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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

March 27, 2020

The Honorable Brian Bulatao
Under Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C., 20520

Dear Under Secretary Bulatao:

I recognize that the global novel coronavirus pandemic poses an enormous challenge for our diplomats and policy makers serving on the front lines. As the Department works to adapt its staffing posture to the current crisis, I urge you to ensure that clear leave and telework policies are applied in order to respond to employees' needs, including to allow for administrative leave.

I understand that the Office of Personnel Management has granted agencies increased flexibility with regard to leave and paid time off, and I ask you to ensure the Department fully avails itself of these options. I welcome efforts by the Department to explore alternative duty systems or other measures to share the burden of in-office work during a pandemic in a way that minimizes individual employees' risk exposure.

Many employees who have already exhausted their annual or sick leave, particularly working families who used that leave to support the birth and care of children, will need additional support during this crisis. I urge you to consider granting paid leave or excused absences to these employees for time spent on caretaker responsibilities and allow increased flexibility in working hours. I assure you that Congress will ensure that budget supplementals will support these efforts.

The Department and its people are in the center of an unprecedented global crisis. Your employees need to know that the Department will be flexible, responsive, and sensitive to the

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pandemic's impact on them and their families, including on leave and telework policies. I appreciate your efforts to this end, and I welcome further dialogue with you on this matter.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Chairman

CC:
Mark Green
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development

Grant Turner
Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Agency for Global Media

Sean Cairncross
Chief Executive Officer
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