

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 17, 2018

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 disqualifies 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.

On June 19, 2018, the United Nations High Commission on Refugees reported that the world is currently facing the worst refugee crisis since World War II, with a record 68.5 million people displaced. This number also reflects the highest increase of refugees in a single year.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.

Throughout his career, Mr. Mortensen has made it clear that he does not share that belief. 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

To commemorate World Refugee Day on June 20, you stated that "the United States provides more humanitarian assistance than any other single country worldwide, including to refugees." We strongly believe 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.

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>

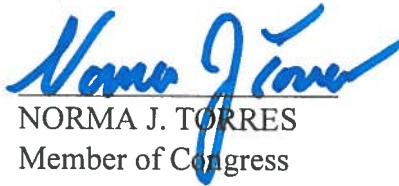
⁴ <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/immigration/326272-most-illegal-aliens-routinely-commit-felonies>

We urge the administration to immediately withdraw Mr. Mortensen's nomination and for you to work with President Trump to name a qualified individual who appreciates 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,



LOIS FRANKEL
Member of Congress



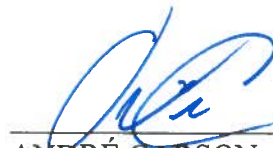
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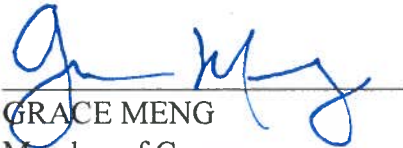
NANETTE DIAZ BARRAGÁN
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Member of Congress



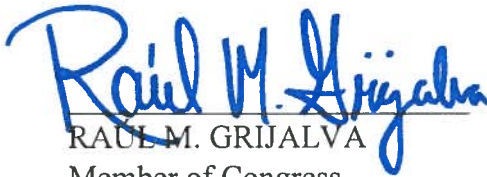
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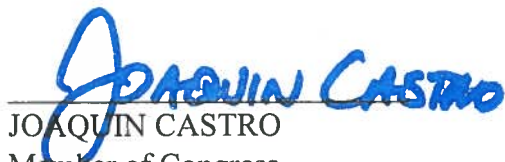


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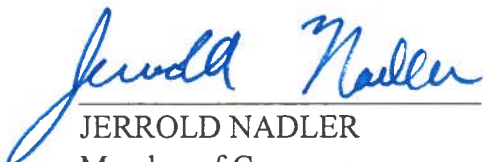


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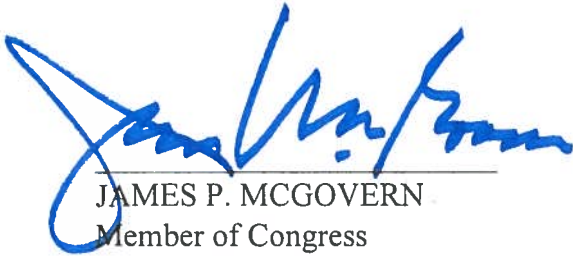
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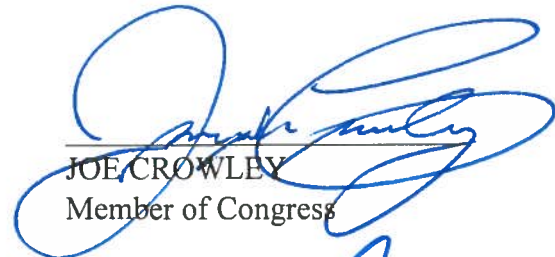
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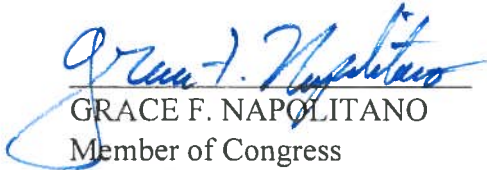
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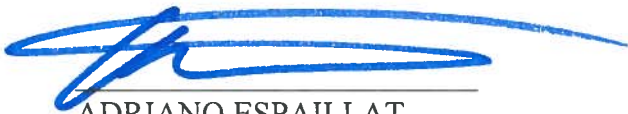
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