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May 17, 2018

The Honorable Mike Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

In the wake of the Administration's decision to withdraw from the JCPOA and its success in securing the release of three American hostages in North Korea, we are writing to ask for your urgent assistance in securing the release of all American citizens and U.S. legal permanent residents currently being held hostage in Iran. The recent announcement by the Administration of its intent to appoint a new Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs is an important first step to bringing these Americans home and we hope that this individual will have the authority to engage directly with Iran regarding our hostages.

On April 26, 2018, the U.S. House of Representatives adopted H.R. 4744, the Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act. This legislation would require the Secretary of State to develop a strategy for addressing the regime's hostage taking and would require the imposition of sanctions on Iranian persons responsible for these actions. Additionally, last year the House adopted unanimously H.Res. 317, demanding the release of the American hostages.

As you are aware, there are currently five reported American citizen hostages detained in Iran. The most longstanding hostage is Siamak Namazi, who was detained in October 13, 2015. When the JCPOA entered into force on January 16, 2016, there were five Americans released as part of the deal, but Namazi was left behind. Then, on February 22, 2016, to the horror of the Namazi family, the regime arrested Siamak's father, Baquer Namazi, a former UNICEF official. The senior Namazi is 81-years-old, has been hospitalized eight times since his detention, had a surgery to implant a pacemaker, and his health continues to decline. Both Namazis were sentenced to 10 years in prison for "collaborating with the enemy," the United States. In addition, Princeton University graduate student Xiyue Wang was arrested on espionage charges on August 8, 2016, and later sentenced to ten years in prison.

Beyond these five hostages, Robert Levinson, an American citizen and the longest-held hostage in U.S. history, traveled to Kish Island, Iran, and disappeared on March 9, 2007. The U.S. previously secured a commitment from the Iranian regime to

gather information about his welfare and whereabouts, but it has yet to provide any information. The Iranian regime is also unjustly detaining several U.S. legal permanent residents, including Nizar Zakka, a Lebanese citizen who was sentenced to 10 years in prison for being a spy for the United States.

Although the Trump Administration has repeatedly demanded the immediate and unconditional release of American citizens and legal permanent residents being held as hostages in Iran, we are concerned that this has not been made a priority.

Therefore, we respectfully urge you to make this matter a top priority for the Department and the Administration. We hope the President's announcement of his intent to fill the position of Special Envoy on Hostage Affairs will finally focus the Administration's efforts on securing the release of all Americans and legal permanent residents who are being unjustly detained by the Iranian regime. This is a promise President Trump has made to the families and to the American people, and we sincerely hope this becomes a reality.

Sincerely,



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Member of Congress



NITA LOWEY  
Member of Congress



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