

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

January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.,  
Washington, D.C., 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

We write to you today in regards to the upcoming Presidential elections in El Salvador scheduled for February 3, 2019. In light of the myriad challenges facing the countries of Central America today, it is essential that the United States government's involvement in the region be guided by and reflect fundamental democratic values. We therefore urge the State Department to communicate to the citizens of El Salvador its commitment to democracy and respect for the outcome of a free and fair elections process.

Addressing the humanitarian crises facing Central American asylum-seekers is one of the defining political and moral challenges facing our nation and our hemisphere and as Members of Congress, we are committed to ensuring that the United States government is upholding internationally-protected rights of migrants and refugees. But we must also work diligently to ensure that democracy and respect for human rights in the region are strengthened; to do otherwise would exacerbate the dire conditions that cause so many people to seek safety and survival elsewhere.

As you know, the ties between the United States and El Salvador are very important to both of our countries, with nearly one-third of the total Salvadoran population living here in the United States. Salvadorans are now the third-largest population of U.S. Latinos/as and continue to enrich their communities and our nation as a whole.

However, the United States' legacy in El Salvador is not the one of mutual respect and shared prosperity that we would hope it to be. Instead, we must reckon with the broad-reaching impact of our past foreign policy decisions, including having provided military funding and training to a government that, according to the United Nations Truth Commission, committed widespread human rights atrocities against the civilian population during El Salvador's civil war.

Out of the ashes of the war, the Salvadoran people have built a strong democracy, a process that has been underway since the signing of the 1992 Peace Accords. Recent elections have been

peaceful and, by evaluation of national and international observation missions, effectively served to reflect the democratic will of its citizens.

Since 2008, the State Department has maintained a neutral position during El Salvador's electoral seasons, making clear to Salvadoran voters that the United States' abiding commitment to the country is not contingent on the winner. The ability of the Salvadoran people to exert their suffrage free of any fear of U.S. retaliation has been essential to the consolidation of their democracy.

In recent months, we have noted with alarm the tendency of the President, of White House staff, and of several of our fellow Members of Congress to publicize statements implying that they would unilaterally cut aid to El Salvador in response to a variety of policy decisions made by the Salvadoran government. With presidential campaigns in full swing, we are concerned that these or any such threats give Salvadoran voters a false impression that the future of our bi-national relations is in jeopardy and therefore impede upon their ability to freely elect a government of their choosing.

Therefore, we encourage that the State Department join us in honoring and respecting the will of the Salvadoran people when they go to the polls on February 3 to elect the next President of El Salvador. We seek your assurance that State Department officials will refrain from positioning themselves in any sort of partisan manner or making any statements to influence the decision of Salvadoran voters ahead of the elections. The State Department's position with regard to the outcome of the 2019 presidential election should be guided solely by evaluations that the process was free and fair and in compliance with El Salvador's laws, not by the political preferences of any U.S. official.

We believe strongly that U.S. policy towards Central America will continue to have major repercussions – negative or positive – on the future of the region. The upcoming elections in El Salvador are an important opportunity for the United States to demonstrate its commitment to a strong democratic future for Central America. We anticipate your assurance and look forward to opportunities to collaborate with the Administration in the months ahead.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress


Don Beyer  
Member of Congress

José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress





Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat  
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David N. Cicilline  
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Earl Blumenauer  
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Eddie Bernice Johnson  
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Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress





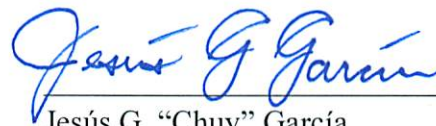
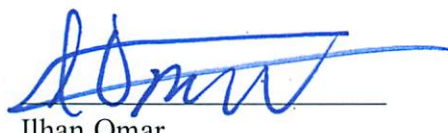
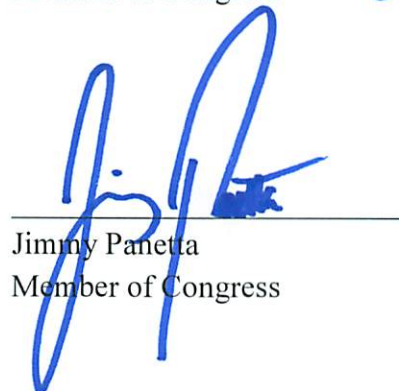



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Member of Congress



Bonnie M. Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress



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Judy Chu  
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Karen Bass  
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Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



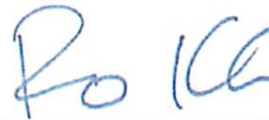
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