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September 22, 2017

The Honorable Salvador Sánchez Cerén  
President of El Salvador  
Casa Presidencial  
San Salvador, El Salvador

Dear President Sánchez Cerén,

I write to offer my congratulations and support for your decree establishing a National Commission to search and resolve cases of the disappeared from El Salvador's civil war. I regret that I cannot attend Wednesday's announcement and formal launch of the Commission due to urgent matters before the U.S. Congress here in Washington, D.C.

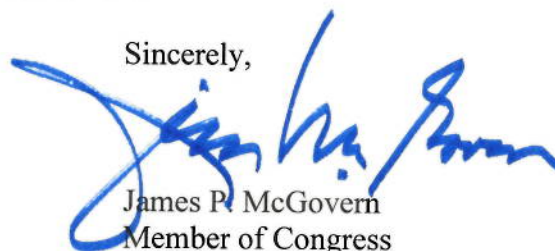
I would like to express again my appreciation for your time and that of your ministers and officials this past January you met with a delegation from the Mauricio Aquino Foundation, other human rights groups, and Salvadoran and Salvadoran-American families who are still searching for answers about what happened to their missing relatives and loved ones. It was a powerful and moving experience for me, and I could see that even the opportunity to meet with you and discuss directly the pain of their not knowing was an act of healing.

I firmly believe that the establishment of a National Commission to Search for the Disappeared will be a valuable contribution for the families and children of the missing and a valuable part of your legacy as president. It will play an important role in the effort to address El Salvador's collective grief and heal the wounds of the past. I appreciate your commitment to seeing it established in a timely manner.

For the Commission to be successful, each of our countries must now take extra effort and care to preserve and make available to the Commission all government, military, intelligence and security records of the period that might help shed light, provide information, clues, context or other documentation that might help solve the puzzle of each missing individual. This is the minimum we can do for these grieving individuals and families.

Once again, thank you for your leadership on establishing this National Commission and further advancing peace and reconciliation in El Salvador. Please know that I will do all that I can to support this important initiative.

Sincerely,



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress