

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 7, 2013

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry,

We are writing you concerning the difficulties that families in our areas are having with respect to the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) decision to halt their adoption visas, and to ask that this issue become a priority for the Department of State. This matter was recently brought to our attention by the families of several constituents who have been unable to leave the DRC with their adopted children for many weeks.

As you know, on December 19, the Congolese Minister of Justice, the Minister of Interior and Security, and the General Direction of Migration (DGM) confirmed to members of the diplomatic corps, including the U.S. Ambassador, that the suspension on the issuance of exit permits continues. This announcement confirmed information reported in the Department of State's October 23 adoption alert regarding the suspension of exit permit issuance to adopted Congolese children seeking to depart the country with their adoptive parents.

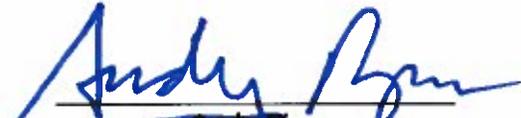
Kathryn Harshman of Kentucky, Ryan Doherty of North Carolina, Justin Carroll of Tennessee, and Erin Wallace of Virginia have all been trapped, unable to leave the DRC with their children, for as long as 12 weeks. Each of these families has been in the process of adopting children from the Congo for months. The families were told by the DRC that their current visit would be the final step in the adoption process, and that they only needed the DRC to sign the exit papers so that the already legally-adopted children could leave the country with their parents.

While international adoptions are often vulnerable to unpredictable bureaucratic red tape, these parents were told that their adoptions would be completed despite the DRC's broader suspension of the adoption program. Now, having adopted their children, they are being prohibited from bringing the children home.

We respectfully ask that the Department of State make the resolution of this issue a priority and do all it can to help these American citizens and facilitate the travel of their adopted children home to the United States. We also request a meeting with the appropriate staff at the Department of State as soon as possible to be briefed on the steps the Department plans to take to

quickly and urgently resolve this matter for these families who remain trapped in the DRC due to no fault of their own.

Sincerely,



Andy Barr
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Phil Roe, M.D.
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Scott Rigell
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Mark Warner
UNITED STATES SENATE

CC:

Ambassador James C. Swan
United States Embassy
Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo