

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

January 11, 2023

His Excellency Fumio Kishida
Prime Minister of Japan
Cabinet Secretariat
Government of Japan
1-6-1 Nagata-cho, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8968
Japan

Dear Prime Minister Kishida:

As senators and members of Congress of the United States, we humbly write to request that you expedite the prisoner transfer of Lieutenant Ridge Alkonis back to the United States. The U.S. Department of Justice has been in talks with the Ministry of Justice regarding a prompt international prisoner transfer under the Council of Europe (COE) Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons, but the process has slowed over the last few months.

As you may recall, Lt. Alkonis was involved in a tragic and unforeseeable car accident in which two Japanese citizens, Seiko Sano and Takeshi Endo, were tragically killed. Following the accident, Lt. Alkonis received a three-year prison sentence, which he has been serving since July of last year. To clarify, Lt. Alkonis does not seek to avoid responsibility for this accident. He fully cooperated with Japanese authorities throughout the investigation, and paid a record \$1.65 million (USD) restitution payment to the aggrieved family as part of the customary recompense process.

We know this is a difficult and sensitive matter, and we also wish to express our sincere condolences to the families of the victims. Lt. Alkonis has displayed exceptional moral character during his service to both the United States and Japan. As a civilian and as a naval officer, he has dedicated nearly seven years of his adult life to protecting and serving the Japanese and American people, while also showing a deep appreciation and respect for Japanese culture. He has made valuable contributions to the strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance through his efforts to build personal relationships that foster mutual understanding and cooperation.

Our nations share a long history of making regular prisoner transfers under the Council of Europe treaty. These transfers facilitate offender rehabilitation and address administrative and diplomatic challenges that arise with the incarceration of foreign nationals. Because of the sensitivity surrounding this issue, we feel that an expedited transfer of Lt. Alkonis back to the United States would be in the mutual interests of both of our nations and our strong continued alliance.

We understand that you will be meeting with President Biden in the coming week. We hope that this matter can be discussed and resolved at or before that meeting. The United States has a strong and longstanding relationship with Japan, and we value the deep alliance between our two great nations.

With these considerations in mind, we respectfully and humbly ask that you will consider our request for the immediate advancement of this prisoner transfer.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Michael S. Lee
United States Senator



Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Mike Waltz
Member of Congress



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Bill Hagerty
United States Senator



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator



Ted Budd
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



Rick Scott
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



John Kennedy
United States Senator



JD Vance
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



Mitt Romney
United States Senator



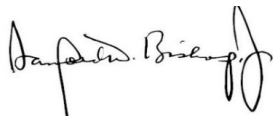
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Member of Congress



Cynthia Lummis
United States Senator



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Sanford Bishop
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Sylvia Garcia
Member of Congress



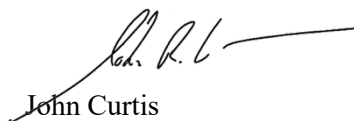
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Member of Congress



Chris Stewart
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster
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John Curtis
Member of Congress



Katie Porter
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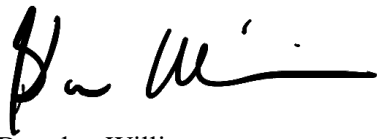
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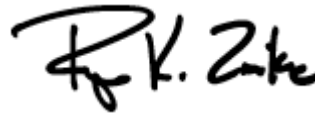
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