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NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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SYRIA LIFTS JEWISH RESTRICTIONS

IMPORTANT STEP DOES THE RIGHT THING AND HELPS MID-EAST NEGOTIATIONS

I WANT TO JOIN PRESIDENT BUSH AND OTHERS IN WELCOMING THE DECISION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SYRIA TO LIFT LONG-STANDING RESTRICTIONS ON THE JEWISH POPULATION OF SYRIA.

THESE ONEROUS RESTRICTIONS -- WHICH EFFECTIVELY PRECLUDED FREEDOM OF TRAVEL, AND THE HOLDING OF PROPERTY -- REPRESENTED GROSS VIOLATIONS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF SYRIAN JEWS. THEY WERE OFFENSIVE TO ANYONE WHO BELIEVES IN FREEDOM AND FAIRNESS. THEY WERE A BLOT ON THE FACE OF THE SYRIAN REGIME.

THIS IS AN ISSUE THAT MANY OF US IN THE CONGRESS HAVE BEEN WORKING ON FOR A LONG TIME. TWO YEARS AGO IN DAMASCUS, I RAISED THIS MATTER DIRECTLY WITH PRESIDENT ASSAD.

AT LONG LAST, THE SYRIAN REGIME HAS DONE WHAT IS RIGHT.

HOPEFULLY, THIS DECISION WILL HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT NOT ONLY ON THOSE DIRECTLY AFFECTED, BUT WILL ALSO IMPROVE THE ATMOSPHERE FOR THE ON-GOING MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS STILL A LONG WAY OFF. BUT THIS DECISION REPRESENTS ONE MORE SMALL BUT IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD IN PURSUIT OF THAT GOAL.

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