

Hello,

I am writing to share with you my concerns about the State Department's Commission on Unalienable Rights. I am a historian with seventeen years worth of experience researching and writing about the history of U.S. foreign relations with a particular expertise in the intersection of human rights and U.S. foreign policy. In addition, during my graduate education, I worked as an intern in the department's Office of the Historian.

I have several concerns about the State Department's Commission. First, it bypasses the extensive expertise in human rights that already exists in the building. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, which was created due to congressional legislation in the 1970s, has the experience and deep knowledge necessary to facilitate any rethinking of the government's approach to human rights. The bureau should be leading any such effort.

Second, the language of the commission's title suggests the department may be redefining ideas about the content and origins of human rights. The United States should continue to uphold its international and national commitments to respecting human rights, universally and indivisibly.

Third, the commission should be made up of diverse voices. Traditionally, United States support for human rights has had bipartisan support, and the current configuration of the commission risks eroding that commitment.

A robust commitment to human rights is essential for the national security of the United States and its soft power internationally. This commission risks weakening the place of the United States in the world.

Thank you,
Sarah B. Snyder