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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

May 15, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

I write to express my deep concern about current efforts to reform the Constitution of the Dominican Republic to circumvent established presidential term limits and allow incumbent President Danilo Medina to run for an unprecedented second re-election.

As you know, the Dominican Republic and several other countries in Latin America have had a challenging but steady transition to civilian democracy after decades of enduring authoritarianism and government overreach.

In this context, a recent Gallup poll conducted in April of this year showed that more than 68 percent of the Dominican population opposes a constitutional reform that would allow President Medina to run for a third term. It is imperative that President Medina respect the wishes of his people by accepting their desire to maintain a two-term presidential limit as guaranteed by the country's constitution, and upholding the democratic norms and institutions the Dominican people have fought so hard to establish.

Earlier this year, the United States Senate approved by unanimous consent a resolution (S.Res.35) reaffirming its commitment to democratic principles in Bolivia and across Latin America and the Caribbean, and supporting the presidential term limits prevalent in the hemisphere as reasonable checks against a history of coups, corruption, and abuses of power.

In upholding the spirit of this resolution, I ask that you utilize all diplomatic tools at your disposal to underscore the importance of democratic governance in the Dominican Republic. Amid increased threats to democracy throughout the world, the United States must demonstrate its commitment to defending democratic norms, and cannot ignore when an elected leader attempts to extend their grasp on power by modifying their country's constitution for their advantage.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
Ranking Member