

*Queens couple continues their plight to bring son home*

Washington, D.C.—Today, Congressman Steve Israel (D-Huntington) led a meeting with the Russian Ambassador to the United States, Sergey Kislyak, and a group of eight bipartisan Members of Congress to urge Russia to reverse its recent law banning Americans from adopting children from Russia. Israel requested this meeting after learning of a Queens couple, Dania and Nick Marvos, who were in the process of adopting a son from Russia when the law was enacted. The Marvos Family began the adoption process in 2011 and traveled to Russia last December where they met and bonded with their one-year old son, Ari. They also traveled to Washington on Monday as Rep. Israel's guests for the State of the Union and to meet with adoption advocacy organizations. It is believed that there are several hundred other families like the Marvos stuck in limbo.

Rep. Israel said, "I thank Ambassador Kislyak for taking the time to meet with me and hear of the Marvos' struggle to bring their child, Ari, whom they fell in love with home to Queens. Innocent children like Ari and the hundreds of other children who were in the process of being adopted should never be used as political pawns. This morning I urged the Ambassador to call on his government to reverse this law and work with the United States to allow the Russian children who were in the process of being adopted to proceed with the adoption process and unite with their adoptive parents."

During the meeting, the Members of Congress discussed the concerns of the Ambassador as well as their own and requested that he make a good faith effort to relay their concerns to those in his government. The Members of Congress agreed that they'd push to continue this dialogue until the issue is resolved.

On December 28, 2012, Putin signed into law a ban on American adoptions of Russian children. This was enacted shortly after the U.S. passed the Magnitsky Act, which imposes U.S. travel and financial restrictions on human rights abusers in Russia. On January 17, 2013, Israel and a bipartisan group of nearly fifty Members of Congress sent a letter to President Putin urging him to allow any families already in the adoption process to move forward. A few weeks ago, the Russian Supreme Court made a decision to permit adoptions that had been approved by a Russian Court prior to the ban taking effect on January 1, 2013, to proceed. However, this decision offers no clarity for families like the Mavros, who are still waiting for a court date, and

are left to wonder whether or not their adoption will be allowed to advance.

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