

LOIS FRANKEL
21ST DISTRICT, FLORIDA

WASHINGTON OFFICE

2305 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-9890

DISTRICT OFFICE

2500 NORTH MILITARY TRAIL
SUITE #490
BOCA RATON, FL 33431
(561) 998-9045
TOLL FREE (866) 264-0957

frankel.house.gov

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0921

April 25, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We write to express our strong opposition to the nomination of Ronald Mortensen for Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration. Mr. Mortensen's animosity toward immigrants and ties to racist organizations disqualify him from managing the bureau responsible for refugee and migration policies and programs, especially at a time when a record number of refugees worldwide are fleeing unspeakable violence, persecution and disaster.

Last year, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that the world is facing the worst refugee crisis since World War II, with a record 68.5 million people forcibly displaced. This number also reflects the highest increase of refugees in a single year, almost 3 million, for a total of more than 25 million refugees worldwide.¹ As a nation of immigrants with a strong history of providing protection for persecuted populations, the United States should welcome refugees and asylum seekers with open arms during this refugee crisis. This approach also demonstrates solidarity with the countries neighboring conflict, who host the vast majority of refugees and are more likely to continue if other nations are stepping up by resettling refugees.

Throughout his career, Mr. Mortensen has made it clear that he does not share these beliefs. He has published his anti-immigrant views through the Center for Immigration Studies, an organization designated as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center for its circulation of writings by authors that have an extensive record of white nationalism and anti-Semitism.² Mr. Mortensen has repeatedly demonized Dreamers as "criminals," accused Latino-American elected officials of dual loyalties, and disparaged American faith leaders for "turning their back on Americans" and focusing on "illegal aliens because they are willing to join their churches."³ In an op-ed in The Hill, he argued that "the myth of the law-abiding illegal alien is just that: a myth."⁴

¹ <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/stories/2018/6/5b222c494/forced-displacement-record-685-million.html>

² <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/center-immigration-studies>


³ <https://cis.org/Mortensen/Religious-Leaders-Love-Their-Neighbors-Long-They-Are-Illegal-Aliens>

⁴ <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/immigration/326272-most-illegal-aliens-routinely-commit-felonies>

The United States has historically been the global leader on refugee resettlement. We are convinced that America's leadership and history of easing the suffering of persecuted peoples would be jeopardized with Mr. Mortensen serving as our senior diplomat for migration and refugee policies.

We urge the Administration to immediately withdraw Mr. Mortensen's nomination and identify a qualified individual who understands our country's moral and legal obligations to assist refugees. Failing to do so would severely undermine our global diplomatic and humanitarian leadership and send a distressing message that the United States is turning its back on the world's most vulnerable people.


Sincerely,

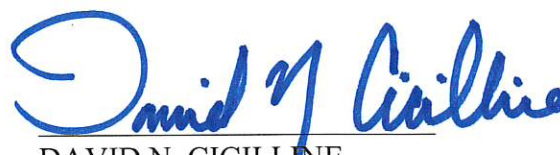

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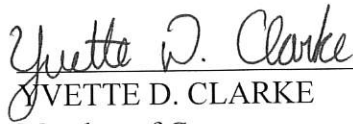

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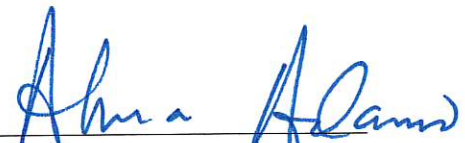
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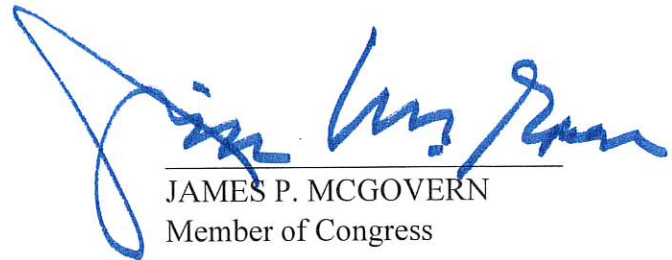
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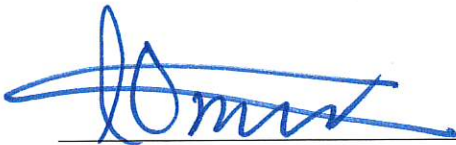
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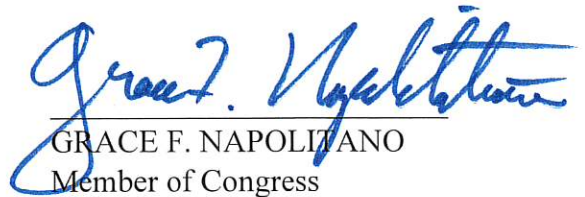
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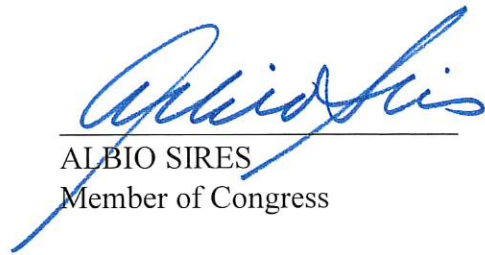
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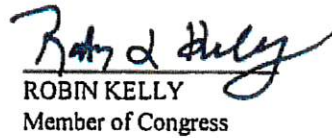
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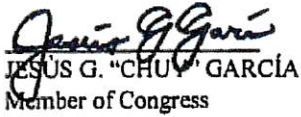
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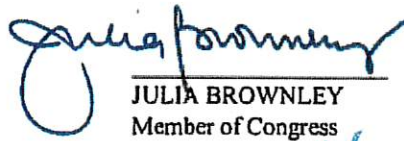
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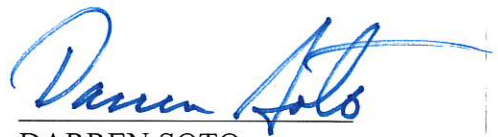
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