

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 28, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We write regarding the U.S. consulate in the City of Ponta Delgada on the island of São Miguel in the Azores, which we understand is one of the consulate locations you are in the process of reviewing.


The United States and Portugal have a close friendship, and the ties between our countries continue to be strengthened by the thriving Portuguese-American communities across the United States. Of the over one million Portuguese-Americans living in the United States, a significant portion are of Azorean descent. These individuals, their Azorean relatives, and U.S. citizens residing in the Azores rely on the consulate in Ponta Delgada to provide a range of vital services.

In these difficult economic and budgetary times, we understand the need to review our country's investments abroad, and we continue to support efforts to more effectively use our resources. However, given the great distance between the U.S. consulate in the Azores and the Portuguese mainland, we believe that the closure of this consulate would be a significant loss for Portuguese-Americans.

As you continue your review, we respectfully urge you to consider the impact of closing our consulate in Ponta Delgada on Portuguese-Americans and our bilateral relations with Portugal.

Thank you for your service and attention to our request. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator