

Sen. Bob Corker, Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Sen. Ben Cardin, Ranking Member, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Rep. Ed Royce, Chairman, House Foreign Affairs Committee  
Rep. Eliot Engel, Ranking Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee

March 7, 2017

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

**We write you today to support the candidacy of Mr. Kenneth Timmerman to become the next CEO of the Broadcasting Board of Governors.**

Mr. Timmerman has an illustrious career of more than 30 years as an investigative journalist, broadcast personality, author, and human rights advocate. His experience with the Voice of America and the “freedom radios” of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty goes back decades.

In 1995, he became an early advocate with Senator Alfonse D’Amato of establishing a freedom radio for Iran under the auspices of RFE/RL, initially known as Radio Azadi (“Freedom Radio”). Unfortunately, with the infiltration of pro-Iranian regime broadcasters into the new radio, people inside Iran began referring to it as “Radio Khatami,” because it blatantly supported the new supposedly “reformist” president of Iran, Hojjat-ol eslam Mohammad Khatami.

A similar deformation of U.S. international broadcasting goals has occurred with Persian service of the Voice of America, which today is derisively referred to by the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran as “Ayatollah Radio” and “Ayatollah TV.”

The BBG has scored lowest among all federal agencies in the confidence of its employees in management, according to the [2015 annual survey](#) by the U.S. government’s Office of Personnel Management.

U.S. international broadcasting desperately needs reform. Mr. Timmerman is the right person for the job.

Mr. Timmerman understands broadcasting. He understands America. And as someone who has lived more than 18 years of his adult life in Europe and the Middle East, he has ground-truth experience of what U.S. government broadcasting can and should mean to the foreign audiences it is intended to reach.

Section 1228 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2017, signed into law in December 2016, creates a powerful new position, the CEO of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, who is given sweeping authority over VOA and RFE/RL.

The right person in that position will give our administration the ability to ensure that the various language services under his purview conform to the overall public diplomacy objectives of the United States.

Mr. Timmerman understands that these objectives are not partisan, and should not be partisan.

VOA should promote U.S. values, American exceptionalism, and the virtues of our system of government. The freedom radios and TVs under RFE/RL should operate as surrogates for the free medias lacking in the target countries.

For many years, the people in charge of these U.S. taxpayer-funded broadcasting services have not understood these essential roles of our public diplomacy.

We believe Mr. Timmerman is the right candidate to put American values first in U.S. government overseas broadcasting, and we strongly support his candidacy.

We urge you to join us in supporting Mr. Timmerman to become the next CEO of the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

***SIGNED:***

**Afshin Afshin-jam**, Islamic Republic of Iran torture victim; human rights activist  
**Mahvash Alasavandi**, Mother of twins, Abdollah and Mohammad Fathi, executed by Islamic regime of Iran; Founder, Mothers Against Execution, Canada

**Pari Asgari**, radio host

**Roya Araghi**, former prisoner of conscience in Iran

**Faezeh (Farnoush) Aghili**, Iran Civil Rights Activist

**Kawa Ahangari**, Political Activist

**Mojgan Amiri**, political activist

**Shabnam Assadollahi**, Former political child prisoner at Evin Prison; former radio producer and host Radio Hamseda, Canada

**Jamshid Chaharlengi**, Persian News Anchor

**Aynaz Anni Cyrus**, Nat'l. Director - American Truth Project, Human Rights Activist

**Pooya Dayanim**, Esq., President, Iranian Jewish Public Affairs Committee (IJPAC)

**Mona Dehmohseni**, political activist

**Hon Jimmy Delshad**, Twice-elected Mayor (Dem.) of Beverly Hills, CA (2007, 2010).

**Manda Ervin**, President, Alliance of Iranian Women

**Amir Ezati**, writer and filmmaker

**Hassan Etemadi**, Political Activist Sweden

**Bijan Fathi**, father of twins executed by Islamic regime in Iran

**Zaman Feyli**, Iranian Journalist

**Dr. Iman Foroutan**, Founder and Spokesperson, The New Iran

**Firouzeh Ghaffarpour**, human rights and political activist, Sweden

**Afshin Gorgin**, CEO, Radio Shadi; former broadcaster with Voice of America Persian Service and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

**Marjan Keypour Greenblatt**, Founder & Director, Alliance for Rights of All Minorities (ARAM); Board Member, Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles (2008-2011)

**George Haroonian**, Iranian-American Jewish activist

**Mahboubeh Hosseinpour**, political activist, television host

**Amil Imani**, Iranian-American writer, national security analyst

**Mohsen Behzad Karimi**, Iranian Journalist, Brussels

**Esfand Khalaf**, political analyst

**Hossein Khorram**, Developer; American Middle East Coalition for Trump

**Behrouz Khosrozadeh**, political scientist

**Dr. Gill Leighton**, Iran Refugee Advocate

**Kendra Malczyk**, human rights advocate

**Walton K. Martin**, Director, Iranian Refugees Action Network

**Karmel Melamed**, Iranian-American Journalist

**Valerie M. Michel**, President, Michel Technical Solutions, Inc.

**Maryam Moazen-zadeh**, European representative of (jailed) Ayatollah Hossein Kazemeini-Borujerdi

**Majid Mohammadi**, Sociologist

**Alireza Morovati**, Founder and CEO of KRSI-Radio Sedaye Iran

**Avideh Motmaen-Far**, Iranian Political Activist

**Ahmad (Afshin) Nariman**, former Voice of America Persian Service reporter

**Mansoureh Nasserchian**, freelance journalist

**Faryar Nikbakht**, Committee for Religious Minority Rights in Iran

**Randy L. Noble**, Christian Author, Human Rights activist

**Khatereh Noorshid**, Editor of Javanan-e Emrooz Media group

**Masoumeh Mohammadinia**, radio host

**Jamshid Ohebsion**, professor of physics (retired)

**Ali Akbar Omidmehr**, former diplomat, member of the Green Embassy campaign

**Reza Parchizadeh**, 'Starred student,' Political analyst

**Valerie Price**, Director, ACT! For Canada

**Reza Qolizadeh**, civil activist

**Amin Rad**, Voice of Christians in Iran

**Ramin Rad**, Voice of Christians in Iran

**Darius Radmanesh**, author, *Escape from Iran*

**Behrdad Rahbar**, architect and artist

**Jahanshah Rashidian**, activist, writer, poet

**Penina Sarah**, attorney, political activist

**Shahin Sartipi**, political activist (Sweden)

**Cyrus S. Shahrizi**, Iranian-American activist

**Shima Silavi**, political activist

**Azadeh Soleymani**, Media critic

**Kaveh Taheri**, Iranian Journalist, Human Rights Activist

**Kambiz Soltanein**, Journalist

**Sima Tajdini**, former prisoner of conscience, Evin; freelance journalist

**Daniel Tousi**, political activist

**Irina Tsukerman Esq.**, Human rights activist

**Voice Of Iranian Christians Organization**

**Patricia Welch**, human rights activist

*The following individuals signed an on-line version of this letter that was circulated via Facebook. Some of them are former political prisoners from Iran.*

Niyousha Afshar	Ralph Graham	Dean Seruntine
Mehdi Akbari	Denise Riffle Grey	Daynell Seruntine
Kathleen Alfaro	Linda Gurley	Saeid Shabani
Victoria Azad	Donna Hansen	Farzaneh Shahinfar
Chase Backman	Gene Haviland	Stephanie Sidebottom
Resha Badke	Lisa Henderson	Kelcey Sidebottom
Sophie Baron	Keith Hilliard	Becky Smuck
Scott Bienvenue	Traci Stout Hodge	Ramin Sohrab
Lori Bordelon	Saeb Hosseini	Esther Solomon
Polar Ortiz Biggio	Amil Imani	Rachel Stevens
Lori Bordelon	Traci Irving	Stacey Summa
Tish Mines Boyd	Dr. Shokoufeh Khozein	Courtney Summers
Jackie Branch	Patricia Langlais	John Summers
Heather Briggs	Alex Lavian	Dusti Swegel
Mary Britton	Robert Lehnert	Christine Swierski
Larry Burns	Lori Lett	Abbas Tabatabaei
Celtic Warriors	Marjan Mohsenin	Brian Templeman
Debra Cole	Sirwan Mansouri	John Tenuta
Morgan Combs	Lynn Mathews	Melissa Thaxton
Jonathan Constantine	Kathryn Maxie	Samantha Thomas
CWAI 4 Hibernia	Scott McKay	Jenni Thompson
Tina DeCaire	John Mills	Lisa Wilson
Jane DeGreef	Steven Mix	Heather Worley
Becky Diefendorf	Anna Mower	Joshua Zuckschwerdt
Jim Diefendorf	Lisa Neville	Kindred Zuckschwerdt
Renee Diefendorf	David Nittolo	
John Dolan	Khatereh Noorshid	
Jason Doss	Rachel Oden	
Joseph Dugal	Angela Louise Palazzo	
Sayran Ehsani	Patricia Parker	
Mino Eyvazzadeh	Leila Parks	
Salim Fani	Angie Peterson	
Vahid Farkhondeh Khoy- Fard	Terry Petty	
Daves Fields	Megan Pickren	
Sean Fintak	Joe Pollarine Jr.	
Jack Gaglio	Steve Prince	
Robert S Goldman	David Rife	
Arman Ghorbani	Aref Saraie	
	Conan T Saxon	
	Rodina Schuurkamp	