Dear Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I write to ask that you support human rights in Bahrain by speaking up on behalf of Mahdi Abu Deeb and all prisoners of conscience currently suffering from torture and mistreatment in the country. Mahdi Abu Deeb is a teacher, education administrator and former president of the Bahrain Teachers’ Association (BTA) who is currently serving a five year prison sentence in Bahrain for peacefully protesting for democratic reforms. Dr. Abu Deeb suffers from chronic health issues including diabetes and high blood pressure, as well as other ailments resulting from ill-treatment and torture incurred while in detention. He was formerly employed by Bahrain’s Ministry of Education to guide development of art studies in government schools, and was elected Assistant-Secretary General of the Arab Teachers’ Union in 2010.

In February 2011, thousands of Bahrainis took the streets to peacefully call for democracy, freedom, and political reforms as part of a broader movement in the Middle East. The authorities in Bahrain responded with a violent and brutal crackdown that resulted in dozens of deaths, hundreds of injuries, and thousands of arbitrary arrests. Since then, the government has only continued to crack down on human rights by the recently criminalizing the rights to freedom of assembly, association, and speech, while fostering a culture of impunity for human rights abusers. Arbitrary detention and torture continue unabated, while the government reduces the sentences of convicted human rights offenders.

Dr. Mahdi Abu Deeb was among those arbitrarily arrested and tortured in 2011. He was detained on April 6, 2011 after the BTA joined protests calling for reform and was active in a strike concerning education reform and human rights abuses. Dr. Abu Deeb was charged with halting the education process, inciting hatred of the regime, and attempting to overthrow the regime. The BTA was subsequently dissolved by the Ministry of Social Development the next day. Three years later, neither the BTA nor any other society for the rights of teachers has been allowed to be re-established. Following his arrest, Abu Deeb spent 64 days in solitary confinement, was physically assaulted, and would later allege in appeals court that he was tortured.

As your constituent, I ask that you call on the Government of Bahrain to unconditionally release Mahdi Abu Deeb and to ensure that he is receiving adequate medical treatment on par with international standards. The United States government has an obligation to ensure that its allies in the region uphold basic human rights such as the rights to peaceful association, assembly and speech.

For that reason, I ask that you, in your capacity as a public figure, bring attention to Mahdi Abu Deeb’s situation, and send a strong signal that the United States does not condone the arbitrary detention and maltreatment of peaceful demonstrators and human rights activists.

Sincerely,

Name

Address