

Below is the full text of a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, shared by the office of U.S. Sen. Dave McCormick, urging the diplomat to work for the safe return of a Pennsylvania man, Marc Fogel, jailed in a Russian prison.

January 23, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

Congratulations on your confirmation as Secretary of State. We look forward to working with you in this new role to advance America's foreign policy and national security interests.

As discussed during your confirmation hearing, we are eager to work with you and the State Department to prioritize Marc Fogel's wrongful detention by the Russian Government.

In August 2021, Marc was detained by Russian authorities at Sheremetyevo Airport for carrying about half an ounce of medical marijuana in his luggage, which he was prescribed in the United States to treat chronic back pain. Marc and his wife, Jane, were returning to Moscow to teach at the Anglo-American School-Moscow. They had both worked there since 2012. In June 2022, the Russian court system sentenced Marc to 14 years behind bars. More than three harrowing years later, Marc remains expelled to a high-security penal colony, separated from his family, without a clear path home. Moscow has rejected the U.S. Department of State's repeated requests for Marc's release on humanitarian grounds, and his health is deteriorating badly.

The Russian Government's outrageous treatment of this American teacher is a clear effort to use Marc as a political pawn to exert leverage on the United States. It must not stand.

We were disheartened that Marc was not included in the August 2024 multi-country prisoner swap that released wrongful detainees, including Evan Gershkovich and Paul Whelan. In December 2024, Marc was designated as wrongfully detained under the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act. This determination was necessary to unlock all of the tools at the U.S. Government's disposal to advocate for Marc's release.

A renewed commitment to Marc is needed now more than ever. To that end, we request you do everything in your power to bring Marc home immediately and that you personally ensure that your State Department does the following:

- Resubmit a request every month for representatives from U.S. Embassy Moscow to visit Marc and use your influence to ensure Russian officials approve those requests.
- Arrange frequent medical visits to externally evaluate Marc's physical and mental condition and to provide the prison's medical staff with any specialized medications Marc may require.
- Offer regular engagement to the Fogel family between the Deputy Secretary of State, or another relevant senior official with visibility into Marc's case.
- Provide regular briefings to interested congressional offices on Marc's case.

President Trump has been clear that returning Americans who have been wrongfully detained is a top priority for his administration. Only the President of the United States and Secretary of State can make the hard choices necessary to bring Marc home, and you have our partnership in doing so.

Thank you again for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

David H. McCormick
United States Senator

John Fetterman
United States Senator

Ryan Mackenzie
Member of Congress

Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress

Dan Meuser
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

Glenn "GT" Thompson
Member of Congress

Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress

Guy Reschenthaler
Member of Congress

Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Mike Kelly
Member of Congress

Rob Bresnahan, Jr.
Member of Congress

CC: Adam Bohler
Special Presidential Envoy for
Hostage Affairs