Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 26, 2013

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

America was birthed in the flames of religious persecution. Our forbearers yearned to worship in their own way, to live their lives in accordance with their own religious creed, and to pass on to their posterity the ability to do the same. Their struggle for religious liberty is one of the enduring strengths of America and we must be diligent in preserving this liberty around the world.

America must be the unwavering light of religious freedom to the world, and our stance on issues relating to religious freedom must be resounding. The undersigned Members of Congress ask you to take a more prominent role in our Nation's condemnation of Pastor Saeed Abedini's imprisonment by the Islamic Nation of Iran and make clear the call for his release.

Pastor Abedini, an American citizen, was detained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard on July 28, 2012, during a lawful entry into Iran. Mr. Abedini's passport was confiscated and he was subsequently sentenced to eight years in prison at the notoriously brutal Evin Prison on charges of intentionally undermining the national security of Iran. The judge handed down this verdict after denying Mr. Abedini full access to his attorney, and after barring both Mr. Abedini and his attorney from the court for much of the proceedings.

Since being held in prison, Mr. Abedini has been subjected to brutal conditions and his health is suffering significantly. On March 3, 2013, Mr. Abedini was able to contact his family with complaints of possible internal bleeding from the many beatings he had suffered. From a recent discussion with Pastor Abedini's wife, we learned that he was taken to a private hospital twice, but not afforded the right to any treatment until July 20, 2013, when a physician was able to examine Mr. Abedini and prescribe medication for his injuries. The physician found a large internal wound with scar tissue in his digestive track, indicating the wound had been reopened several times.

An American citizen is being held in prison, abused, and denied basic rights, all because he is of the Christian faith, yet you have remained silent on the issue. White House Press Secretary, Jay Carney, has barely discussed Pastor Abedini, and neither time condemned Iran with a serious violation of human rights. Secretary of State John Kerry has not issued any statements condemning Iran since March, 2013. In his statements, Secretary Kerry

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has only said he was "deeply concerned" and "disturbed". Your administration's near silence comes after legislation urging for Pastor Abedini's release, H.Res 147, was introduced and has garnered 65 cosponsors. This brutal and inhumane treatment requires an American response which makes clear our dedication to protecting religious freedoms around the world, especially with regards to an American citizen.

Americans, as do all people of the world, have the inalienable right to practice the religion they so choose. Mr. President, the world is waiting for you to step forward and condemn Iran for their actions, taking a stand not just for Pastor Abedini, but for religious freedom.

Sincerely,

Robert Pittenger
Member of Congress

Robert B. Aderholt
Member of Congress

Tim Huelskamp
Member of Congress

Lynn Westmoreland
Member of Congress

Randy Weber
Member of Congress

Steve Pearce
Member of Congress

Lynn Jenkins
Member of Congress

Roger Williams
Member of Congress

Walter Jones
Member of Congress

John Shimkus
Member of Congress

Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress

Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress

Dana Rohrabacher
Member of Congress

Steve Stockman
Member of Congress

Joe Pitts
Member of Congress

Marlin Stutzman
Member of Congress

Markwayne Mullin
Member of Congress

John Fleming
Member of Congress

Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress

Bill Cassidy
Member of Congress

Andy Barr
Member of Congress

Mike McIntyre
Member of Congress

Scott Garrett
Member of Congress

Richard Hudson
Member of Congress

John Campbell
Member of Congress

Mike Pompeo
Member of Congress

Kay Granger
Member of Congress

Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress

Alan Nunnelee
Member of Congress

Randy Forbes
Member of Congress

Steve Chabot
Member of Congress

Frank Wolf
Member of Congress

Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress

Howard Coble
Member of Congress

Tim Walberg
Member of Congress

Joe Wilson
Member of Congress

Pete Olson
Member of Congress

Todd Rokita
Member of Congress

Patrick McHenry
Member of Congress

Steve Daines
Member of Congress

Michele Bachmann
Member of Congress

James Lankford
Member of Congress

Tom Latham
Member of Congress

Luke Messer
Member of Congress

Chris Stewart
Member of Congress

Ted Yoho
Member of Congress

Rich Nugent
Member of Congress

Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress

Kevin Cramer
Member of Congress

Kay Granger
Member of Congress

Bob Latta
Member of Congress

Trent Franks
Member of Congress

Dan Benishek
Member of Congress

Kerry Bentivolio
Member of Congress

Joe Barton
Member of Congress

Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress

Jeff Miller
Member of Congress

Rodney Davis
Member of Congress

Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress

Randy Neugebauer
Member of Congress

Brad Wenstrup
Member of Congress

David Schweikert
Member of Congress

Rob Wittman
Member of Congress

Glenn Thompson
Member of Congress

Pete Sessions
Member of Congress

Rob Woodall
Member of Congress

Tom Graves
Member of Congress

Tom Rice
Member of Congress

Susan Brooks
Member of Congress

John Carter
Member of Congress

Jeb Hensarling
Member of Congress

Ron DeSantis
Member of Congress

Brett Guthrie
Member of Congress

John Culberson
Member of Congress