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HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT
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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
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July 27, 2020

Dear Colleague,

Last week, I announced my intention to seek the Chairmanship of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Today, I am writing to respectfully request your consideration and support in this effort.

I serve as Vice Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, a position created so a new generation of public servants could have the opportunity to lead. I also chair the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, holding this corrupt administration accountable for dismantling the U.S. State Department, abandoning our allies, and jeopardizing the security of the American people.

I am honored to serve as Chairman of the 38-member Congressional Hispanic Caucus and growing. Latinos are nearly 20-percent of the U.S. population and have been disproportionately devastated by COVID-19. I'm grateful to our collaborative efforts to expand our nation's promise to all Americans.

Over the last eight years, I've worked at the intersection of diplomacy, defense and intelligence as the only House member who's served on the Foreign Affairs, Armed Services and Intelligence committees—I've come to not only appreciate the power of diplomacy to shape the world how it ought to be, but also the limits of American power to alter the world how it is. I approach this vital work with both humility and ambition.

Today, democracy is under assault at home and around the world. From voter suppression and systemic racism to foreign disinformation and the corrupting influence of money in politics, U.S. foreign policy needs to confront transnational corruption and accelerate domestic efforts to ensure our democracy remains a government for, by, and of the people.

While it's true our power internationally depends on our strength domestically, we can never lose sight that the purpose of statecraft is not geopolitics—success of U.S. foreign policy is measured by improvements in American lives. That means advancing the rights of workers and environmental protections. We must rethink trade so globalization benefits workers and the planet, not just corporations and consumers. It also means defending our democracy and asserting Congress' independent authority to hold the administration accountable.

I believe that Congress must reassert its role under Article I of the U.S. Constitution to restrain executive power. That's why I led the change to reject the unconstitutional construction of President Trump's racist border wall, which passed with bipartisan majorities in both the House

and Senate. The House Foreign Affairs Committee must also take a leading role in reclaiming War Powers from the Executive branch.

America must also be a beacon of hope for the oppressed and a place of refuge for the vulnerable. Our nation's identity as a nation of immigrants who come here in pursuit of a better life must be at the forefront of our foreign policy. Today rising sea levels, extreme drought and historic floods are creating climate refugees, and we must address the root causes of migration while also doing our part to welcome new Americans.

Our nation's two greatest geopolitical challenges in the 21st century are the climate crisis and competition with China. To overcome these challenges, we will need both skilled diplomacy and robust partnerships with other democratic nations. That's why I co-founded the U.S.-Japan Caucus to strengthen our alliance with a democratic ally in the Indo-Pacific and the ASEAN Caucus to recommit the United States to multilateralism. As we improve ties with long-standing allies, we must also seek out new friends across the Atlantic in the continent of Africa and also right here in the Western Hemisphere.

As chair, I will work to rebuild America's infrastructure of diplomacy. The U.S. State Department needs the best among us, and America's diplomats should reflect the diversity of America. That's why I led the expansion of the Rangel and Pickering fellowships signed into law by President Obama.

The next chair should also include more input from members on the topics covered in the committee such as the importance of cyber diplomacy and an open internet, and also use our platform to highlight injustices such as the ethnic cleansing of Muslim Uighurs in Xinjiang, China.

We should welcome more voices—women, African Americans, Latinos, the LGBTQ community, immigrants and indigenous peoples—at the witness table, as I have fought for with the CHC-led Tri-Caucus Diversity Initiative.

In this moment of pandemic and protest, let's have a national conversation about the role of the United States in the world, democracy and human rights, war and peace, and the future of our planet. I believe diplomacy should be at the center of our strategy.

I have had great conversations with many Members about the future of American foreign policy after Donald Trump. Please reach out as you have suggestions, comments or questions about what we can or should be doing on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

I look forward to listening to your ideas, seeking your consideration, and asking for your support. You can read my full announcement [here](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joaquin Castro". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joaquin Castro