

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

May 19, 2023

The Honorable James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Accountability
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Comer:

We are deeply concerned about the continuing spread of efforts to undermine democracy and freedom in the United States and request that you hold a hearing to examine such trends in the case of shocking antidemocratic abuses of power currently taking place in the State of Florida.¹

Under its current administration, Florida's executive and legislative branches of government have engaged in a relentless assault on the basic rights and freedoms of Floridians. The Florida Governor has forced through this repressive agenda by extreme and lawless means, including the use of brazen political intimidation tactics against elected officials and citizens, the undermining of the law and policies of elected local governments, blatant policy retaliation and political threats directed against private businesses, and the unjust removal of public officials who express dissent to this creeping authoritarianism.² At the same time, Republicans in the state legislature have been complicit in many of these abuses, passing laws that further entrench the power of the Governor and his enablers while making it harder for citizens to have their voices heard.³

In Article IV, Section 4 of the Constitution, the Republican Guaranty Clause compels Congress to "guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government," which means not a Republican Party form of government, but a representative government based on principles of fair democratic representation, vindication of voting rights, due process and freedom of speech and association for all.

¹ *We're Reaching Fascism's "Inflection Point"—Again*, The Hill (Feb. 8, 2023) (online at <https://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/3849326-were-reaching-fascisms-inflection-point-again/>); *The U.S. is Still on the Path to Becoming a 'Fascist Country': Sociologist*, Business Insider (Nov. 25, 2022) (online at www.businessinsider.com/fascist-country-us-on-way-becoming-sociologist-2022-11).

² *Fascism's History Offers Lessons about Today's Attacks on Education*, Scientific American (Apr. 7, 2023) (online at <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/fascisms-history-offers-lessons-about-todays-attacks-on-education/>).

³ *Block the Vote: How Politicians are Trying to Block Voters from the Ballot Box*, ACLU (August 17, 2021) (online at <https://www.aclu.org/news/civil-liberties/block-the-vote-voter-suppression-in-2020>).

Given the seriousness of the current attack on democracy and freedom in Florida and other states, and the urgent need for Congressional action, a full hearing is essential to understand the pattern of these abuses of power and to identify the steps that must be taken to protect the rights and freedoms of Floridians and Americans living in other states witnessing similar attacks.

We hope to work with you to address this growing crisis and to defend democracy and free government anywhere it is being threatened in America. Please let us know whether we can facilitate this process and investigation, and we look forward to your prompt reply.

Very truly yours,

Maxwell Alejandro Frost

Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin

Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Accountability