

United States Senate

June 7, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20522

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We write to urge you to immediately designate Mr. Marc Fogel as wrongfully detained and prioritize securing his release. The top responsibility of any administration needs to be the safety and security of the American people and we cannot allow innocent Americans to be used as pawns for Putin's ambitions. Mr. Fogel has strong family ties to our home state, and as sons of Montana, we request you take all appropriate actions to free Mr. Fogel and return him to American soil.

As you know, Mr. Fogel has been detained in Russia since August 2021. For many years, he taught the daughters and sons of American diplomats and soldiers serving our country in Russia. He is serving an unjust and unwarranted 14-year sentence of hard labor in a Russian prison for drug trafficking due to possession of medically prescribed medical marijuana. This severe sentence is of particular concern as he is facing deteriorating health conditions that could potentially result in this judgment serving as a life sentence. Given the charges he is facing are similar to those of Brittney Griner, who was deemed to be wrongfully detained, similar actions by the State Department are warranted and every effort to secure his release should be made, including designating him as wrongfully detained.

We look forward to your immediate attention to this matter and a prompt response.

Sincerely,



Senator Steve Daines



Michael McFaul, former U.S. Ambassador to Russia