

August 3, 2018

Lissett Hernandez
Charge D'Affaires
Embassy of Venezuela
1099 30th Street NW
Washington, DC 20007

Ms. Hernandez,

I write to express my deep 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 two months ago, Venezuelan authorities have refused to release him. Consistent with the court's ruling, I ask that he be released without delay.

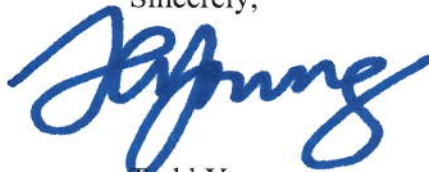
My understanding is that Todd has served his time respectfully, working throughout his sentence and exhibiting good behavior. His family, while frustrated with what they see as significant legal and procedural irregularities in the criminal proceedings against Todd, have allowed the Venezuelan justice 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, the San Cristóbal court issued an order for his conditional release on May 23, 2018. Yet, prison authorities at La Planta have apparently refused, without justification, to release Todd. The Ministry of Prisons and director of La Planta have refused to meet with Todd's lawyer or respond to diplomatic inquiries from the U.S. Embassy regarding Todd's continued detention. Informally, the director of La Planta has made statements that suggest he is being held inappropriately simply based on his status as an American.

I am concerned that his 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. Consistent with the court's ruling, I ask that Todd be released without delay.

Sincerely,



Todd Young
United States Senator