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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

November 19, 2020

The Honorable Brian Bulatao
Undersecretary of State for Management
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

Marik String
Acting Legal Adviser
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Mr. Bulatao and Mr. String:

We write to follow-up on our letters to the Department on August 25th and October 5th requesting the guidance the Department has provided to Secretary Pompeo ahead of speeches to domestic political audiences. To date, the Department has not provided any response to these inquiries, which the Committee has pursued as part of its constitutionally mandated oversight work. Moreover, since our most recent inquiry on October 5th, additional information has come to light that has only heightened our concerns about the Secretary's decision to increasingly abandon his role as a nonpartisan advocate of America and Americans abroad, in favor of a role as a domestic political partisan.

In our October 5th letter, we requested information on legal guidance provided to the Secretary ahead of his October 3rd remarks to the Florida Family Policy Council. We have now seen reports that Department of State staffers, including on the Secretary's advance travel team, raised concerns with senior Department leadership in the Secretary's office about the appropriateness of his planned speech to this group. Concerns reportedly included that this organization promotes so-called "conversion therapy" for LGBTQ individuals—a deeply troubling and dangerous practice, and certainly not one that the Secretary or the Department should be legitimizing or advancing in any way. A State Department spokesperson has publicly

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claimed that the Secretary was not made aware of these concerns, but it remains imperative that we understand what guidance the Department provided on the legal, ethical, and policy considerations around his planned speech and which officials reviewed concerns that were raised internally.

As such, in addition to reiterating the document requests we previously made on September 25th and October 5th, we now specifically request any and all records reflecting communications between the Office of the Secretary and other parts of the Department discussing the views and policies supported by the Florida Family Policy Council, particularly with regards to LGBTQ individuals and conversion therapy, and the policy considerations around the planned speech.

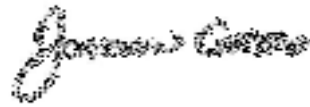
We wish to convey our profound disappointment that the Secretary would make remarks to an organization supportive of a bogus and discredited practice like conversation therapy. That State Department officials raised concerns about this speech should not be grounds for the Department to stifle internal dissent, but rather to ensure such concerns are appropriately considered and addressed by Department officials, including the Secretary. The Secretary's apparent effort to proceed with this speech without regard to these internal concerns sends an appalling message to LGBTQ Americans, including the many LGBTQ individuals at the State Department who are working day in and day out to support the Secretary's work.

We thank you for your prompt attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Chairman



JOAQUIN CASTRO
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations