Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 15, 2013

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton,

The purpose of this letter is to bring to your personal attention the plight of Saeed Abedini, a 32-year-old American citizen wrongfully detained in Iran, and to request your full engagement on his behalf.

As you are well aware, Iran has a long and troubling track record on a variety of human rights issues. Of particular note is Iran's regular and severe persecution of religious minorities -- especially Christians. In Iran, simply exercising the fundamental human right of religious freedom carries with it the threat of harsh and lengthy imprisonment, and in some cases even death. We acknowledge your commitment to stand against these atrocities, and we are resolved to assist you in that endeavor. We are also mindful that it is particularly incumbent on us to engage when this persecution is aimed at one of our own citizens.

It is our understanding that Mr. Abedini converted from Islam to Christianity when he was a teenager. In the years following his conversion, Mr. Abedini established a number of house churches in Iran, where Christian converts gathered to worship. In 2005, Mr. Abedini and his American wife moved to the United States. However, during a 2009 visit with his family in Tehran, the intelligence police arrested him and claimed that his activities were undermining national security. During the course of intense interrogations, the police asserted that Mr. Abedini deserved to die because of his conversion. Ultimately, Mr. Abedini was released on bail under an agreement that the Regime would not try him in exchange for his commitment to cease work with the house churches. Mr. Abedini honored these terms, and shifted his focus in Iran to humanitarian endeavors, including the establishment of an orphanage in Rasht, Iran. Although Mr. Abedini was periodically interrogated about his activities in Iran over the next few years, the Regime initially honored its end of the agreement.

However, on July 28, 2012, as Mr. Abedini was lawfully entering Iran from Turkey, the Revolutionary Guard stopped his bus and detained him. The Revolutionary Guard interrogated him, confiscated his passports, and ordered him to remain in Iran to face trial for his Christian activities. On September 26, 2012, the Revolutionary Guard raided Mr. Abedini's parents' home. During the raid, all religious materials were confiscated, the home ransacked, and Mr.

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Abedini taken into custody and confined at the infamously brutal Evin prison. While at Evin, Mr. Abedini has endured periods of solitary confinement, repeated physical assaults and intense interrogations, all while being denied access to legal counsel.

Mr. Abedini's charges and arbitrary detention violates numerous domestic laws and international obligations. As you know, Iran's own constitution (Articles 13, 14, and 23) guarantees his right to freely practice his religion. Iran's actions also contradict its commitment as represented by being a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

We are both mindful of the fact that the United States does not have diplomatic relations with Iran and grateful for your faithful condemnation of Iran's human rights record. However, we believe there is still a great deal of good that the State Department can and should do on behalf of Mr. Abedini, one of our own citizens. We respectfully request that you leave no stone unturned in your efforts to bring Mr. Abedini home to his family. We believe that strong and sustained advocacy from the State Department would do much to rally the voice of the world against this wrongful detainment. As such, we stand ready to join with you in demanding Mr. Abedini's full, immediate, and unconditional exoneration and release.

We are confident in your desire to ensure justice for each and every American citizen, and look forward to receiving notice of your planned actions.

Respectfully,

Robert B. Aderholt

Jeff Duncan

Tim Huelskamp

Adam Kinzinger

Randy Hultgren

Randy Forbes

Trent Franks

Steve King

Raul Labrador

Frank Wolf

Joe Pitts

Alan Nunnelee

Gus Bilirakis

Spencer Bachus

Peter Roskam

Bill Johnson

Lou Barletta

Mike Pompeo

John Fleming

Mike Simpson

Steve Daines

Mike Kelly

Trey Gowdy

Mike Rogers (AL)

Vicky Hartzler

Randy Weber

Markwayne Mullin

Steve Scalise

Steve Stockman

James Lankford

Marsha Blackburn

Ted Poe

Lynn Westmoreland

Mike McIntyre

Doug Lamborn

Lonnie Lehmann

Bill Flores

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Mike McIntyre
Doug Lamborn
Louie Gohmert
Bill Flores