



## **This Week in the Office of Senator Marco Rubio**

Following reports of slum-like living conditions, I am demanding an investigation of Glorieta Gardens. On Tuesday, I called for Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Ben Carson and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Commissioner Charles Rettig to conduct an investigation and potentially suspend benefits to the owners of Glorieta Gardens Apartments in Opa-locka, Florida. The request was made following multiple visits by my staff to see first-hand the living conditions described in tenant testimonies. Read more [here](#).

MARCO RUBIO  
FLORIDA

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES  
APPROPRIATIONS  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

December 18, 2018

The Honorable Ben Carson  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban  
Development  
451 7 Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20410

The Honorable Charles Rettig  
Commissioner  
Internal Revenue Service  
111 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20224

Dear Secretary Carson and Commissioner Rettig:

I write with great concern for constituents who reside at the Glorieta Gardens Apartments in Opa-locka, Florida. In 2017, Glorieta Gardens Apartments, which consists of more than 300 units owned and managed by Glorieta Partners Ltd., went through an extensive rehabilitation that reportedly cost more than \$16 million. It was partially financed with federal tax credits and allegedly allowed for a 20 percent subsidized-Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rent increase in the wake of its completion. Since the rehabilitation, tenants have reported that the property is in worse condition now than it was prior to the repairs.

My staff recently visited the property, met with residents, and witnessed thick layers of mold coating walls, sewage leaking into kitchens, and corroded pipes. Tenants reported that they received appliances that do not work, experienced instances where their walls were painted to cover rust and mold, and experience constant flooding. Tenants were assured by management that a "state of the art security camera system" would be installed, however, no such security system is believed to be present on the property, while violent crime and drive-by shootings remain prevalent.

In addition to the responsibilities afforded to HUD to ensure safe living conditions, I respectfully request that both HUD and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) audit the finances of Glorieta Partners, Ltd., and their contractors, to ensure federal tax dollars were used as intended in the rehabilitation and management of Glorieta Gardens. In addition, I request HUD consider freezing the 20 percent rent increase, if it was awarded to the property, until Glorieta Gardens can achieve consistent satisfactory Real Estate Assessment Center inspection scores.

On Thursday, I requested Glorieta Partners, Ltd., to provide his office with a detailed explanation as to how they spent \$24 million in tax-exempt bonds and additional revenue generated from increasing rents on tenants, which were intended to finance a rehabilitation of the Glorieta Gardens Apartments. Read more [here](#).

MARCO RUBIO  
FLORIDA

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 20, 2018

COMMITTEES  
APPROPRIATIONS  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. Kenneth Weiss  
President  
Glorieta Partners Ltd.  
8896 North Military Trail, Suite 201E  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410

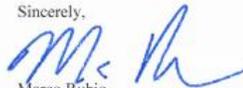
Dear Mr. Weiss:

It has come to my attention, that in 2017, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approved the ability for you to increase the rents on your tenants by up to 20 percent as a condition of Glorieta Gardens' alleged \$16 million rehabilitation. It has also been brought to my attention that while you collected about \$8 million in contractor and developer fees, this rehabilitation was not in fact completed.

You may be aware that my staff recently visited your property, and witnessed residential apartments with thick layers of mold, sewage leaking into kitchens, and corroded pipes. Tenants complained that they received what they believed to be new appliances, but did not work. They also stated that workers painted over the rust and mold that covers their walls, and were assured by management that a "state of the art security camera system" would be installed. However, no such security system is on the property, despite the fact that violent crime and drive-by shootings remain prevalent.

This week, I asked HUD and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to conduct an investigation into your affordable housing business practices. Should they request additional information, I encourage you to swiftly and efficiently comply. In the meantime, please provide my office with a detailed explanation as to how you spent the \$24 million you received in tax-exempt bonds and the additional revenue you collected from increased rents, both of which were awarded to finance the rehabilitation of this property. In addition, I urge you to request a Section-8 pass-through lease from HUD so that the tenants residing in this building may receive immediate assistance to relocate to safe and sanitary housing. The tenants deserve better than what you have provided them thus far, and their needs must be addressed immediately.

Sincerely,

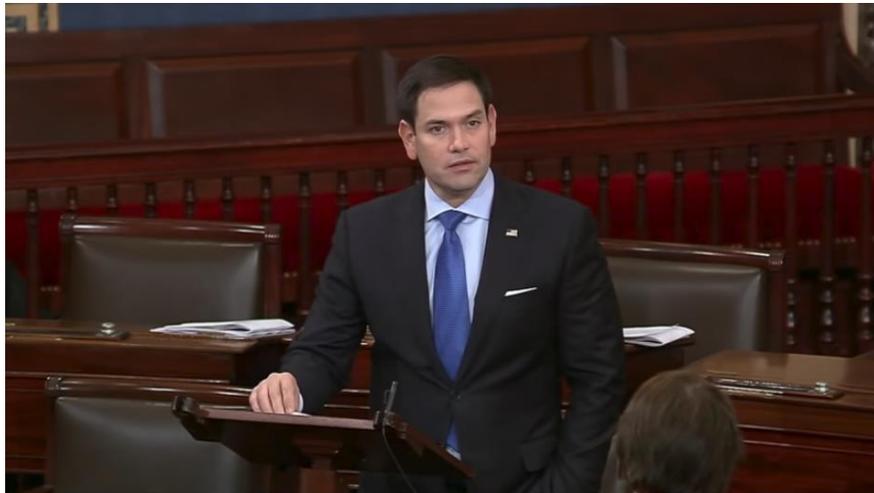


Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator

On Tuesday, I spoke on the Senate floor urging Florida officials to pardon "the Groveland Four," four young African American men who were victims of institutionalized racial hatred in Lake County, Florida in 1949. After 70 years, it is time for Florida to do the right thing. Watch my full speech [here](#).



I believe withdrawing troops from Syria is a grave mistake. On Wednesday, I spoke on the Senate floor in opposition to the President's decision. Watch my full speech [here](#).



On Thursday, I joined Dana Perino on Fox News to discuss why withdrawing troops from Syria is a colossal mistake with grave consequences. Watch my interview [here](#).



Read my statement on the President’s decision for a “full and rapid” withdrawal from Syria [here](#).

“The decision to pull U.S. defense presence out of Syria is a big mistake. The Syrian Democratic Forces and YPG will now abandon the fight against ISIS in the Middle Euphrates River Valley. Iran will step up activity in Southern Syria, which will elicit increased Israeli strikes that could lead to a new and far deadlier Israel-Hezbollah war. And our adversaries will use this as evidence that America is an unreliable partner. Today’s decision will lead to grave consequences in the months and years to come.”

On Wednesday, I joined Senators Graham, Shaheen, King, Cotton, and Ernst in sending a letter to President Donald Trump expressing our concerns regarding the consideration to withdraw U.S. forces from Syria. Read more [here](#).

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 19, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
The President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write today to express our concern regarding your Administration's consideration to withdraw U.S. forces from Syria. We believe that such action at this time is a premature and costly mistake that not only threatens the safety and security of the United States, but also emboldens ISIS, Bashar al Assad, Iran, and Russia.

The United States currently retains a small and limited military presence within Syria. The approximately 2,000 American troops stationed in Syria serve as a vital shield against ISIS cells operating within Northeast Syria. While you believe the threat of ISIS has dissipated, the conditions on the ground paint a very different picture.

In addition, our troops provide critical support for our Kurdish partners, who have been crucial in the fight against ISIS. If our Kurdish partners in the region lose the support of the United States, we run the risk of a resurgence of ISIS and the possible capitulation or all out destruction of Kurdish resistance in the region.

Furthermore, hundreds of foreign fighters being held in captivity by our Kurdish partners are at risk of being released or worse if our support is withdrawn.

If you decide to follow through with your decision to pull our troops out of Syria, any remnants of ISIS in Syria will surely renew and embolden their efforts in the region. However, ISIS is not the only threat. The brutal dictatorship of Bashar al Assad continues to weigh heavily upon the Syrian people, and we fear that a withdrawal of our troops may embolden Bashar al Assad to take further actions to solidify his power.

The withdrawal of American presence from Syria also bolsters two other adversaries to the United States, Iran and Russia. As you are aware, both Iran and Russia have used the Syrian conflict as a stage to magnify their influence in the region. Any sign of weakness perceived by Iran or Russia will only result in their increased presence in the region and a decrease in the trust

On Wednesday, I joined Senator Menendez in leading a bipartisan letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, asking his agency to formally determine if the Burmese military's campaign of violence against the Rohingya people constitutes a genocide. Read more [here](#).

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 19, 2018

The Honorable Mike Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We commend the State Department for its work to document atrocities and provide humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya, following atrocities committed against them by the Burmese military and security forces in Rakhine State. However, we are deeply concerned that despite clear evidence of genocide amassed by the Department's own report—alongside the findings of numerous credible non-governmental organizations, including the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum—that the Department has not made a formal determination that the crime of genocide has been committed.

The definition of genocide includes killing or causing serious bodily or mental harm to a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, the group. The deliberate infliction on such a group of conditions intended to bring about the physical destruction in whole or part of the group also constitutes genocide.<sup>1</sup>

There is no question that the violence in northern Rakhine State -- intended to terrorize, drive out, and exterminate Rakhine's Rohingya population -- meets the definition of genocide. It has been documented by respected organizations that the attacks starting in August 2017 were well-planned and fully-coordinated military operations, which included the deliberate use of tactics intended to destroy the Rohingya as an ethnic/religious group. These actions clearly meet internationally-accepted definition for genocide.

The Department's own report published in September 2018 expertly and extensively documents these atrocities and their scale. The Public International Law and Policy Group (PILPG), the legal experts who were contracted by the Department to gather evidence used for its report concluded "there are reasonable grounds to believe that genocide has been committed" against the Rohingya. We respectfully ask that you provide a formal legal determination regarding whether the actions of the Burmese military amount to genocide to Congress without delay.

While we would agree that there are often situations of violence and mass atrocities around the globe in which evidence is uncertain and intentions unknowable, the situation in Rakhine State is

On Thursday, I commended the Administration for pursuing charges against Chinese hackers directly associated with the Ministry of State Security. Read more [here](#).

"I commend the Administration for pursuing charges against Chinese government hackers. Regardless of any past commitment, China's intelligence services have continued brazen attempts to steal the intellectual property of American companies in an effort to continue to exploit the technological gains of others and fuel the goals of the Chinese Communist Party. The United States must lead like-minded countries to counter the Chinese government's lawless cyberaggression. We must understand that this is part of China's strategic effort to supplant and undermine America's economic and global leadership. The United States must continue using all tools, including military alliances, law enforcement, sanctions and other pressure, to end China's growing threat to our national and economic security. How we confront China is the single most important geopolitical issue of our time."

On Thursday, Congressman Chris Smith and I released a statement on the impending verdict in the trial of Igor Bitkov in Guatemala. Read more [here](#).

"In April of this year, we learned about the plight of the Bitkov family in Guatemala and their highly unjust imprisonment that was orchestrated by CICIG.

"This case exemplifies Russia's interference in international organizations and internal Guatemalan affairs.

"Our concerns were so great that a decision was taken to suspend US Government funding to CICIG. The Bitkov family was subsequently released from prison and apparently vindicated after the Constitutional Court ruled in their favor. US Government funding to CICIG was restored in September.

"It is now alarming to learn that CICIG and the Guatemalan prosecutors are now re-trying Igor Bitkov on the same questionable charges.

"We understand that the presiding judge is due to deliver her verdict tomorrow. CICIG and the prosecutors have recommended that Igor Bitkov serve another 14 years in jail followed by expulsion to Russia.

"If this sentence materializes, we will look at all available tools to rectify such a grave injustice."

On Tuesday, I joined Senators Cortez Masto, Gardner, Coons, Bennet, and Cruz in expressing concern to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and other national security leaders in the Trump Administration about ongoing Chinese Communist Party (CCP) attempts to undermine democracy. Read more [here](#).

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 13, 2018

The Honorable Mike Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street Northwest  
Washington, DC, 20520

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin  
Secretary of the Treasury  
U.S. Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest  
Washington, DC 20220

The Honorable Dan Coats  
Director of National Intelligence  
Office of the Director of National Intelligence  
1500 Tysons McLean Drive  
McLean, VA 22012

The Honorable Christopher Wray  
Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest  
Washington, DC, 20220

Dear Secretaries Pompeo and Mnuchin, Directors Coats and Wray:

We write with concern about allegations that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) interfered in Taiwan's recent elections. CCP attempts to erode democratic processes and norms around the world threaten U.S. partnerships and prosperity. Allegations such as those surrounding Taiwan's recent elections must therefore be pursued with seriousness and urgency. We appreciate the actions your departments are already taking to address CCP foreign interference. We encourage you to work closely with Taiwan authorities to thoroughly investigate these allegations and, if necessary, take swift action to deter future CCP interference in elections in Taiwan or elsewhere across the globe.

In the lead-up to Taiwan's local elections on November 24, 2018, Taiwan authorities and independent observers alleged that the CCP used illegal funds and disinformation to influence the election results in favor of the CCP's strategic interests. It is not our intent, nor our role, to question the veracity or fairness of the electoral outcome. Rather, in an era of growing authoritarian interference, we believe such allegations must be taken seriously if free societies are to continue to thrive. If true, CCP interference in Taiwan's elections would be deeply concerning not only for Taiwan's future, but also for fellow democracies around the world where the CCP may choose to interfere.

Taiwan authorities' statements suggest that illegal campaign contributions to pro-Beijing political candidates were one of the primary tools of alleged CCP interference. In October, Taiwan authorities announced that they were investigating 33 cases of alleged funding from China to political campaigns in Taiwan. If true, the donations would be in violation of Taiwan's Political Donations Act and the Act Governing Relations Between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area. Indeed, Taiwan investigators reportedly conducted raids on two illicit money exchanges funneling money to pro-Beijing election activities in Taiwan. Authorities are also investigating allegations that CCP-linked individuals tried to bribe or coerce voters.

Esta semana escribí una columna de opinión en Diario las Américas en honor a los presos políticos y de conciencia en Cuba, Venezuela y Nicaragua. Vea la columna [aquí](#).

OPINIÓN

## Otro diciembre bajo represión en América Latina

17 de diciembre de 2018 - 09:12 - Por MARCO RUBIO

Los presos políticos y de conciencia de Cuba, Venezuela y Nicaragua son hoy un motivo de reflexión e inspiración por su lucha a favor de los Derechos Humanos y la democracia

I discussed my concerns on the First Step Act on Fox News Radio with Guy Benson and Marie Harf on Tuesday. You can listen to the Interview [here](#). Read about why I voted against the First Step Act [here](#).

“Over the past several months, I have heard arguments on both sides of the First Step Act. Ultimately, I voted no because the Senate did not address serious concerns raised by local law enforcement, federal prosecutors and constituents in Florida about the sentencing reforms in this bill. As I’ve said before, reforms to our criminal justice system are needed because 95% of federal inmates will be released at some point. Preparing them to integrate into society and find meaningful work is in our best interests, but we must always err on the side of public safety.”

Over the weekend, I praised the ruling by U.S. District Judge Reed O’Connor declaring the Affordable Care Act unconstitutional. Read more [here](#).

“The ruling against Obamacare, on behalf of Florida and others, serves as a stark reminder of the millions of Americans who are suffering under the law. Americans should have the ability to buy a health plan that meets their needs, rather than what Washington tells them.

This ruling is a first, not a final step, in a long legal process and will not impact next year’s coverage. Ultimately, congress must take action. We should look at opportunities that give families flexibility in obtaining healthcare while also allowing states the ability to innovate.”

## In Case You Missed It...

“Rubio introduces bill to net Florida hospitals an additional \$600M” ([Politico](#), 12/18/2018)

“Florida's US Sen. Marco Rubio Seeks Pardon for Groveland 4” ([New York Times](#), 12/19/2018)

“Shoddy renovation of HUD apartments in Opa-locka unconscionable. Audit the developers, like Marco Rubio says.” ([Miami Herald](#), 12/18/2018)

“Complex still squalid after feds paid millions for rehab, Rubio says. He wants audit” ([Miami Herald](#), 12/18/2018)

“Sens. Marco Rubio and Ed Markey team up to deny Saudi Arabia nuclear energy” ([Washington Examiner](#), 12/19/2018)

“Rubio, along with Senators Bob Menendez, D-NJ, Dick Durbin, D-IL, and Patrick Leahy, D-VT, recently introduced the Venezuela Temporary Protected Status and

**Asylum Assistance Act of 2018.** According to a news release from Rubio's office, 'The bipartisan legislation seeks to grant Temporary Protected Status for eligible Venezuelans fleeing the dire conditions in their homeland and to provide support for migration systems in the countries surrounding Venezuela.'" (Lawmakers hold roundtable discussion in Sunrise on crisis in Venezuela, [ABC 10](#), 12/17/2018)

**"Marco Rubio Joins Ted Cruz in Pushing for More Sanctions on Iran"** ([Sunshine State News](#), 12/18/2018)

**"Rubio, Smith Warn Judge In Bitkov Case"** ([Washington Free Beacon](#), 12/20/2018)

**"We're Abandoning Them': Rubio Says Syria Pullout Will Lead to 'Slaughter' of Kurds by Turkey"** ([FOX Insider](#), 12/20/2018)

**"Marco Rubio Rips Syria Withdrawal: A 'Colossal Mistake' That Will 'Haunt This Administration'"** ([Mediaite](#), 12/19/2018)

**"Florida's Senators, Neal Dunn Urge Congress to Rebuild Tyndall Air Force Base"** ([Florida Daily](#), 12/17/2018)

**"Marco Rubio: We're headed toward a series of 'grave' defense policy errors"** ([Washington Examiner](#), 12/21/2018)

**"Led by Senator Bob Menendez, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the letter was also signed by Republican Senators Marco Rubio and Susan Collins and Democratic Senators Ed Markey, Tim Kaine, Ben Cardin and Jeff Merkley."** (Bipartisan senators call for U.S. 'genocide' label of Myanmar killings, [Reuters](#), 12/20/2018)

## **Legislation Introduced...**

- I introduced the [State Accountability, Flexibility, and Equity \(SAFE\) for Hospitals Act](#), which would overhaul the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) program to create equity for all states by updating a metric used to determine how much each state is allotted, which has not been reformed since the early 1990's.
- Senator Markey and I joined Representatives Sherman, and Messer in introducing [legislation](#) that increases Congressional oversight over any civil nuclear cooperation agreement – or 123 agreement – between the United States and Saudi Arabia.
- I joined Senators Markey, Collins, Cardin and Merkley in introducing a bipartisan [resolution](#) that highlights the horrific acts of violence against the Rohingya people in Burma.

Keep up with me on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

