

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 14, 2012

President René Fasel, DMD
International Ice Hockey Federation
Brandschenkestrasse 50
Postfach
8027 Zurich
Switzerland

Dear President Fasel,

We write to express our deep concern regarding the ongoing human rights situation in Belarus and request that the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) reconsider its decision to hold the 2014 World Hockey Championships in Minsk during the IIHF congress this May in Helsinki, Finland.

Individuals in Belarus—widely regarded as Europe’s last dictatorship—do not have the right to exercise even basic civil and political rights. Elections routinely fail to meet international standards of fairness. Those who publicly display dissatisfaction with the regime are quickly arrested and face the very real threat of mistreatment.

Of particular concern is a heightened crackdown on freedom of expression and association since the 2010 presidential election. On the evening of December 19, 2010, tens of thousands of Belarusians peacefully gathered in downtown Minsk to demonstrate against the expected election results. In the ensuing crackdown, police arrested hundreds of peaceful protesters, including opposition candidates Mikalai Statkevich and Andrei Sannikov, and political advisor Zmister Bandarenka. After trials that failed to meet international standards of due process, the government sentenced Mr. Statkevich to six years in a medium security penal colony and Mr. Sannikov to five years.

Both men have suffered greatly while in government custody. Like other political prisoners detained in Belarus, they have suffered harsh physical conditions including beatings and deprivation of medical treatment for often serious medical conditions. When Mr. Sannikov’s lawyer expressed concern about his client’s “horrendous” condition he was disbarred and Mr. Sannikov was denied private access to counsel for months following. Additionally, both men were deprived of contact with their families and legal counsel for prolonged periods during their imprisonment.

In light of these facts, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention determined that Mr. Statkevich’s detention is the direct result of exercising his fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, association and political participation. The Working Group therefore concluded that his detention is arbitrary and a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Despite this, Mr. Statkevich remains in prison.

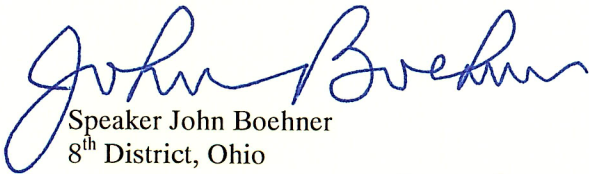
Unfortunately, these types of abuses by Belarusian authorities are all too common. Although Mr. Sannikov and his advisor, Mr. Bandarenka, were released on April 14 and 15 of this year, many others, including Mr. Statkevich, remain imprisoned and activists and civil society leaders continue to face intimidation and arrest. Because the Belarusian judiciary lacks real independence, such abuses go unchecked.

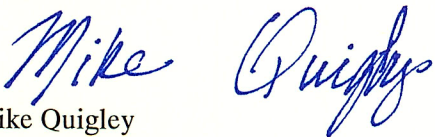
This unrestrained climate of repression in Belarus creates significant “reason for concern that the well-being or the safe freedom of movement of the players, officials, traveling spectators and media is in doubt” should the


championship be held in Minsk in 2014. As such, the IIHF has the right to withdraw hosting rights from Belarus and allocate the championship to another Member National Association.

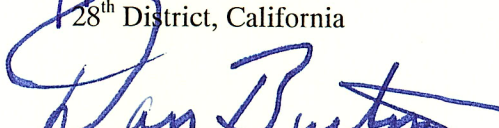
The United States Senate, the United States House of Representatives, and the European Parliament have each expressed opposition to holding the Ice Hockey World Championships in Minsk while political prisoners continue to languish in Belarusian prisons. Today, we reiterate this call and urge each member of the International Ice Hockey Federation to demand that Belarus release all political prisoners or forfeit the honor of hosting the Championship.

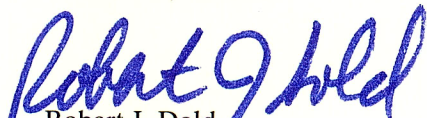
Sincerely,

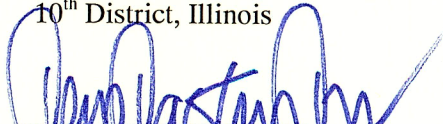

Speaker John Boehner
8th District, Ohio



Mike Quigley
5th District, Illinois



Howard L. Berman
28th District, California

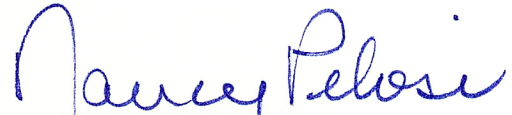

Dan Burton
5th District, Indiana

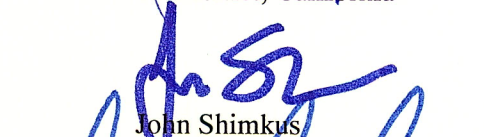

Robert J. Dold
10th District, Illinois



Jesse Jackson, Jr.
2nd District, Illinois



Peter T. King
3rd District, New York


Thaddeus McCotter
11th District, Michigan

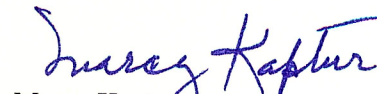

Nancy Pelosi
8th District, California

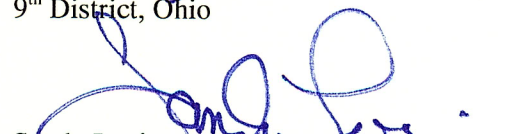

John Shimkus
19th District, Illinois



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
18th District, Florida

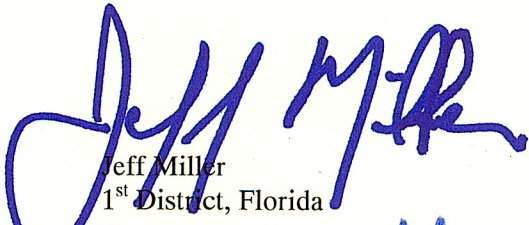

Danny K. Davis
7th District, Illinois



Virginia Foxx
5th District, North Carolina



Marcy Kaptur
9th District, Ohio



Sandy Levin
12th District, Michigan

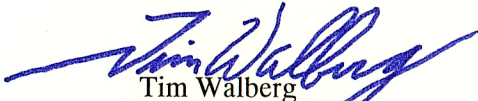

Patrick Meehan
7th District, Pennsylvania

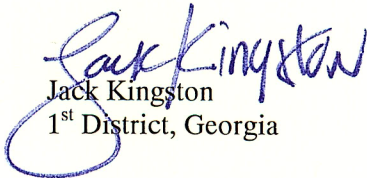

Jeff Miller
1st District, Florida



Steve Rothman
9th District, New Jersey

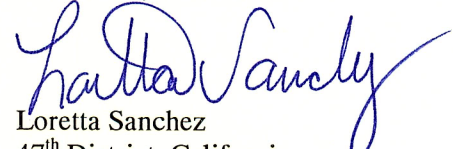

Aaron Schock
18th District, Illinois



Steve Stivers
15th District, Ohio

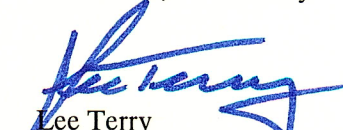

Tim Walberg
7th District, Michigan

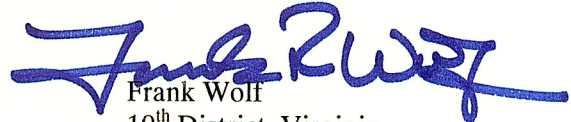

Jack Kingston
1st District, Georgia

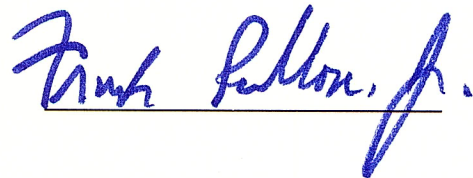

Erik Paulsen
3rd District, Minnesota


Loretta Sanchez
47th District, California


Chris Smith
4th District, New Jersey


Lee Terry
2nd District, Nebraska


Frank Wolf
10th District, Virginia


Frank Pallone, Jr.

CC: Anthony Rossi, USA Hockey
Horst Lichtner, International Ice Hockey Federation
Shoichi Tomita, International Ice Hockey Federation
Kalervo Kummola, International Ice Hockey Federation
Murray Costello, International Ice Hockey Federation