

# 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.

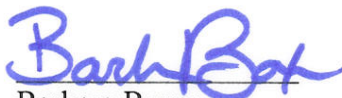
Based on information from international human rights advocacy organizations, it appears that Father Ly's arrest and trial were seriously flawed. During his trial, which lasted only four hours, Father Ly was denied access to counsel and precluded from presenting a defense. When Father Ly attempted to 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.

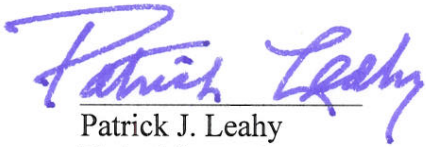
Respectfully,



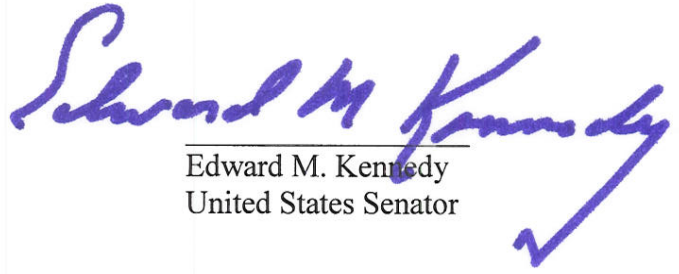
Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



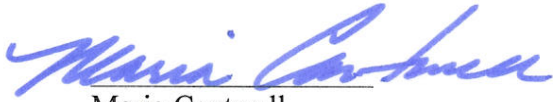
Sam Brownback  
United States Senator



Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senator



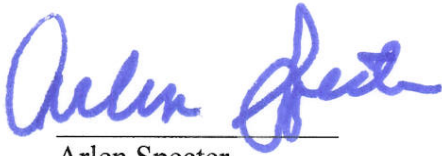
Edward M. Kennedy  
United States Senator



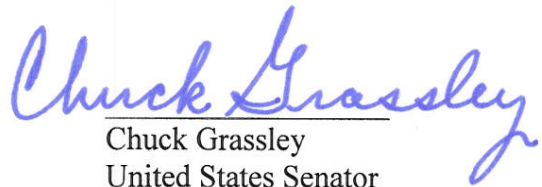
Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



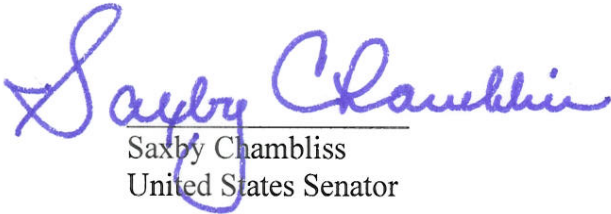
Richard Durbin  
United States Senator



Arlen Specter  
United States Senator



Chuck Grassley  
United States Senator



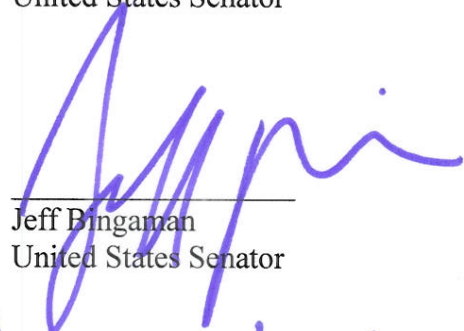
Saxby Chambliss  
United States Senator



Thad Cochran  
United States Senator



Byron L. Dorgan  
United States Senator



Jeff Bingaman  
United States Senator



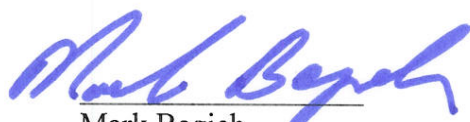
Jon Kyl  
United States Senator



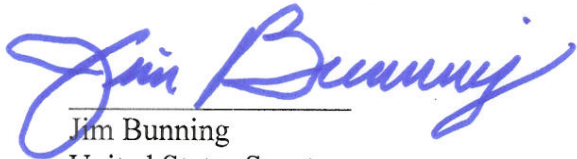
Mark Udall  
United States Senator



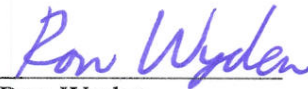
Carl Levin  
United States Senator



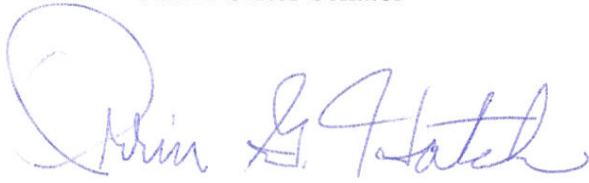
Mark Begich  
United States Senator



Jim Bunning  
United States Senator



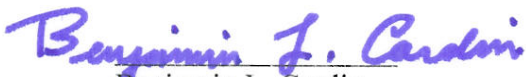
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Orrin G. Hatch  
United States Senator



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



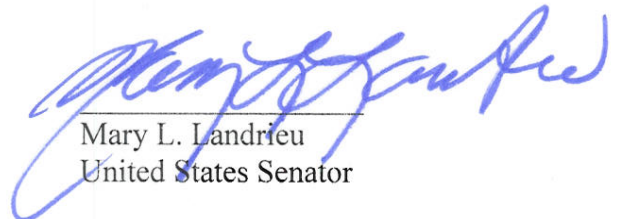
Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Barbara A. Mikulski  
United States Senator



Johnny Isakson  
United States Senator



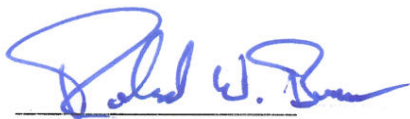
Mary L. Landrieu  
United States Senator



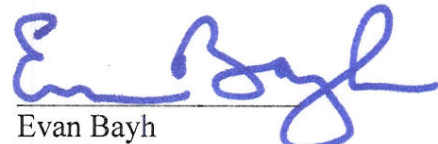
Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



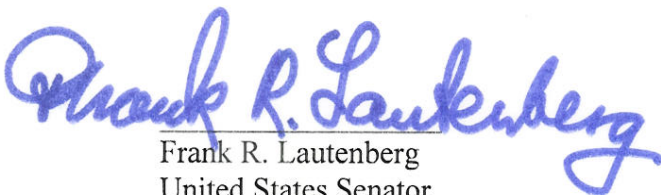
Edward E. Kaufman  
United States Senator



Roland W. Burris  
United States Senator



Evan Bayh  
United States Senator



Frank R. Lautenberg  
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