April 19, 2019

Her Royal Highness Princess Reema bint Bandar bin Sultan
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to
the United States of America

Dear Ambassador bint Bandar:

As you begin your tenure in Washington, we write to express our deep concern over Saudi Arabia’s treatment of women. As your nation’s first female Ambassador to the United States, we urge you to play a leading role in improving the livelihoods of women throughout the Kingdom.

We applaud Saudi Arabia’s decision to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women. However, we believe the Saudi government must do more, including enacting legislation that prohibits discrimination against women.

In addition, we urge the Kingdom to take steps toward dismantling the male guardianship system. The United Nations has said the “mahram” system is “the key obstacle to women’s participation in the society and economy,” and we urge the Saudi government to take concrete legal steps to abolish it.

Finally, we urge the government to end its mistreatment of women’s rights activists. The arbitrary detention, sexual abuse, and use of torture by the Saudi government against women is appalling and unacceptable. We urge the Kingdom to immediately release all women’s rights advocates in detention, allow for an independent investigation of their treatment, and hold anyone responsible for their mistreatment accountable.

As women in the United States Senate, we believe we must raise the issue of women’s rights in Saudi Arabia. In order to improve our relationship, the Kingdom should abolish the male guardianship system and end its crackdown on women’s rights activists. As you take up your charge, we look forward to working with you on this vitally important issue.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Susan M. Collins
United States Senator