

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 11, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to request an update regarding U.S. efforts to bring home Austin Tice, a Marine Corps veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and who has been detained in Syria since 2012. Given the recent fall of the Assad regime and the rapidly changing dynamics on the ground in Syria, we think this moment presents a critical opportunity to secure Austin's release and bring him home to his family.

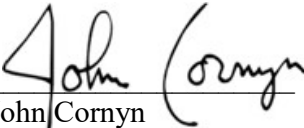
We know that you are familiar with Austin's case, as your administration publicly acknowledged Austin's detention by the Syrians in 2022, and you also met with Austin's parents, Debra and Marc Tice, in 2022. We also know that National Security Advisor (NSA) Sullivan met with Austin's family on December 6. Moreover, Congress has pressed for Austin's release for several years, most recently in a joint letter led by Senator Van Hollen and Senator Cornyn and signed by 34 Senators on August 6, 2024.


On December 8, you said that your administration believes he is alive and that "We want to get him out. We have to identify where he is." We appreciate those comments as well as those of NSA Sullivan on December 9, saying "This is a top priority for us – to find Austin Tice, to locate the prison where he may be held, get him out, get him home safely to his family."

For more than 12 years, Austin's parents have demanded our government bring him home, and given the evolving situation in Syria, we urge you to seize this opportunity to launch an urgent effort to secure Austin's release. As a beloved son, brother, Eagle Scout, journalist, and veteran, Austin represents the best our nation has to offer and deserves the full and active support of our government to secure his release. Congress is committed and more than willing to work with you to return him to his loving family. We encourage your administration to utilize all available means to further discourage the hostage taking of American citizens.

Twelve years is far too long for Austin to be held. We ask that you direct the relevant members of your administration to provide us a briefing by December 20 on current U.S. efforts to identify Austin's whereabouts and bring him home so that the Congress and your Administration can continue working hand-in-hand on this important issue.

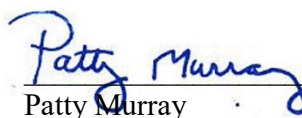
Sincerely,


John Cornyn
United States Senator


Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Mark R. Warner in blue ink.

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Patty Murray in blue ink.

Patty Murray
United States Senator