

U.S. Congressmen Introduce Bill Targeting Magnitsky's Enemies

September 29, 2010

The  **Moscow Times**

Two U.S. congressmen, Benjamin Cardin and James McGovern, introduced a bill Wednesday that would freeze assets of and block visas for individuals responsible for the death of Hermitage Capital lawyer Sergei Magnitsky.

Magnitsky died of health problems in a pretrial detention center in Moscow last November. He was placed under arrest by Interior Ministry investigators after he accused senior ministry officials of embezzling millions of dollars in government funds.

The bill calls for the U.S. government to lift the sanctions only after Russia conducts a thorough probe into Magnitsky's death and the fraud he was investigating and brings offenders in both cases to justice, the official U.S. human rights watchdog, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, said in a statement.

Cardin first proposed a visa ban in April, saying it should cover 60 Russian officials implicated in the tax fraud and Magnitsky's death.

Both legislators backing the bill are members of the Democratic Party.

President Dmitry Medvedev ordered the Prosecutor General's Office to open an investigation into Magnitsky's death amid an international outcry, but investigators have failed to name any suspects and ruled that all officials involved had done their jobs correctly. A separate police investigation into the actions of officers linked to the tax fraud also has produced no results.

Editor's note: An earlier version of this article and its headline indicated James McGovern was a U.S. senator. McGovern is in fact a U.S. representative, or congressman.

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