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**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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October 29, 2015

The Honorable Alejandro Baltazar Maldonado Aguirre  
President of the Republic of Guatemala  
6ta Avenida 4-46, Zona 1  
Guatemala City, Guatemala

Dear President Maldonado,

I write to bring to your attention to the plight of a Russian family that has been under arrest in Guatemala since January 2015. The family has lived peacefully in Guatemala since 2009 after fleeing persecution in Russia. I request your assistance in approving their political asylum request.

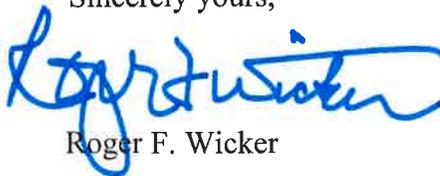
The Bitkov family was forced to flee Russia after being persecuted by Russian officials for refusing to pay bribes to local government officials. In 2009, the family relocated to Guatemala where they were subsequently victimized by corrupt Guatemalan lawyers and government officials who provided them with improper travel and residency documents. The Bitkov family has been incarcerated without trial for over 10 months. I am concerned that the Bitkovs would face severe human rights violations and a grim future with no prospects for a fair trial or justice should they be deported to Russia.

We are hopeful that your country's recent Presidential elections will begin the process of restoring faith in democracy and the rule of law in Guatemala. The U.S. Congress has held numerous hearings and passed legislation that takes President Putin's regime to task on its violations of basic human rights in Russia. As such, we urge the Government of Guatemala to resolve the Bitkov family's legal case as soon as possible and consider granting their request for political asylum in your country.

Thank you for your consideration.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,



Roger F. Wicker

CC: The Honorable John Kerry, U.S. Secretary of State  
The Honorable Carlos Raúl Morales Moscoso, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
The Honorable Eunice del Milagro Mendizábal Villagrán, Minister of Government  
The Honorable Thelma Aldana Hernandez, Attorney General