

**Congresswoman Sylvia R. Garcia (TX-29)**

**State, Foreign Ops Subcommittee Appropriations Remarks**

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you Chairwoman Lee, Ranking Member Rogers, and committee members, for having me here today to share my Fiscal Year 2023 priorities for the Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs. I am proud to represent Texas' 29th Congressional District, which includes Houston, South Houston, Pasadena, Jacinto City, and Galena Park. And I am a proud member of the Congressional Equality Caucus. I am a strong advocate for the LGBTQIA+ community--in my community and abroad. Unfortunately, at least 68 countries have laws that criminalize same-sex sexual relations between consenting adults and at least nine countries have laws criminalizing forms of gender expression that target transgender people. This is unacceptable. Nobody should be discriminated against--or denied their human rights--just for being themselves. As a defender of human rights for LGTBTQIA+ people around the world, I am proud to sign and support Rep. Cicilline's FY23 Appropriations request letter to support funding programs for LGBTQIA+ individuals globally. Specifically, this letter requests \$30 million for the Global Equality Fund at the State Department and \$30 million for the Equal Rights in Action Fund at USAID, which are funded through this subcommittee. As Members of Congress, we should be committed to the pursuit of global equality. Equality for all. No matter what you look like, where you're from or who you love. And that is why this request urges appropriators to invest in LGBTQIA+ rights around the world. U.S. foreign assistance programs at the State Department and USAID have been vital in supporting LGBTQI+ people and are embedded in broader initiatives that support democracy, human rights and economic development. Funding these programs will allow the United States to restore its leadership in this area and support our global citizens. Coincidentally, today is also the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), which was founded to draw attention to the violence and discrimination experienced by LGBTQI+ people around the world. In honor of today's International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia, I ask for your strong consideration of these funding requests. I appreciate your time today, members. I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you again, and I yield back.