



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF THE UNITED STATES

June 27, 2018

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Burbank, California

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The Honorable Mike Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
US Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Nikki Haley  
United States Ambassador to the United Nations  
The United States Mission to the United Nations  
799 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

*Submitted electronically and via USPS*

Dear Mr. Secretary and Madam Ambassador:

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) is deeply disappointed with the Administration's decision to withdraw from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). We respectfully request that the United States reconsider its withdrawal from the UNHRC.

LWVUS worked to support and build public understanding for the United Nations even before it was formally established. We were one of the original 42 nongovernmental organizations invited by President Truman to serve as consultants to the U.S. delegation. To this day, LWVUS enjoys ECOSOC special consultative status at the UN as a result of our work on its behalf. We support "a strong, effective and active participation of the United States in the UN system. According to our official position, "The United Nations should be an important component of U.S. foreign policy. The League supports U.S. policies that strengthen the UN's capacity to solve global problems...The United States should work actively and constructively within the UN system, exercising diplomatic leadership in advance of decision-making."

We recognize that there are flaws with both the UNHRC's process in member selection and operations, resulting in bias towards Israel and lack of progress on human rights violations by some of its own members. However, it is specifically because of those flaws, that we believe that the United States has a better chance of working from within to spearhead the needed change to both the process and results. To quote Boris Johnson, the UK Foreign Secretary, "We've made no secret of the fact that the UK wants to see reform of the human rights council, but we are committed to working to strengthen the council from within." "Britain's support for the human rights council remains steadfast. It is the best tool the international community has to address impunity in an imperfect world and to advance many of our international goals."

The League of Women Voters of the United States agrees with Mr. Johnson's statement. We also agree with Madam Ambassador's assessment that the Council has a "chronic bias

against Israel" and Mr. Secretary's notation "Since its creation (2006), the council has adopted more resolutions condemning Israel (70) than against the rest of the world combined." We also agree with Mr. Secretary's recognition that the selection process is flawed, "Countries have colluded with each other to undermine the current method of selecting members". We note that the dysfunction is also exacerbated by Agenda Item 7, which since its adoption in 2007 has singled out Israel for perpetual censure and is a measure that no other country faces at the UNHRC.

Despite these flaws, UNHRC serves a purpose as the protector and promoter of all human rights around the globe. By giving up its seat, the United States is allowing other countries on the Council, who do not share American values on the importance of human rights to take over and forfeit any progress that has been made regarding human rights challenges. The global and political shoes that the United States fills in this arena will be tough for other countries seeking to take this seat to fill. Vacating our seat on the UNHRC lessens the U.S.' platform to influence the course of global human rights. This forfeiture only allows the victims of human rights abuses to fall prey to governments that will take advantage of the U.S.' absence.

We urge you to reconsider and seek reelection to the UN Human Rights Council in 2019 and maintain an observer status through the rest of the current term.

Sincerely,



Chris Carson  
President  
League of Women Voters of the United States



Rosalee Keech  
Chief UN Observer  
League of Women Voters of the United States