

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 28, 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

Your recent decision to drastically curtail our nation's acceptance of refugees is an abdication of American leadership and values. We urge you to reconsider.

The Fiscal Year 2019 refugee admissions goal of just 30,000 people is a 33 percent decrease from the previous historic low cap of 45,000 for fiscal year 2018. Setting a new record low refugee admissions goal is an abandonment of U.S. leadership amidst the largest global refugee crisis in history, and ultimately makes America less safe. We urge you to increase the refugee admission level to no lower than 110,000.

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, there are more than 68.5 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide, 25.4 million of whom are refugees. Yet the ratio of refugees admitted to the United States to the number of refugees worldwide has never been lower. The U.S. has a long history of resettling refugees, and leveraged the resettlement program to advance our diplomatic, foreign policy, and national security interests. With the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980, the average admissions goal until fiscal year 2018 was 95,000, with an average of 80,000 refugees resettled each year.

As both Republican and Democratic administrations have confirmed, the United States screens refugees more stringently than any other traveler allowed to enter the United States. Over the past 1.5 years this administration has made additional changes to the program to further ensure its safety and security. Our refugee admissions program has safely and successfully resettled more than three million refugees from around the world to American communities across the country since 1975. Refugee applicants must undergo a robust and thorough screening process that takes roughly two years and involves our nation's top security and counter-terror experts. The exhaustive vetting process includes checking fingerprints and other biometric data against terrorist and criminal databases and multiple interviews through multiple Federal agencies.

Therefore, when faced with a record high number of global refugees, the Administration's response of setting an historic low refugee admissions cap ignores an obvious humanitarian crisis that the United States can and should help address. The announcement comes after a failure to consult with Congress, as mandated by U.S. law. The announcement also implies that the Administration cannot address the asylum backlog while also maintaining a strong refugee admissions level. Refugee resettlement and asylum are two critical forms of protection and one need not come at the expense of the other, especially at a time when global needs have never been greater. Moreover, diverting resources away from refugee resettlement to asylum has yet to successfully reduce the backlog.

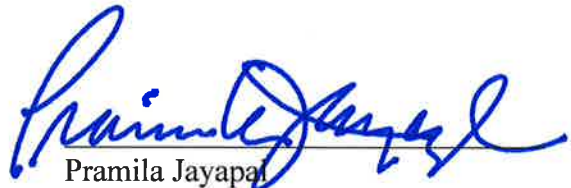
It is also deeply concerning that the United States is on track to resettle less than half of the refugee admissions goal set for fiscal year 2018. According to public State Department data, as of eleven months into fiscal year 2018, the U.S. had resettled only 19,899 refugees — a more than 60 percent drop compared to the same period in fiscal year 2017 when 51,392 refugees had been resettled. At this rate, the U.S. is on track to resettle no more than 22,000 refugees in fiscal year 2018. In addition, there has also been a 90 percent reduction in the number of Muslim refugees resettled compared to the previous fiscal year.

Our nation has rich history as a beacon of freedom and hope. At a time when we are facing the world's worst displacement crisis in history, the U.S. refugee resettlement must step up and help meet these needs — which also encourages other countries to do the same. Slamming America's door on refugees is an abandonment of American values, and a commentary on the broader global retreat sounded by this administration. These anti-refugee policies will harm our economic and national security interests in the near and long-term.

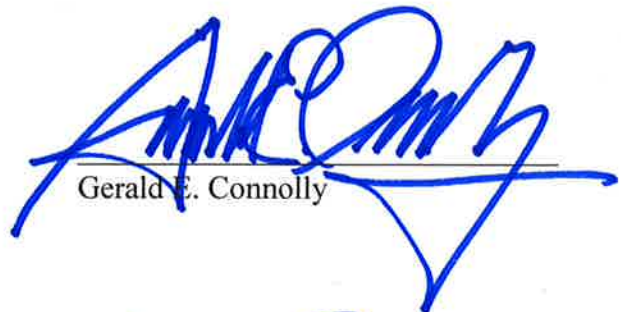
We call on your administration to stop its systematic effort to dismantle the U.S. resettlement program, raise the fiscal year 2019 refugee admissions cap to no lower than 110,000 refugees, engage in the requisite Congressional consultations, and account for the discrepancy between the refugee admissions goal for fiscal year 2018 and the grossly inadequate resettlement rate. We look forward to hearing from you and await your response.

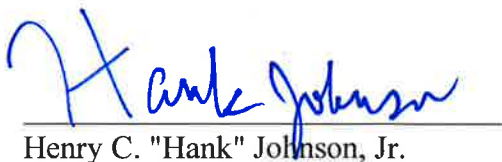
Sincerely,


Donald S. Beyer Jr.


Pramila Jayapal


David N. Cicilline


Gerald E. Connolly


Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.


Bill Pascrell, Jr.



Alan Lowenthal



Joe Crowley



Steve Cohen



Peter Welch



Eleanor Holmes Norton



Frank Pallone, Jr.



Adriano Espaillat



Albio Sires



Carolyn B. Maloney



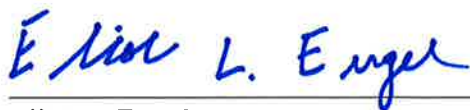
Juan Vargas



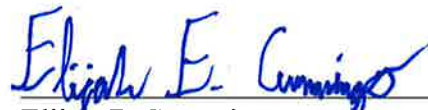
Diana DeGette



Bobby L. Rush

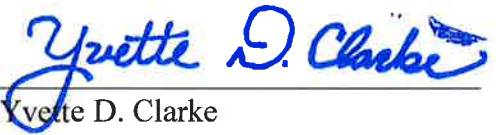


Eliot L. Engel




Elijah E. Cummings


Robert A. Brady


Yvette D. Clarke


Earl Blumenauer


Joaquin Castro


Mark Pocan


Scott H. Peters



James R. Langevin


Nanette Diaz Barragán



Gregory W. Meeks


Ted Deutch


Grace F. Napolitano


Seth Moulton


Julia Brownley


Sean Patrick Maloney

Doris Matsui

Doris Matsui



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Jimmy Gomez

Jimmy Gomez

Elizabeth H. Esty

Elizabeth H. Esty

Katherine M. Clark

Katherine Clark



Keith Ellison

Betty McCollum

Betty McCollum



Barbara Lee

Derek Kilmer

Derek Kilmer

Nita M. Lowey

Nita M. Lowey

Raúl M. Grijalva

Raúl M. Grijalva



Rick Larsen



James P. McGovern



Jared Huffman



Bonnie Watson Coleman



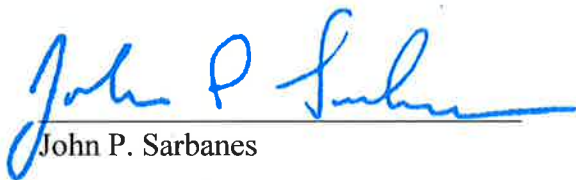
John Yarmuth



Bill Foster



Rosa L. DeLauro



John P. Sarbanes



Darren Soto



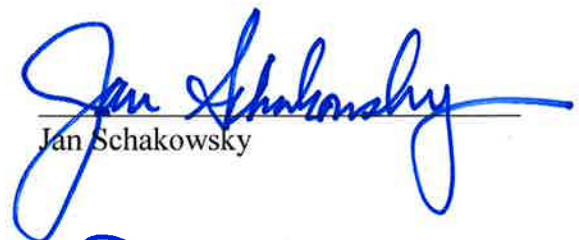
A. Donald McEachin



Donald M. Payne, Jr.



Karen Bass



Jan Schakowsky



Tony Cárdenas



Ro Khanna


Ben Ray Luján


Luis V. Gutiérrez


Grace Meng

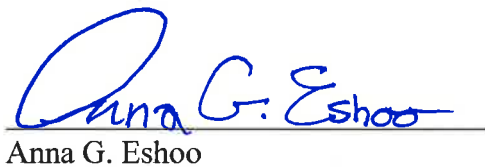

Adam Smith


Ruben Gallego

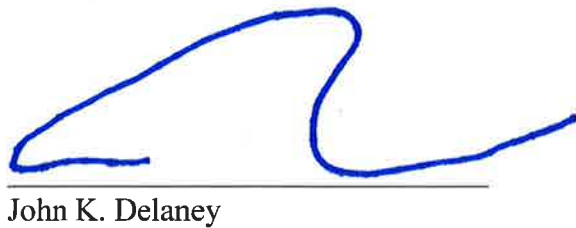

Kathleen M. Rice


David E. Price


J. Luis Correa


Anna G. Eshoo


André Carson


John K. Delaney


Joseph P. Kennedy, III


Robert C. "Bobby" Scott


Lucille Roybal-Allard



Dina Titus



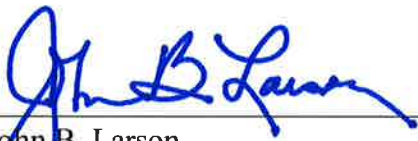
Hakeem Jeffries



Anthony G. Brown



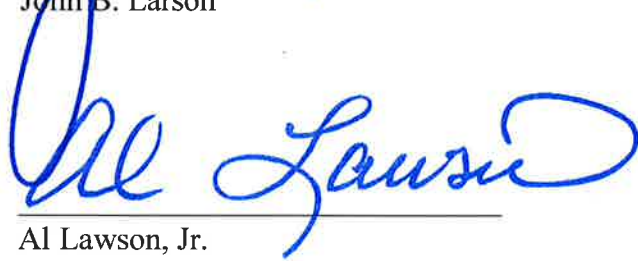
Ed Perlmutter



John B. Larson



Beto O'Rourke



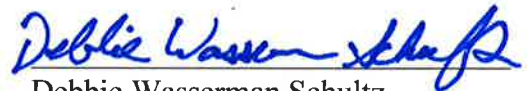
Al Lawson, Jr.



Mark Takano



Peter A. DeFazio



Debbie Wasserman Schultz



Ted W. Lieu



Suzanne Bonamici



Carol Shea-Porter



Brian Higgins

Judy Chu

Judy Chu

G. K. Butterfield

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Jimmy Panetta

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Adam B. Schiff

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Cedric L. Richmond

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Mike Thompson

Mike Thompson

Al Green

Al Green

Brenda L. Lawrence

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Denny Heck

Denny Heck