

JAMES P. MCGOVERN, Massachusetts  
Co-Chairman



JOSEPH R. PITTS, Pennsylvania  
Co-Chairman

One Hundred and Fourteenth Congress  
**Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission**

September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015

International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief  
One United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Delegates:

We welcome you to the United States and express our support for the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief. We serve as Co-Chairs of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission in the House of Representatives of the U.S. Congress. The Commission brings together Members of Congress to promote, defend and advocate internationally recognized human rights norms in a non-partisan manner, both within and outside of Congress, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights instruments.

While we will be unable to join your meeting in New York City due to the Congressional schedule, we firmly believe that freedom of religion or belief is a bedrock principle of the United States and a core component of international human rights standards. Through our bipartisan work, the Commission holds hearings and engages foreign governments about religious freedom violations and other human rights abuses. The effort of the International Panel of Parliamentarians to bring legislators together from different political, regional, and religious perspectives is timely and needed. With persecution on the rise globally, by working together we hopefully will see significant improvements in respect for this fundamental freedom.

Again, we wish you success during your meeting this week. We look forward to exploring collaborations with your coalition in our mutual efforts to advance religious freedom for all.

Sincerely,

Joseph R. Pitts  
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress