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Contact: Chris Tucker - (202) 225-5121

## **Peterson urges new Chilean president to get to the bottom of Weisfeiler case**

*Letter to President Bachelet signed by high-profile senators, to be delivered by Weisfeiler family*

**Pleasantville, PA** - A formal letter of inquiry regarding the fate and possible whereabouts of long-time missing Penn State professor Boris Weisfeiler is on its way to Santiago, Chile this afternoon, crafted by U.S. Rep. John E. Peterson, R-Pleasantville, and to be delivered to the Chilean president personally by Boris's niece, Anna Weisfeiler, and his sister, Olga.

"Earlier this month, my colleagues and I asked Secretary [of State Condoleezza] Rice to deliver a message to the new Chilean president that the United States government has not forgotten about Boris Weisfeiler - and you shouldn't either," said Rep. Peterson. "Today, with the help of Anna and Olga, we seek to open a direct line of communication with President Bachelet, hopeful that her new administration will make a commitment to addressing this case with the degree of seriousness and candor it deserves."

The letter represents the first piece of direct, formal correspondence between members of the U.S. Congress and newly inaugurated Chilean President Michelle Bachelet. Joining Peterson in signing it were several members of the House, including Pennsylvania congressmen Mike Fitzpatrick, R-Levittown, Mike Doyle, D-Forest Hills, and Allyson Schwartz, D-Jenkintown, as well as a number of high-profile members of the Senate, including Pennsylvania Republicans Rick Santorum and Arlen Specter, and Massachusetts Democrats Edward Kennedy and John Kerry.

Mr. Weisfeiler, a former professor of mathematics at Penn State, disappeared in 1985 while on a

hiking trip near the border of Chile and Argentina. Authorities from Chile concluded at the time that Weisfeiler had fallen into a river and drowned, though evidence would later surface suggesting that Weisfeiler had been detained by former dictator Augusto Pinochet and taken for interrogation. Little is known of the Russian-born professor's fate beyond that.

For her part, President Bachelet has heard of the Weisfeiler case before, briefed in 2002 as minister of defense under former President Ricardo Lagos, and most recently by Secretary Rice upon urging from Congress earlier this month. Lagos, the outgoing president, represented a government that largely refused to offer substantive comment on or investigate further the details of the Weisfeiler case. Today, Peterson and others expressed optimism that President Bachelet's inauguration will mark an important turning point in which both Chile and the United States can enter into a bi-lateral, transparent, and comprehensive investigation of Mr. Weisfeiler's fate.

"President Bachelet informed Secretary Rice that she was ready and willing to work with the U.S. government to get to the truth, and we're going to hold her to that commitment," added Peterson. "It is my hope that we'll now be able to finally conduct a thorough and appropriate investigation into Boris's disappearance, and, in the process, hopefully provide some support, comfort, and well deserved answers to the Weisfeiler family."

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A complete list of the co-signatories, along with the letter itself, is attached to this release