



July 10, 2019

The Honorable James E. Risch  
Chairman  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
United States Senate  
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Risch:

We write to ask you to oppose confirmation of Andrew Bremberg for service as U.S. Ambassador to the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva.

We do not make this request lightly. The work of the United Nations, both to oppose violence and discrimination against LGBTI individuals and to maintain a shared response to what is a global refugee crisis, has come under virulent attack in Geneva's deeply polarized political environment. Mr. Bremberg's formulaic written responses to post-hearing questions from the Committee give us little confidence in the depth of his commitment to LGBTI fairness, or indeed in the understanding he would bring to these matters. We also see no indication that he can assert American leadership or partnership in dealing with complex global issues that will, if confirmed, be within his purview.

The promotion of human rights is, of course, critical to Mr. Bremberg’s prospective mission, as it is to the mission of our respective organizations. In this regard, we are deeply troubled by the insistent defense Mr. Bremberg offered of the State Department’s Commission on Unalienable Rights, the purpose of which, according to the Federal Register, is to provide “...fresh thinking about human rights discourse where such discourse has departed from our nation’s founding principles of natural law and natural rights.” To be clear, these are unambiguous code words that often are used by extremist groups to deny the rights of LGBTI persons. There is ample reason to believe that this Commission — which Mr. Bremberg defended fulsomely at his hearing, and the recommendations of which would inform his prospective work in Geneva — is intended to undermine the universality of human rights, and thereby our country’s commitment to Senate-ratified human rights treaties as well as the work of associated treaty bodies in Geneva. Mr. Bremberg’s confirmation likely would embolden extremist groups that advance spurious religious freedom and “natural law” arguments to oppose the rights of LGBTI individuals, empowering a walk-back from our country’s traditional leadership of a genuinely inclusive commitment to human rights.

Mr. Bremberg’s staff role as the Policy Director for the RNC’s 2016 Party Platform Committee is particularly concerning to the LGBTI community in the United States. In that role, Mr. Bremberg facilitated the most overtly anti-LGBT policy positions ever taken by the Republican Party in their platform, including support for conversion therapy, supporting the right to discriminate against LGBT couples in adoption, opposition to marriage equality, and opposition to the rights of transgender Americans in both the military and in use of bathrooms.

In addition to these human rights concerns, we further stand with those organizations that have opposed Mr. Bremberg on grounds of his work to date to limit women’s health and reproductive rights, including through expansion of the “global gag rule” to PEPFAR funds. The discriminatory framing Mr. Bremberg would bring to his duties can only undermine our country’s financial and political investments in global health policy; that framing also would cloud his ability to provide oversight and leadership to global health bodies based in Geneva, including UNAIDS. His abrasive handling of reproductive health issues at the hearing only questions his diplomatic capacity on issues of considerable sensitivity in Geneva.

We would be happy further to discuss these matters with you or your staff upon request. In the meantime, we appreciate your consideration and again urge you to oppose Mr. Bremberg’s confirmation.

Sincerely,

Mark Bromley  
Council Chair  
Council for Global  
Equality

Robert Bank  
President & CEO  
American Jewish World  
Service

Serra Sippel  
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Center for Health and  
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