Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 7, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

We write to call to your attention the vast, egregious human rights and religious freedom violations being committed by the North Korean regime and urge you to speak up for those who share our values and cannot speak up for themselves. As you consider meeting with Kim Jong-un, we urge you to demand the dismantlement of North Korea's prison camps alongside the dismantlement of its nuclear program.

We understand and agree that the elimination of North Korea's nuclear weapons program is a critical step in the possible emergence of North Korea on the global stage. Yet, we maintain that this emergence should also hinge on the acknowledgement and amelioration of decades of human and religious rights abuses.

Numerous findings by multiple governmental and non-governmental organizations have made it clear that the Kim regime's treatment of prisoners and detainees has been nothing short of heinous. Additionally, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom describes the regime's approach toward religion and belief as, "among the most hostile and repressive in the world."

A 2014 report released by the United Nations found that prisoners in North Korea's political prison camps are "gradually eliminated through deliberate starvation, forced labour, executions, torture, rape, and the denial of reproductive rights enforced through punishment, forced abortion, and infanticide."

Though the Kim regime claims religious freedom for its citizens, the Commission on International Religious Freedom reports that North Koreans who practice a religion are forced to do so in secrecy, or face the real risk of disappearing forever into the regime's system of political prison camps. North Koreans often keep their faith hidden even from family members, to ensure they are not found "guilty by association."

Mr. President, this is not a regime that simply falls short of Western or American standards of human rights and religious freedoms. The conditions in North Korea fail to meet any international standard pertaining to the treatment of our fellow man. A 2017 report by the International Bar Association boldly chronicles some specific crimes committed by the regime:

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- "Deliberate starvation, malnutrition and overwork are extremely common, resulting in the deaths of countless prisoners;
- A prisoner was beaten to death for hiding stolen corn in his mouth;
- One witness described a torture chamber with blood and flesh on the walls and decaying corpses of past victims placed in the chamber in order to instill fear in the next prisoner;
- A former prison guard witnessed a prisoner's newborn baby, most likely fathered by a high-ranking official, fed to guard dogs and killed;
- A witness lost consciousness after enduring a beating designed to trigger premature labor, with prison officials killing her baby before she could regain consciousness;
- Rape victims who feared being killed after becoming pregnant self-induced abortions by eating dirt and poisoning themselves with flower roots;
- Multiple witnesses watched prisoners tortured and killed on account of their religious affiliation."

In light of the atrocities outlined above, which are sadly only a small selection of the many crimes against humanity within this oppressive regime's borders, we urge you to include the cessation of these injustices among any conditions that would ease your Administration's maximum pressure campaign on the North Korean regime. The United States and international community must work to end the suffering the North Korean people have endured under this oppressive regime for generations.

Sincerely,

Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress

Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress

Joe Wilson
Member of Congress

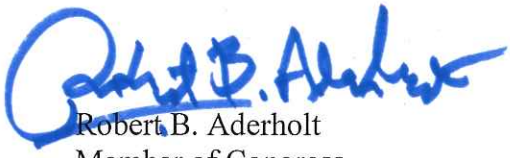
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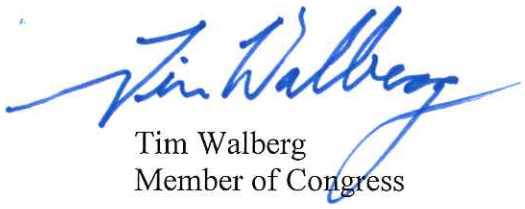
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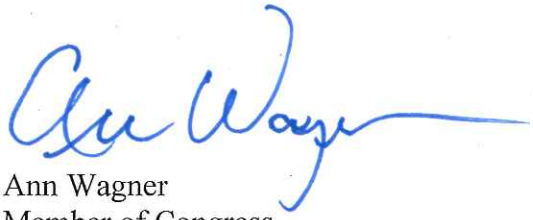
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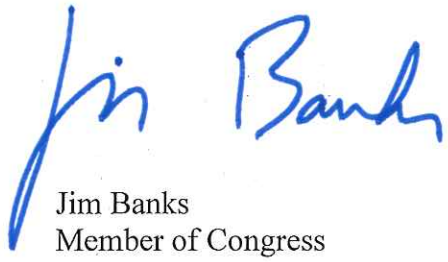
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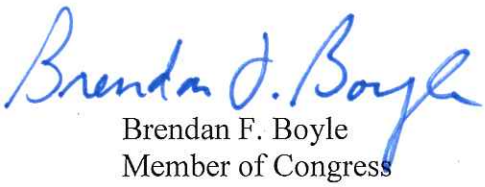
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