

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 20, 2015

The Honorable John F. Kerry  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write to express our concern over this year's Pride parade in Istanbul, Turkey. For years, members of the Turkish lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community and their supporters have been able to partake in one of the few permitted pride parades in the Muslim world. It was a distinction for which Turkey could have been proud of, however this goodwill was ruined this year after the government banned the parade and then police proceeded to brutally disperse the parade with tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons.

We need to help those around the world who are still denied basic human freedoms. With the Supreme Court's decision regarding the case of *Obergefell v. Hodges*, marriage equality finally became legal across our country. That same day, we were pleased when Turkey accepted Norway's proposal at the United Nations Universal Periodic Review just the previous Friday that "Turkey should carry out its human-rights obligations by ensuring that LGBTI individuals and non-governmental organizations are included in the process." Further, we believe Turkey should honor its commitments to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe relating to freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. We have been following the situation of LGBT people in Turkey with great interest through the UN Review processes with the help of shadow reports issued by LGBT organizations in Turkey.

It is against this backdrop of hope that we witnessed, with extreme anguish and surprise, the oppressive treatment by Turkish authorities of the Istanbul Pride Parade.

It is in the United States' national interest to address civil injustice abroad. We implore that you further promote ending discrimination of LGBT individuals around the world. This is a moment where we can take steps to protect the rights of citizens abroad. We urge you to publicly address these concerns with the leaders of Turkey.

Thank you for your continued leadership on these issues and working to ensure that LGBT rights are respected.

Sincerely,

Name

District

Name

District

[Signature]

NY-18

Shela Jackson Lee TX-18

Kristen Girone

AZ-09

Barbara Jee CA-13

Mark Takano

CA-41

Charles B. Angel NY-13

Rail M. Hijiko AZ-03

Brian H. [Signature] NY-26

Katherine M. Clark MA-05

Jackie Spear (GA-14)

Ken VanHalle MD-08

Steve Cohen TN-09

Grace J. Nepletans CA-32

Dan B. Shiff CA-28

[Signature] CA-52

Jim [Signature] MA-2

Earl Blumenthal OR-03

Anna Tuttle NV-01

Luis Frankel FL-22

[Signature]

Jim McDonnell WA-07

Patricia M. [Signature] FL-18

Heaven H. Norton OR-10

Frank Pallone NJ-06

David M. [Signature] RI-01

Joseph [Signature] CO-02

Edith L. Engel NY-16

Michael M. [Signature] CA-17

Name

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Albino MI-22

Rosa L. Dehewra CT-03

Jimmy MI-1

Alan Lowenthal CA-47

CPD NY-19

Eric Sackme CA-15

John White MA-06

John KY-3

Paul CA-02

Janice Horn CA-44

Juan Vargas

MV TX-33

Del WA-06

Kathleen Qin NY-04

Joseph NY-14

Tony Cardenas CA-29

Beto O'Rourke TX-16

Jim NY-06

Pete Aguil CA-31

James CA-34

Della Wasserman Schultz FL-23

Keith Ellison MN-05

Chris J. Walsh MD-01

Jan Schabert IL-09

Pat Malloy NY-17

Kenny Heck WA-10

John Frowndsi CA-03

Jon MA-04

Name

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Tim Ryan

OH-13

Paul D. Tonko

NY-20

Daniel J. Kildee

MI-05

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