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One Hundred and Eleventh Congress
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

December 8, 2009

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
The President
The White House
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write today to ask that you personally meet with the following left-behind parents whose children are victims of international parental child abduction: David Goldman, Lt. Col. Paul Toland, Patrick Braden, Tom Sylvester, Shoko Matsuda, and Michael Elias.

Four of these courageous individuals recently shared their heart wrenching stories in testimony before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. As a father, you can imagine the rollercoaster of emotions that these parents go through when they learn that their children have been abducted. The utter terror, anguish, anxiety, and depression these parents experience when they realize that they may never see their own children again is unimaginable. That is something that no parent should ever have to experience.

These parents are only a sampling of the thousands of other left behind parents in the United States. According to the State Department, in the last three years, reported cases of international child abduction have increased 60 percent. Current mechanisms for resolving abductions with other countries, such as the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, often fail for lack of enforcement. In countries that are not a party to the Hague Convention, such as Japan, no mechanism whatsoever exists for the return of American children.

Again we respectfully ask that you promptly meet with these parents to discuss their cases and potential solutions to this endemic problem.

HANS HOGREFE
Democratic Staff Director

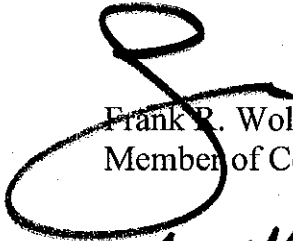
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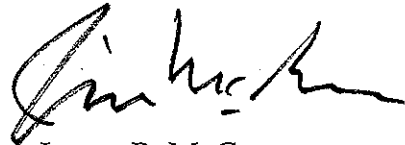
Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to your response.

Best wishes.

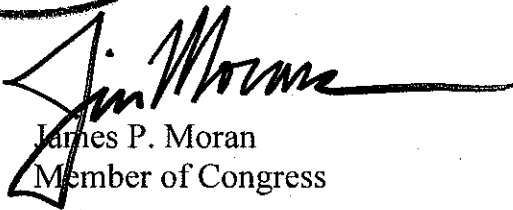
Sincerely,



Frank P. Wolf
Member of Congress




James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



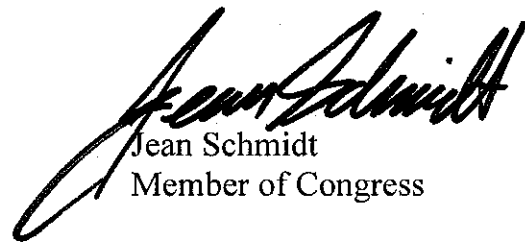
James P. Moran
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress



Jean Schmidt
Member of Congress