**U.S. Statement at the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Korea,**

**28th Session, November 9, 2017**

Thank you Mr. Vice President.

The United States warmly welcomes the Republic of Korea delegation to the UPR Working Group.

The United States commends the Republic of Korea for its commitment to the promotion of human rights, but we remain concerned by laws that limit freedom of expression and restrict internet access, including ‎criminal defamation and libel laws.

We welcome the Government’s recent commitment to improve its record on freedom of expression.

We are also concerned that the Republic of Korea does not provide alternatives to military service for conscientious objectors. We acknowledge efforts to explore alternative forms of service; however, roughly 400 conscientious objectors are currently serving jail terms. Once released from prison, they face ongoing discrimination and employment restrictions due to their criminal record.

We are also concerned there is no enforceable national anti-discrimination legislation that would extend human rights protection to LGBTI individuals.

We recommend that the Republic of Korea:

1. Replace criminal defamation and libel laws with civil ones, and reform national security laws to provide greater protections for free expression.
2. Introduce alternatives to military service to protect conscientious objectors.
3. Adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation to provide protection for and to promote the rights of LGBTI persons.

Thank you Mr. Vice President.