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July 23, 2007

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary:

I have been contacted by my constituents, Kathy and Howard Will, whose son Bradley was shot and killed in Oaxaca, Mexico on October 27 of last year.

As you are probably aware, Brad was covering the political unrest in Oaxaca as a freelance photojournalist. He was allegedly killed by a bullet from the plainclothes police who fired at the protesters. Over 90 civilians were injured during the incident, and many were killed.

Two municipal officials were taken into custody in the case of Brad's death, but a judge released them shortly thereafter, citing lack of evidence. Other gunmen who were photographed shooting at the protesters have not been arrested or questioned. State prosecutors have countered with claims that the protesters, not the police, murdered Mr. Will to draw attention to their cause.

The killing of Bradley Will took place in an environment that your 2006 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices says is "extremely dangerous" for journalists. Since 1982, 53 journalists have been murdered or disappeared in Mexico, 11 of them in 2006. The establishment of a Special Prosecutor for Crimes Committed Against Journalists shows that the Mexican federal government acknowledges its shortcomings in protecting freedom of the press.

I understand that murder is a state crime in Mexico. However, since sufficient action has not been taken on the state level, I urge you to press the Mexican federal government to swiftly complete a thorough investigation of the killing of Bradley Will and the Oaxaca protesters. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

RJD/cd