

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 22, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State

By Electronic Mail

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We write today in support of the Ukrainian people and their right to live free of violence or the threat of it. Ongoing threats to Ukraine's sovereignty and the security of its citizens are unacceptable, and we are alarmed Russia's invasion of the country. Ukraine is one of our strongest partners in eastern Europe and we place a paramount importance on its future as a free, democratic state.

As a Russian invasion begins, we are particularly concerned for the wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) Ukrainians and other marginalized groups in Ukraine. There is an impending humanitarian emergency in Ukraine and Ukraine's partners - including the U.S. - must take action to protect Ukrainian lives, with a particular focus on minority communities. LGBTQ Ukrainians as well as Ukrainians with disabilities, the elderly, and other marginalized groups face greater hurdles in seeking safety as a Russian incursion into Ukraine begins. We must safeguard the rights of marginalized people in Ukraine and ensure they are protected as this crisis unfolds.

The new U.S.-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership, signed on November 10, 2021, affirms the importance of advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms. Specifically, the agreement notes that advancing democracy and the rule of law includes "fighting racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and discrimination, including against Roma and members of the LGBTQI+ communities." This shared dedication to respect for human rights must be put into action by recognizing the particular risks that marginalized communities face during a Russian invasion of Ukraine.

In recent years, Ukraine has made great strides towards securing equality for LGBTQ people within its borders and is a regional leader in LGBTQ rights. Workplace discrimination based on LGBTQ status is outlawed in Ukraine, and Ukrainian law enforcement have taken special steps to protect Pride parades around the country. In addition, new legislation creating hate crime statutes to protect LGBTQ Ukrainians was recently introduced in Ukraine's parliament. LGBTQ civil society in Ukraine is robust and visible with numerous LGBTQ groups officially registered as non-governmental entities. While there is still work to do, these advancements stand in stark contrast to Russia's positions on LGBTQ equality. Increased Russian government influence on


the lives of Ukrainians is likely to be incredibly harmful to the rights of LGBTQ people in Ukraine.

We applaud Ukraine for making progress towards equality for LGBTQ individuals. We look forward to working with the Administration to ensure those hard-won rights are safeguarded as Russia threatens Ukraine's sovereignty. Thank you for your continued leadership as the United States defends the safety and freedom of the Ukrainian people.

Sincerely,



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

/s/

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

/s/

Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Richie Torres
Member of Congress

/s/

Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress

/s/

Sean Casten
Member of Congress

/s/

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

/s/

Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

/s/

Dina Titus
Member of Congress

/s/

Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress

/s/

Susan Wild
Member of Congress

/s/

Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

/s/

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

/s/

Colin Allred
Member of Congress

/s/
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

/s/
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/
Mondaire Jones
Member of Congress

/s/
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

/s/
André Carson
Member of Congress

/s/
Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

/s/
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

/s/
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress

/s/
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

/s/
Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

/s/
Jim Costa
Member of Congress

/s/
Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress

/s/
Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

/s/
Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

/s/
William R. Keating
Member of Congress

/s/
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

/s/
Karen Bass
Member of Congress

/s/
Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress

/s/
Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Julia M. Brownley
Member of Congress

Cc: Jessica Stern, U.S. Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI+) Persons