

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 18, 2012

Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton,

As you are aware, this December the U.N.'s International Telecommunications Union (ITU) will hold the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT). Unfortunately, it appears that this organization and this conference in particular are being dominated by countries who oppose internet freedom and who would like to see more U.N. control over the internet. We are very concerned by this development.

Recently a document called TD-62 was leaked to internet freedom advocates. This document includes a number of proposals expected to be considered at WCIT in December. Some of these proposals are nothing more than power grabs by totalitarian and repressive regimes. One proposal, supported by Russia and Iran, would meter internet traffic at national boundaries, enabling countries to raise the cost of or restrict access to foreign websites. Another proposal would create a legal justification for the government inspection of email. Yet another proposal, from China, would give governments the ability to enforce standards of behavior on internet networks.

These are just a few of the proposals to be considered in December, and unfortunately we would not know about these proposals had they not been leaked to internet freedom advocates. The process remains secret and thus favors authoritarian regimes who want to rein in the freedom of the internet. Vinton Cerf, one of the founders of the internet, said that "users worldwide will be at risk of losing the open and free Internet that has brought so much to so many" if the U.N. were to claim control over the internet. Secretary Clinton, you yourself said in your 2010 speech on internet freedom that "governments should not prevent people from connecting to the internet, to websites, or to each other." The U.N. and its agencies should not facilitate government censorship or centralized control over the internet.

In view of this potential power grab by the U.N. and nations bent on stifling internet freedom, we ask you to do two things. First, please use all of the influence and power of the United States to prevent the United Nations from increasing their control over the internet or the control of authoritarian regimes. Second, if internet freedom remains under threat from the World Conference on International Telecommunications, we ask that you form a coalition with other freedom loving countries to put an end to this process and prevent centralized government control over the internet.

The internet has proven to be an amazing benefit to America and the rest of the world over the last few decades. As a nation, we cannot sit idly by as the freedom of the internet comes under assault. Our Declaration of Independence speaks of the unalienable rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." While our Founders may not have imagined the internet when they wrote those words, the fact is that the internet is one of the most powerful tools of our age to help people around the world have life, liberty and pursue happiness. Please fight to keep the internet free.

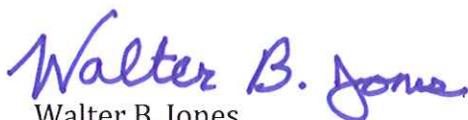
Sincerely,



W. Todd Akin
Member of Congress



Edward R. Royce
Member of Congress



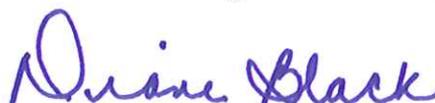
Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



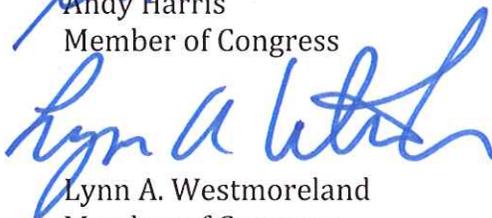
Cathy McMorris-Rodgers
Member of Congress



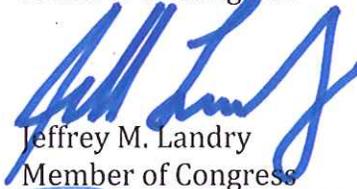
Andy Harris
Member of Congress



Diane Black
Member of Congress



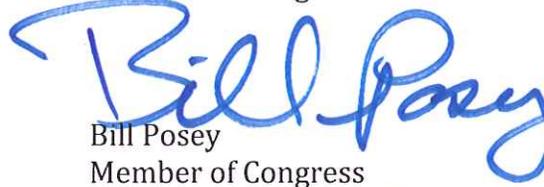
Lynn A. Westmoreland
Member of Congress



Jeffrey M. Landry
Member of Congress



Marsha Blackburn
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



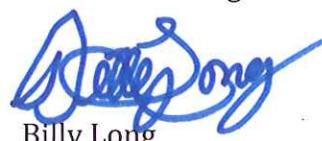
Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress



Howard Coble
Member of Congress



Ken Calvert
Member of Congress



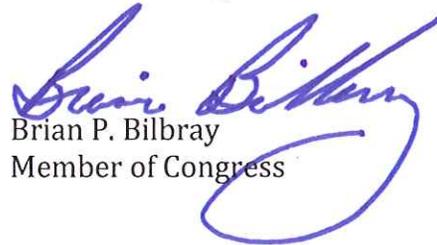
Billy Long
Member of Congress



John Kline
Member of Congress



Renee L. Ellmers
Member of Congress



Brian P. Bilbray
Member of Congress



Jeff Miller
Member of Congress



Greg Walden
Member of Congress



Pete Olson
Member of Congress