

EDWARD R. ROYCE, CALIFORNIA  
CHAIRMAN

AMY PORTER  
CHIEF OF STAFF

THOMAS SHEEHY  
STAFF DIRECTOR

ELIOT L. ENGEL, NEW YORK  
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER

JASON STEINBAUM  
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR



One Hundred Fourteenth Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
[www.foreignaffairs.house.gov](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov)

August 26, 2016

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write as Members of the United States Congress to express our deep concern regarding Sandy Phan-Gillis, an American citizen arbitrarily detained by the People's Republic of China for the last seventeen months. We urge you to make Ms. Phan-Gillis's release a priority as you consider your participation in the G20 meeting in China next month.

As documented by the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNWGAD), Ms. Phan-Gillis was detained en route to Macau on March 19, 2015, reportedly by the Nanning State Security Bureau of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

After a year of investigation into the case, the Chinese government advised the UNWGAD that Ms. Phan-Gillis was being investigated for "assisting" in the theft of state secrets. In April, the U.N. WGAD adopted an opinion that Ms. Phan-Gillis was being arbitrarily detained by the Chinese government and denied access to effective legal counsel for her defense (A/HRC/WGAD/2016 Opinion No. 12/2016). Three months after this decision, the Chinese government substantially upgraded the charges against Ms. Phan-Gillis in indicting her for espionage. We understand that her defense lawyer has yet to see the case file.

In addition, we are concerned about reports that Ms. Phan-Gillis has been hospitalized twice during her detention. She is in poor health, requiring more than half a dozen medications to be administered on a daily basis. Recent reports suggest that Ms. Phan-Gillis was hospitalized because of the abuse she suffered at the hands of Chinese authorities.

Mr. President, it is unprecedented for the Chinese government to arbitrarily detain an American citizen without indicting her or giving her access to legal counsel for her defense for almost a year and a half. Given the treatment of Ms. Phan-Gillis, the lack of due process, and the seemingly thin and spurious evidence against her, this case raises serious questions about the legitimacy of these proceedings and indeed, about the safety of any American citizen traveling in China.

The President  
Page 2  
August 26, 2016

We urge you to press the Chinese government to immediately and unconditionally release Ms. Phan-Gillis. However, in the event that this case goes forward, we urge you to insist that the Chinese government ensure full compliance with its international legal obligation to provide a fair trial and access to counsel in an environment that is free from intimidation or threat of reprisal. In addition, we ask that a full report on her health status be provided to her family and lawyer.

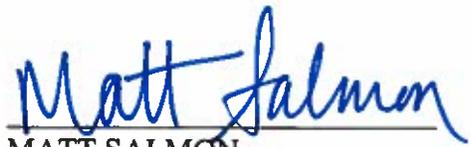
The arbitrary detention of Ms. Phan-Gillis casts a shadow over the U.S.-China relationship. While we support a strong, constructive bilateral relationship and believe that cooperation between the United States and China is essential to solving many of the pressing challenges facing our two countries and the world, we believe this issue must receive immediate and sustained high-level attention to as not to derail our work together.

Sincerely,

 ELIOT L. ENGEL Ranking Member House Foreign Affairs Committee	 EDWARD R. ROYCE Chairman House Foreign Affairs Committee	 AL GREEN Member of Congress
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

  
JAMES P. MCGOVERN  
Co-Chair  
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

  
JOSEPH PITTS  
Co-Chair  
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

  
MATT SALMON  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific

  
BRAD SHERMAN  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific



---

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Chairman  
Africa, Global Health, Global Human  
Rights and International Organizations



---

KAREN BASS  
Ranking Member  
Africa, Global Health, Global Human  
Rights and International Organizations



---

TED POE  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Terrorism,  
Nonproliferation and Trade



---

JOAQUIN CASTRO  
Member  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



---

RANDY K. WEBER, SR.  
Member  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



---

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL  
Member  
House Foreign Affairs Committee