Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 7, 2008

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

We want to thank you for your commitment to protect children and their birth families by working to ensure that intercountry adoptions remain as an option for children who would otherwise not be placed for adoptions in their own countries. We would also like to strongly urge you to negotiate a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government of Vietnam that addresses concerns surrounding the adoption system in Vietnam.

We strongly share your concern about reported instances of fraud and corruption within Vietnam's adoption system. We share your belief that systematic reform and more effective safeguards are needed to prevent the types of abuses described in your most recent report. Further, we understand that greater cooperation of the Government of Vietnam will be required to address these concerns. Nevertheless, we encourage you to work with the Vietnamese Government to implement proactive measures designed to guard against abuse. Such measures could include a thorough accreditation process for all U.S.-based agencies providing services in Vietnam, increased transparency and accountability with regard to fees, and strengthened laws and procedures for prosecuting individuals found to be complicit in fraudulent behavior.

We believe that signing an interim agreement with Vietnam is consistent with your goal of moving toward a Hague-compliant system, provided that such an agreement would contain enforceable safeguards. We strongly support the transition to a Hague-compliant system in Vietnam. However, we also understand that the establishment of such a system can take years, and it is not in the best interest of children to remain institutionalized or homeless during the period of transition. It is our hope that a properly designed interim agreement could serve as a foundation for the implementation of a Hague-compliant system in the near future.

Madam Secretary, we appreciate the important work that the State Department has done in investigating concerns with the Vietnamese adoption system. It is our hope that we will be able to address these concerns, so that we can continue to find families for these orphans. Accordingly, we ask that you work to resolve these issues and to secure an updated Memorandum of Understanding with Vietnam that ensures the integrity of international adoptions between our two countries.

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Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you on this important humanitarian issue.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator

Norm Coleman
United States Senator

Ginny Brown-Waite
Member of Congress

James L. Oberstar
Member of Congress

Gordon Smith
United States Senator

Barbara Mikulski
United States Senator

John Kerry
United States Senator

James Inhofe
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

John Sununu
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Robert Bennett
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Carl Levin
United States Senator

Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator

Blanche L. Lincoln
United States Senator

Daniel Inouye
United States Senator

Richard Burr
United States Senator

Kent Conrad
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Christopher Dodd
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Bob Corker
United States Senator

John D. Rockefeller IV
United States Senator

Pat Roberts
United States Senator

Jeff Sessions
United States Senator

Saxby Chambliss
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

Frank Lautenberg
United States Senator

Byron Dorgan
United States Senator

Daniel Akaka
United States Senator

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

George Voinovich
United States Senator

Herb Kohl
United States Senator

Barack Obama
United States Senator

David Vitter
United States Senator

Larry Craig
United States Senator

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Tim Johnson
United States Senator

Susan Collins
United States Senator

Christopher S. Bond
United States Senator

John Thune
United States Senator

Tom Harkin
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Charles Schumer
United States Senator

Hillary Rodham Clinton
United States Senator

Ken Salazar
United States Senator

Kay Bailey Hutchison
United States Senator

Orrin Hatch
United States Senator

John Cornyn
United States Senator

Elizabeth Dole
United States Senator

Sam Brownback
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Maria Cantwell
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Marsha Blackburn
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Tim Bishop
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Peter J. Roskam
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