

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 5, 2009

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you prepare to visit Japan on November 12 and 13, we write to respectfully request that you address the issue of international parental child abduction in your discussions with Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama. This is a deeply important issue, as Japan currently does not recognize international parental child abduction as a crime.

There are currently 79 known cases involving over 100 American children who have been abducted by a parent to Japan. This is a heartbreaking loss for the left-behind parent and deprives the child of a relationship with two loving parents. Equally concerning is that left-behind parents typically have little recourse once their child arrives in Japan. According to the U.S. Department of State, no cases have been successfully resolved with Japan over the last few decades through the Japanese judicial system or through diplomatic or political efforts.

It is particularly troubling that Japan remains the only G-7 industrialized nation that has yet to accede to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. The Hague Convention has been adopted by more than 70 countries and is an important tool for those seeking the return of a child abducted across international borders. We agree that Japan's accession to the Hague Convention would result in important reforms to Japanese family law and we are grateful that the United States continues to prioritize this issue.

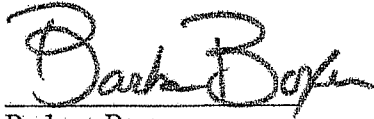
But while we acknowledge that Japan's accession to the Hague Convention is an important goal, the United States must also work with Japan to establish a bilateral mechanism to assist with the resolution of current cases. This is critical because the Hague Convention does not apply to abductions that occur before a country joins the Convention, and therefore would not be available as a tool to resolve existing cases involving Japan. We urge your Administration to seriously consider initiatives to foster cooperative and coordinated engagement with the Japanese government on cases of international parental child abduction. Many parents have not seen or heard from their children in years. We cannot sit back and wait while these children grow up without one parent.

We feel strongly that the recent election of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), under the leadership of Prime Minister Hatoyama, is a unique opportunity for the United States to reinvigorate its dialogue with Japan on the issue of international parental child abduction. As

such, we urge you to ensure that the United States continues to raise this issue at the highest possible levels in the context of our close bilateral relationship with Japan.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request. We stand ready to assist you in your efforts to reunite American children with their left-behind parents.

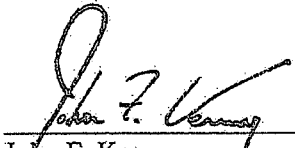
Sincerely,



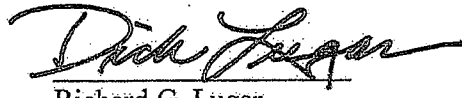
Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



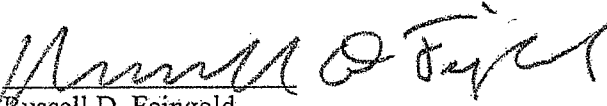
Bob Corker  
United States Senator



John F. Kerry  
United States Senator



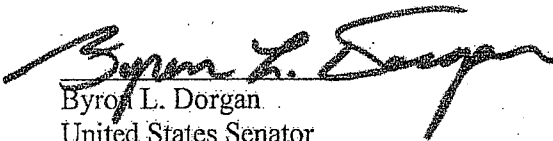
Richard G. Lugar  
United States Senator



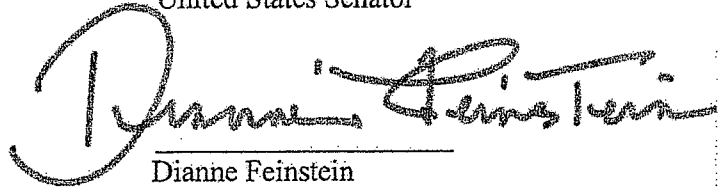
Russell D. Feingold  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Byron L. Dorgan  
United States Senator



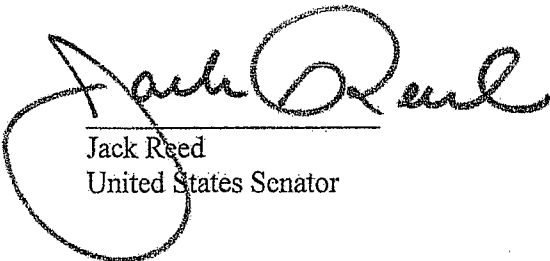
Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Lamar Alexander  
United States Senator



Daniel K. Inouye  
United States Senator



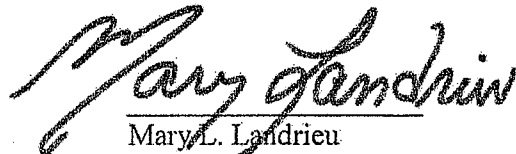
Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Carl Levin  
United States Senator



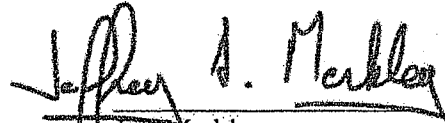
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



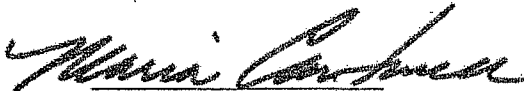
Mary L. Landrieu  
United States Senator



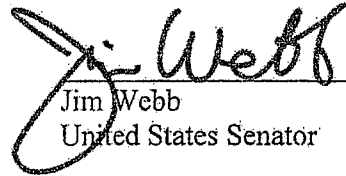
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



Jim Webb  
United States Senator



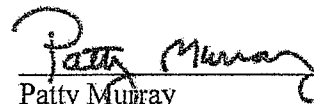
Roland W. Burris  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Bill Nelson  
United States Senator



Patty Murray  
United States Senator