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**SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8012**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Liias, Pedersen, Fain, Rivers, Walsh, Ranker, Chase, Hasegawa, Darneille, Conway, Saldaña, Hunt, Billig, Nelson, Rolfes, McCoy, Palumbo, Cleveland, Wellman, Takko, Kuderer, Mullet, Frockt, Van De Wege, Hobbs, Keiser, and Carlyle

TO THE HONORABLE DONALD J. TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES, AND TO THE UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AND TO THE MEMBERS OF THE WASHINGTON STATE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION:

We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent and petition as follows:

WHEREAS, Credible reports by news publications and human rights organizations have recently surfaced describing the detention, torture, and killing of suspected gay and bisexual men by law enforcement and security forces in the Chechen Republic; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that up to one hundred men have been abducted and detained at a de facto concentration camp as part of a state-sanctioned operation to silence the voices of a repressed community within Chechen society; and

WHEREAS, Both victims and witnesses to this coordinated effort have described state-sanctioned torture and beatings, which are believed to have led to the death of at least three victims; and

WHEREAS, This extrajudicial apprehension and interrogation of citizens is carried out by law enforcement with the consent of the head of the Chechen government, Ramzan Kadyrov, who has repeatedly denied the very existence of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons in Chechnya; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and experts from the United Nations have condemned the actions and statements of authorities in the region, observing that such persecution and violence violate international human rights laws; and

WHEREAS, Chechen officials have denied these reports and made statements inciting hatred based on sexual orientation or gender identity and encouraging violence against LGBT individuals by their families and community members; and

WHEREAS, The Russian government has not publicly condemned these actions, but has instead deflected responsibility to local law enforcement and asked that official complaints of abuse be filed through the same civil authorities responsible for encouraging violence; and

WHEREAS, It is the moral obligation of the United States to "work aggressively to advance human rights for everyone," in the words of Secretary of State Rex Tillerson at his confirmation hearing;

NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that peaceable action be taken by the diplomatic bodies of the federal government in collaboration with the international community on behalf of the victims of the persecution in Chechnya to: (1) End the state-sanctioned detention of and violence against LGBT individuals, and (2) provide asylum to LGBT individuals seeking safety.

BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately transmitted to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, the Secretary of State of the United States, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of Washington.