

News From...



The Subcommittee on Human Rights and Wellness

Chairman Dan Burton (R ~ IN)

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A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION ...

REP. BURTON SECURES AMENDMENT TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF ABDUCTED U.S. CITIZENS

Washington, D.C. – Chairman Dan Burton (R-IN-5) released the following statement today regarding House passage of, *The Foreign Relations Authorization Act* (H.R. 1950), including his amendment to protect the rights of abducted U.S. citizens:

“Every year, hundreds of American children are kidnapped by their non-custodial parent, often in violation of U.S. court orders, and held against their will in a foreign country. Many of these children will never see their American families or visit the United States again, because several of the countries that harbor these felons do not observe U.S. laws. In addition, their governments not only aid and abet these criminals, but they also protect them from being brought to justice in the appropriate court of law. Nations such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia even go so far as to grant full custody of children with U.S. citizenship to the foreign-national parent, the one who abducted them in the first place, effectively leaving the American parent with little or no recourse.”

“Yesterday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed, *The Foreign Relations Authorization Act*, which included an amendment I authored to help resolve these diplomatically sensitive and heart-wrenching international child custody disputes. First and foremost, my amendment requires U.S. Embassies to grant sanctuary to American citizens who are living or traveling abroad. My amendment will also allow the U.S. State Department to deny visas to all known foreign-national child abductors, as well as to the extended family members of such abductors.”

“In addition, my amendment requires the State Department to send notices to all U.S. Embassies located in countries where American citizens are suspected to have been abducted. Finally, my amendment requires the State Department to issue an annual report to Congress detailing the actions that they have taken on international child abduction cases, on a country-by-country basis.”

“The provisions of my amendment are a definite step in the right direction. I believe my amendment equips our State Department with many of the tools they need to bring about the necessary

diplomatic pressure to ensure the safe return of U.S. citizens who have been kidnapped and are being held against their will. But much more work remains to be done.”

For more information on Chairman Burton’s legislative and investigative efforts regarding international child abductions, please visit the human rights portion of his website at www.house.gov/burton/humanrights.