

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 15, 2020

His Excellency Boris Johnson, MP
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London, United Kingdom
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister Johnson:

We write to you as strong supporters of the long-standing critical alliance between the United States and the United Kingdom, and as Americans who remain grateful for the friendship of the British people. We, however, write with grave concern over the recent reports that you may be working on legislation or other efforts that would likely invalidate or override the Northern Ireland protocol of last year's European Union-United Kingdom Withdrawal Agreement.

As Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, we are deeply invested in the United States' relationships with countries around the world, and we consider the United Kingdom to be among the United States closest allies and friends. The special relationship between our democracies has served as a pillar of stability in the West. To that end, we are grateful that the United Kingdom and United States so regularly confront global challenges as close allies – not least the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. As you know, we stand with millions of Americans who support the achievement of the Good Friday Agreement and feel personally invested in ensuring peace in Northern Ireland.

It is for these reasons we were so disturbed by the reports about your government's efforts to undermine the Northern Ireland protocol of the Withdrawal Agreement that, if true, could have disastrous consequences for the Good Friday Agreement and broader process to maintain peace on the island of Ireland. We appreciate the challenges that your country faces as it stares down the October 15th deadline for a negotiated agreement – but an Ireland divided by a hard border risks inflaming old tensions that very much still fester today and undoing decades of progress that the United States, Republic of Ireland, and United Kingdom achieved together.

Finally, it is necessary for us to emphasize how this issue could directly affect the U.S.-U.K. bilateral relationship even beyond the broad, bipartisan support for the people of Northern Ireland. Many in the United States and in Congress consider the issues of the Good Friday Agreement and a potential U.S.-U.K. Free Trade Agreement inextricably linked. To that end, we

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stand by the position made clear by the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, who just this month reiterated that the United States Congress will not support any free trade agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom if the United Kingdom fails to preserve the gains of the Good Friday Agreement and broader peace process. If these reported plans were to go forward, it would be difficult to see how these conditions could be met.

With the issues raised in this letter in mind, we therefore urge you to abandon any and all legally questionable and unfair efforts to flout the Northern Ireland protocol of the Withdrawal Agreement and look to ensure that Brexit negotiations do not undermine the decades of progress to bring peace to Northern Ireland and future options for the bilateral relationship between our two countries. Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to continuing to work with you to fulfill the promises of the Good Friday Agreement.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L ENGEL

Chairman
House Committee on Foreign Affairs



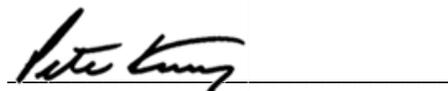
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