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One Hundred Sixteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

August 30, 2019

The Vice President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President:

As Members of Congress deeply committed to the transatlantic alliance and strengthening democracy in Central Europe, we write to you ahead of your trip to Poland beginning this weekend.

We value the strong, historic ties between the Polish and American peoples and appreciate Poland as a critical ally that contributes to the security of the United States and to NATO. We also, however, have significant concerns about the continuing deterioration of the state of democracy in Poland, particularly efforts by the government to undermine the independence of the judiciary, weaken the rule of law, stifle freedom of expression, curtail the freedom of the press, and erode the apolitical nature of the military. The government's attacks on democratic norms, values, and institutions are real causes for concern and undermine U.S. national security interests. We are also troubled by increasing manifestations of anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry, as well as the need to strengthen engagement on the legacy of the Holocaust and World War II free from historical revisionism. This rise in hate speech led to the tragic assassination of the visionary mayor of Gdansk, Pawel Adamowicz. Most recently, a newspaper's promotion of "LGBT-free zones" accompanied by an alarming escalation of violence is unacceptable in a democratic country.

All of these challenges are of very serious concern given Poland's historically strong leadership in democratic reforms and protection of liberty. We therefore urge you to use your upcoming visit to Poland to underscore to President Duda and other Polish leaders the importance of robust democratic and judicial institutions. At a time when Poland is asking for an increased U.S. military presence and support in Poland and seeking to purchase high-end U.S. weapons systems like the F-35, you have a unique opportunity to support Polish democracy and

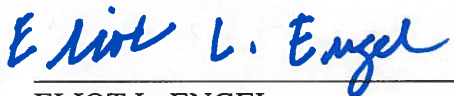
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make a lasting, historic contribution to Poland's future success. It is also critical that you meet with members of Polish civil society during your visit to hear firsthand about the democratic backsliding in the country and how increased funding to civil society can show America's support for defenders of democracy.

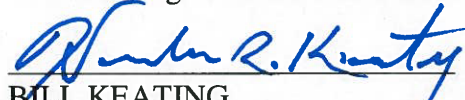
A fair system of representation, rule of law, equality among citizens, a free press, and independent branches of government are critical components of fully functioning, healthy democracies. These elements also help inoculate against Russian malign influence, which consistently seeks to exploit the divisions within democracies.

Indeed, it is because we consider Poland to be among America's closest of friends that we must speak out forcefully in defense of democracy and human rights in Poland. These democratic values form the basis of the close alliance and friendship that we enjoy. On the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, we expect Poland to lead on shared values once again to ensure the protection of liberty in Europe.

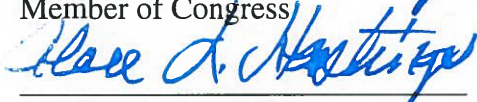
Sincerely,



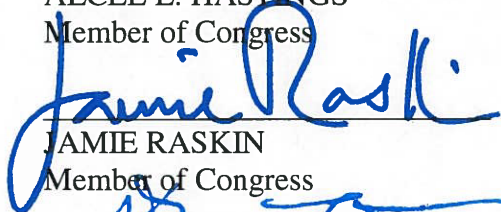
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House Foreign Affairs Committee



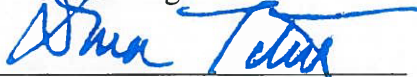
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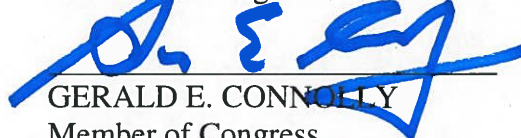
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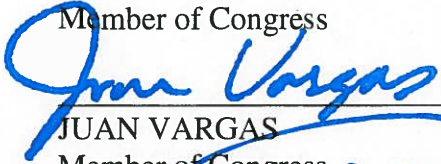
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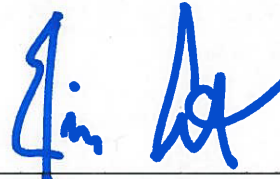
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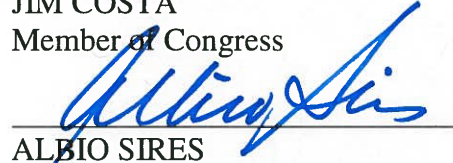
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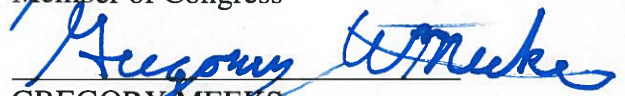
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