

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 9, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
The President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We congratulate you on being sworn in as 46th President of the United States of America. As a Presidential candidate, you spoke of strengthening our alliances and promoting democracy as a bulwark against a rising global tide of authoritarianism. We have long shared those beliefs, and we write regarding the ongoing human rights situation in Turkey and ask that you press the Turkish government to improve its troubling record.

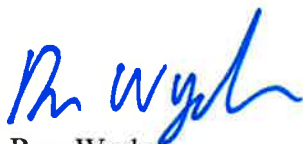
Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has taken the country down an increasingly authoritarian path. He has systematically marginalized domestic opposition, silenced or coopted critical media outlets, purged independent judges and replaced them with party loyalists and jailed scores of journalists. The Committee to Protect Journalists ranks Turkey behind only China in number of imprisoned media workers. Freedom House rated Turkey “Not Free” in its 2020 Freedom in the World Report. And the U.S. State Department’s 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices noted: “under broad antiterror legislation the government restricted fundamental freedoms and compromised the rule of law.”

President Erdogan’s foreign policy has also grown more belligerent and combative over time. In recent years, he brazenly attacked U.S.-backed Kurds fighting ISIS in Syria, he purchased Russian air defense systems despite warnings that they were incompatible with U.S. technology, and he encouraged Azerbaijan to use violence to settle a territorial dispute with Armenia. President Erdogan has also attempted to pressure the U.S. and other countries into extraditing Turkish nationals, whom he blames for the failed coup in 2016. The Erdogan government has sought to silence critics in the United States like Enes Kanter, an NBA player and human rights advocate, by going after his family in Turkey and placing an INTERPOL red notice on him.

Turkey remains an important ally in a significant region of the world, and it is precisely for this reason that we write you today. We believe that the United States must hold allies and partners to a higher standard and speak frankly with them about issues of human rights and democratic backsliding. We urge you to emphasize to President Erdogan and his administration that they should immediately end their crackdown on dissent at home and abroad, release political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, and reverse their authoritarian course.

America has a bipartisan tradition of promoting basic human rights and democratic principles. We believe deeply in continuing this important tradition and stand ready to assist your administration on these important issues.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Marco Rubio  
United States Senator



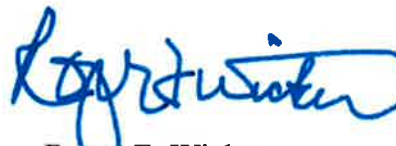
Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



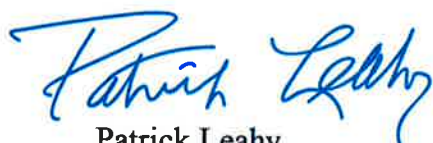
John Thune  
United States Senator

/s/

Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator



Thom Tillis  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Ben Sasse  
United States Senator



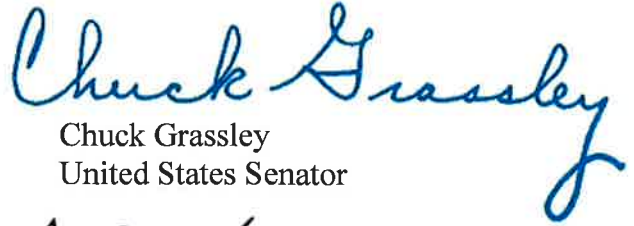
Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



John Boozman  
United States Senator

/s/

Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



Chuck Grassley  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



John Cornyn  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator



Patty Murray  
United States Senator



James Lankford  
United States Senator



Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Cindy Hyde-Smith  
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Mike Braun  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Todd Young  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



Mitt Romney  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator




John Kennedy  
United States Senator

/s/  
Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator




Jerry Moran  
United States Senator

/s/  
Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator




Jon Tester  
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator


/s/  
Mazie Hirono  
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator