

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 18, 2015

Secretary John Kerry
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20520

From the desk of Rep. Jim Weidner



Dear Secretary Kerry,

We write to express our deep concern about the persistence of human rights violations in Turkey. We are particularly concerned by the recent arrest and detainment of members of the Turkish media and the broad effort by the Erdogan Administration to censor the freedom of press. A strong democracy requires that all members of the society respect the freedom of expression, even when voices opposed to the government are vocal. We hope that you will address this issue as you engage with the Turkish government.

According to Human Rights Watch, President Erdogan's Administration has begun a "crackdown" on critical voices in the Turkish media. The Administration has attracted international attention in recent months with the arrest of Ekrem Dumanli, editor-in-chief of Zaman, a highly circulated daily newspaper in Turkey, and Hidayet Karaca, CEO of Samanyolu Media Group. On December 14, 2014, these members of the media were arrested and detained on questionable charges. Mr. Dumanli has since been released, but Mr. Karaca unfortunately remains detained. Both Mr. Dumanli and Mr. Karaca lead major news organizations critical of the Erdogan Administration.

Unfortunately, this case reflects a broader pattern of abuse. One year prior to these arrests, allegations of corruption were levied against the Erdogan Administration. Subsequently, many prominent journalists lost their jobs for writing material that was critical of the Erdogan Administration. These tactics are unacceptable in a democracy; a free press is central to full access to information for citizens. The attempt by the Turkish government to punish and censor the Turkish media is a matter of deep concern for the United States.

We strongly urge you to address this issue with President Erdogan and his Administration in a way that encourages a peaceful and appropriate resolution to these cases. Such a broad effort by the Turkish government to censor media is an affront to the basic principles of democracy, free society, free enterprise, rule of law, and equal opportunity.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Roger Wicker
United States Senator



Thad Cochran
United States Senator



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



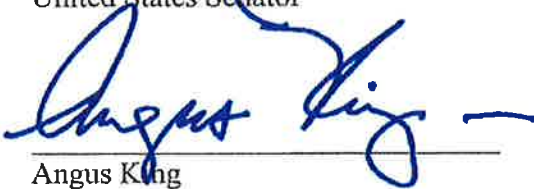
Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Joe Manchin
United States Senator



Bernie Sanders
United States Senator



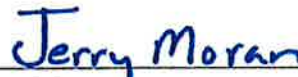
Angus King
United States Senator



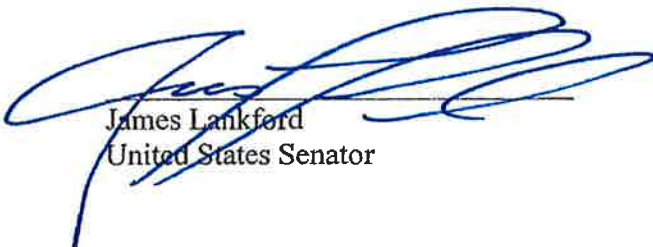
Susan Collins
United States Senator



John Thune
United States Senator



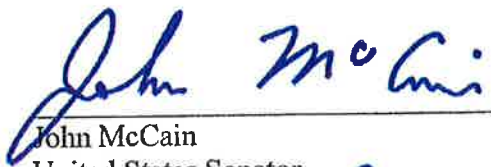
Jerry Moran
United States Senator



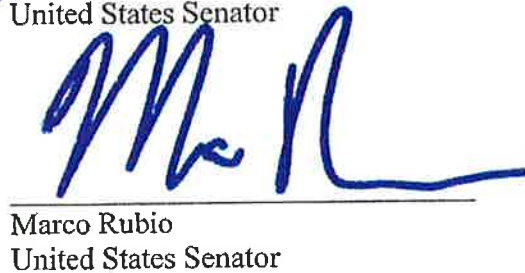
James Lankford
United States Senator



Ben Sasse
United States Senator



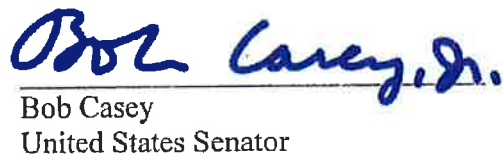
John McCain
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



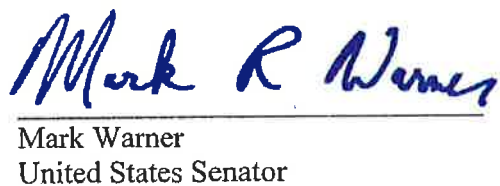
Deb Fischer
United States Senator



Bob Casey
United States Senator




Rob Portman
United States Senator



Mark Warner
United States Senator



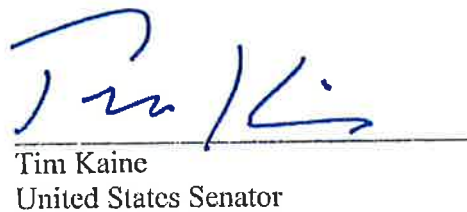
Tom Cotton
United States Senator



Roy Blunt
United States Senator



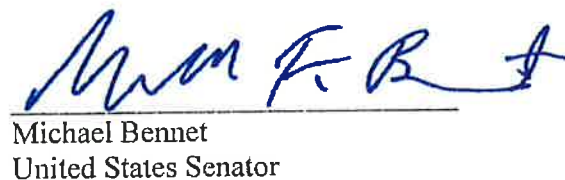
Jeff Sessions
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



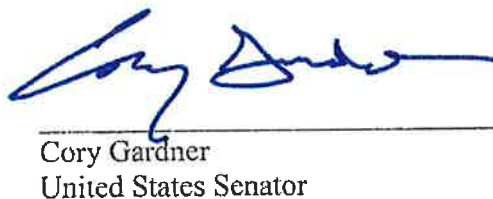
Mike Rounds
United States Senator



Michael Bennet
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Cory Gardner
United States Senator



Richard Durbin
United States Senator



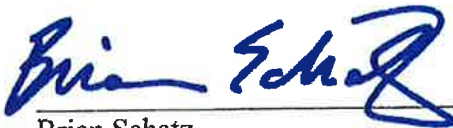
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Bill Nelson
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



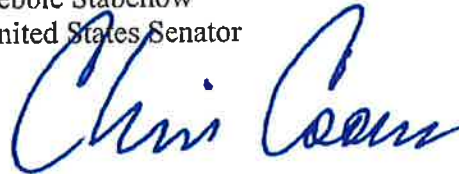
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Joni Ernst
United States Senator



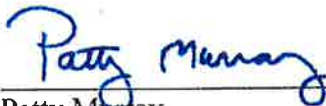
Chris Coons
United States Senator



Johnny Isakson
United States Senator



Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Gary Peters
United States Senator



James Inhofe
United States Senator




Ed Markey
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



Orrin Hatch
United States Senator



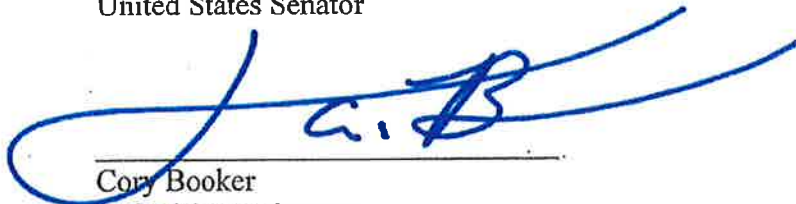
Pat Roberts
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



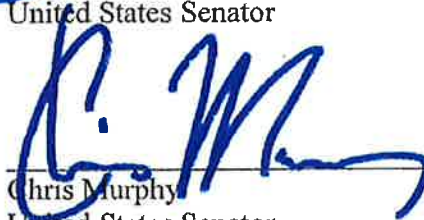
Charles Grassley
United States Senator



Cory Booker
United States Senator



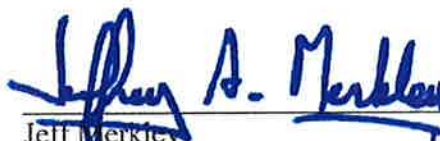
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



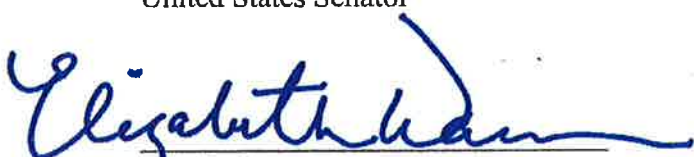
Chris Murphy
United States Senator



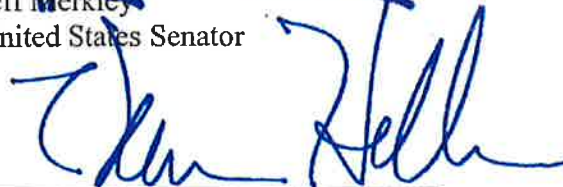
Al Franken
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Dean Heller
United States Senator



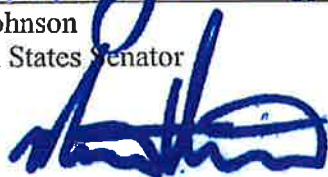
John Boozman
United States Senator



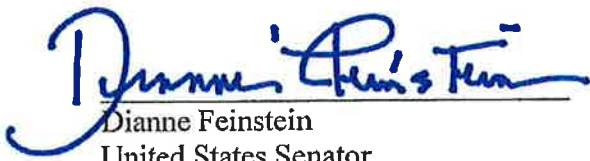
Ron Johnson
United States Senator



Mazie Hirono
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator


John Hoeven
United States Senator


Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator

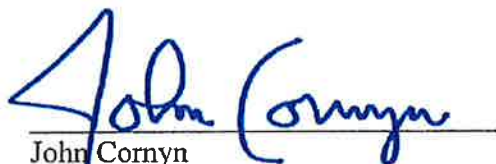

Barbara Mikulski
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator


Ben Cardin
United States Senator


Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

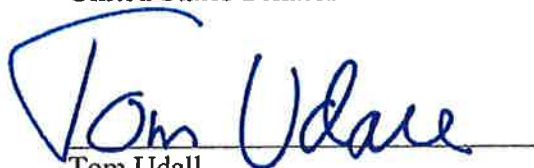

Tom Carper
United States Senator


John Cornyn
United States Senator


Mark Kirk
United States Senator


Robert Menendez
United States Senator


Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator


Tom Udall
United States Senator


Bill Cassidy
United States Senator