

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 12, 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to request greater clarification on your decision to invoke a waiver for continued United States military assistance to countries that use child soldiers—assistance prohibited under the Child Soldier Prevention Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-457). This law was amended in 2013 (Public Law 113-4) to include similar restrictions on U.S. funding for international peacekeeping missions.

Several of our offices helped draft the original Child Soldier Prevention Act out of concern that the use of child soldiers around the world remains far too common. Still today, an estimated tens of thousands of children are fighting in active conflicts around the world.

These young boys and girls fight on front lines of combat, serve as human mine detectors, participate in suicide missions, carry supplies, and act as spies, messengers, lookouts, and sex slaves—endangering their health and their lives. They are stigmatized and traumatized by their experiences and left with neither family connections nor skills to allow them to transition successfully into productive adult lives. Not only are they robbed of their childhoods, but the lasting effects remain with them for years if not entire lifetimes.

While we recognize there are challenging and important security interests in many of these nations, the United States and its allies should be doing everything possible to end military support for governments that engage in the abhorrent practice of using child soldiers and to also help reintegrate such children back into their families and society. Using sweeping waivers to continue such assistance undermines such efforts and the spirit of the law.


Sincerely,



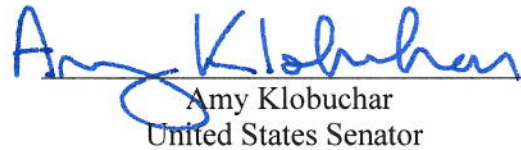
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



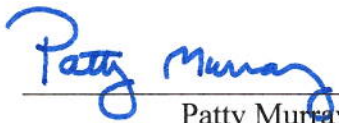
John Boozman
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator