



July 2, 2019

Chairman James McGovern
House Rules Committee
408 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Tom Cole
House Rules Committee
2207 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McGovern and Ranking Member Cole,

We, the undersigned organizations dedicated to the promotion and protection of universal human rights, write to voice our support for the [Saudi Arabia Human Rights and Accountability Act of 2019](#), which has been introduced as an amendment to H.R. 2500, the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2020, and to urge that you rule the amendment in order.

The Saudi Arabia Human Rights and Accountability Act encourages accountability for the premeditated and brutal murder of *Washington Post* columnist and Virginia resident Jamal Khashoggi. As evidenced by numerous supportive statements by Republican and Democratic lawmakers; the unanimous passage in the Senate of S.J.Res. 69, which condemned the murder, named Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as ultimately responsible, and called for accountability; and the Saudi Arabia Human Rights and Accountability Act's recent report out of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) by voice vote, such accountability has enjoyed widespread, bipartisan support in both the House and Senate.

The Saudi Arabia Human Rights and Accountability Act takes a measured approach to seeking accountability for Khashoggi's killing. It requires a determination concerning those responsible for the murder—a requirement championed by the present and former chairs and ranking members of both the HFAC and Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as well as a number of other Republican and Democratic senators and House members. It also includes visa restrictions

on those determined to have been involved in the killing, subject to presidential national interest waiver, while including an “off-ramp” of steps Saudi authorities could take to ensure that any visa restrictions imposed not be permanent. These steps include actions like ceasing the torture and detention of women’s rights activists that enjoy bipartisan support.

Failing to enact a bill that holds Khashoggi’s killers accountable for their gruesome crime has the potential to signal a green light to autocrats around the world that they can murder dissidents and journalists without repercussion, even if those dissidents seek shelter in the United States – an extremely dangerous precedent. We believe the Saudi Arabia Human Rights and Accountability Act strikes an appropriate balance concerning a horrendous crime and the behavior of an important Middle East partner. We urge you to support it, and would welcome an opportunity to discuss the amendment in greater depth.

We respectfully thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Signed,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain

Article 19

Committee to Protect Journalists

Freedom House

Human Rights First

Human Rights Watch

James W. Foley Legacy Foundation

Open Society Policy Center

PEN America

Project on Middle East Democracy

Reporters Without Borders

cc:

Adam Smith, Chairman, House Armed Services Committee

Mac Thornberry, Ranking Member, House Armed Services Committee