

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 27, 2018

The Honorable Michael Pence
Vice President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President:

We write in advance of your visit to Ecuador to encourage you to continue building upon the important progress made in our bilateral relationship over the last year. We believe your trip can help forge a new chapter in longstanding relations between the United States and Ecuador built on shared values, and address remaining challenges between our countries.

Over the last decade, the relationship between the United States and Ecuador was marked by unfortunate tensions. However, under President Lenin Moreno's leadership, there is a unique opportunity to reverse this trend. In the last two months alone, President Moreno's Administration has signed two important agreements with the United States to improve cooperation to combat transnational criminal organizations and illicit trafficking.

Additionally, at a time when there is growing concern in the region about the link between indefinite re-election and authoritarianism, we commend President Moreno's efforts to hold a referendum that allowed Ecuadoreans to reinstate presidential term limits. This development has important implications for Ecuador and is an invaluable precedent for the hemisphere.

We also welcome President Moreno's intent to reform Ecuador's Law of Communication and his statements in support of freedom of expression protected. We are hopeful that his administration will restore Ecuador's historical commitment to the fundamental freedoms and democratic values as enshrined in the Inter-American Democratic Charter and other international covenants, and we encourage you to use this visit to reaffirm our shared commitment to those values.

Despite these advances, we remain extremely concerned about Ecuador providing asylum to WikiLeaks Founder Julian Assange since June 2012. As you are aware, in its declassified January 2017 report, the U.S. Intelligence Community assessed that Russia's Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) used WikiLeaks to release hacked information in order to influence from the 2016 U.S. presidential election. We are also deeply troubled by WikiLeaks interventions in the 2017 French presidential election and the 2017 Spanish referendum on Catalan independence.

During his tenure as Director of Central Intelligence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo characterized WikiLeaks as, "a non-state hostile intelligence service often abetted by state actors like Russia." For these reasons, we were alarmed that the readout of your June 4, 2018 phone call with President Moreno made no mention of efforts by Julian Assange and WikiLeaks to interfere in the 2016 U.S. electoral process or the elections of some of our closest allies.

As the United States is still seeking clarity about the full extent of Russian intervention in our elections and Russian interference in elections across the world, it is imperative that you raise U.S. concerns with President Moreno about Ecuador's continued support for Mr. Assange at a time when WikiLeaks continues its efforts to undermine democratic processes globally.

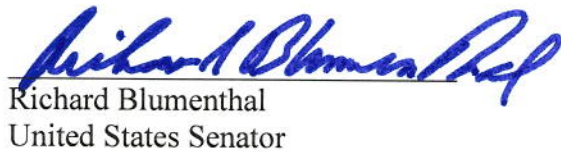
In closing, we ask that you convey our condolences to President Moreno for the deaths of the two journalists from the *El Comercio* newspaper and their driver, who were abducted in northern Ecuador by a dissident faction of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in March 2018. We stand behind the efforts of the U.S. Embassy in Quito to provide all relevant assistance to efforts to investigate this incident and address regional security challenges.

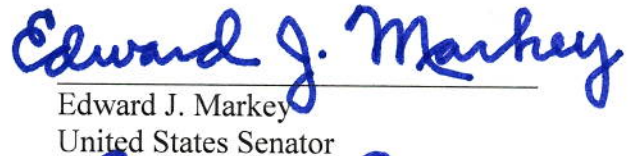
Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to advance collaboration between the United States and Ecuador, and address enduring challenges to our national security.

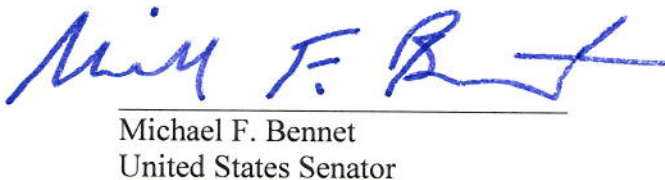
Sincerely,

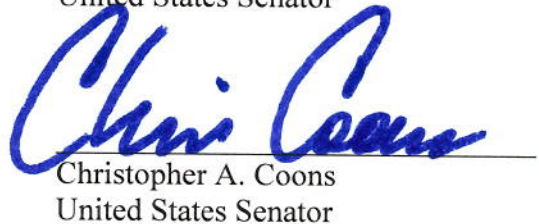

Robert Menendez
United States Senator


Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

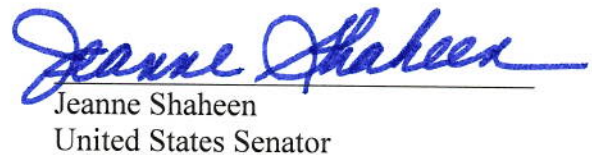

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

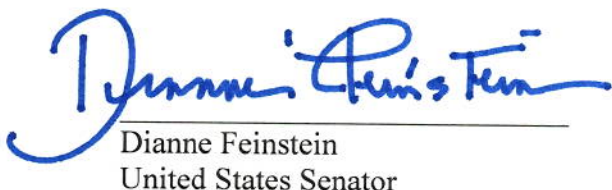

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

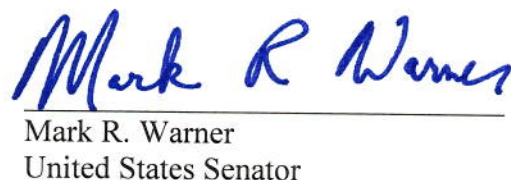

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator


Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator


Joe Manchin III
United States Senator


Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator


Mark R. Warner
United States Senator