

Lincoln, NE – Congressman Jeff Fortenberry today called on U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to work to protect Chinese human rights activist Chen Guangcheng, who has sought U.S. support after fleeing house arrest in China. Secretary Clinton and Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner are currently in China for official talks under the framework of the bilateral Security and Economic Dialogue.

"Chen Guangcheng has given voice to the poor and vulnerable in Chinese society. For this, his government imprisoned and persecuted him. Today he and his family live under the threat of violence and intimidation.

"It is a great tribute to the United States that a Chinese human rights hero is seeking our protection. Persons all over the world in the harshest conditions often know that America is their last best hope. I urge Secretary Clinton to negotiate asylum or some other absolute guarantee for the protection of Chen and his family."

Guangcheng is a blind, self-taught lawyer who was sentenced to prison in 2006 after campaigning on behalf of women who had undergone forced sterilizations and abortions.

Fortenberry is a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and is Vice Chairman of its Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights.

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