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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](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov)

March 20, 2020

Dear Colleague:

As the Chair and Ranking Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, we are working closely with the State Department to ensure that the U.S. government is doing all it can to help Americans around the world address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The imposition of various travel restrictions and border closures across the globe is unprecedented, and we know there are many questions about how these developments affect Americans currently overseas and those with planned international travel. As our country navigates this crisis, we hope you will share the below information with your constituents, and we stand ready to help you however we can.

The State Department is advising Americans to avoid all international travel at this time. In countries where commercial departure options remain available, Americans seeking to return home should make immediate arrangements to do so, unless they are prepared to remain abroad for an indefinite period. For more information on the State Department's worldwide "Level 4" travel advisory, please see [here](#).

A number of countries have suspended all international air travel, and more may follow suit. We are in regular contact with the State Department and continue to encourage them to explore every feasible option for Americans in those countries to return home safely.

If you need to contact U.S. embassies about constituent cases, the State Department has provided a country-specific list of congressional liaison contacts that is available [here](#). Because this list is not for public distribution, it can only be accessed when on the congressional network (or VPN).

The State Department has created a 24-hour public hotline for Americans abroad who are impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. For callers in the U.S. and Canada, the number is 888-407-4747. For those dialing from overseas, the number is 202-501-4444. Travelers are also strongly encouraged to enroll in the State Department's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive alerts and make it easier to locate them in an emergency. The only way for our missions

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abroad to know that an American is in country is to register through STEP. Once they do so, the mission will not only know whether the citizen is present on the ground but will also be able to send that person updates in real time. This is the quickest way for Americans to receive the most up to date information where they are.

At the bottom of this letter, we've enclosed additional resources for you and your constituents. If you have further questions not addressed in these materials, please contact Rachel Levitan with the majority staff ([Rachel.levitan@mail.house.gov](mailto:Rachel.levitan@mail.house.gov)) or Caroline Campbell ([Caroline.Campbell@mail.house.gov](mailto:Caroline.Campbell@mail.house.gov)) with the minority staff.

Thank you for your continued service to the American people in these trying times. Our staffs stand ready to assist you however we can. We will provide updates as we continue to work with the State Department on these critical issues.

Sincerely,

Chairman Eliot L. Engel and Ranking Member Michael McCaul

**Additional Resources for Congressional Offices and Constituents:**

[CDC Materials for Incoming Travelers from High-Risk Countries](#)

[State Department Capabilities in a Crisis](#)

[Country-Specific Information/Health Alerts](#)

[Embassy-Specific COVID-19 Information](#)

[Reducing Stigma](#)

[CDC's Travel Website](#)

**STATE DEPARTMENT CONSULAR AFFAIRS 24/7 EMERGENCY HOTLINE**

- Callers located in U.S. and Canada: 1-888-407-4747
- Callers located overseas: 1-202-501-4444