

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 23, 2018

The Honorable John J. Sullivan
Acting Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Acting Secretary Sullivan,

We write to request information regarding the Administration's efforts to secure the release of American citizens and permanent U.S. residents held hostage by the government of Iran.

As you know, Iran has a long history of unjustly holding hostages in violation of international law dating back to 1979. Over the years, the Iranian regime has arrested dozens of foreigners on spurious charges and convicted them in sham trials held in secretive courts. Many of the detained American citizens and permanent residents are also held in deplorable conditions, where they experience severe health and psychological issues.

Today, there are more than six American citizens and permanent U.S. residents held by the Iranian regime in a shameful attempt to use innocent human lives as political bargaining chips. These hostages include Bob Levinson, who has been missing since 2007 and remains America's longest-held hostage; Siamak Namazi and his 81-year-old father Baquer, held since 2015 and 2016, respectively; PhD student Xiyue Wang, held since 2016; internet freedom activist Nizar Zakka, held since 2016; and others. The United States has a moral responsibility to devote resources to these hostages and make their return a priority.

This past month, the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed H.R. 4744, the Iran Human Rights and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act, to increase U.S. leverage by levying new sanctions on those responsible for detaining U.S. citizens or legal permanent respondents in Iran. But more sticks must be complemented with a coordinated diplomatic effort with our allies.

According to media reports, the State Department has increased efforts in recent months to secure the release of these hostages, including outreach to the Iranian regime in December 2017 that has gone unanswered. On April 6, 2018, the Department outlined efforts that have been undertaken in a report to Congress pursuant to Section 110 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act. We request that the Department provide some additional details to Congress. Specifically, please provide answers to the following questions in either written responses or a briefing:

1. How has Iran responded to the various lines of effort made by the U.S., as detailed in the April 6 report to Congress, to raise the detention cases?

2. According to a June 20, 2017, article from the *Washington Post*, two senior officials from the Trump administration stated a range of options were being considered, which included “sticks more than carrots.” What specific tools are being considered to secure the release of detained Americans and permanent U.S. residents?
3. Does the Administration require any new authorities from Congress to utilize these tools?
4. What is the Administration’s strategy for disincentivizing and deterring foreign governments, particularly Iran, from taking Americans and permanent U.S. residents hostage in the future?

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



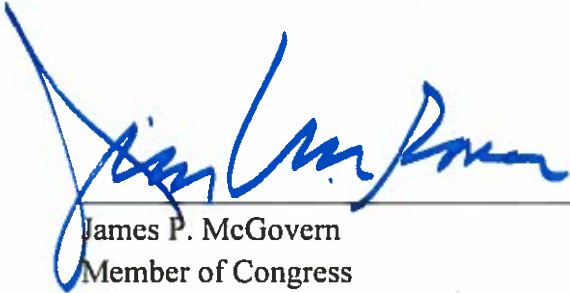
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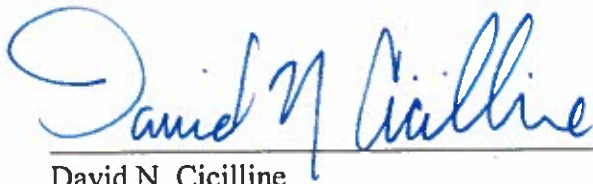
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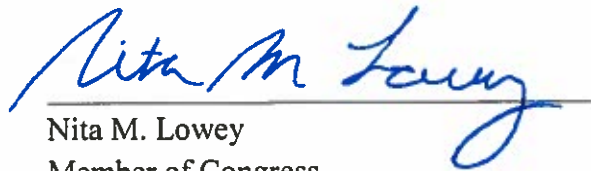
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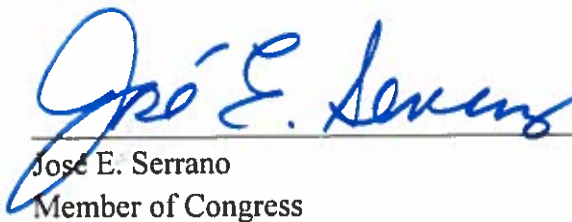
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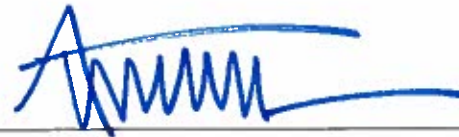
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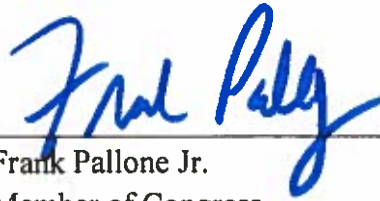
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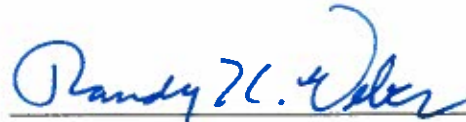
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