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One Hundred Nineteenth Congress

U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on Foreign Affairs

2170 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

January 27, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

Congratulations on your confirmation as the United States' Secretary of State. We believe your history of public service and commitment to U.S. foreign policy, national security, diplomacy, and development serve you well to exercise the responsibilities of this prestigious office.

As Democrats on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, our priorities for this Congress are clear: promoting foreign policy that advances U.S. national security and the economic prosperity of the American people; leveraging foreign assistance to promote democracy, human rights, and stability around the globe and counter the malign influence of our adversaries; deepening and broadening our alliances; and ensuring the State Department and its workforce have what is needed to compete effectively and win partners on the global stage. Ensuring the Department's personnel policies follow the law, including as it relates to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that you fully utilize the contributions of every public servant irrespective of background or politics are vital to achieving these critical objectives.

We believe these priorities intersect with your demonstrated track record on human rights, diplomacy, and U.S. national security, and we look forward to working together in common cause. However, we are deeply troubled by early steps the Trump Administration has taken to sideline, remove, or reassign many apolitical, career foreign service and civil service

professionals at the Department without cause. These individuals serve the American people across administrations of both parties and possess decades' worth of experience and taxpayer investment. The potential gutting of institutional knowledge, credibility, and core competencies at the Department as a result of these reckless and short-sighted decisions cannot be understated and will undermine your ability to serve effectively as Secretary. We therefore strongly urge you to reverse course on any efforts to purge or sideline career Department staff and to ensure all personnel decisions under your tenure are lawful and merited.

We are also equally concerned by a variety of other steps announced by the new Administration that gut core State Department programs and responsibilities—from stopping critical foreign assistance, to suspending the U.S. Refugee Assistance Program, to eliminating diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility programs that have been in place across multiple administrations, as well as a new and unlawful anti-DEI prerequisite for receiving U.S. foreign assistance. These actions undermine America's credibility and put U.S. diplomats, American implementers, and vulnerable people around the world at risk. They belie a lack of understanding of the value of diplomacy, the Department of State as an institution, and the work that thousands of dedicated public servants do every day to make the American people safer and more prosperous.

We reiterate our firm hope—and expectation—to have a collaborative and fruitful relationship with you and the Department during your tenure as Secretary of State. But the troubling developments we have referenced here—among the many others that have already been reported in just the first few days of the Trump Administration—raise questions about whether the agency you now lead will continue to successfully serve the American people or serve the personal whims of the President of the United States. We hope you will engage immediately and act swiftly to stem any concern that the Department—and America's position in the world—are being weakened as a result of the Administration's decisions.

Sincerely,



GREGORY W. MEEKS
Ranking Member



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Member of Congress



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