

CHRIS VAN HOLLEN  
8TH DISTRICT, MARYLAND

COMMITTEE ON  
WAYS AND MEANS

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND  
GOVERNMENT REFORM

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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April 21, 2008

The Honorable Howard L. Berman  
Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2170 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
B360 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Berman and Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen:

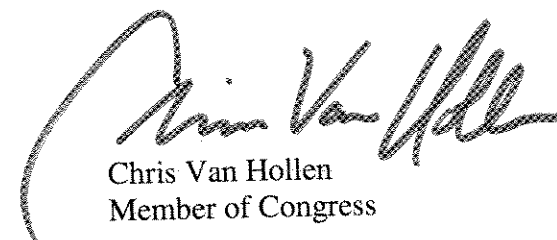
We, the undersigned, respectfully request your leadership in bringing up HR 3202 for consideration in the House Foreign Affairs Committee in late April or early May. This measure is of vital importance to our nation and to our nation's Foreign Service personnel.


As you know, the Foreign Service often serves under extremely challenging and dangerous circumstances. Unfortunately, an existing pay inequity requires that Foreign Service personnel take a nearly 21 percent pay cut when they serve overseas. Locality pay for Foreign Service personnel serving in Washington, D.C. is now 20.89 percent up from 18.59 percent last year. Foreign Service personnel serving abroad do not receive this adjustment, so they take a 20.89 percent pay cut to their base salaries when they transfer overseas. An unreasonable consequence of the disparity is that diplomats now take a cut in base pay to serve at 183 of 268 overseas posts. Within three or four years, another 42 posts -- those at the 25 percent hardship level without an additional danger pay supplement -- will be added to the list.

We cannot allow this issue to slip through the cracks under the belief that it be reintroduced and taken up in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. If not corrected now, the problem will only grow more acute. The 110th Congress must act and we believe negotiating and marking-up HR 3202 provides an opportunity to move forward. This is good policy and the right thing to do for our nation's overseas officers who are patriotically serving the interests of the American people.


Thank you for your attention on this critical matter.

Sincerely,

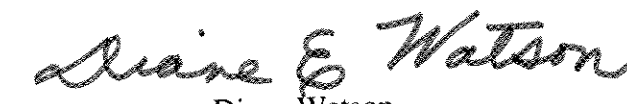
  
Chris Van Hollen  
Member of Congress


  
Chris Smith  
Member of Congress

  
Frank Wolf  
Member of Congress

  
Gregory Meeks  
Member of Congress

  
James Moran  
Member of Congress

  
Diane Watson  
Member of Congress

  
Michael Honda  
Member of Congress