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

July 9, 2018

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

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We believe that our diplomatic footprint around the globe must represent the diversity of our country while utilizing the talent of our first-rate foreign service officers and civil servants. With this in mind, we are extremely concerned by the pattern we have observed of the White House replacing female career ambassadors in Latin America and the Caribbean prior to their designated departure dates. In Chile, Uruguay and Barbados, first-rate female career ambassadors are being pushed aside prior to their departure dates to make way for male political appointees. We urge you to work with the White House to reverse this trend.

In the case of Barbados, we are particularly disappointed that the White House nominated Leandro Rizzuto Jr. to replace Ambassador Linda Tagliabue, a career officer who continues to serve our country with great distinction. As you may know, given the lack of a physical U.S. diplomatic presence throughout most of the Eastern Caribbean, the U.S. Ambassador to Barbados concurrently serves as our ambassador to St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada. This is a challenging post. Unfortunately, Mr. Rizzuto has a troubling history of making inflammatory and preposterous remarks, something that would not serve him well as an ambassador.

In your written testimony before the Foreign Affairs Committee in May, you stated, "The Department's workforce is our most valuable asset. Since becoming Secretary, one of my highest priorities has been ensuring that the finest diplomatic corps in the world is fully prepared and empowered to achieve our mission." Valuing the State Department's workforce means ensuring

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that career ambassadors – especially women – are not pushed out of their posts prematurely. Congress places a high value on the diversity of the Department's workforce, and we urge you to similarly place a high value on recruiting, promoting and retaining women in the foreign service, including in our posts in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Affairs



LOIS FRANKEL
Co-Chair
Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues