Houston, April 20, 2013 

Dear Prime Minister Peeters,

Dear Prime Minister Rutte,

As a long-term citizen of Texas who is concerned about basic human rights, I request that you cancel your planned trip to Texas.

Human rights abuses abound in Texas.   We have executed almost 500 people in the last 30 years and still have almost 300 people in our death row.  Furthermore, we have over 150,000 people incarcerated in our state prisons.  Many of them are unnecessarily locked up in solitary confinement which can lead to severe mental illness.

Furthermore,  the state cut over 5 billion dollars from the public education budget in 2011 and is refusing to take approximately 80 billion dollars from the federal government for health care for the poor.  In fact, our state ranks near the bottom of U.S. states in terms of education and health care for the poor.   Although we currently have a surplus in our state budget,  politicians in this state have not restored all the funding they cut two years ago.

You may be coming to Texas to foster business relationships, but do you really want to do business with a state with such severe human rights abuses?   Did you also do business with South Africa when it was an apartheid state?

Until some political leaders like yourself refuse to do business with Texas, these human rights abuses will continue.  Please cancel your trip and state publicly why you are doing so.   It would help us tremendously in this state.

Sincerely,

David P. Atwood

Founder, Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

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