

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 3, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
US Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

Since Operation Epic Fury began, indiscriminate attacks from the Iranian regime and regime-aligned forces have targeted American and allied civilians, military personnel, facilities, embassies, and hotels, causing casualties and significant damage.

In response to the evident security risks, on March 2, the State Department's Assistant Secretary of Consular Affairs issued a "DEPART NOW" communication urging American citizens in 15 countries and territories to leave due to "serious safety risks."¹ The countries and territories cited include Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

The Department instructs American citizens to use commercial transportation means. However, as you are aware, most flights have been cancelled, airports are closed, and commercial travel is not feasible. Consequently, Americans have reported being stranded, even as other governments like the United Kingdom are reportedly offering transport.² Furthermore, at least one report suggests the State Department's emergency number merely recites the "same security update posted online" rather than providing substantive guidance.³ Embassies are also closed or shutting down.⁴

These issues were predictable. The lack of clear preparation, planning, and communication to Americans abroad is unacceptable and a violation of the State Department's basic mission to provide consular assistance and "the protection of U.S. citizens overseas."⁵

¹ <https://x.com/AsstSecStateCA/status/2028588420403241021?s=20>

² <https://x.com/atrupar/status/2028544448532013284>

³ <https://x.com/JBlunt1018/status/2028625938855154120>

⁴ <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/state-department-urges-americans-mideast-depart-strikes-continue-rcna261313>

⁵ <https://travel.state.gov/en/international-travel.html>

At this harrowing moment, it is important that every American seeking to return home has the opportunity to do so. We urge the State Department to commit to using all resources at its disposal, including charter flights, to help those Americans affected return to the United States safely and quickly. We urge you to consider charter flights and military operations for evacuation simultaneously. We also ask that you provide updated guidance to travelers with clear directives on how and where evacuations may be available, and any expenses for which they will be responsible. Lastly, we ask the Department to coordinate with our allies and partners in the region to increase capacity and provide those stranded with more options to seek safety.

We look forward to your quick response.

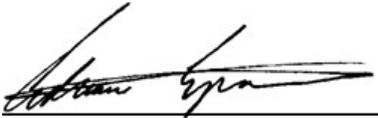
Sincerely,



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Sharice L. Davids
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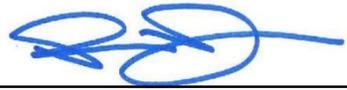
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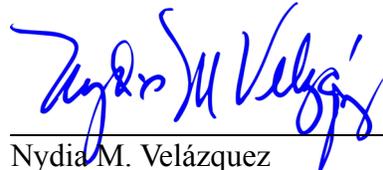
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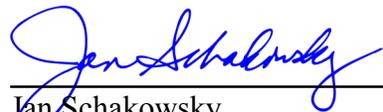
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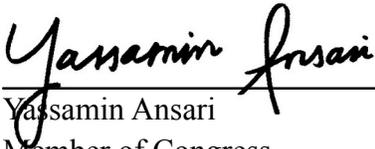
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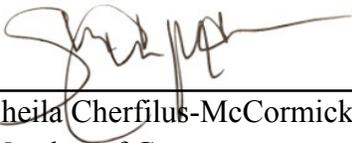
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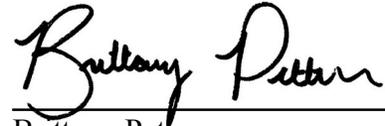
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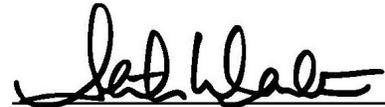
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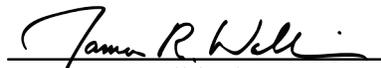
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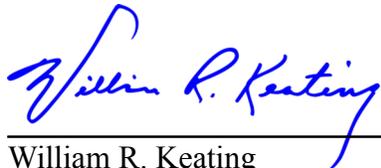
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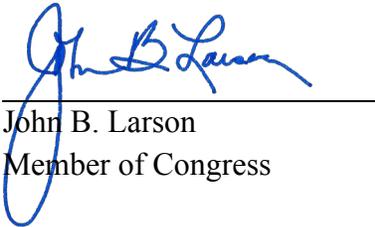
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