



June 20, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
 Secretary of State
 U.S. Department of State
 2201 C Street NW
 Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We write to express deep concern at a number of recent signals that the State Department, under your leadership and that of President Trump, has abandoned full support of LGBTI people within its global human rights policy.

For the first time in many years, the Department chose not to issue a statement in honor of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOTB) — a day

that expresses global support for the inclusion of LGBTI persons in civil society. It also has not issued a statement for LGBTI Pride month and has refused requests from a number of diplomatic facilities to fly the Pride flag during celebrations this month — a notable reversal of instructions provided in previous years.

To be clear, both IDAHOTB and Pride fit squarely into the Department's efforts to combat hate crimes, violence and human rights violations around the world. We find it particularly disappointing that your choice to pull back has come on the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall uprising in New York, an important milestone in our country's civil rights history which Pride commemorates. Taken together, these actions amount to an irrefutable effort by the Administration to distance itself from the American tradition of affirming human rights as part of our country's foreign policy — an effort that we flatly condemn.

We are equally concerned by the May 30 announcement in the Federal Register of a new "Commission on Unalienable Rights" to provide "...fresh thinking about human rights discourse where such discourse has departed from our nation's founding principles of natural law and natural rights." We recognize this formulation, which is used by a variety of organizations as code words for denying human and civil rights to LGBTI citizens — a significant deviation from the comprehensive approach that long has guided the human rights diplomacy, programming and reporting of the State Department. Taken together with the President's refusal to support the Equality Act, the Administration's exclusion of transgender Americans from military service to their country, and recent efforts to strike references to LGBTI persons and gender from multilateral documents, we cannot but conclude that you and the President have embarked on a clear-cut effort to undermine LGBTI progress at home and disavow LGBTI populations abroad.

We ask that you issue a robust clarification of policy to encourage embassies around the world to show support for LGBTI communities and inclusion during the remaining weeks of LGBTI Pride season. We also ask that you dismantle the proposed commission and instead invest in the work already underway at the Bureau of Democracy Human Rights and Labor (DRL). Failure to take such actions will only encourage the view that, contrary to the President's previous expressions of support for the rights of LGBTI people, the Administration is in fact purposefully distancing itself from American principles of human rights and from the protection of LGBTI people around the world.

With respect, we remain

Sincerely yours,

Mark Bromley
Council Chair
Council for Global Equality

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Senior Legal & Int'l Policy
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Bishop Joseph W. Tolton
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