Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 14, 2016

The Honorable François Nkuna Balumuene
Ambassador to the United States
Democratic Republic of the Congo
1100 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 725
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Ambassador Balumuene,

We write to you on behalf of the American families, including the families in Washington state, who have completed the adoption of children from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and are currently awaiting exit permits. As their representatives, we are encouraged by your government's recent decision to begin issuing exit permits once again. We thank you for your continued efforts to ensure that all children adopted by American families are able to receive exit permits by the end of March.

As you know, the exit permits suspension which has been in place since September 2013, has deeply affected the lives of our constituents, as well as hundreds of American families around the country. Many American parents moved to the DRC in order to properly care for their adopted children, undertaking significant personal and financial hardship to do so. In many cases, this required them to leave behind spouses and children in the United States for the duration of their stay. Your government's recent announcement that more than 200 exit permits would be issued is very welcome news for our adoptive families, as is the commitment to continue the review process until all cases have been resolved.

As the representatives of adoptive parents, we ask you to ensure that the ongoing review process by the commission charged with resolving all pending adoption cases be given your government's highest priority. We are committed to working with your government to continue resolving all pending adoption cases quickly, and appreciate your cooperation and commitment to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Patty Murray
U.S. Senator

Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senator

Dave Reichert
U.S. Representative

Suzan DelBene
U.S. Representative

Rick Larsen
U.S. Representative

Jaime Herrera Beutler
U.S. Representative

Dan Newhouse
U.S. Representative

Cathy McMorris Rodgers
U.S. Representative

Derek Kilmer
U.S. Representative

Jim McDermott
U.S. Representative

Adam Smith
U.S. Representative

Denny Heck
U.S. Representative