

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 1, 2017

President Donald Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As of January 20, 2017, the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom position within the State Department, is now vacant.

Given the extreme persecution of religious groups around the world, including the genocide of Yezidis, Christians, and Shia Muslims at the hand of ISIS, we urge you to act quickly to nominate an Ambassador-at-Large.

The nominee must have significant foreign policy experience and understand the relationship between religious freedom and national security. It is also critical that the Ambassador is vested with the authority and the resources necessary for success. As mandated by the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act (P.L. 114-281), this bipartisan law requires that the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom "shall report directly to the Secretary of State," rather than being buried in the bureaucracy of the Department, underscoring the centrality of religious freedom in U.S. foreign policy. Additionally, we are committed to ensuring that funding for this crucial position and the work of the Office of International Religious Freedom remains a priority.

The promotion of the freedom of religion – the right to practice any faith or to choose no faith at all – as a fundamental human right, is a proven source of stability for all countries. As such, the mission of the Office of International Religious Freedom should be to promote religious freedom as a core objective of U.S. foreign policy.

Under previous administrations, this position was not immediately filled and the prolonged vacancy sent a message that religious freedom was not a priority of the United States government.


We encourage you to nominate an Ambassador-at-Large not only to ensure that the key value of religious freedom is protected, but to show that religious freedom is a priority for our government.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

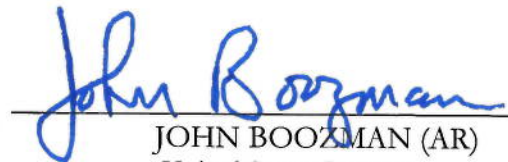


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United States Senator

  
CORY GARDNER (CO)  
United States Senator

  
JAMES M. INHOFE (OK)  
United States Senator

  
TODD YOUNG (IN)  
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Rex Tillerson  
Secretary  
U.S. State Department