

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We write to express deep concern over the level of assistance being provided to American citizens stranded abroad as they try to return home to the United States amidst the rapid spread of COVID-19.

We have heard from an alarming number of constituents whose family members have been unable to leave certain affected areas due to closed borders, movement restrictions, mandatory quarantines, and canceled flights. They have contacted us from Peru, Morocco, the Philippines, Honduras, China, Cambodia, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, and several other countries looking for clear guidance as they navigate this difficult and frightening landscape to return home to their families. In some instances, constituents informed us that they have been unable to establish any level of communication with U.S. Embassy and Consular personnel.

Additionally, there has been conflicting reports on the State Department's efforts to help Americans return to the United States. We appreciate the swift action the State Department took to arrange charter flights to evacuate American citizens stuck in the quarantine zone in China. However, recent news reports have indicated that as a matter of policy, the Department will not arrange additional chartered flights to the United States. Yet, last night, the State Department and the U.S. Mission to Morocco announced special charter flights for U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents, leading to more confusion for American citizens stranded in other countries. This was after the State Department released a Global Level 4 Health Advisory that stated: "If you decide to travel abroad or are already outside the United States: [h]ave a travel plan that does not rely on the U.S. Government for assistance."

While we appreciate the immense strain State Department personnel around the world are under, providing support and assistance to American citizens abroad must remain the top priority. To that end, we urge the State Department to take immediate and comprehensive action, including working with other federal agencies, foreign governments, and commercial airlines to ensure that every American abroad who wants to return home during this public health crisis can safely do so.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

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