

United States Senate

May 19, 2011

Ms. Gail J. McGovern
President and CEO
American Red Cross
2025 E Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Ms. McGovern:

I write to ask for your assistance in facilitating efforts to reunite Korean-American families separated from their North Korean relatives. As you may know, more than 100,000 Korean-Americans may still have family living in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

Currently, no official bilateral or multilateral mechanism exists to reunite these divided families. The Red Cross, as the world's most recognized humanitarian organization, can play an important role to establish such a mechanism.

I am encouraged that the American Red Cross has engaged with Ambassador Robert King, the Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights. As noted in the attached communication from the State Department, you recently discussed "possibilities and modalities to facilitate family reunions for Korean-Americans with their relatives in the DPRK."

I strongly support your efforts. I would appreciate a detailed description of your engagement on this issue with relevant stakeholders, including any response you may have received from the DPRK concerning divided family reunions.

While I recognize the challenges posed by the lack of cooperation from DPRK authorities, I ask that you prioritize this important and time-sensitive human rights issue. Korean-American divided family members are now in advanced age and many of their DPRK relatives may have passed away. Time is not on their side.

I look forward to working closely with you to bring these families together for the first time in nearly sixty years.

Sincerely,



Mark Kirk
United States Senator