



February 11, 2002

Representative John Peterson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
307 Cannon House Office Building (HOB)  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Peterson,

I am writing to request that you actively involve yourself in ending the uncertainty regarding the disappearance of my colleague Professor Boris Weisfeiler, a U.S. citizen and then a brilliant young Professor of Mathematics at Penn State, who disappeared while on a hiking trip in Chile in January 1985. In mid 2001, declassified U.S. Government documents revealed that Professor Weisfeiler was probably kidnapped by a Chilean military patrol, contradicting an initial report that he had accidentally drowned. Whether he was then beaten to death or transported to the infamous prison of Colonia Dignidad (where he may have survived) is uncertain. Unbelievably, we in the academic community still do not know exactly what happened to him, in spite of numerous attempts by the mathematical community and his family to obtain the truth. The longer this task is delayed, the less likelihood there is that the truth will ever be found.

If, as now appears likely, Boris Weisfeiler was the victim of terrorists acting in the name of Pinochet's famously repressive government, his family and colleagues should be able to know what happened to him. In a year when meticulous care is being taken to provide closure for the families and friends of victims entombed in the World Trade Center, fairness demands that the same effort be made on behalf of the family and colleagues of Boris Weisfeiler. We have waited a very long time.

Sincerely,

Gary L. Mullen  
Chair, Mathematics Dept.

GLM/bab

✓cc: Olga Weisfeiler