

January 24, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Honorable Mitch McConnell and Honorable Schumer,

We write to you as organizations representing a diverse range of issues and constituencies. We support the mission of the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom. Today we write as a unified voice to express our deep concern over the nomination of Governor Sam Brownback for the position of Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom.

Engagement with, and respect for, all religions and human rights is imperative to deliver on the mission of The Office of International Religious Freedom and maintain its integrity. As such, we have great concern about the ability of Gov. Brownback to serve as Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom given his history of religious intolerance, discrimination, and alienation of minority groups while Governor of Kansas.

While governor, Mr. Brownback pursued an agenda based on his personal ideology under the guise of religious freedom. He signed into law an anti-Sharia bill, alienating the Muslim community, issued an executive order allowing tax-payer funded social services to deny services to members of the LGBT community, and has used religion as a weapon to attack access to contraception and comprehensive sexuality education – risking the lives of the very people he swore to represent and protect. Additionally, he signed an Executive Order prohibiting the State of Kansas from participating in the resettlement of Syrian refugees based on false claims that Syrian Muslims posed a risk for terrorism. These are only a few of the many examples of how Gov. Brownback has misused religion to deprive other groups, including religious minorities, of their rights, health, and freedom.

Religious freedom is a core value protected in the United States Constitution and a fundamental human right. The Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom should have a demonstrated track record of upholding these ideals for all people throughout their career. We strongly encourage you to carefully weigh Gov. Brownback's record and his commitment to honor the office of International Religious Freedom by upholding the religious freedom and human rights of all people; especially those of certain religious groups and other communities who face discrimination both here in the U.S. and around the world.

Respectfully Submitted,

4Girls GLocal Leadership
Advocates for Youth
American Jewish World Service
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
Council on Global Equality
The Fellowship Global
Human Rights Campaign
International Women's Health Coalition
IntraHealth International

National Center for Lesbian Rights
NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Center for Lesbian Rights
OutRight Action International
PAI
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Population Council
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
Synergía - Initiatives for Human Rights
Woodhull Freedom Foundation