

United States Senate

September 20, 2019

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President,

I am writing to encourage you to take all appropriate action to advocate for the release of U.S. citizen Paul Whelan, a Michigander, who is currently imprisoned in the Russian Federation. In particular, I request that you direct your new National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien to prioritize resolving this situation and utilize the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs (SPEHA) to advocate on behalf of Mr. Whelan and to support the Whelan family.

Robert O'Brien, who you announced this week as your next National Security Advisor, has considerable experience in securing the freedom of American citizens. His personal attention to this matter will benefit Paul Whelan and the Whelan family.

Although the Russian Federation has accused Mr. Whelan of espionage, the circumstances surrounding his arrest are suspect and his prolonged detention without evidence is troubling. The Russian government has not provided adequate information or evidence about the case against Mr. Whelan to justify his continued detention.

I understand that Ambassador O'Brien, in his role at the time as SPEHA, attended the trial of Rakim Mayers, known as A\$AP Rocky, in Sweden. There are similarities between Mr. Mayers' case and Mr. Whelan's situation that warrant the involvement of the SPEHA.

This is a time sensitive matter as Mr. Whelan has alleged abuse by the guards at Lefortovo Prison and he is suffering from a hernia that requires medical attention. Mr. Whelan was scheduled to undergo surgery on the hernia in January 2019 after his planned return from Russia, but his December 2018 detention has prevented him from receiving this necessary medical treatment.

Thank you for your continued attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Mike Pompeo, Secretary of State