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October 14, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Women's Rights Crisis in Iran

Dear Mr. President,

It was an honor to welcome you to Orange County today. I appreciated your comments on the ongoing protests in Iran and your statement of support for the brave women of Iran.

The crisis in Iran is of great concern to my constituents in Orange County. We have all been watching the protests unfold in Iran following the tragic and brutal killing of 22-year-old Mahsa (Jhina) Amini. The international community is well aware of the shocking story that Mahsa was simply wearing her hijab loosely when she was arrested, tortured and killed in the custody of the so-called "Morality Police." This should not be treated as an "incident." This is a direct attack on women and we must continue to condemn this hostile regime perpetuating extreme violence against the women and people of Iran.

The Iranian people have been protesting against the brutal regime for nearly a month, in nearly 80 cities across Iran. Although it has been incredibly inspiring to watch the Iranian women and people stand up to the oppression of the Iranian regime with so much courage and resilience, it is distressing to witness the response from their leaders. The violent crackdown on these peaceful demonstrations has resulted in over 220 deaths and scores of injured Iranians.

In my District, I have witnessed the mobilization of Iranian Americans in our Orange County community and throughout Southern California. They are committed in their efforts to continue to shed light on the ongoing struggle in Iran and amplify the voices of their loved ones back home, who are fighting against the oppressive regime.

I am proud of the United States government's swift action as it moved to ease sanctions in order to allow access to Internet services for the Iranian people to evade the government's crackdown on communications. I know that we can do more to support the Iranian people. I urge the Administration call for the establishment of an independent international investigative and accountability mechanism to address the prevailing crisis of impunity in Iran.

In Orange County, we stand in solidarity with the Iranian women and the Iranian people as they continue to stand up to the regime. For the last 40 years, the Iranian people have endured oppression and lacked fundamental human rights. The fight that they are waging now is not only about Mahsa's tragic death. It is a fight for freedom and their foundational human rights. The strict dress code by the government is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of their oppressive policies, and protesters in Iran are fighting against the many cruel injustices they face, especially women and ethnic minorities. Mahsa was a Kurdish-Iranian woman, whose gender and ethnic heritage contributed to her horrific killing.

Just as Iranians everywhere have been unrelenting in this fight, we must continue to show strong support and not allow what happened to Mahsa (Jhina) Amini be a momentary headline, but rather a devastating catalyst for the Iranian people seeking real and lasting change.

Thank you for your support and your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Petrie-Norris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cottie Petrie-Norris
Assemblywoman, 74th District