Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 21, 2012

His Excellency Victor Orban
Prime Minister
Hungary
c/o Embassy of Hungary
3910 Shoemaker Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Prime Minister Orban:

As strong supporters of a strengthened U.S.-Hungary relationship, we have long sought to build upon the ties between our two countries. Hungarian immigrants to the United States have contributed significantly to American economic, political and cultural life, and many Hungarian-Americans retain ancestral links with Hungary. Moreover, Hungary holds a special place in the American imagination as one of the Central European states at the vanguard of fighting for freedom, independence and justice.

We are deeply concerned, however, by anti-Semitic and homophobic positions espoused by members of the Jobbik party. For example, Jobbik's presidential candidate, Krisztina Morvai, referred to Israeli Jews as "lice-infested, dirty murders" and warned Hungarian Jews that "your kind's time is over." The Jobbik magazine implied there is truth to the myth that Jews used Christian blood in religious rites, and Jobbik introduced a bill in parliament referring to homosexuality as a perversion and calling for the imprisonment of those who "promote" homosexuality. Further, Jobbik has attacked the employers of those who may be gay, calling for the ouster of Robert Alfoldi, the director of the National Theater, based on his presumed homosexuality. These statements take place against a backdrop of broader problems of intolerance and discrimination against Roma, migrants and others.

These positions have no place in civilized discourse and must not be allowed to go unchallenged, particularly in light of reports by the U.S. Department of State and the Anti-Defamation League that anti-Semitic rhetoric is increasing in Hungary.

We understand that there has been an agreement reached to set up a parliamentary ethics committee to address hate speech in the parliament itself. It is vital that Hungary's leaders use their authority to speak out against anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry to send a clear message that intolerance is an affront to the decency of the people of Hungary.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

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Member of Congress

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