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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

May 15, 2018

Secretary of State Michael Pompeo
The State Department
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

Congratulations on your confirmation as Secretary of State. I share the desire of the majority across the country for a return to strong, unequivocal, vital American global leadership—especially in the fight against human trafficking. To that end, I write you today to respectfully request that you prioritize the rapid appointment of the next Ambassador-at-Large to lead the State Department’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (the TIP office).

As the author of the legislation that created the TIP office¹ and as the author of subsequent legislation to create the position of Ambassador-at-Large,² I remain deeply engaged in congressional oversight to ensure full and proper implementation of US anti-human trafficking laws. The current lack of an Ambassador-at-Large leaves without leadership the President’s Interagency Task Force, which coordinates both domestic and international anti-trafficking efforts across the Departments of State, Justice, Labor, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, Treasury, Defense, Interior, Treasury, Agriculture, Transportation, Education, Management and Budget, the FBI, USAID, Domestic Policy Council, National Security Council, and others. These Departments, offices, and agencies have been without unifying and de-conflicting leadership for almost a year, putting at risk the gains and investments we have made as a nation in the fight against human trafficking over the last 18 years.

The lack of an Ambassador-at-Large also leaves without leadership the writing of the highly influential Trafficking in Persons Report, putting at risk the most effective tool we have to help the more than 25 million victims of trafficking victims enslaved around the world today. Since the inception of the yearly report, more than 100 countries have enacted anti-trafficking laws, and many

¹ *Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (PL 106-386)*.

² *Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 (PL 108-193)*.

countries have taken other steps recommended in the report to significantly raise their tier rankings. The power of the Report lies in its credibility, and the credibility of the Report lies in its accuracy—but it lost both in 2015 when it was written without the benefit of an Ambassador-at-Large. That summer, Reuters came out with both a special report and series of stories on the 14 countries whose rankings had been inflated.³ I respectfully urge you to appoint an Ambassador-at-Large to oversee the writing of the report and to prevent grade inflations for countries that fail to meet the minimum standards for eliminating human trafficking.

Finally, the Ambassador-at-Large is the high level political figure who has the gravitas and expertise to raise human trafficking at the highest levels of foreign governments. Our best Ambassadors-at-Large have traveled extensively and met one-on-one with high level counterparts to ensure the fight against trafficking is prioritized and effective in problem regions. An empty Ambassador-at-Large post not only wastes diplomatic opportunity, but sends the wrong message that trafficking is no longer a priority for the United States.

Consequently, I respectfully urge you to bring this gap in trafficking leadership to a rapid close and appoint an Ambassador-at-Large to ensure the full and effective implementation of U.S. antitrafficking law and policy across government agencies at home and abroad.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

CHRIS H. SMITH
Member of Congress

³ Jason Szep, Matt Spetalnick, *Special Report: State Department Watered Down Human Trafficking Report* (August 3, 2015) <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-humantrafficking-disputes-special-idUSKCN0Q821Y20150804>.