

EQUALITY CALIFORNIA



April 16, 2018

The Hon. Bob Corker, Chairman
The Hon. Robert Menendez, Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
423 Dirksen SOB
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Director Mike Pompeo, Nominee for Secretary of State

Dear Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Menendez:

On behalf of Equality California, the nation's largest statewide LGBTQ civil rights organization, we write to urge you to reject the nomination of Mike Pompeo to be the next U.S. Secretary of State.

Equality California brings the voices of LGBTQ people and allies to institutions of power in California and across the United States, striving to create a world that is healthy, just, and fully equal for all LGBTQ people. We advance civil rights and social justice by inspiring, advocating, and mobilizing through an inclusive movement that works tirelessly on behalf of those we serve.

Since the Second World War, America's role in the world has included providing moral leadership, including advancing and promoting respect for democracy and human rights around the globe. For decades, our top diplomats have spoken out forcefully in support of human rights and against countries that discriminate against their citizens on the basis of race, religion and gender. And in the last decade, the United States has unequivocally condemned countries around the world that criminalize and discriminate against the LGBTQ community, while again providing leadership in the advancement of equality and civil rights for all LGBTQ people.

Indeed, the entire Obama Administration — including the President, Vice President Biden, Secretaries of State Clinton and Kerry, Ambassadors Susan Rice and Samantha Power, as well as other U.S. diplomatic and national security leaders — stood as vocal proponents of LGBTQ human rights throughout Africa, the Middle East, Asia and some countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, in both multilateral institutional settings and quiet bilateral meetings.

By sharp contrast, President Trump has demonstrated contempt toward many of our security and trading partners and a little interest in diplomacy, much less a commitment to our nation's history of moral leadership in the advancement of human rights around the world.

Board of Directors

Mandy Lee
President

Joseph Gregorich
Vice President

Scott Malzahn
Secretary

Laurie Hasencamp
Treasurer

Susan McCabe
Governance Chair

Jerry Bloom
PAC Chair

Jason Anderson
Linda Bernhardt
Marc Blakeman
Susan Burnside
Cecilia Cabello
Juan Camacho
Andrea Casalett
Jason Daniels
Sue Dunlap
Boe Hayward
Dolores Huerta
Deanna Johnston
Leslie Katz
Andreas Meyer
Stuart Milk
C. Scott Miller
Doug Moreland
Drew Murphy
Rich Poppen
Chris Robert
Yale Scott
Ernie Schmider
Nancy Sutley
John Tedstrom
David J. Tsai
Darrell L. Tucci
Hillary Whittington
Hon. James Williamson

3701 Wilshire Blvd
Suite 725
Los Angeles, CA 90010

Since his nomination, we have been deeply concerned about Director Pompeo's troubling anti-LGBTQ record, including his co-sponsorship of multiple bills during his service in the U.S. House of Representatives that would have slowed the spread of marriage equality and provided a "license to discriminate" against the LGBTQ community. He opposed the repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' and said it was "not ideal" for children to have same-sex parents. He also voted against reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act and, in three full terms in the House, received two zeroes and one 30 out of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign's Congressional Scorecard.

During Director Pompeo's confirmation hearing, we were horrified that he refused to tell Senator Booker that he now disavows his earlier belief that same-sex relations are a "perversion," even as he seeks to represent our nation as top diplomat and oversee the careers of hundreds of LGBTQ diplomatic personnel and staff at the State Department and USAID. Of note, the virulently anti-LGBTQ leader of the Family Research Council Tony Perkins recently said that if he is confirmed, Pompeo would be a "desperately needed agent of change" at the U.S. State Department.

Director Pompeo's open disdain for the civil rights and human dignity of these highly-qualified LGBTQ people who have dedicated their careers to service of their country is as clear a reason as any that he should not be confirmed. But at a time when the Chechen Republic is forcing gay men into concentration camps, countries around the world continue to criminalize same-sex relationships and transgender and intersex communities face growing violence and persecution, the position of U.S. Secretary of State demands a leader willing to stand up for LGBTQ human rights in public settings and behind closed doors.

For all of these reasons, we respectfully urge you to stand with the LGBTQ community and vote against Director Pompeo's confirmation as U.S. Secretary of State.

We are aware, of course, that a number of members of the committee voted to confirm Director Pompeo to be CIA Director last January. The role of Secretary of State, however, requires a far different skill-set and record. Director Pompeo's public statements and positions on issues important to the LGBTQ community here and around the world make it clear that he would be unfit to serve in this capacity.

Sincerely,



Rick Zbur
Executive Director



Valerie Ploumpis
National Policy Director

cc: Members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations