

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 30, 2021

**VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue

Dear President Biden:

We write today to ask for your attention to the case of American citizen Mark Frerichs. Mr. Frerichs, originally from Illinois and a Veteran of the U.S. Navy, had spent several years living and working as an independent contractor in Afghanistan. He has been missing from Afghanistan since January 31, 2020 and is believed to have been kidnapped by members of the Taliban, Haqqani Network or their affiliates. As the duration of his captivity stretches to over a year, his family is understandably distressed about his well-being and hopeful for his safe return.

As questions linger regarding the future of American forces in Afghanistan after the previous administration's hasty and reckless drawdowns, we are increasingly concerned that we may be losing our leverage to ensure American hostages in Afghanistan and Pakistan, including Mark Frerichs, are safely returned home to their families. Further troop withdrawals that are not conditioned upon the release of American hostages will likely make it harder to subsequently secure their release. We urge you to examine this case and ensure that the release of Mark Frerichs and other American hostages be prioritized in future negotiations with the Taliban and that any further troop reductions be conditioned upon their safe return.

The last administration appeared intent upon leaving Afghanistan at any cost. We implore you to seek a different path now, one that protects and prioritizes American hostages and ensures that we don't leave any American behind. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that all of our citizens safely return home from Afghanistan.

Sincerely,



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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator