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COMMITTEE ON
FINANCIAL SERVICES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL MARKETS AND
GOVERNMENT SPONSORED ENTERPRISES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

December 14, 2016

President Joseph Kabila
Democratic Republic of the Congo

Dear President Kabila,

As Members of Congress, we urge you to announce timely and peaceful elections that honor the spirit of the constitution of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the will of the Congolese people, as reflected in public opinion polls. The constitution states that the term of the current president expires on December 19, 2016, and we ask you to publicly announce that you will not seek another term or support any effort to amend the constitution to permit any president to serve for more than two terms. We call on you to negotiate inclusively and in good faith with all major opposition parties to set a binding date for elections in 2017 and to establish a caretaker government before December 19 that will step aside once a new president is elected.

As you undertake this transition of power in keeping with the spirt of the constitution, we call on you to respect the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Congolese people—freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly, which extends to the freedom to demonstrate against the breakdown of a democratic system. We have witnessed with increasing alarm and dismay the use of threats, intimidation, violence, and arbitrary arrests by government authorities throughout the country. We urge you to respect activists, civil society organizations, students, and religious and political leaders and all others who seek to exercise their rights and demonstrate peacefully on, before, or after December 19. The use of force against peaceful activists, politically motivated trials, and political oppression are not in accordance with the values or constitution of the DRC. As Members of Congress, we will continue to encourage our own government to do its utmost to identify any DRC government officials who have or continue to repress protestors and obstruct human rights.

The door is open for you, the People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy, the Congolese people, and the opposition to reach an inclusive political compromise and transition agreement before December 19 that respects everyone's rights and safety, including your own, and that safeguards your past political achievements. Progress toward a peaceful democratic transition through credible elections and the protection of the fundamental rights of a free society are your most precious duties as a national leader. We urge you to take swift and immediate action accordingly.

Respectfully,

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Ann Wagner
Member of Congress

Karen Bass
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Thomas Rooney
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress