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UMSL GRADUATE STUDENT HAS CONTRABAND CHARGES
DROPPED BY RUSSIAN COURT

Researcher expected to return to UMSL in several days

St. Louis, MO- The office of Congressman Todd Akin (R-MO), has been informed that Roxanna Contreras, a graduate student at the University of Missouri St. Louis (UMSL) will be allowed to leave Russia after paying a fine equivalent to \$600 U.S. dollars. Contreras had been detained by Russian authorities since June 14 for having purchased various medals and coins from a street vendor. The items valued at approximately thirty U.S. dollars had been declared contraband by Russian authorities.

Congressman Todd Akin, who had advocated on the behalf of an UMSL student and had written the Russian Embassy on behalf of Contreras stated that, "I am very pleased to hear that there has been a resolution to Roxanna's case and that she will be able to return to her research at UMSL."

Dr. Sonya Bahar, Roxana's PhD thesis advisor told Congressman Akin's office that;

"I cannot possibly express how thrilled and relieved I am that Roxana has been freed and will be able to return home. She has been held for 76 days for a minor infraction for which most tourists are never detained.

"It has been an agonizing ordeal for her, but she has gone through it with immense courage and dignity. Although confusing that they were ever brought, I am glad that the prosecution finally dropped the contraband charges, which carried the possibility of a seven year jail sentence. She has many supporters who are very relieved that justice has finally been attained and that this talented scientist and wonderful person will be able to return to UMSL.

"I am very grateful to Congressman Akin, to the University of Missouri at St. Louis, and to the Chilean government, for their support of Roxana throughout this Kafka-esque nightmare."

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