

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 25, 2016

The Honorable John Kerry
United States Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry,

We write to express our deep concern regarding recent developments in Brazil that we believe threaten that country's democratic institutions. We urge you to exercise the utmost caution in your dealings with Brazil's interim authorities and to refrain from statements or actions that might be interpreted as supportive of the impeachment campaign launched against President Dilma Rousseff. Our government should express strong concern regarding the circumstances surrounding the impeachment process and call for the protection of constitutional democracy and the rule of law in Brazil.

As you are aware, Brazil's legislature recently voted to suspend President Dilma Rousseff and a pending Senate trial could result in her permanent removal from office. This is not a legal trial, but a political one, where a two-thirds majority vote by a Senate riddled with corruption can end President Rousseff's tenure. The circumstances surrounding these impeachment proceedings and the recent actions taken by Brazil's interim government have generated enormous controversy both in Brazil and internationally. The impeachment process has come under fire for procedural irregularities, corruption, and political motivations from its beginning. The U.S. government should express concern about the threat to democratic institutions unfolding in a country that is one of our most important political and economic allies in the region, and the world's fifth most populous country as well as Latin America's largest economy.

With President Rousseff's suspension, Vice President Michel Temer ascended to power and immediately replaced a progressive, diverse and representative administration with one that contains only white men who have announced plans to impose austerity, privatization and a far right social agenda. Their actions include the elimination of the Ministry for women, racial equality and human rights (replacing them with weak Secretariats subordinated to the Justice Ministry), and the announcement of major funding reductions for social programs and poverty reduction, prompting statements of concern from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and other groups.

Brazil remains deeply divided along income lines, yet the new cabinet has supported an agenda of sharp reductions to public services and extensive public pension and labor reforms with potentially deeply adverse effects on the poorest and most vulnerable. Again, these sharp

reversals in government policy are conducted by a government with no popular mandate and which has come to power through extremely dubious means.

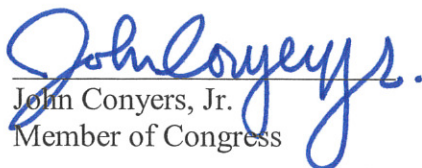
In his first 30 days in office, Michel Temer lost three of his chosen ministers to corruption charges, including a close ally, Romero Jucá, President of the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party. Mr. Jucá stepped down after Brazil's largest newspaper *Folha de Sao Paulo* released a taped conversation of him plotting the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff to install Temer in her place as a way to shut down a massive corruption investigation. To make matters worse, many of the politicians who support this impeachment process currently face allegations of serious crimes such as corruption, embezzlement and even attempted homicide. This includes Mr. Temer, who was found guilty of campaign finance violations and is banned from running for any political office, including the one he now holds, for eight years once he leaves office.

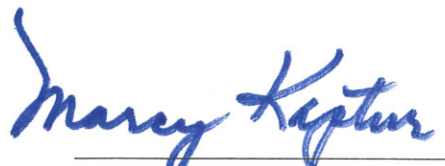
President Rousseff herself has never been formally charged with corruption and the impeachment claims are not based on corruption allegations. Instead, she is accused of using money from public banks to temporarily cover budget gaps. Whether appropriate or not, it is a widely used practice at all levels of Brazilian government, including by her two predecessors. This fuels allegations that the impeachment proceedings against President Rousseff are politically motivated. Beyond that, however, they are also seen as an opportunity for the interim president to impose a political agenda which reflects the views of the opposition, not of the elected President.

Finally, we are concerned that, rather than showing concern regarding these troubling developments, our government has sent signals that could be interpreted as supportive of the impeachment campaign. Because many Brazilians have labeled the impeachment process as a "coup" against the country's elected president, it is especially important that U.S. actions not be perceived as supportive of impeachment. We note, for instance, that on April 19 – just two days after the lower house voted to impeach President Rousseff – Brazilian senator Aloysio Nunes, a key backer of the impeachment campaign, met with one of the State Department's most senior officials: Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon. In Brazil, this meeting was widely interpreted as a gesture of support for the removal of President Rousseff from office.

Furthermore, we are dismayed to note that to date, State Department officials have limited themselves to expressing confidence in the democratic process in Brazil, without noting some of the very obvious concerns regarding the impeachment process and actions taken by the interim government. We urge you to join others in the region and express concern regarding these recent events and support stability, constitutional democracy and the rule of law in Brazil.


Sincerely,


John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

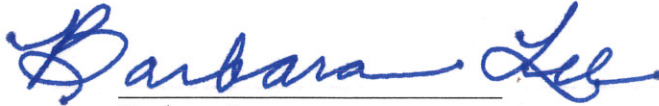

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



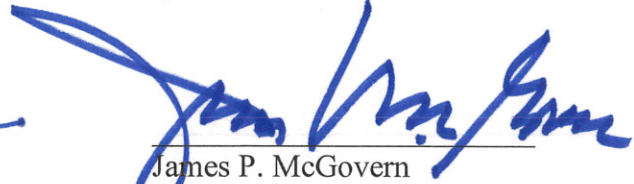
Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



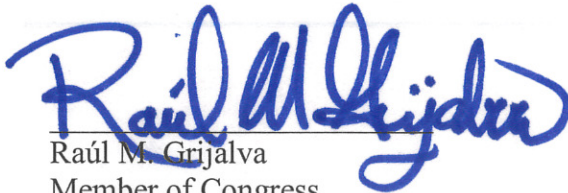
John Lewis
Member of Congress



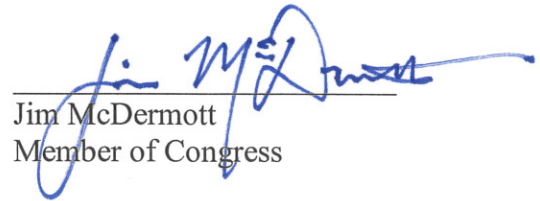
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



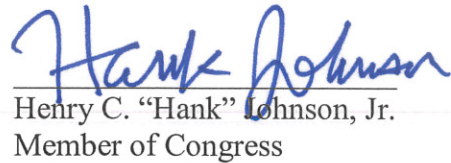
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



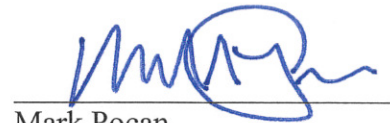
Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress



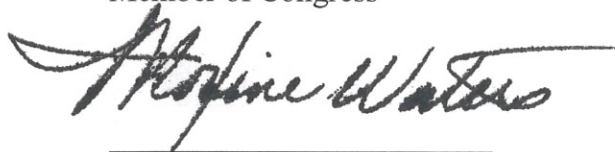
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Alan Grayson
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



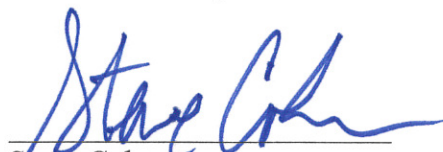
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



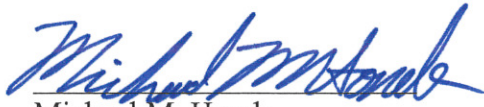
Sam Farr
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



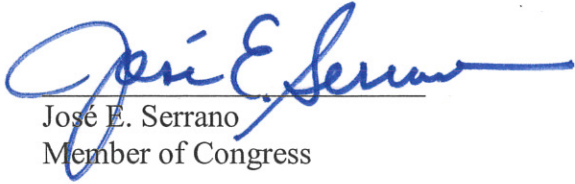
Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress



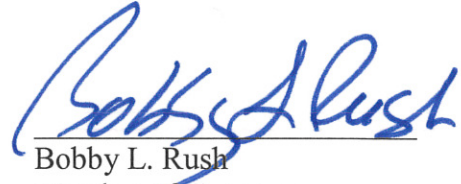
Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



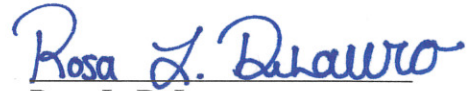
José E. Serrano
Member of Congress




Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



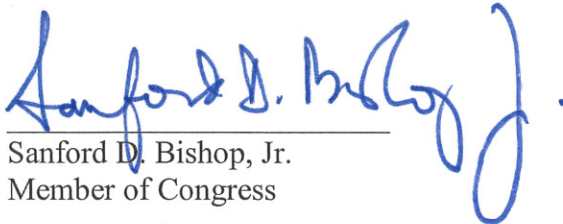
Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



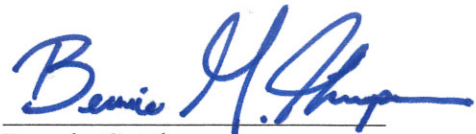
Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress



Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



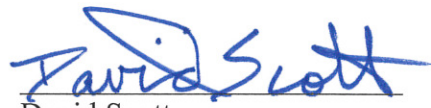
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



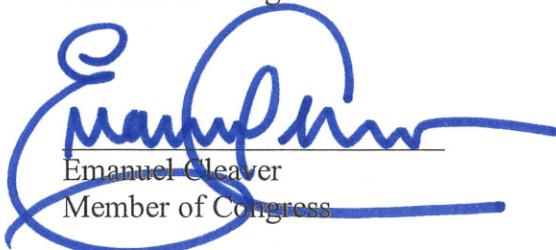
Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



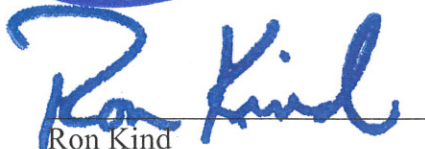
David Scott
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress



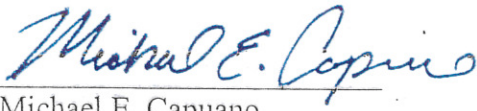
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



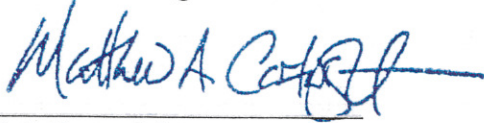
Ron Kind
Member of Congress



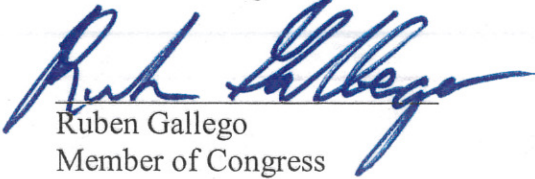
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



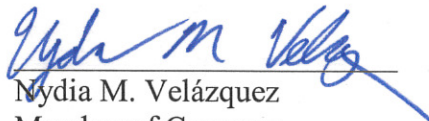
Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



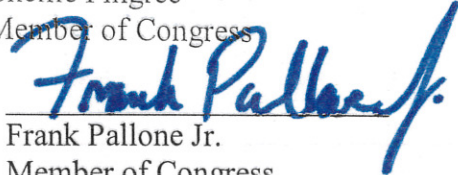
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



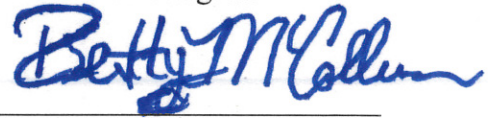
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



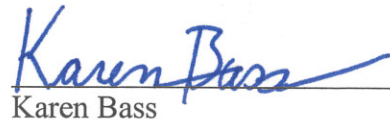
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone Jr.
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Karen Bass
Member of Congress