

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 17, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to request that the National Security Council (NSC) immediately convene an interagency meeting of the Principals Committee with the objective of developing a course of action for your consideration to secure the release of our constituent, Mark Frerichs, a Veteran of the United States Navy who was working in Afghanistan as a civil engineer prior to being kidnapped by members of the Taliban, Haqqani Network or their affiliates.

Securing the safe release and return of potentially the only U.S. citizen being held hostage in Afghanistan is an urgent matter that the United States Government should prioritize. A whole-of-government approach will demonstrate our Nation's commitment and resolve to leave no American behind in Afghanistan. The NSC Principals Committee would also be the most effective and efficient vehicle to make sure Federal agencies with relevant equities in the matter appropriately participate in the development of a potential course of action to free Mr. Frerichs.

We remain deeply troubled over the Trump administration's decision to forgo efforts to negotiate Mr. Frerichs' safe release and return when it worked with the Taliban to develop its February 29, 2020, "Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America." However, there is no time to dwell on past mistakes.

Our attention and energy must be devoted to pushing on every reasonable lever to secure the safe return of Mr. Frerichs to his family in the United States. Mr. Frerichs served our country in uniform and we must honor his service by doing everything in our power to make sure our exit from Afghanistan includes bringing Mr. Frerichs home.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator