

## (January 22, 2008) Lipinski Stops Deportation for Corina Turcinovic

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Works with Bipartisan Group to Gain Release

[Washington D.C.] Today, Congressman Dan Lipinski successfully secured a stay of deportation and a release from jail for Corina Turcinovic. Mrs. Turcinovic, a French national, was on her way to the airport when ICE responded to the congressional request from the House Immigration Subcommittee.

"Today, injustice was narrowly averted when the car carrying Corina Turcinovic to the airport was turned around," said Rep. Lipinski. "I am greatly relieved that I was able to get Democrats and Republicans on the House Immigration Subcommittee to join me in working to delay the deportation and allow Corina to return home while her case is considered."

Mrs. Turcinovic was arrested at her home on December 28 and her lawyer was told she would be deported on January 30th. However, early this morning it became evident that immigration authorities planned to deport Corina this afternoon. In response, Congressman Lipinski quickly enlisted bipartisan leaders on the House Judiciary Committee to help secure Corina's release. Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Immigration, played an active role in preventing Corina's deportation, while Republicans Steve King (R-IA, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Immigration) and Lamar Smith (R-TX, Ranking Member of the full Judiciary Committee) agreed the case deserved a second look. Immigration officials agreed to delay deportation while Corina was on her way to the airport.

"This is a very unique case resulting from a bureaucratic mistake, it is not connected to the issue of comprehensive immigration reform," stated Lipinski, "That is why I was able to get bipartisan cooperation to halt the deportation."

Mrs. Turcinovic entered the United States legally in 1990 when her then-fiancé, Maro Turcinovic, was paralyzed after being hit by a car in New Jersey. Maro was soon transferred to Chicago for rehabilitation care, and Corina - having been given permission by immigration authorities to stay and care for her injured fiancé - came with him. Over the next 14 years, Corina would spend nearly every hour attending to the health needs of Maro, and in 1996, the couple was married. Maro was pursuing his American citizenship, but due to his paralysis he was unable to visit a U.S. immigration office to have his fingerprints taken. Unfortunately, the bureaucratic red-tape remained unresolved when complications stemming from Maro's injuries claimed his life. Because Maro did not become a citizen prior to his death, Corina could not apply for permanent legal status under the expedited procedures available to spouses and widows of U.S. citizens.

To help correct this government mistake, Rep. Lipinski introduced a bill, H.R. 5030, on Corina's behalf on January 16, 2008. If signed into law, this legislation would grant Mrs. Turcinovic permanent legal resident status in the United States. The House Subcommittee on Immigration is expected to consider this legislation in mid-February.

"This is just the first step in fighting to correct the bureaucratic snafu that prevented Corina's husband, Maro, from obtaining his citizenship before he died," said Rep. Lipinski. "There is still more work to be done, but we now will have the time to make the case that Corina's situation is unique and was the result of a mistake by the government."