

Joint Statement in Support of Rep. Joaquin Castro for House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman

The undersigned grassroots and advocacy organizations representing millions of Americans from all walks of life and backgrounds write in support of Representative Joaquin Castro as the next Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC).

Rep. Castro has demonstrated a strong commitment to bringing a diversity of voices into discussions on foreign policy. Too often, the voices of those impacted by U.S. foreign policy are left out of the conversations in Washington. We believe Rep. Castro can protect our families and communities by promoting diplomacy and other nonviolent means - rooted in cooperation - to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives. As Black, indigenous, and other communities of color face increased militarism at home, and as U.S. militarism abroad has led to disastrous endless wars, we are impressed with Rep. Castro's transparent and engaging campaign for HFAC Chair, that focuses on the root causes of militarism. We hope to build with Rep. Castro towards a U.S. foreign policy that centers the perspectives and solutions of communities who have experienced harm as a result of U.S. policy, and that tackles the rise in right-wing authoritarianism around the world, which disproportionately impacts women, girls, the LGBTQ+ community, and communities of color.

It is critical that the next HFAC Chair be committed to turning the page on post 9/11 policies that have led to massive military budgets, refugee crises, cruel immigration policies, and mass surveillance programs that have disproportionately harmed Latinx, Caribbean, African-American, Asian, and Muslim communities in our nation and around the world. We are heartened by Rep. Castro's commitment to support war powers reform legislation that would appropriately strengthen Congress's role in authorizing and overseeing the use of force.

Rep. Castro has also supported a diplomacy-driven approach to conflicts in the Middle East, including in Iran and ending reliance on collectively-punishing sanctions as a foreign policy tool. He has voiced support for the U.S. returning to the Iran nuclear agreement and finding diplomatic solutions to other U.S. disputes with Iran. He has also committed to ending U.S. support for the Saudi war in Yemen and reducing America's military presence in the region. Sanctions and war disproportionately affect women, as they are usually the ones to provide unpaid care work to ensure food, water, and healthcare when social safety nets are decimated, and it is crucial for the next chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee to pay particular attention to the gendered impacts of U.S. foreign policy.

We believe it is urgent that the next HFAC Chair work to stem the massive and dangerous growth of our military by reallocating wasteful Pentagon spending, reducing the number of foreign bases and increasing diplomacy, eliminating use of private military contractors in combat, decreasing spending on nuclear weapons, and finally ending the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. We commend Rep. Castro for supporting the Pocan-Sanders amendment to curb Pentagon spending.

As Chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC), Rep. Castro has led numerous letters and statements to hold the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) accountable for family separation and other human rights violations against migrants, asylum seekers, and immigrant communities. He has also led congressional delegations to the border and to immigration detention centers to investigate abuses and speak directly with impacted families and people.

With the devastating impacts of climate change being felt both in the U.S. as well as abroad, the House Foreign Affairs Committee needs a leader like Rep. Castro who puts addressing the climate crisis at the forefront of its agenda. The committee must ensure the U.S. contributes its fair share to global climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. The U.S. must work to advance and expedite the transition to clean, renewable energy domestically and abroad. This means committing to redirect U.S. investments towards funds and projects that support global emissions reductions and climate resilience, rather than the expansion of polluting fossil fuels.

Rep. Castro has also been a consistent supporter of reproductive rights (in the U.S. and abroad) and we hope to continue working with him to repeal the global gag rule.

Finally, we applaud Representative Castro's recent commitment to include Palestinian voices in the formulation of policy impacting their lives and his specific condemnation of the Trump administration backing Israeli settlements and its overt and tacit approval of the annexation of the West Bank. In addition, Rep. Castro's leadership presents an opportunity for the U.S. to hold human rights violators such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt accountable to international law and support policies that help ensure a future in which all people can live with full equality, human rights, and dignity.

With the next Congress, we are eager to work with Rep. Castro to build a more restrained and progressive foreign policy that genuinely serves the needs of communities here in the U.S. and abroad.

Sincerely,

Action Center on Race & the Economy (ACRE)
Adalah Justice Project
Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine
American Muslims for Palestine
Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain
Beyond the Bomb
Brooklyn For Peace
Center for International Policy
Climate Hawks Vote
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
CODEPINK
Common Defense
The Feminist Foreign Policy Project
Friends of the Earth U.S.
Grassroots Global Justice Alliance
The Gravel Institute
Historians for Peace and Democracy
IfNotNow
International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)
Jetpac
Jewish Voice for Peace Action
Jewish Voice for Peace - San Antonio
Justice Democrats
Justice for Muslims Collective
Justice Is Global
Labor Against Racism and War
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
LeftNet
MADRE
Massachusetts Peace Action
MPower Change
Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala

New Generation for Palestine
New Internationalism Project, Institute for Policy Studies
Peace Action
Progress America
Progressive Change Campaign Committee
Progressive Democrats of America
Project Blueprint
RAICES
Rethinking Foreign Policy
RootsAction.org
Security Policy Reform Institute (SPRI)
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Westchester, New York
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Whatcom, Washington
Sunrise Movement
Texas Civil Rights Project
Tree of Life Educational Fund
Tunisian United Network
United for Peace and Justice
US Campaign for Palestinian Rights
US Network for Democracy in Brazil - Washington Brazil Office
Veterans For Peace
Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice and the Environment
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
Women's Action for New Direction (WAND)