



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Ms. Baldwin:

NOV 25 2009

Thank you for your letter of October 30 regarding the “Anti-Homosexual Bill” introduced in Uganda’s parliament last month. We share your concerns and have already initiated a dialogue with the Ugandan government about this bill. The United States was the first government to issue a public statement condemning the proposed legislation.

As you noted, this bill appears to create a legal process for depriving lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Ugandans of their liberty and inexplicably appears to carry the death penalty for activities deemed “aggravated homosexuality.” Likewise, we understand there is a penalty provision for failure to report the identities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender individuals which is completely unacceptable. Were this law to be enacted, human rights organizations working in Uganda might have to cease any activities related to LGBT groups, and organizations that promote LGBT freedoms might have to leave Uganda to ensure their safety.

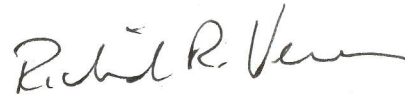
By subjecting government officials, health care providers, human rights advocates, parents, and teachers to fines and potential prison time for failing to report homosexual orientation or activity to local authorities, this bill would create fear, promote hatred, and potentially divide communities. In encouraging Uganda to grow as a free, democratic nation that values a diverse and healthy society, the United States has urged Uganda to take all necessary measures to ensure that sexual orientation or gender identity may under no circumstances be the basis for criminal penalties, harassment, or discrimination.

We understand that Ugandan Parliamentarian David Bahati submitted the “anti-homosexuality” legislation as a “private” bill, which suggests that the bill has not been endorsed by the Government of Uganda. However, some senior Ugandan government officials are clearly supportive of the legislation. We plan to monitor the progress of this bill through the Ugandan Parliament and will continue our dialogue with appropriate Ugandan officials, local human rights activists, and international donor partners concerning it.

The Honorable
Tammy Baldwin,
House of Representatives.

We hope this information is helpful in addressing your concerns. Please feel free to contact us further on this or any matter of concern to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard R. Verma". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "R".

Richard R. Verma
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs