

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

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

Dear Madame Secretary:

Knowing of your longstanding interest in promoting fundamental human rights and freedoms, we write to express our profound concern regarding ongoing violations of human rights in Honduras. We urge you to fully investigate reports of severe human rights abuses and to urge the new Honduran government to adequately address this escalating pattern of violations.

While the inauguration of Porfirio Lobo as President on January 27, 2010 may have ended the political crisis caused by the June 2009 coup d'état, we are concerned that opposition activists and groups continue to be targeted for intimidation and abuse. International and Honduran human rights groups report death threats, kidnappings, beatings, and assassinations of political activists. To date, no one has been indicted or prosecuted for those crimes.

Since President Lobo's inauguration, several prominent opponents of the coup have been attacked. On February 3rd, Vanessa Zepeda, a nurse and union organizer who had previously received death threats linked to her activism in the resistance movement, was strangled and her body dumped from a vehicle in Tegucigalpa. On February 15th, Julio Funes Benitez, a member of the SITRASANAA trade union and an active member of the national resistance movement, was shot and killed by unknown gunmen on a motorcycle outside his home. Most recently, Claudia Brizuela, an opposition activist, was murdered in her home on February 24th.

Unfortunately, those are only three of the numerous attacks against activists and their families. We are alarmed to note that incoming President Porfirio Lobo, rather than seeking to address the serious rights violations that took place and continue to occur in Honduras, has signed a blanket amnesty that pardons all crimes related to the coup d'état. These and other actions under the Lobo government suggest that there may be little will to take serious measures against those responsible for persistent acts of repression perpetrated against anti-coup activists.

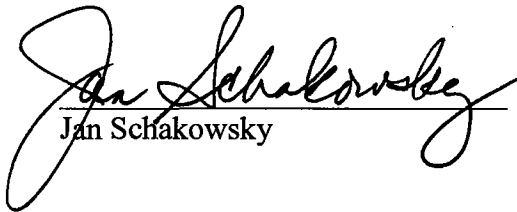
In order to restore confidence in democratic institutions, promote political reconciliation, and strengthen the rule of law, President Lobo must work to end the abuses and targeting of opposition leaders. The United States government must make it clear that the ongoing

intimidation and persecution of activists and dissidents is unacceptable, and that we expect to see a serious effort to halt human rights violations and pursue accountability for ongoing abuses.

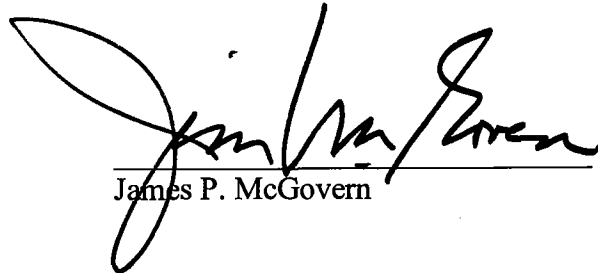
In addition, it is our understanding that you are meeting with President Lobo on Friday, March 5. We ask that, during that meeting, you send a strong unambiguous message that the human rights situation in Honduras will be a critical component of upcoming decisions regarding the further normalization of relations, as well as the resumption of financial assistance.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue, and we look forward to your timely response.

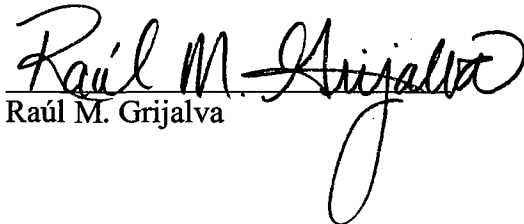
Sincerely,



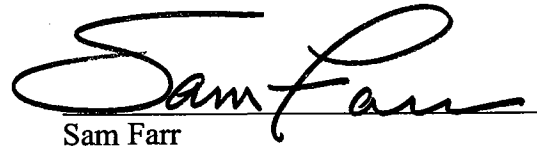
Jan Schakowsky



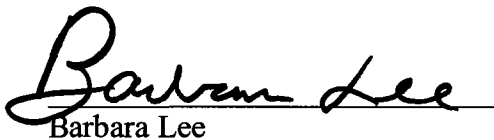
James P. McGovern



Raúl M. Grijalva



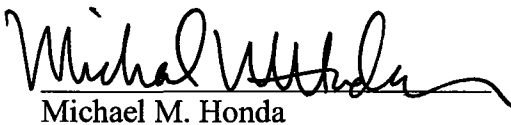
Sam Farr



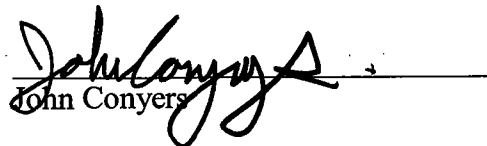
Barbara Lee



James L. Oberstar



Michael M. Honda



John Conyers

Maxine Waters

Maxine Waters