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

September 25, 2012

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to express grave concern about the events surrounding the terrorist attack in Benghazi, Libya on September 11, 2012, that led to the murder of the United States Ambassador to Libya, Christopher Stevens, and three other U.S. Government personnel. We profoundly regret the loss of lives and seek to ensure all necessary steps are being taken to bring the perpetrators to justice and prevent similar future attacks. While we appreciate your willingness to provide the House of Representatives with an interagency briefing last week, many of the members' questions were left unanswered. To that end, we are seeking additional information regarding the intelligence leading up to the attack, the security posture of our embassy, the role former Guantanamo Bay detainees may have played, as well as the way forward in Libya and, indeed, the region.

We are also disturbed by the public statements made by members of the Administration that would lead the American public to believe this attack was a protest gone wrong, rather than what it truly was – a terrorist attack on the United States on the anniversary of 9/11. Decades after al Qaeda attacked our embassies in East Africa, which catalyzed a series of events that led to the attacks on 9/11, it appears they executed a highly coordinated and well-planned attacked against us again. Clearly, the threat from al Qaeda and affiliated groups has metastasized; yet we do not appear to be learning from the past. For example, although brave Americans were once more murdered by terrorists, it seems our response is to rely on a late-to-the-scene FBI investigation. Media reports indicate investigators were prevented from arriving in Libya until more than a week after the attack, but it is not clear that they have gone to Benghazi and have, therefore, been unable to secure valuable information, such as the Ambassador's journal. The FBI has expertise in these situations, and they have a role to play. However, this seems like a pre-9/11 mindset – treating an act of war solely as a criminal matter, rather than also prioritizing the gathering of intelligence to prevent future attacks. Moreover, given that violence in the region continues unabated, what actions are we undertaking to deter terrorists from capitalizing

on the successful Benghazi attack, or launching similar attacks elsewhere in the region or in the homeland?

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns. We place significant weight on our constitutional responsibility to conduct appropriate oversight even when Congress is not in session and stand ready to return to Washington. Therefore, we respectfully request a joint briefing to respond to the questions enclosed, as classified Attachment A, at the earliest opportunity and would appreciate your commitment to continue to keep Congress informed even as the FBI investigation proceeds.

Respectfully,

Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations

Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs

Lamar Smith
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary

Mike Rogers M.C
Chairman
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Frank R. Wolf
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce Justice, Science and Related Agencies

C.W. Bill Young
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense

Kay Granger
Chairwoman
Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs