

## US lawmakers demand China grant dissident medical parole

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WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States Congress urged China to grant medical parole to a noted Chinese scholar from Harvard University who has suffered a stroke while in prison. The call was made to commemorate dissident Yang Jianli's 1,000th day in a Beijing prison on charges of espionage and illegal entry.

"This is a senseless persecution of a brave and decent man and terrible pain has been inflicted on his family," said Barney Frank, the Representative for Massachusetts, at a solemn ceremony to mark the occasion in Congress.

Frank and two other members of the House of Representatives called for Yang's immediate release, noting that he was eligible for medical parole under Chinese law due to his health condition. "We speak on behalf of the House and the Senate," Frank said.

The US Congress had passed several resolutions calling for Yang's release and the State Department has also called for him to be freed.

Yang has suffered complications following the stroke, including numbness in the left side of the body, said his wife Christina Fu, who returned Wednesday after being allowed by Chinese authorities to visit her husband for the first time since his April 26, 2002 arrest.

Fu broke down at the ceremony, saying in between sobs "he has aged so much and has lost so much weight. He really does not look healthy."

While thanking Beijing for allowing her visit, the mother of two said his early release would enable him to return to the United States for urgent medical treatment.

The Harvard University research fellow was already eligible for normal parole on October 26, 2004 after serving half his five-year sentence.

An American permanent resident, Yang had fled to the United States following the bloody 1989 Tiananmen democracy protests. He was arrested in China when he tried to secretly return using a friend's passport.

He was held incommunicado, not given due process and convicted on trumped up espionage charges, US legislators complain.

Christopher Cox, the Representative for California, said Yang's case reflected the larger American concern of human rights abuses in China which he stressed should be a "priority" issue for US Secretary of State designate Condoleeza Rice to raise with Beijing.

The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention had found that Yang was being held in violation of international law, his lawyer Jared Genser said.