NORM COLEMAN
MINNESOTA

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510–2307

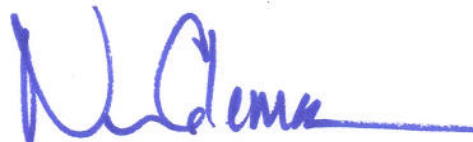http://coleman.senate.gov

May 21, 2007

Dear Colleague,

As a Member of the Board of Directors of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), I urge you to join me in protesting the arrest of a former NED fellow, Le Quoc Quan, by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and to call for his immediate release from prison.

Le Quoc Quan, a lawyer from Hanoi, conducted independent research on civil society while in residence at the NED under the congressionally funded Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Program. Previously, he worked as a local governance consultant to the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, UNDP, and the Swedish International Development Agency. Within a few days of returning from the fellowship at NED, Quan was arrested and charged under Article 79 of the Criminal Code, which proscribes "activities aimed at overthrowing the Government." His family has not been permitted to visit him.

Quan's arrest is part of a larger crackdown in Vietnam on people trying to express their opinion or freely practice their religion. This is occurring just months after the U.S. Congress approved Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) for Vietnam, and Vietnam's accession to the World Trade Organization. President Nguyen Minh Triet is expected to visit Washington next month on an official visit, and this letter will be a timely reminder of the expectations the Congress holds about respect for human rights around the world.

Please join me in sending the attached letter to the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam calling for the immediate release of Le Quoc Quan from prison. If you have any questions or would like to sign on, please contact Anna Kopperud at 4-7568 or anna_kopperud@coleman.senate.gov. The deadline for joining is May 29th. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Norm Coleman
United States Senate

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May __, 2007

His Excellency Nguyen Minh Triet
President, Socialist Republic of Vietnam
c/o Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
1233 20th Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036

Your Excellency,

We are writing to express our deep concern about Le Quoc Quan, a lawyer who has been detained by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam since March 8, 2007. We call upon you to release him from prison immediately.

Le Quoc Quan was arrested very shortly after his return to Vietnam following the completion of a five-month fellowship in residence at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in Washington, D.C. He had conducted independent research on civil society through the Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows program, which is named in honor of the two principal founders of the NED - former President Ronald Reagan and the late Congressman Dante Fascell. This program is funded by the United States Congress through a grant from the Department of State.

Citizen exchange programs, such as the Reagan-Fascell program in which Le Quoc Quan participated, are essential to strengthening the ties between our two countries. The immediate release of Le Quoc Quan from prison will therefore send a strong signal that the Government of Vietnam approaches its relationship with the United States with great seriousness and respect. The commitment of the United States Congress to upholding international human rights standards is unwavering. We therefore ask that Vietnam respect the rights of its own citizens, including Le Quoc Quan.

We urge you to release Le Quoc Quan from detention as a step to improving bilateral relations between the United States and Vietnam. We look forward to your consideration and your prompt reply.

Sincerely,