

The Committee on Foreign Affairs
Member Day Hearing
Testimony of Congressman Al Green on
H.Res. 17 – Expressing concern over the
disappearance of Austin Tice

I would like to thank Chairman Engel and Ranking Member McCaul for presenting me with this opportunity to testify before the Committee. I would also like to thank them for their efforts, in particular for their leadership in sending a bi-cameral letter to the White House requesting the dispatch of the Special Envoy for Hostage Affairs for Mr. Austin Tice. Because of you, the letter had support from 52 senators and 120 representatives and, for that, I am especially thankful.

Mr. Tice is a former Marine Corps Captain and freelance journalist from Houston, Texas. He is an Eagle Scout and grew up wanting to become an international correspondent for NPR. Mr. Tice was an outstanding student. He attended the University of Houston for one year and then transferred to the Georgetown University, School of Foreign Service.

His work was published in The Washington Post, McClatchy newspaper, and Agence France-Presse. He was enrolled in Georgetown Law School and had completed two years before his sudden disappearance.

In May of 2012, Mr. Tice went to Syria as a freelance journalist to tell the story of the ongoing conflict there. He was abducted after being detained at a checkpoint in Damascus and approximately a month later, a 43-second video emerged with the title “Austin Tice is Alive.”

The video showed Austin being held by a group of unidentified men with assault rifles. There has been absolutely no contact with his captors since. We can only imagine the horrors Mr. Tice has been through the past seven years. The Tice Family and the U.S. government are both confident that Mr. Tice is alive and have worked tirelessly for his release. The F.B.I. has offered a \$1 million reward for information leading to his return.

One of our most important responsibilities as elected officials is to protect the American people, on both

domestic and foreign soil. We have an obligation to Mr. Tice and his parents, who have waited for over seven years to see their son.

I am indebted to all my colleagues across both chambers and both sides of the aisle for their advocacy on behalf of Mr. Tice and his family, but I believe we can still do more. That is why I am testifying today in support of my resolution, H.Res.17. My resolution expresses concern over the detention of Austin Tice and encourages the Department of State, the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, and other U.S. government entities to engage with Syria to facilitate Mr. Tice's safe release.

I have never given up on my constituents or family members of constituents who have been deported or detained by foreign governments. Seven years is simply too long for Mr. Tice to be separated from his loved ones, and I ask this Committee to take up my resolution and show that Congress not only agrees with this sentiment but also calls for his safe return.

I thank you again and welcome any questions you may have about my resolution or Austin Tice.