

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 1, 2009

His Excellency Nguyễn Minh Triết
President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
c/o Embassy of Vietnam
1233 20th St NW, Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear President Triết:

We are writing to convey our serious concern regarding the continued detention of Father Thadeus Nguyen Van Ly and to ask for your assistance to ensure that Vietnam acts in a manner consistent with its own legal obligations and that of international law.

On February 18, 2007, your Government arrested Father Ly, a Catholic priest, at his parish in Hue. Shortly thereafter, on March 30, 2007, Father Ly was sentenced to eight years in prison and five years of house arrest for peacefully practicing his faith, expressing his political opinions, and associating with others who shared those opinions. As you are no doubt aware, Father Ly's longstanding non-violent activities to promote religious freedom and democracy in Vietnam are well known in the United States.

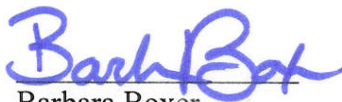
Based on information from international human rights advocacy organizations, it appears that Father Ly's arrest and trial were seriously flawed. During his trial, which lasted only four hours, Father Ly was denied access to counsel and precluded from presenting a defense. When Father Ly attempted to speak, a security guard immediately silenced him by putting his hands over his mouth and removing him from the courtroom.

According to your Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Vietnam is a party, all citizens enjoy freedom of religion, freedom of opinion, freedom of speech, and the right to form associations. Both your Constitution and the ICCPR also guarantee criminal defendants the presumption of innocence, the right to present a defense, and the right to counsel. Father Ly's arrest, trial, and ongoing detention in this instance call into question Vietnam's commitment to these fundamental principles.

Given these serious flaws in relation to his arrest, trial, and imprisonment, we request that you facilitate Fr. Ly's immediate and unconditional release from prison, and allow him to return to his home and work without restrictions on his right to freedom of expression, association, and movement. In the meantime, we also respectfully request that you provide us with any information your government may have concerning Father Ly's health and welfare.

We thank you in advance for your assistance in this important matter.

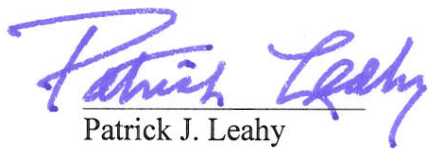
Respectfully,



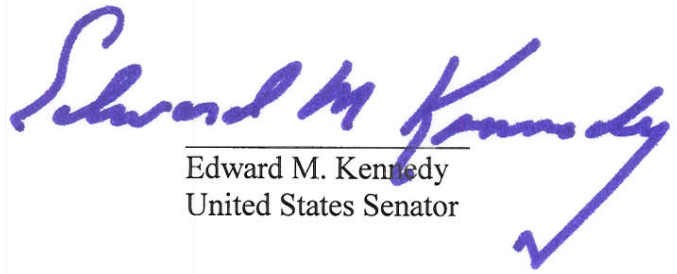
Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



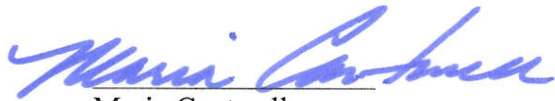
Sam Brownback
United States Senator



Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator



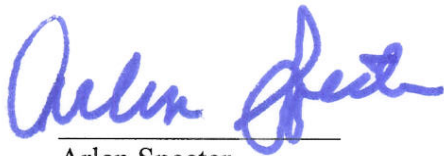
Edward M. Kennedy
United States Senator



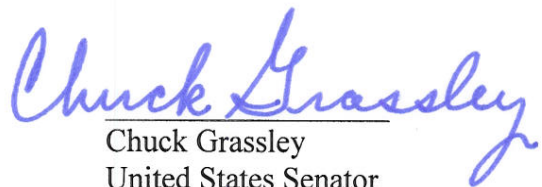
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



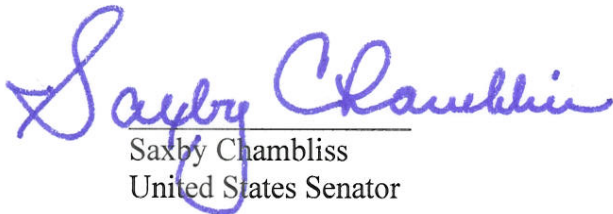
Richard Durbin
United States Senator



Arlen Specter
United States Senator



Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



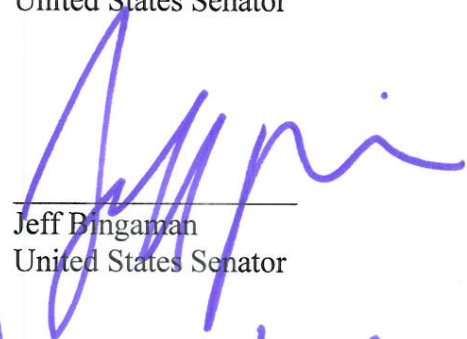
Saxby Chambliss
United States Senator



Thad Cochran
United States Senator



Byron L. Dorgan
United States Senator



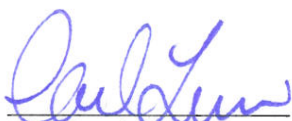
Jeff Bingaman
United States Senator



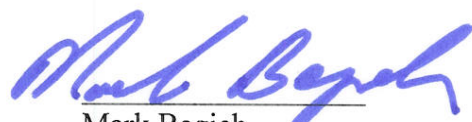
Jon Kyl
United States Senator



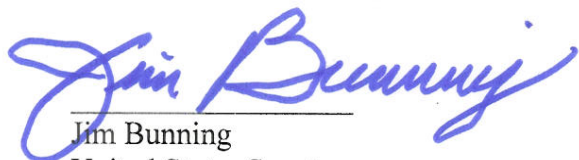
Mark Udall
United States Senator



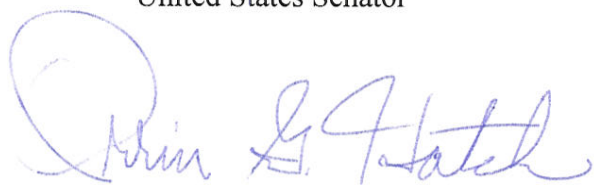
Carl Levin
United States Senator



Mark Begich
United States Senator



Jim Bunning
United States Senator



Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



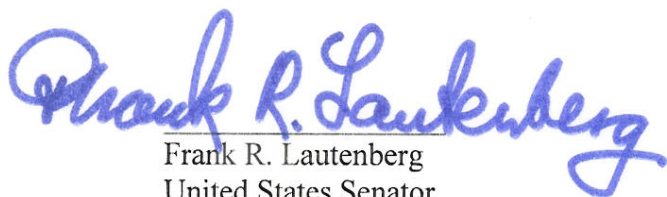
Johnny Isakson
United States Senator



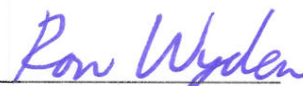
Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



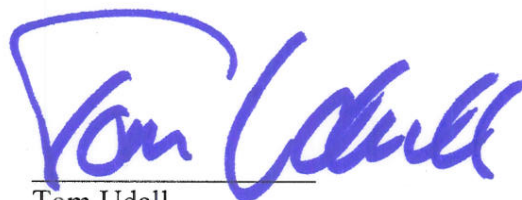
Roland W. Burris
United States Senator



Frank R. Lautenberg
United States Senator



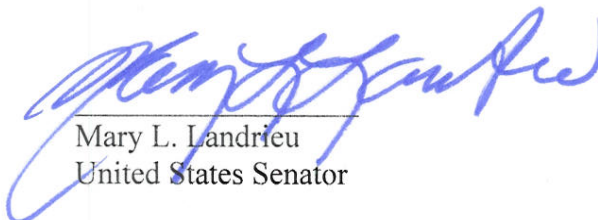
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



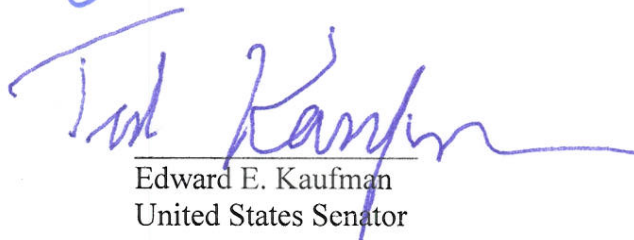
Tom Udall
United States Senator



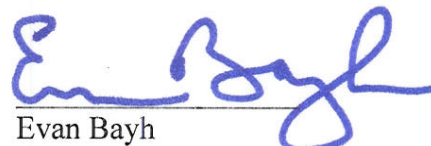
Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator



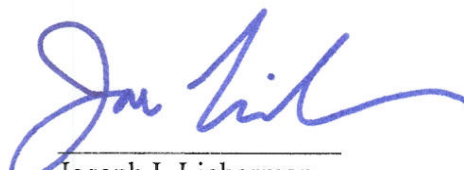
Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator



Edward E. Kaufman
United States Senator



Evan Bayh
United States Senator



Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Robert F. Bennett
United States Senator

Herb Kohl
United States Senator

Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator

James E. Risch
United States Senator

Mike Johanns
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator