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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

## The Goldman Act at Five Years

# Preventing—and Assisting Victims of Child Abduction

*Excerpts of remarks  
by Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ)  
at press conference in Red Bank, NJ  
August 8, 2019*

It took more than five and a half years for David Goldman to bring Sean home.

David's extraordinary love and devotion to Sean coupled with a tenacity and indomitable spirit to persevere even when things appeared to be hopeless, was vindicated on December 24, 2009 when together they boarded a jet in Rio de Janeiro bound for the United States.

David Goldman was blessed to have an amazing international family law attorney Patricia Apy—a world class expert in child abduction cases and related matters.

And David had the solid support from the community including Mark DeAngelis—head of the [Bring Sean Home Foundation](#)—and journalists including Asbury Park Press columnist Bill Handleman.

As I worked with David, Patricia and Mark—and having twice traveled to Brazil with David—it became clear to me that little or nothing was ever done by the U.S. government to help not just David and Sean but other children and left behind parents. I was shocked and dismayed by the lack of effective advocacy by the U.S. Department of State.

So, working with David, Patricia, Mark and my chief of staff Mary Noonan, I introduced comprehensive legislation to prevent parental child abduction and to assist those who are abducted and their left behind parent and sanction those countries that demonstrated a pattern of noncompliance with the Goldman Act.

It took five years for the [Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act of 2014](#) to be enacted into law.

Today, we mark and recognize the significant progress achieved over the five years since passage—all inspired by Sean and David—including a dramatic decline in the number of new cases of parental child abduction and the resolution of many others.

According to the U.S. Department of State, there has been a continuing, consistent decrease in the number of abductions from a high of 1,512 in 2008 to 698 abductions in 2018.

In his letter of transmittal of the [2019 Annual Report on International Child Abduction](#), Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said that:

“During 2018, the Prevention Team responded to more than 5,200 prevention-related public inquiries and enrolled over 4,700 children in our prevention programs...

“232 children returned to the United States and an additional 174 cases were resolved in other ways during 2018...

“Some countries demonstrated a pattern of noncompliance as defined in the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act of 2014. This Report cites nine such countries.”

The Annual Report coupled with the [Action Report on International Child Abduction](#) required by the Goldman Act also provides American judges with accurate user-friendly information in country-specific charts allowing judges to assess country risks in the cases they adjudicate.

Much progress has been made.

However, much remains to be done—[utilizing all the tools including serious sanctions against offending countries that are embedded into the Goldman Act](#) need to be robustly applied. Countries with egregious records of noncompliance including Japan need to be held accountable.

Over the years, I’ve [chaired 15 congressional hearings](#) on child abduction. David Goldman has been the lead witness at four of them, providing insights, hope and a way forward. In like manner, Patricia Apy has testified as well—most recently at my [July 25th hearing](#).

Another former hearing witness—[left behind dad Ravindra Parmar of Manalapan—testified in 2015](#) three years after his son was abducted to India. He still yearns to be reunited and said at the hearing:

“I am here today because my little boy, whom I love dearly, isn’t with me and he has been robbed of his father’s love and presence... Reyansh is another victim of a crime that was not perpetrated by a stranger but by his own parent. It was a calculated and malicious act committed to inflict maximum pain on me without any regard for Reyansh’s wellbeing or rights.”