

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Dec. 15, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We are writing to encourage you to award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to the late Dr. Jan Karski, a diplomat who, after the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939 worked for the Polish Underground and witnessed Nazi war crimes first hand. He was smuggled into the Warsaw Ghetto where he witnessed atrocities and later entered the Nazi Izbica transit camp disguised as a guard. Armed with the tragic knowledge he had gained at great personal risk, Karski then met with Allied leaders including British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden and President Roosevelt sharing his eyewitness accounts and pleading for a strong response. While those pleas were not successful, he was persistent in his efforts to make the world understand the reality of the Holocaust. Later during the war, his firsthand account, *Story of a Secret State*, was published and became a bestseller.

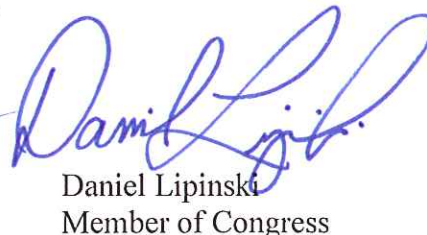
In the years since, Dr. Karski has been widely recognized by the governments of Israel and Poland for his contributions. Israel granted him honorary citizenship and Yad Vashem honored him as "Righteous Among the Nations." He also received Poland's highest civilian award, the Order of the White Eagle, along with its premier military decoration, Virtuti Militari.

As the centennial of Dr. Karski's birth approaches in 2014, the Jan Karski US Centennial Campaign is developing programming here in the United States as well as in Poland and Israel to commemorate his legacy. Both the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League have named awards in Dr. Karski's honor in recognition of his heroic and consistent efforts to stop the Holocaust.

In describing Medal of Freedom recipients, you said that they "reveal the best of who we are and who we aspire to be." Dr. Karski's courage in standing up and speaking out at great personal risk certainly reflects those values. With that in mind, we encourage you to confer the Presidential Medal of Freedom on Dr. Jan Karski who called on us to seek our highest selves, to speak truth to power and to promote tolerance toward all people.

Sincerely,


Nita M. Lowey
Member of Congress


Daniel Lipinski
Member of Congress

Howard L. Burman

John

Nancy Kaptur

Bill Pasrell Jr

Jan Schrey Charles B. Rangel

Alan L. Hirsch Sam Russell

Luille Roybal-Allard

STIN

Rosa DeLauro

James Hahn

Jerry Costello

Al B. Ship

Marion Hilly

Bob Filmer

Sterre Isaac

Tommy Baldwin

BRAN Hagan

Jim V. Gutierrez

Steven Stone

Dan Price

Eliot L. Engel

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Wyn Cullen

Ellen Guletz

Henry G. Warner

Jim Moran

Brad Shum

Thick Jackson Lee

Ellen H. W.

Judy Allen

Sam Lane

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Jay Diller

Mazie K. Hirose

Earl Blum

Larry C. Peters

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Allyson J. Schmitz

Janet Lee

Helen Clarke

Ron Kind

Nancy Hayworth

Sharon Lang

Allen B. West

Tim Ryan

Signatories (66):

Rep. Nita Lowey *Co-Sponsor

Rep. Dan Lipinski *Co-Sponsor

Rep. Steve Austria

Rep. Tammy Baldwin

Rep. Howard Berman

Rep. Earl Blumenauer

Rep. Robert Brady

Rep. Judy Chu

Rep. David Cicilline

Rep. Hansen Clarke

Rep. Steve Cohen

Rep. Gerry Connolly

Rep. Jerry Costello

Rep. Mark Critz

Rep. Henry Cuellar

Rep. Rosa DeLauro

Rep. Ted Deutch

Rep. John Dingell

Rep. Lloyd Doggett

Rep. Keith Ellison

Rep. Eliot Engel

Rep. Anna Eshoo

Rep. Sam Farr

Rep. Bob Filner

Rep. Elton Gallegly

Rep. John Garamendi

Rep. Luis Gutierrez

Rep. Janice Hahn

Rep. Alcee Hastings

Rep. Nan Hayworth

Rep. Martin Heinrich

Rep. Brian Higgins

Rep. Maurice Hinchey

Rep. Mazie Hirono

Rep. Rush Holt

Rep. Steve Israel

Rep. Jackson-Lee

Rep. Marcy Kaptur

Rep. Mike Kelly

Rep. Ron Kind

Rep. Sandy Levin

Rep. James McGovern

Rep. Brad Miller

Rep. Gwen Moore

Rep. Jim Moran

Rep. Mick Mulvaney

Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton

Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Rep. Gary Peters

Rep. David Price

Rep. Mike Quigley

Rep. Charles Rangel

Rep. Laura Richardson

Rep. Tom Rooney

Rep. Peter Roskam

Rep. Steven Rothman

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard

Rep. Tim Ryan

Rep. Jan Schakowsky

Rep. Adam Schiff

Rep. Allyson Schwartz

Rep. Brad Sherman

Rep. Paul Tonko

Rep. Henry Waxman

Rep. Allen West

Rep. Frederica Wilson