todd C. Chapman
U.S. Ambassador to Brazil
St. de Embaixadas Sul 801 – Asa Sul
Brasilia – DF, 70297-400, Brazil

Dear Ambassador Chapman:

We are extremely alarmed by a report in Brazilian newspaper *O Globo* yesterday which stated that while lobbying your counterparts on reducing ethanol tariffs, you raised “the importance for the Bolsonaro government of maintaining Donald Trump as U.S. President.” The article further stated, “Iowa is the largest ethanol producer in the United States...and could be a key player in Trump’s election. Hence the importance – according to Chapman – for the Bolsonaro government to do the U.S. a favor.”

These statements are completely inappropriate for a U.S. ambassador to make, and if true, would be a potential violation of the Hatch Act of 1939. We ask that you respond in writing by **5:00 p.m. EST on August 4th** as to whether the allegations in the aforementioned article (attached to this correspondence) are true. Specifically, please provide us with a complete description of all conversations that you have had with Brazilian government officials in the executive and legislative branches with regard to ethanol tariffs and the U.S. presidential election. If you deny these allegations, please provide complete and unredacted copies of any and all documents referring or related to any discussions you have had with Brazilian government officials in the executive and legislative branches with regard to ethanol tariffs, to reassure Congress and the American people that our Ambassador to Brazil is truly representing the interests of the United States and not the narrow, political interests of President Trump.

Elections in the United States are for the American people and the American people only to decide. Earlier this week, Congressman Eduardo Bolsonaro – the son of President Bolsonaro – tweeted a video supporting the re-election of President Trump. In response, you defended Congressman Bolsonaro’s right to speak freely. We found your response extremely

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disappointing. While Mr. Bolsonaro has the right to speak freely, it is simply not appropriate for sitting foreign government officials – in any branch of government – to promote the campaigns of candidates in the United States. After everything that occurred in the U.S. presidential election in 2016, we frankly believe that you should know better.

Finally, it is important to note that the purpose of this correspondence is not to take a position on ethanol tariffs – an issue which is worthy of a meaningful conversation in both of our countries. This is about something much bigger. Given the events of 2016, it is all the more important for U.S. ambassadors serving our country abroad to not insert themselves into U.S. elections or encourage foreign government officials from any branch of government to do so.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Chairman



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Chairman
House Subcommittee on the Western
Hemisphere, Civilian Security, and Trade