

Park Climbing Ranger Nick Hall and other Climbing Rangers braved the elements and terrain to rescue the climbers and get them the medical attention they desperately needed. Mr. Hall, a 33-year-old four-year veteran of Mt. Rainier's Climbing Ranger team, tragically fell more than 2,500 feet down the side of the mountain. The Climbing Ranger team was unable to communicate with Mr. Hall after his fall and continued their heroic efforts to save the four climbers. All four climbers were saved and all suffered non-life threatening injuries. I applaud the heroic efforts of the rescue team.

Rangers did reach Mr. Hall hours after the rescue mission began, but, sadly, determined that he had died as a result of his fall. Because of heavy snow, clouds, and the threat of an avalanche, Mr. Hall's body could not immediately be recovered. Finally, on Thursday, July 5, Mt. Rainier National Park personnel were able to confirm that Mr. Hall's body had been recovered.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a tough year at Mt. Rainier. On January 1 Park Ranger Margaret Anderson was gunned down at Mt. Rainier by a fleeing gunman. Now Nick Hall has lost his life saving climbers on the mountain. I grieve with the friends, family, and colleagues left behind.

The week of July 15 has been declared "Stand With Those Who Serve Week" in Washington. Nick Hall is the latest example of someone willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice in service to others. Today I stand with members of the Park Service, Mt. Rainier Superintendent Randy King, and the supportive communities around the mountain.

GOVERNOR PERRY'S LETTER TO  
KATHLEEN SEBELIUS

HON. LOUIE GOHMERT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 9, 2012

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following letter.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR,  
July 9, 2012.

Hon. KATHLEEN SEBELIUS,  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY SEBELIUS: In the ObamaCare plan, the federal government sought to force the states to expand their Medicaid programs by in the words of the Supreme Court putting a gun to their heads. Now that the "gun to the head" has been removed, please relay this message to the President: I oppose both the expansion of Medicaid as provided in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the creation of a so-called "state" insurance exchange, because both represent brazen intrusions into the sovereignty of our state.

I stand proudly with the growing chorus of governors who reject the PPACA power grab. Thank God and our nation's founders that we have the right to do so.

Neither a "state" exchange nor the expansion of Medicaid under the Orwellian-named PPACA would result in a better "patient protection" or in more "affordable care." What they would do is make Texas a mere appendage of the federal government when it comes to health care.

The PPACA does not truly allow states to create and operate their own exchanges. Instead, it gives the federal government the

final say as to which insurance plans can operate in a so-called "state" exchange, what benefits those plans must provide, and what price controls and cost limits will apply. It leaves many questions to be answered later through federal "future rulemaking." In short, it essentially treats the states like subcontractors through which the federal government can control the insurance markets and pursue federal priorities rather than those of the individual states.

Through its proposed expansion of Medicaid, the PPACA would simply enlarge a broken system that is already financially unsustainable. Medicaid is a system of inflexible mandates, one-size-fits-all requirements, and wasteful, bureaucratic inefficiencies. Expanding it as the PPACA provides would only exacerbate the failure of the current system, and would threaten even Texas with financial ruin.

I look forward to implementing health care solutions that are right for the people of Texas. I urge you to support me in that effort. In the meantime, the PPACA's unsound encroachments will find no foothold here.

Sincerely,

RICK PERRY,  
Governor.

CALLING FOR THE FIRING OF U.S.  
AMBASSADOR TO VIETNAM

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 9, 2012

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I submit a letter I sent to President Obama and Secretary Clinton calling for the firing of the U.S. ambassador to Vietnam.

Ambassador David Shear should be removed because he has repeatedly failed to advocate for human rights and speak out for the voiceless in Vietnam. I recommend that he be replaced by a Vietnamese-American.

I am particularly upset by Ambassador Shear's failure to invite more dissidents and human rights activists to the U.S. Embassy for a July 4 celebration after promising that he would.

Further, I have been disappointed in Shear's handling of the case of Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan, a Vietnamese-American democracy activist and U.S. citizen presently being held by the communist government of Vietnam.

As I stated in the letter, "America must be a voice for the voiceless. The U.S. Embassy in Vietnam must be an island of freedom, headed by a bold American ambassador. Ambassador Shear is not that man."

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
July 9, 2012.

Hon. BARACK H. OBAMA,  
The President, The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: On May 15, 2012, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, which I co-chair, held a hearing on human rights abuses in Vietnam. As you undoubtedly know, the State Department's own annual human rights report aptly describes Vietnam as an "authoritarian state." During the hearing, several of my colleagues and I heard testimony from Mrs. Mai Huong Ngo, the wife of Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan, a Vietnamese-American democracy activist and U.S. citizen. Upon his arrival at Tan Son Nhat International Airport in Ho Chi Minh City on April 17, he was arbitrarily detained and has been in prison ever since. Dr. Quan's

wife was invited to testify in light of her husband's plight.

Assistant Secretary Michael Posner was also invited to testify at the hearing on behalf of the State Department. At the time I expressed my shock and dismay that no one from the department, not even the U.S. ambassador to Vietnam, David Shear, had been in touch with Dr. Quan's wife since his detention. Only at my urging did Ambassador Shear initiate contact with Mrs. Ngo to update her on her husband's situation.

This was disturbing on a number of levels. I have long believed that U.S. embassies should be islands of freedom—especially in repressive countries like Vietnam. Under Ambassador Shear's leadership it didn't appear that the U.S. embassy in Hanoi was embracing this important task. But even more troubling is the fact that Dr. Quan is an American citizen, and yet there appeared to be little urgency to securing his release.

In speaking by phone with Ambassador Shear following the hearing I expressed my concerns and urged him to host a July 4th celebration at the embassy, where the guest list was comprised of religious freedom and democracy activists in Vietnam. I stressed that he should fling open the doors of the embassy and invite Buddhist monks and nuns, Catholic priests and Protestant pastors, Internet bloggers and democracy activists. Such was the custom during the Reagan Administration, especially in the Soviet Union. This practice sent a strong message that America stood with those who stand for basic human rights. In many cases it afforded these individuals protection from future harassment and even imprisonment.

Ambassador Shear said that he intended to honor this request. Following my conversation with him I received the enclosed letter from the department indicating that, "Ambassador Shear continues to engage with civil society advocates, promoters of rule-of-law, and democracy activists and will welcome them to the Embassy's July 4th celebration." I took Ambassador Shear at his word and in fact shared this correspondence with members of the Vietnamese Diaspora community in the U.S., several of whom were greatly encouraged by this development.

Late last week it was brought to my attention that many of the most prominent democracy and human rights activists in Vietnam were not invited to the event. These reports seemed starkly at odds with the assurances I had personally received from Ambassador Shear. I called him directly this morning to find out if the embassy had invited the dissidents as had been agreed upon. His response was appalling. He said that he had invited a few civil society activists but then said that he needed to maintain a "balance." I then asked him for a list of the invitees. He initially refused saying he was unable to provide this information, even though presumably the embassy, which he leads, created the guest list. Then he said he would have to address this through State Department. I asked him when we might expect to receive a copy of the guest list and, after initially declining to be specific; he eventually conceded that it would be "in a few weeks."

Ambassador Shear's entire handling of this issue has been unacceptable. He showed little to no initiative in the case of Dr. Quan. Then, after appearing to recognize the shortsightedness of this approach, he agreed to host an Independence Day event at the embassy attended by human rights and democracy activists—only to go back on his word and mislead me about his intentions. Finally, when posed with a simple congressional request for additional information about the guest list at a U.S. embassy event, he was uncooperative at best and obstructionist at worst.