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DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CAUCUS  
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NEW DEMOCRAT COALITION

September 20, 2024

Her Excellency Birgitta Tazelaar  
The Kingdom of the Netherlands  
Ambassador to the United States of America  
4200 Linnean Avenue, NW.  
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Ambassador Tazelaar:

I write to thank you for your time on Friday, September 6, 2024, to discuss the repatriation of critically important religious and cultural artifacts to the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo Tribe, as these Pueblo treasures are now being held by the Nationaal Museum Van Wereldculturen in Leiden. I am grateful the Dutch government has made a strong commitment to return items of patrimony, along with your willingness to assist with the matter involving the Pueblo. However, I am concerned by the turnaround of adjudicating the Pueblo's request, and I respectfully seek your assistance to expedite the return of the Pueblo's Powith Winter Drum and other items held in the Netherlands prior to the Pueblo's Saint Andrew Dance and Winter Dance season, which will begin on November 30, 2024.

Over the last few months, the Dutch government and officials at the Museum have been most helpful in communicating with the U.S. government and Congress, as well as the Pueblo's leadership. I was particularly encouraged by telephonic and written communication between the Museum and Pueblo in July in which Museum leadership expressed their willingness to return the Pueblo's artifacts, pending a review by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and the Colonial Collections Committee. As discussed, my understanding was that the review included a meeting within the Ministry on August 23, 2024. Accordingly, I was quite disheartened to learn from you and the U.S. Department of State that the Pueblo's formal request was not on the agenda for the Ministry meeting.

As we move forward, I seek your esteemed assistance to intervene in support of the Pueblo so that their request is reviewed by the committee ahead of their winter ceremony in November. The repatriation of these artifacts is of great ceremonial importance, specifically the Powith

Winter Drum. These drums are birthed, fed, cared for, blessed, prayed for, and buried when they die. When birthed, these drums are blessed and given names known only to members of the Pueblo. Should a tribal drum break, it must be returned to the ancestral home of the Pueblo and be respectfully interred in the sacred ground. Moreover, the drum in question is the twin brother of the Pueblo's remaining ceremonial drum. Both were hewn from the same tree and fashioned at the same time while the Pueblo was located in its ancestral home. These artifacts hold immense value to the Pueblo, who are their rightful stewards. Their return would revive long-interrupted celebrations and rituals, restoring a vital part of the Pueblo's cultural heritage.

I deeply appreciate your consideration of my request, and I am grateful for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Veronica Escobar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress

Cc:

The Honorable Robbert Dijkgraaf, Minister of Education, Culture, and Science Catalogue of Pueblo