



AMERICAN CITIZENS ABROAD
THE VOICE OF AMERICANS OVERSEAS

January 8, 2014

*The Honorable Congresswoman Kay Granger
U.S. Congress
1026 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515*

RE: Inclusion of Consular Notification in Omnibus Appropriations Bill

Dear Congresswoman Granger,

American Citizens Abroad, ACA, Inc. the premier organization representing the interests of the 7 million Americans living overseas, urgently requests that you work with Senator Leahy to ensure that the consular notification compliance provision (§ 7083) is included in the final “Foreign Ops” portion of the Omnibus Appropriations Bill.

Inclusion of the notification compliance provision is a key element in demonstrating strong U.S. support for the objectives embodied in the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (“the Convention”), an agreement of capital importance for ensuring respect for the legal rights of all citizens living outside their country or origin.

American citizens living overseas who are subject to arrest for any reason should expect that the authorities in the country of residence will immediately contact U.S. consular officials in order to ensure decent, fair and equitable treatment under the laws of the foreign country. Failure on the part of U.S. authorities to demonstrate observance of the Convention’s provisions subjects Americans living or traveling abroad to an unacceptable and unnecessary level of legal jeopardy. To the extent American authorities fail to apply the letter and spirit of the Convention, American consular authorities cannot plausibly and credibly insist that the authorities in the arresting country observe Convention norms with

respect to American nationals. Reciprocity and comity are the cornerstones of the international legal system, and it is of vital importance that Americans detained overseas possess the right to avail themselves of the protections afforded under the Vienna Convention.

We look forward to your firm and steadfast defense of the rights of our compatriots overseas and stand ready to provide you with any further information or assistance you may require concerning this important issue.

Best,

*Marylouise Serrato
Executive Director ACA
202 322 8441*

cc: Congressman Robert Goodlatte – Chair of the House Judiciary Committee

American Citizens Abroad, Inc. (ACA, Inc), is a non-profit, non-partisan, volunteer membership organization whose mission is to represent the interests of Americans living overseas. With offices in Washington D.C. and Geneva, Switzerland, the association draws on more than three decades of rich experience and knowledge of laws affecting Americans overseas.

ACA, Inc. is reorganizing as a US tax-exempt organization operating under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code. Alongside it is American Citizens Abroad Global Foundation, a publicly-supported charity under section 501(c)(3).