

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
13 AUGUST 2009

## **NDP MPs URGE HALT TO IRAQ WAR RESISTER DEPORTATION**

**BURNABY:** New Democrat MPs Libby Davies (Vancouver East), Peter Julian (Burnaby-New Westminster), Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior), Denise Savoie (Victoria), Jean Crowder (Nanimo Cowichan), Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway), and Bill Siksay (Burnaby-Douglas) have urged the federal government to stop all removal action against US Iraq war resister Rodney Watson.

“Rodney Watson, like other war resisters, made a principled decision to refuse further service in the war in Iraq. He sought asylum in Canada because his position of conscience was not respected in the US. He should receive a welcome here and not be sent back to a very uncertain future”, said Siksay. “Canada refused to participate in the war in Iraq and many Canadians believe it is an illegal war. Supporting those who take a stand against war has been a long tradition in Canada and we have often benefited from those who came here rather than participating. One need only look to the Viet Nam War era for an example of the positive outcomes of a policy that supported war resisters.”

“On two occasions a majority of Members of the House of Commons have called on the government to stop deporting war resisters and instead put in place a programme that gives them asylum and puts them on track to be permanent residents of Canada. The Conservative government should act on the will of the House”, concluded Siksay.

Rodney Watson came to Canada in 2007. He is a resident of Greater Vancouver. Since arriving in Canada Watson has started a family, and now has an eight month old Canadian son. The text of the NDP MPs letter to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Jason Kenney and Minister of Public Safety Peter Van Loan follows.

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For more information:  
Office of Bill Siksay MP (613-996-5597)

**TEXT of letter to Minister Kenney and Minister Van Loan:**

OTTAWA  
12 August 2009

The Honourable Jason Kenney, PC MP  
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration,  
The Honourable Peter Van Loan, PC MP  
Minister of Public Safety,  
House of Commons  
OTTAWA ON K1A 0A6

Dear Ministers,

We are writing with regard to impending removal from Canada of Rodney Watson. Mr. Watson is an Iraq war resister who has made a refugee claim in Canada. As you know, Canada refused to participate in the war in Iraq which many Canadians believe to be an illegal war.

We would strongly urge you to immediately intervene to cease all deportation action against Mr. Watson and to allow him to remain in Canada.

In doing so, we would again draw your attention to the concurrence motions passed in both the 39th and 40th Parliaments which called on the government to establish a specific programme for war resisters who seek asylum and permanent residence in Canada.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your early reply.

Sincerely yours,



Bill Siksay MP  
Burnaby-Douglas

On behalf of:  
Libby Davies MP  
Vancouver East

Don Davies MP  
Vancouver Kingsway

Peter Julian MP  
Burnaby-New Westminster

Alex Atamanenko  
British Columbia Southern Interior

Jean Crowder MP  
Nanaimo Cowichan

Denise Savoie MP  
Victoria