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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

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July 20, 2018

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

We write to you today regarding the International Parental Kidnapping Crime Act (IPKCA).¹ Your Department has an obligation to the American people to use all tools available to assist in the return of American citizen children. We believe this statute is a valuable tool in combatting international parental child abduction. We hope that your Department will utilize it to the fullest extent allowed by law.

As you know, the IPKCA criminalizes the removal of a child from the United States with “the intent to obstruct the lawful exercise of parental rights.”² Individuals found guilty of violating this statute are subject to criminal fines and the possibility of imprisonment of up to three years.³ The possibility of criminal fines and imprisonment can provide powerful inducement for the taker-parent to return a wrongfully taken or retained American citizen child abroad.

Unfortunately, our review of public records suggests individuals are rarely—if ever—prosecuted under this statute. Worse still, our conversations with victims of international parental child abduction and their advocates suggests that many federal prosecutors are either unaware of the statute’s existence or do not understand the vital role the *threat* of prosecution can play in securing the return of abducted children. It is clear that the Department can do more with respect to IPKCA.

Several months ago, in a hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, we urged the Administration to use every possible tool to secure the return of American citizen children

¹ 18 U.S.C. § 1204.

² *Id.* (explaining what constitutes a criminal act under IPKCA).

³ *Id.*

abducted abroad. This statute is one of those tools. Accordingly, by August 31, 2018, please provide our offices with answers to the following questions:

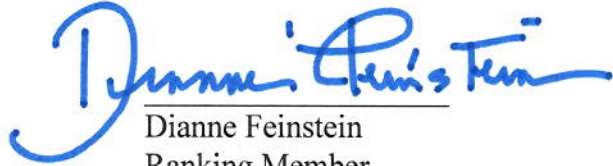
1. How many individuals have been prosecuted under the IPKCA since it was enacted? On average, how many individuals are prosecuted annually under the IPKCA?
 - a. What is the average term of imprisonment an individual convicted under the IPKCA is sentenced to?
 - b. Will you commit to providing an annual report to the House and Senate Committees on the Judiciary on the number of individuals prosecuted under this statute?
2. How many children have been returned as a result of either prosecution under the IPKCA or the threat of prosecution under the IPKCA?
3. What steps does the Department of Justice take to make United States Attorney's offices aware of this statute?
4. Does the Department of Justice provide United States Attorneys and Assistant United States Attorneys with any training on this statute and how it may be used as an inducement to secure the return of an American citizen child? If not, why not?
5. If the Department of Justice does not provide training to federal law enforcement officers on this statute, will you commit to providing such training in the future?
6. What steps does the Department of Justice take to coordinate with state and local law enforcement officers on preventing international parental child abductions and securing the return of American citizen children?
7. What steps does the Department of Justice take to coordinate with advocacy groups and left-behind parent organizations on preventing international parental child abductions and securing the return of American citizen children?
8. What additional tools or resources does the Department of Justice need to more effectively prosecute individuals under this statute? What additional authorities do you believe are necessary in order to combat international parental child abduction and secure the return of American citizen children?
9. Will you commit to meeting with representatives of the "left-behind" parent community in order to better understand their concerns and frustrations?

We know you recognize the seriousness of the issue and look forward to working with you to resolve and prevent cases of international parental abduction. Working together, we are confident that Congress and the Administration can secure the return of American citizen children and prevent their kidnapping in the future.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee



Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Senate Judiciary Committee