

June 14, 2012

Dear Member of Congress,

We are religious and human rights organizations which work together on issues of international importance and today we are writing you to support the “Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act” currently before both houses of Congress.

Issues of human rights and religious freedom are inseparable. As representatives of a wide number of religions and faiths across the United States, we do everything possible to make sure that all people can practice their faith around the world without restriction or interference. For this reason, we strongly support the passage of the “Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act” (H.R 4405 / S.1039). This Act was named after Sergei Magnitsky, a young lawyer in Russia who bravely stood up to corruption, and ultimately paid the highest possible price by losing his life at the hands of the official of the Russian state involved in the corruption he uncovered. The details of his story are extremely sad, but his sacrifice will hopefully lead to an important and new method for fighting human rights abuses which could have a dramatic effect everywhere.

Among other things, we support this legislation because it specifically targets officials who abuse human rights with effective travel and financial sanctions. America's rule of law, property rights and entrenched freedoms make our country a magnet for millions of people all over the world. They visit our great nation to enjoy our stability, use our banking system and feel safe. We support sharing our way of life with people from all over the world who want to visit our country. At the same time, coming to America is a privilege and not a right, and when foreign officials are involved in torture, murder, restrictions of religious freedom or other human rights abuses, they should have that privilege taken away. We believe that this law would not only create an effective punishment for people who have violated human rights, but also a powerful deterrent for people not to do these things in the future.

It is one thing to talk about human rights and religious freedoms and quite another to actually do something about it. Because of the well thought out terms of this legislation, we believe that this bill will become an effective lever that the United States will have in dealing with this pernicious and growing problem of human rights abuses around the world. We strongly urge you to co-sponsor this bill in the short term and vote for its passage into law.

Sincerely Yours,

ORGANIZATIONS

ACTION FOR POST-SOVIET JEWRY

AMERICAN ISLAMIC CONGRESS

CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY

HINDU AMERICAN FOUNDATION

HUMAN RIGHTS LAW FOUNDATION

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

JEWISH LABOR COMMITTEE

PARTNERS FOR A PROGRESSIVE ISRAEL

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UNION OF COUNCILS FOR JEWS IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION (UCSJ)

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