

Dear Representative:

It is estimated that each year more than 350,000 parental abductions occur. 163,000 of those cases involve the concealment of a child, transporting out of state, or intent to keep the child permanently. According to the National Center For Missing And Exploited Children approximately 10% of these cases are international child abductions, where the child is removed from the United States of America, illegally, in violation of court orders, parental rights, and the child's rights. These statistics represent roughly 16,500 U.S. citizens abducted to foreign lands each year, taken from American soil against their will. These are children, too young to defend themselves, being stripped of their rights as U.S. citizens as well as their natural rights to family relationships.

Today, one statistic in particular is on my mind, Khan Lagemann. This is a child who was abducted to Turkey by his non-custodial mother. The father, John Lagemann, was in possession of the child's passport, had placed his son on a "Do not fly" list, and contacted the Turkish embassies. A court order had been issued prohibiting the mother from leaving the state without the judge's consent. All the appropriate authorities were made aware of the potential flight risk, all court decisions and orders were in favor of the fathers' custodial rights, all efforts were made to prevent this crime from occurring. Yet, this mother was able to abduct Khan and illegally exit our borders on a commercial airline in flagrant defiance of our law.

Illegal entry through U.S. borders has been a hot topic of late, but who would ever have imagined how easy it is to illegally exit. One would think that with such heightened security measures that would allow airline passengers to be detained for trying to carry on a nail clipper or a bottle of soda that a U.S. citizen could be taken against their will, without their passport right through security. With all the money we spend on security looking for potentially illegal activities how could we allow a crime to be perpetrated against one of our citizens, a defenseless child, under the watchful eye of our agents. According to the U.S. Department of State's website "The United States government does not have exit controls at the border." That's an outrage!

As Americans, we surely have much to fear when thousands of our citizens are abducted and taken from our homeland each year right through the security checkpoints that are meant to keep us safe. As "the super power", we certainly have the resources, ability, and responsibility to establish and enforce some form of exit controls at our borders. A policy of no exit controls acts as an accomplice to the abductor, aiding and abetting them in their crime of kidnapping. As a nation of law, it should be within the power and certainly the duty of our agents to uphold the law. A criminal should not be able to fly away from justice, first class.

I contact you because of the abduction of Khan Lagemann, one statistic, but also on behalf of the thousands of other children kidnapped and taken from our country each year. As my representative, I would like you to look into measures to prevent further abductions of this nature; our current lack of exit policy simply makes it too easy. Also, specific to Khan's case, if your office could draft a letter of inquiry as to the progress of his case. It has been months since Khan was taken from the U.S., a Hague Convention case has been opened, and Turkish legal counsel has been retained. I am looking to raise awareness of this case, and am seeking to apply political pressure on the Turkish authorities so that they might give this case a higher priority. I am seeking any assistance you might be willing and able to provide to help reunite Khan and his father, to bring one of our citizens home. This has gone on too long.

As Americans, we surely have much to fear when abduction of American children becomes commonplace (several thousand per year) and illegal exit or entry of our country is easy. Our borders are in great danger. As a "super power", why do we not have the ability to cross check a few thousand names on our do not fly list? I contact you on behalf of a crisis in our own country and on behalf of this father's story. This situation is a tragedy, but our countries lack of responsibility to prevent the situation is an atrocity.

As my representative, I would like to have you look into why these abductions can happen to thousands of American children annually. I would also like you to put some pressure on those who would have some influence on John Lagemann's case. Our State Department agent, Ryan Haley, has stated that if they had more letters from Congress to present to the Turkish government, the priority of John's case would be increased.

Please Representative, send your official inquiry to the State Department on my behalf. I look forward to your reply as well as inquiries you send that might aid in the return of this child.

Sincerely,

Please **print** your name and full mailing address below: