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November 16, 2020

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

We, the undersigned organizations representing millions of people across the United States, write to support Representative Joaquin Castro's candidacy for Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. We believe that as chairman, Representative Castro will boldly advance a new vision for our nation's role in the world, centered around human rights and human dignity, justice, accountability, cooperation, and diplomacy. Nearly one year into a global pandemic and economic crisis, it is clearer than ever how interconnected our wellbeing in the United States is with health, stability, prosperity, and peace abroad. Representative Castro has articulated a holistic approach to foreign policy that meets the enormity of the challenges we face. Rep. Castro represents the best opportunity to unify the Democratic Caucus around an inclusive vision to put diplomacy at the forefront of our foreign policy.

At this critical crossroads for the United States and the rest of the world, Representative Castro recognizes the importance of global cooperation to innovate and ensure universal access to lifesaving medicine; international trade and tax policy that advances economic and environmental justice, and human rights; and the need to alleviate human suffering by limiting the use of broad-based sanctions that harm civilians while bringing endless wars to a responsible close. Most recently, for example, he has been an important champion in support of House Democrats' COVID-19 relief efforts to provide hundreds of billions of dollars in financial support and debt relief to the developing world at no cost to U.S. taxpayers, working to unite the leaders of the diverse House Democratic caucuses around the enactment of this global stimulus to strengthen U.S. exports while alleviating poverty, hunger, and disease abroad.

We are confident that under his capable leadership, the House Foreign Affairs Committee will be revitalized, relying on diverse voices and expertise to solve some of our biggest challenges, such as climate change, global inequality, racial justice, nuclear proliferation, and the deterioration of democracy at home and abroad. Equipped with the experience and expertise of serving on Foreign Affairs, Armed Services, and Intelligence Committees, Castro has brought crucial ideas to the race by reimagining the committee's potential and engaging with grassroots organizations

across America. He has led the effort to document and expand racial and gender diversity among experts called to testify before House committees, and will pursue this aggressively as chairman. He has also proposed a self term limit on his own chairmanship to foster broader leadership within HFAC. Vice Chair Castro is also unique among the candidates seeking committee chairmanship as the only Representative currently serving as a subcommittee chair, the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, a role which shows his dedication to the committee.

As a grandson of a Mexican immigrant and as a child of activists in the Chicano Civil Rights movement, Representative Castro is the candidate we need to counter the damage done by years of hate-filled White House policy towards our southern neighbors, including against those who have taken the perilous journey in search of a better life. He has shown leadership in reining in the Executive Branch's lawlessness, introducing a resolution of disapproval against the Trump administration's unconstitutional allocation of funds for border wall construction. Castro's legislation passed both legislative chambers, including Leader McConnell's Senate, to reassert Congress's Article I authorities. More than any HFAC chair candidate, Congressman Castro has demonstrated the ability to build broad coalitions in the diverse Democratic Caucus and bring people together.

As we work to rectify this dark chapter in our history, Representative Castro will be a powerful voice for centering Latino voices in foreign policymaking and committee leadership and put forward a new vision for reforming our policies on trade, military alliances and arms sales, and human rights in the Western hemisphere and beyond to protect migrants and address the root causes of migration and displacement. As Chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Castro has also pursued fierce investigations, oversight and accountability for the administration's horrific policies of detention, abuse, and separation of migrant children at the U.S. border.

Representative Castro is uniquely qualified for this role, given his wealth of committee expertise on the Foreign Affairs, Armed Services, and Intelligence Committees. His personal and professional ethics will ensure the committee's impartiality, and a stellar legislative record that demonstrates foresight and sound judgment on foreign policy, such as votes in support of diplomacy instead of unjust war, and fair trade that prioritizes working families and the planet over corporate profits.

While we strongly endorse Representative Castro for Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, we also recognize the valuable foreign policy contributions of the other candidates. Representative Meeks, for example, was a chief supporter of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (or Iran deal), engaged in direct dialogue with the Venezuelan government, and was a uniquely strong voice opposing the Bush Administration's overthrow of the elected government of Haiti in 2004. Representative Sherman has defended Congressional war powers under both Republican and Democratic administrations, including leading efforts to demand authorization for the disastrous intervention in Libya. He has also led important recent efforts to reject the Trump Administration's reckless, militarized approach toward China in pursuit of more constructive relations, and to block the development of nuclear weapons in Saudi Arabia.

While we appreciate the wealth of experience and knowledge that each of the candidates for HFAC Chair bring to the position, we believe that the House will strongly benefit from a new generation of foreign policy leadership, one that is willing to develop creative and progressive solutions to the major global issues facing our country. Young Americans are getting engaged across this country and making their voices heard, including calling for an end to the post-9/11 wars and prioritizing global climate justice and poverty alleviation. The HFAC chair election can be an important step towards acknowledging the benefits that generational diversity can bring in terms of both fresh ideas and new interest and engagement in the legislative process among younger Americans.

It is for these reasons we believe Representative Castro would pursue a new vision as chairman that promotes inclusive prosperity and democracy at home and a more holistic view of security abroad. We believe he will serve as a fair and open-minded leader who will encourage robust and open debate, skillfully wield the committee's constitutional oversight duties, and uphold the highest ethical standards as Chairman. We strongly encourage members of the House Democratic Caucus to elect Representative Castro to be the House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair in order to champion diplomacy that can help create a more open, peaceful and just world.

Sincerely,

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American Muslims for Palestine  
CODEPINK  
Common Defense  
Demand Progress Education Fund  
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Government Information Watch  
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IfNotNow  
Immigration Hub  
Indivisible  
Institute for Policy Studies - New Internationalism Project  
Just Foreign Policy  
Justice Democrats  
Justice Is Global  
MADRE  
MALDEF  
MoveOn  
Peace Action  
Progressive Change Campaign Committee  
Project Blueprint  
Rethinking Foreign Policy  
RootsAction.org  
Sunrise Movement

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Cc: Members of the Democratic Caucus of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress