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March 19, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

Thank you for your leadership during this unprecedented coronavirus outbreak, and your concern for United States citizens abroad. I wish, however, to elevate the issue of Americans – including constituents of mine – stranded in Peru due to that country’s decision to close its border, and to urge that the Administration evacuate American citizens from the country.

As of this evening, over 1,600 Americans are unable to leave the country, with the largest number under curfew in Lima, requiring written permission to leave their premises to buy essentials. The case is particularly acute for more than 700 Americans in the Andean town of Cusco, however, a popular tourist destination located near Machu Picchu, for whom it is near impossible to reach the capital of Lima.

Among those stranded in Cusco are my constituent Dylan Budnick and his friend Evan Raksin. The issue for Dylan, Evan, and the other Americans stranded in Cusco, is that the town is located at an altitude of over 10,000 feet, heightening the vulnerability to COVID 19.

I thus ask your assistance in prioritizing the evacuation of Americans from Peru, including the chartering of aircraft or utilizing military planes; the former option would have the added benefit of assisting financially-pressed American airlines, thereby addressing an additional concern expressed by the President.

Again, thank you for your compassionate care for fellow Americans in need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Smith".

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress