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Opening Statement of the Honorable **Ed Royce (R-CA), Chairman**  
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International  
Organizations Hearing:  
“The Future of Democracy and Governance in Liberia”  
September 13, 2017

(As prepared for delivery)

The U.S. has long shared close ties with Liberia, and this Committee has played an important role in strengthening those ties. I want to commend Chairman Smith for keeping up this focus, as Liberia faces important elections.

We remember the horrors of Charles Taylor, his brutal regime in Liberia, and his support of the vicious rape, mutilation, and murder of tens of thousands of people in Sierra Leone and the region. When I chaired the Africa Subcommittee, we worked diligently, and across party lines, to send a clear, unified message—Charles Taylor must be brought to justice. And against the odds, he was.

Now, years later, we have seen some impressive growth in Liberia. The U.S. has invested to rebuild, and support democratic institutions. As a nation confronted with immense political, economic, security, and development challenges, Liberia has persevered. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has been leading these efforts, and I commend her strong leadership through two terms. She is stepping down from office, admirably, and setting an example for other African leaders.

Elections next month provide an opportunity to consolidate these democratic gains and peacefully transfer power. If done successfully, Liberia will be a model to fledgling democracies across Africa.

As we look ahead to future engagement, deep reforms are needed to further address corruption and create a more conducive environment for trade and business investment. The U.S. must remain a willing partner to support a peaceful transition of power, where the will of the people is respected and upheld, and beyond, so that this country, the ancestral home of many Americans, can continue its hopeful track.