

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 3, 2013

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

Dear Secretary Kerry:

As you grapple with many pressing duties as Secretary of State, we would like to urge you to consider making it a priority to visit and engage with the Holy See on matters of mutual concern to the United States and responsible stakeholders in the international community.

Over the past several years, we have witnessed a disturbing proliferation of international security threats and associated humanitarian tragedies, as dramatically illustrated in the evolving Syrian crisis and other serious conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, many of which involve ongoing terrorist activity. Also, we are particularly concerned about the worldwide proliferation of human trafficking in its various forms and intensified persecution of religious minorities worldwide, including fragile Christian minority communities. We believe that the Vatican can speak to such matters with authority, potentially helping to mitigate damage, encourage struggling communities, and mediate just outcomes.

The recent installation of Pope Francis provides a fresh opportunity to explore how the United States might work with the Holy See to advance the cause of peace and justice in difficult circumstances, especially for vulnerable persons in need of urgent humanitarian intervention.

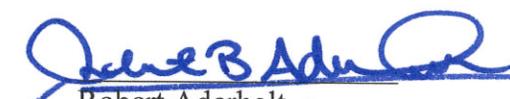
We wish you well in your new role and thank you for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you would like to discuss this or any other matter of concern.

Sincerely,

  
Daniel Lipiaski  
Member of Congress

  
Jeff Fortenberry  
Member of Congress

  
Rubén Hinojosa  
Member of Congress

  
Robert Aderholt -  
Member of Congress