

COMPENSATION FOR SILENCE

In response to public outcry in the aftermath of the May 12 earthquake, local governments across Sichuan Province initiated a coordinated campaign to appease angry parents of children killed in collapsed schools during the earthquake. Officials visited parents' homes, sometimes even in the middle of the night, with a written agreement in hand, and warned that if the parents did not sign this agreement, they would receive no special assistance from the government. While many parents have in fact received varying sums from the government as compensation for their losses, the agreement making them eligible for this compensation includes no specific terms regarding the total compensation they should expect. Versions of this agreement varied by locality—the version pictured below was distributed in Hanwang, China.*

*Edward Wong, "China Presses Hush Money on Grieving Parents," *The New York Times*, July 24, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/24/world/asia/24quake.html?hp>.

“5·12”特大地震遇難學生家庭 社保扶助和特殊救助申請書

_____鎮(鄉)人民政府(街道辦事
我們是_____學校，_____

_____班
學生_____的家長，父親_____
母親_____。

突如其來的“5·12”特大地震導致我們子女
房倒塌，孩子在地震震倒的學校樓房中不幸
其悲傷和痛苦。天災無情，人間有愛，黨委
政府及時伸出了強有力的關愛之手，動員
社會方方面面深切地對我們開展疏導關懷、
助我們走出痛苦的境地，解決地震造成的困
對黨委、
政府的真情關懷、強有力幫助和社會的關愛
！

但是，由於喪失子女、房屋毀損、家庭經濟補
後的生活困難重重，後顧之憂壓力巨大，為
府組織協調社會各方個面幫助我們解決社保
殊救助。今後，我們將在黨和政府
的領導下，遵守法律，自覺維護災後重建的
不參予影響災後重建大局的任何活動。自力
業，積極參與抗震救災，集中精力重建美
請予批准！

申請人：(父親)

(母親)

二〇〇八年 月 日

Families of Students Killed in the May 12th Earthquake Application for Social Security Assistance and Special Aid

_____ Town (County) People's Government (Subdistrict Office):

We are the parents of _____, a student in the _____ class,
_____ grade, at _____ school. The father's name is
_____, the mother's name is _____.

The sudden earthquake on May 12th caused our children's school to collapse, and the children that were inside the school building that collapsed as a result of the earthquake were unfortunately killed. We are extremely sad and in great pain. While the natural disaster was merciless, amongst our people there was love. The Communist Party Committee and the government promptly reached out their powerful and loving hands and mobilized all parts of society to provide guidance, bring aid, help us to step out of this place of suffering, and resolve the problems caused by the earthquake. For this, we express thanks from the bottom of our hearts to the Party Committee and the government for their genuine concern and vigorous aid, and to society for their concern as well.

However, due to the loss of our children, as well as the damage done to our homes and our family's financial situation, our lives hereafter will be beset with difficulties, and the pressure of future worries will be great. Because of this, we are specifically applying to the government to organize and coordinate various parts of society to help us obtain social security assistance and special aid.

Henceforth, under the leadership of the Communist Party and the government, we will abide by the law and be conscious to safeguard social order during post-earthquake reconstruction. We will absolutely not participate in any activity that may influence this reconstruction. We will reconstruct through our own efforts, undertake the arduous task of starting over, actively participate in earthquake precautions and disaster relief, and concentrate our energy on rebuilding a beautiful and prosperous homeland!

We request your approval!

Applicant: (Father)
(Mother)

____ (month) ____ (day), 2008