

JAY INSLEE  
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

March 11, 2015

The Honorable John Kerry  
U.S. Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Jacob J. Lew  
Secretary of the Treasury  
Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Jennifer Shasky Calvery, Director  
FinCEN  
Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Kerry, Secretary Lew & Director Shasky Calvery:

I write to lend my voice to the efforts of others who have made a call to action to address the emerging crisis that has been created by the inability of the Somali community in Washington State and around the country to transmit much-needed funds to friends and family members in Somalia. It has been recently reported that Somali emigrants annually send an estimated \$215 million from the United States. In many cases, such remittances are a lifeline for Somalis, who rely heavily on payments from our citizens for basic necessities including food, clothing and shelter.

Money transmission activities in the state of Washington are regulated by the Consumer Services Division of the Department of Financial Institutions. The division provides a robust system of regulation through licensure, examination, and enforcement to ensure the safe and sound operation of money transmission businesses and the protection of consumers who use those services.

Over the years, remittances to Somalia have drawn significant attention from the United States government's counterterrorism efforts. For years, many of the smaller money transmitters that service underserved diverse communities in our state have experienced great difficulty in obtaining bank accounts from traditional financial institutions. Now, the Somali community find themselves without any banking options.

As you may know, due to tightened restrictions on remittances, possibly the last remaining financial institution relied upon by many licensed money transmitters to provide transfers to Somalia notified its money transmitter clients last month that it would close their bank accounts. This has left money transmitters serving the Somali immigrants unable to serve their customers. It has also left very few practical options for Somali-Americans to continue critical financial support to family members in Somalia. These developments could quickly exacerbate the humanitarian situation in a country that is already experiencing a desperate economic condition.

The federal government needs to limit remittances that present significant security risks, but it should not be impossible for our citizens to get money to their families in Somalia. The current disruption in remittances jeopardizes the well-being and survival of many Somalis and necessitates immediate action. In this environment, it is readily apparent that relief can only be achieved through a federal



Secretary Kerry, Secretary Lew & Director Shasky Calvery

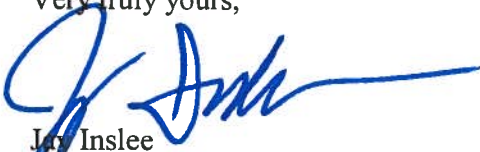
March 11, 2015

Page 2

solution that will end the disruption in remittances to Somalia. For this reason, I am requesting that you and others in our federal government immediately take up this issue and find a solution.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your hard work and service to our nation.

Very truly yours,



Jay Inslee  
Governor