

Dear Colleague:

I am writing to invite you to join me in sending the **attached letter to President Obama urging him to confer the Presidential Medal of Freedom on Jan Karski.**

Jan Karski was a Polish diplomat who, after being tortured by the Nazis, escaped and became a courier for the Polish underground, smuggling information out of Poland to the Polish government-in-exile. Among his many missions, he twice infiltrated Warsaw's Jewish Ghetto to witness its horrors. He was sent to the West and was the first credible witness to inform the Allies about the Holocaust and encourage prompt and forceful action. You can learn more about Jan Karski at: <http://www.jankarski.net/1/618/About+Karski.html>

Jan Karski's courage has been recognized by the Israeli and Polish Governments, the World Center for Holocaust Research, and by both the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League. Yad Vashem recognized him as "Righteous Among the Nations", and statues honoring Karski have been placed in New York City and on the grounds of Georgetown University.

In honor of the Centennial of Dr. Karski's birth in 2014, and the Jan Karski U. S. Centennial Campaign is submitting a request to President Obama that he grant the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Dr. Karski. The deadline for materials to be submitted in support of that request is December 14. If you would like to sign this letter, please contact Karen Larson (karen.larson@mail.house.gov) of my staff by **COB on Wednesday December 14.**

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

NITA M. LOWEY

Member of Congress

Dec. 12, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We are writing to encourage you to award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to the late Dr. Jan Karski, a diplomat who, after the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939 worked for the Polish Underground and witnessed Nazi war crimes first hand. He was smuggled into the Warsaw Ghetto where he witnessed atrocities and later entered the Nazi Izbica transit camp disguised as a guard. Armed with the tragic knowledge he had gained at great personal risk, Karski then met with Allied leaders including British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden and President Roosevelt sharing his eyewitness accounts and pleading

for a strong response. While those pleas were not successful, he was persistent in his efforts to make the world understand the reality of the Holocaust. Later during the war, his firsthand account, *Story of a Secret State*, was published and became a bestseller.

In the years since, Dr. Karski has been widely recognized by the governments of Israel and Poland for his contributions. Israel granted him honorary citizenship and Yad Vashem honored him as a "Righteous Among the Nations." He also received Poland's highest civilian award, the Order of the White Eagle, along with its premier military decoration, Virtuti Militari.

As the centennial of Dr. Karski's birth approaches in 2014, the Jan Karski US Centennial Campaign is developing programming here in the United States as well as in Poland and Israel to commemorate his legacy. Both the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League have named awards in Dr. Karski's honor in recognition of his heroic and consistent efforts to stop the Holocaust.

In describing Medal of Freedom recipients, you said that they "reveal the best of who we are and who we aspire to be." Dr. Karski's courage in standing up and speaking out at great personal risk certainly reflects those values. With that in mind, we encourage you to confer the Presidential Medal of Freedom on Dr. Jan Karski who called on us to seek our highest selves, to speak truth to power and to promote tolerance toward all people.

Sincerely,