

October 2, 2018

The Honorable John Sullivan
Deputy Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Deputy Secretary Sullivan:

I write to express my deep and continued concern regarding the ongoing detention of U.S. citizen Todd Leininger. Todd and his family are my constituents. Todd has been imprisoned in Venezuela for more than four years. Despite the fact that a Venezuelan court ordered Todd's parole over four months ago, Venezuelan authorities have refused to release him. Consistent with Venezuelan law, it is imperative that Todd is released without delay.

My understanding is that Todd has served his time respectfully, working throughout his sentence and exhibiting good behavior. His family, while frustrated with what they see as significant legal and procedural irregularities in the criminal proceedings against Todd, have allowed the Venezuelan justice system to run its course. That approach, however, has encountered a serious obstacle.

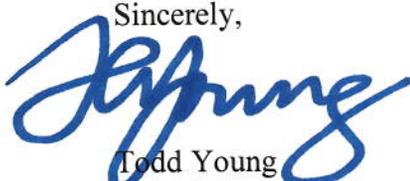
For months, I understand that Todd has been entitled to parole based on his work record while in prison. Consistent with Venezuelan law, a Venezuelan court issued an order for his conditional release on May 23, 2018. Yet, prison authorities have refused, without justification, to release Todd. The Ministry of Prisons and the director of Todd's prison have apparently refused to meet with Todd's lawyer or respond to diplomatic inquiries from the U.S. Embassy regarding Todd's continued detention. A letter I sent to the Charge D'Affaires for Venezuela regarding Todd's case nearly two months ago has gone unanswered. I am told the director of Todd's prison has made informal statements that suggest he is being held inappropriately simply based on his status as an American.

Todd's continued detention violates both Venezuelan law and international human rights law. Todd's mother, Barbara, is extremely concerned for his welfare and is terrified that Todd may take drastic measures if his wrongful detention continues.

Todd's situation is becoming increasingly dire. I respectfully ask that you make Todd's case a priority and push for his release without delay. I would like to arrange a phone call within the next two weeks to receive an update on what additional and specific steps have been taken to secure Todd's release.

Thank you for your assistance with this important issue.

Sincerely,



Todd Young
United States Senator