

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

REYKJAVÍK, ICELAND
February 9, 2015

THE AMBASSADOR

Ambassador John L. Loeb, Jr.
George Washington Institute for Religious Freedom
50 Broad Street, Suite 1137
New York, NY 10004

Dear Ambassador Loeb:

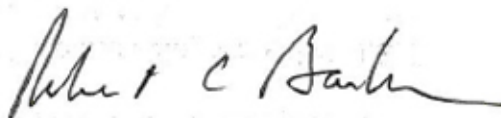
Thank you very much for your kind letter of December 2014. I have recently arrived at post and I am in the early stages of getting to know this beautiful country and its people. My first impressions of Iceland have been very positive and I am excited to represent the United States and engage with the Icelandic people.

Your dedication and enthusiasm for advancing George Washington's message, which has retained its relevance to this day, is truly admirable. During my time in Iceland I look forward to advocating religious freedom in Iceland as part of our foreign policy.

I would like to highlight some of the outstanding work that U.S. Embassy Reykjavik does to advance the issue of religious freedom. As noted in the Iceland chapter of the 2013 State Department International Religious Freedom Report (the latest version is publicly available), "Embassy officials regularly discuss religious freedom with local leaders representing a broad spectrum of religious groups and nongovernmental organizations." Over the past year, the Chargé d'Affaires has, for example, attended Iftar and Ashura celebrations organized by a local Muslim interfaith group. The Embassy has also hosted gatherings on several occasions that brought together representatives of other faiths, members of civil society, and government officials. In recent months, Embassy officials have met with representatives of the Icelandic government, the Jewish community, and the Asatru Association to discuss the importance the U.S. places on religious tolerance.

I also appreciate all of the valuable material you have provided for us to use as we continue our engagement with Icelandic interlocutors. While time constraints will not allow us to put together an event for George Washington's birthday this year, I look forward to future work on the issue.

Sincerely,



Robert C. Barber