

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 3, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We write regarding the State Department's announcement last week of a proposal to facilitate the release of two Americans currently detained in Russia: Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) player Brittney Griner and former Marine Paul Whelan. We strongly urge the Biden Administration to include Pennsylvania resident Marc Fogel in any potential exchange.

Mr. Fogel was detained on August 14, 2021, and is serving an exorbitant, 14-year hard labor sentence for possession of medical marijuana used to treat his severe back injury, a charge very similar to that of Brittney Griner.

A Butler, PA native who resides in Oakmont, PA, Mr. Fogel taught history courses at schools attended by children of U.S. diplomats in Colombia, Venezuela, Oman, Malaysia, and, for the last 10 years, in Russia. Upon his return to Russia in August 2021 to continue his decade-long position at an Anglo-American school in Moscow, Mr. Fogel was detained in the Sheremetyevo Airport with slightly more than half an ounce of medical marijuana, which was prescribed in the U.S.

This past June, Mr. Fogel was sentenced to 14 years of hard labor in a Russian prison, a sentence usually reserved for large-scale drug smugglers and murderers, according to his attorney.¹ Given his already declining health, 14 years in a Russian prison colony will be "at best, a life sentence and, at worst, a death sentence" for Mr. Fogel.²

Although he may not carry the notoriety of a celebrity WNBA athlete, we believe it is essential the Biden Administration work to bring Mr. Fogel safely home to his family. Brittney Griner's wife received a call from President Joe Biden, but the family of Mr. Fogel has struggled to even receive a response from the State Department. As members of Congress representing the

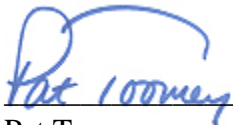
¹ <https://www.foxnews.com/us/marc-fogel-family-pennsylvania-man-detained-russia-begs-biden-blinken-include-him-brittney-griner-deal>

² *ibid.*

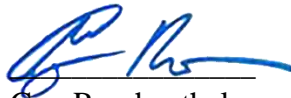
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we strongly urge the State Department to immediately classify Mr. Fogel as wrongfully detained and ensure he is included in any negotiations to bring home American prisoners in Russia.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to your prompt response.

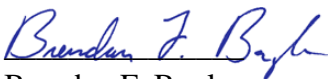
Very respectfully,



Pat Toomey
United States Senator



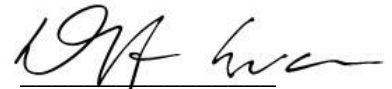
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Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress




Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
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Fred Keller
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Mike Kelly
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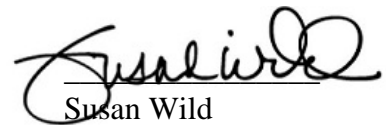
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