

ALCEE L. HASTINGS
20TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON RULES
SENIOR MEMBER

UNITED STATES
HELSINKI COMMISSION
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER

FLORIDA DELEGATION
CO-CHAIRMAN
SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0920

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

- 2353 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0923
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-1313
FAX: (202) 225-1171
 - 2701 W. OAKLAND PARK BOULEVARD
SUITE 200
FT. LAUDERDALE, FL 33311
TELEPHONE: (954) 733-2800
FAX: (954) 735-9444
 - TOWN OF MANGONIA PARK
MUNICIPAL CENTER
1755 EAST TIFFANY DRIVE
MANGONIA PARK, FL 33407
TELEPHONE: (561) 469-7048
- www.alceehastings.house.gov

May 13, 2016

His Excellency Peter Kmec
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
The Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Washington
3523 International Court, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ambassador Kmec:

We write to congratulate the Slovak Republic on its most recent parliamentary elections. At the same time, we are concerned by the recent rise of far-right political parties that champion bigotry and hatred – we know that the majority of the Slovakian people do not share such values. However, we encourage the government to do all that it can to rid the country of the hatred directed at Slovakia’s Jewish, LGBT and Roma communities, respectively. Indeed, when leaders of political parties in Slovakia make statements in which they refer to members of the Roma as ‘Gypsy parasites,’ ‘the others,’ and ‘Gypsy terrorists’ they erode the important democratic gains your country has made since its independence.

We know that the rise of anti-Semitism, homophobia and the denigration of the Roma people are not problems solely found within Slovakia, but rather has been on the rise across Western and Eastern Europe. This is a problem that all of us who are dedicated to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law must confront together. We welcome President Andrej Kiska strong example in defending vulnerable groups. Also, we commend Minister of Justice Lucia Zitnanska for her International Roma Day statement.

However, we hope you will translate this letter to your authorities as we encourage your government to speak out against those who insist on perpetuating a xenophobic and bigoted narrative in Slovakia, and we stand ready to help you confront this problem in any way we can.

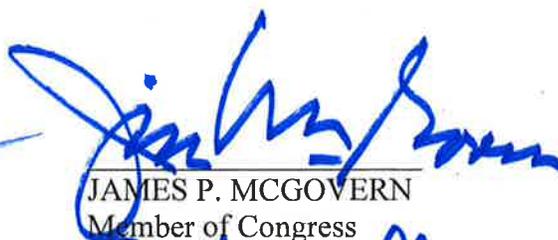
Since its independence, the Slovak Republic has developed strong diplomatic ties with the United States; ties that we are proud to support especially in light of your country’s effort to continue the realization of democratic gains, including an increased commitment to human rights and the rule of law. It is because of our high regard for the impressive democratic steps your country has taken since its independence that we write to you today. The growing tide of individuals who see value in attacking vulnerable groups within Slovakia undermine and threaten the democratic gains the country has worked so hard to achieve. We stand ready to work with you to address the increase in attacks against the Roma, refugees, Jews and LGBT, so that your country’s commitment to human rights and the rule of law is not put in further jeopardy.

Again, we stand ready to work with your government and look forward to a combined effort to put an end to bigotry and hatred once and for all.

Sincerely,



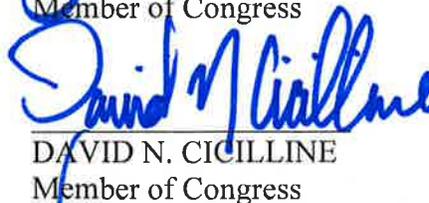
ALCEE L. HASTINGS
Member of Congress



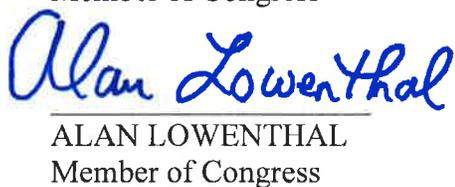
JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress



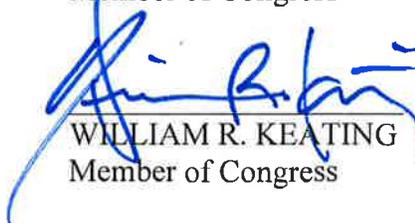
ELIOT L. ENGEL
Member of Congress



DAVID N. CICILLINE
Member of Congress



ALAN LOWENTHAL
Member of Congress



WILLIAM R. KEATING
Member of Congress