

Statement by Senator John McCain

At the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Sunday, July 8, 2012

Thank you for the opportunity to join you this afternoon.

Let me recognize my fellow members of Congress, Dennis Cardoza and Robert Aderholt, who are doing great work on behalf of the American delegation. I am pleased that Robert is standing for vice president of this assembly, and I want to voice my full support for his candidacy.

It is also my pleasure to support this resolution on rule of law in Russia and the case of Sergei [SER-gay] Magnitsky. What happened to Sergei was a horrific crime. But it is also an example -- an extreme example, to be sure, but an example nonetheless -- of the pervasive and systemic corruption in the Russian government. To this day, no one -- not one person -- has ever been held responsible for Sergei's death. This, despite the fact that the Russian Human Rights Council, established by the Russian President, found that Sergei's arrest was illegal, that he was denied access to justice, and that his treatment amounted to torture. This resolution correctly notes these disturbing facts.

The demand for justice for Sergei is what has mobilized the world in his memory. In the United States, Senator Ben Cardin and I introduced legislation that would impose an array of penalties on those believed to be responsible for Sergei's death, but also on other human rights abusers in Russia and beyond. The Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act has been passed by our Foreign Relations Committee, and no matter what you hear, make no mistake: It will become law. And it will contain the full array of essential measures—visa bans, asset freezes, and financial sanctions. I assure you of it.

The Congress now has a path to pass this legislation. I and others have made clear that doing so is the condition for repeal of the Jackson-Vanik amendment and extension of Permanent Normal Trade Relations to Russia, which I have also sponsored legislation to enact.

Other European legislatures, as well as the European Parliament, have condemned Sergei's murder and may take legislative action as well. Now, this resolution offers an opportunity for all of us, legislators from more than 50 nations, to speak with one voice in favor of the justice that Sergei and his family deserve. It is essential that we do so.

I know that some will try to paint this resolution as anti-Russia. I could not disagree more. Indeed, I believe it is pro-Russia, as are the pieces of national legislation that would punish those guilty of Sergei's death. I believe that supporting the rule of law is pro-Russia. I believe that defending the innocent and punishing the guilty is pro-Russia. And ultimately, I believe the virtues that Sergei Magnitsky embodied—integrity, fair-dealing, fidelity to truth and justice, and the deepest love of country, which does not turn a blind eye to the failings of one's government, but seeks to remedy them by insisting on the highest standards—this too is pro-Russia, and I would submit that it represents the future that most Russians want for themselves and their country.

The example that Sergei set during his brief life is now inspiring more and more Russian citizens. They are standing up and speaking up in favor of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. They, like us, do not want Russia to be weak and unstable. They want it to be a successful and just and lawful

country, as we do. Most of these Russian human rights and rule of law advocates support our efforts to continue Sergei's struggle for what's right, just as they are now doing.

Let us now add our voices to theirs by passing this important resolution today. And in doing so, let us align this Assembly with the highest aspirations of the Russian people -- Sergei's aspirations -- for justice, for equal dignity under the law, and for the indomitable spirit of human freedom.