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**Congress of the United States**  
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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

November 15, 2016

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
725 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mr. Trump,

Congratulations on your decisive election to the Presidency of the United States of America. As a senior member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, I share the desire of the majority across the country for a return to strong, unequivocal, vital American global leadership.

There are many issues I hope to discuss with you and your team. Yet, in light of your upcoming meeting this week with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, I take this immediate opportunity to respectfully urge you to prioritize and publically advocate for the return of the more than 50 American children who have been abducted to Japan and are awaiting reunification with his or her American parent.

More than two years ago, Congress passed, and the President signed my legislation, [the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act](#) in order to help American parents left behind when a former spouse or other family member kidnaps and/or illegally holds his or her child or children abroad. The new law gave the State Department more tools to deal with abduction cases and identified a series of actions—increasing in severity from official protests to suspension of assistance—that the State Department should take to bring home American abducted children.

Regrettably, the Obama Administration has [yet to properly implement](#) or make good use of the new law, especially when it comes to the cases pending from Japan. In addition, Japan has been breathtakingly unresponsive to continued requests to resolve the long-standing cases of international child abduction. The attached [Washington Post](#) editorial from last year outlined the problem and urged the Obama Administration to do more.

Simply put: child abduction is child abuse. Children abducted by one parent overseas and kept away from the other are at grave risk of serious emotional and psychological problems; many experience anxiety, eating problems, nightmares, mood swings, aggressive behavior, resentment, and fear. Every day the abduction continues only compounds the harm to a child.

Since 2009, I have held nine hearings on the issue of international parental child abduction. The cases highlighted at my hearings are tragic and unjust with numerous experts and left behind parents testifying about this horrific human rights abuse. Consider just for example:

- The case of Navy Capt. Paul Toland. His daughter was taken from him in 2003. Captain Toland is now his daughter's only living parent, yet he cannot even visit her in Japan.
- Marine Corps Sgt. Michael Elias suffered the abduction of his two children to Japan after courts in New Jersey decreed shared custody and that the children were not allowed to leave the country. The children's mother, a former employee of the Japanese consulate in New York, abused her Japanese consulate connections to obtain replacement Japanese passports—a crime for which she has yet to be prosecuted in Japan. With the replacement passports, she abducted little Jade and Michael Jr. just before Christmas in 2008. She will not allow Sgt. Elias or the paternal grandparents any contact whatsoever with the children.
- Jeffery Morehouse has been fighting since 2010 for the return of his young son, Mochi. As he testified at a March 25, 2015, hearing, he has a custody order in Washington State and in Japan—but he *still* cannot get access to his son.
- Randy Collins has not seen his son, Keisuke, since 2007. His ex-wife Reiko Nakata Greenberg Collins has warrants for her arrest by the Orange County Sheriff's Department, has a red notice issued by Interpol, and is on the FBI Most Wanted List for Parental Kidnappings—but the abduction continues. Concerted U.S. action is needed.
- James Cook represents the rare case in which the Japanese court ordered the return of his four children to the United States. Yet Japan has utterly failed to enforce the return—further traumatizing the children.

The Obama Administration is “proud” that Japan finally acceded to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction in 2014, *but* the provisions in the Convention do not apply to the large majority of U.S. children abducted to Japan before the effective date. In fact, almost all of the abduction cases to Japan open at the beginning of 2014 remain open—while most have been pending for many years.

With strong leadership, the U.S. can and must initiate a bilateral agreement for the resolution of pre-Hague Convention cases and raise the stakes on Japan's current refusal to enforce the access and return provisions of the Hague Convention. The parents and their children need the active support of their government and I respectfully urge you to take every appropriate action to help reunite abducted U.S. children with their American parent, including discussion of the issue with Prime Minister Abe this week.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress