

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 2, 2018

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C., 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to express our concern about then-Secretary Tillerson's decision to recommend the termination of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for more than 400,000 Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Haitians despite warnings from senior State Department officials and U.S. diplomats that such a decision would have devastating consequences.

As you know, over the past ten months the Department of Homeland Security, in consultation with the State Department, terminated TPS for over 262,000 Salvadorans, 86,000 Hondurans, and 58,000 Haitians.¹ The Secretary of State plays a crucial role in the decision-making process and is charged with providing an objective assessment of conditions on the ground. In this context, we are deeply troubled by internal State Department documents, which detail how then-Secretary Tillerson knowingly jeopardized our national security interests in Central America and the safety of TPS beneficiaries and their U.S.-citizen children.

The documents released by the State Department pursuant to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request show that then-Secretary Tillerson acknowledged that his recommendation could lead foreign governments to "take retaliatory actions counter to our long-standing national security and economic interests like withdrawing their counternarcotics and anti-gang cooperation with the United States." Despite this troubling admission, the Trump Administration still terminated TPS for all three countries.

In the documents, then-Secretary Tillerson also stated that high levels of crime, weak law enforcement capabilities, and inadequate government services in El Salvador and Honduras would make it difficult for these governments "to ensure the protection of [their] returning citizens – no less the U.S. citizen children who may accompany their parents." Additionally, the State Department openly warned that many of TPS beneficiaries repatriated to El Salvador and

¹ Congressional Research Service, *Temporary Protected Status: Overview and Current Issues* (Jan. 17, 2018)

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Honduras would be accompanied by their U.S.-citizen children, who would be “vulnerable to recruitment by transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), such as MS-13”. Despite these facts, your predecessor still recommended the termination of TPS for all three countries.

In recent weeks, we have witnessed the heart-wrenching separation of approximately 3,000 children from their migrant parents along the southern border. The decision to end TPS for Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Haitians will also result in cruel family separation. TPS beneficiaries will face the difficult decision of separation from their U.S.-citizen children or taking their children to dangerous countries, risking their safety, and making them vulnerable to gang recruitment. This disturbing reality will affect the lives of more than 273,000 U.S. citizen children who will be forced to accompany their parents or be left behind.

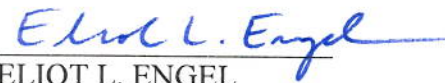
We believe that the warnings that then-Secretary Tillerson ignored – that mass deportations could destabilize the region, trigger a new surge of unauthorized immigration, endanger our U.S. foreign policy goals, risk the safety of TPS beneficiaries and their U.S. citizen children and force the separation of families – require reconsideration.

Given the implications for U.S. national security and the safety of TPS beneficiaries and their U.S.-citizen children, we strongly urge you to reverse your predecessor’s recommendation and conduct a thorough review of the decision-making process that led to it. Going forward, we trust that you will ensure this process is based on objective analysis and relies on the expertise of the State Department.

Sincerely,



ROBERT MENENDEZ
Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee

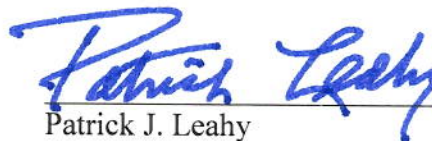


ELIOT L. ENGEL
Ranking Member
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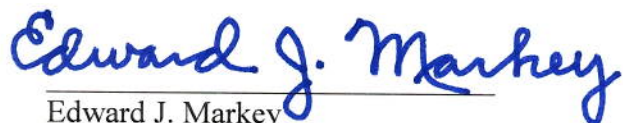
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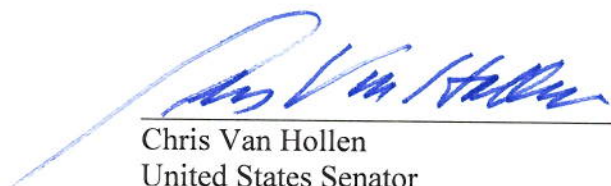
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United States Senator



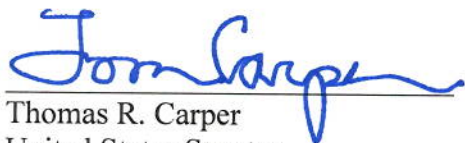
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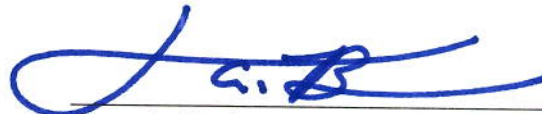
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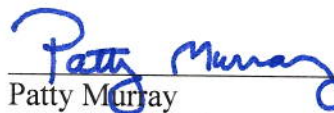
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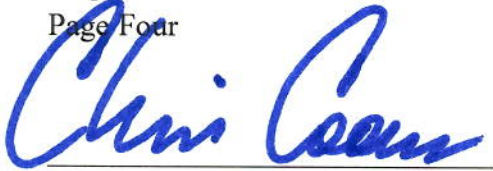


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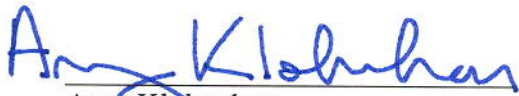
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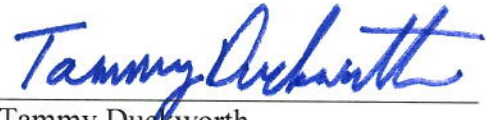
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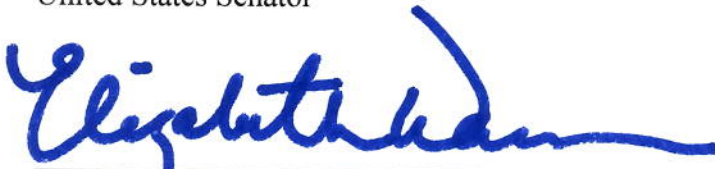
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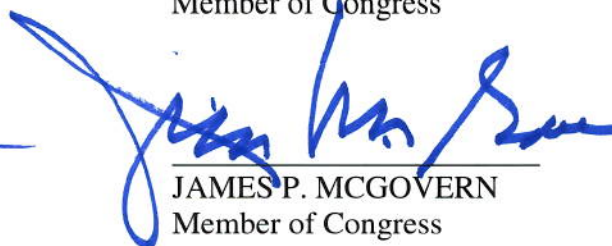
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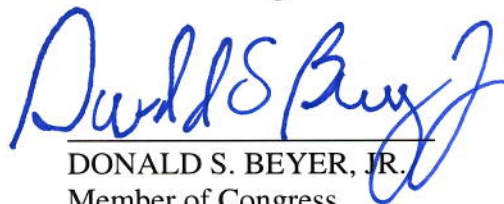
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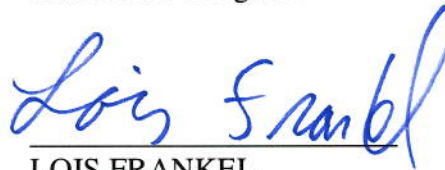
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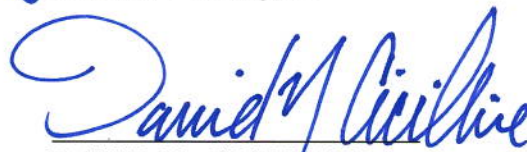

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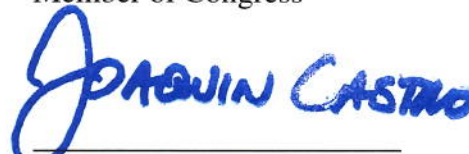

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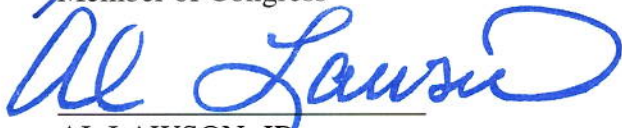

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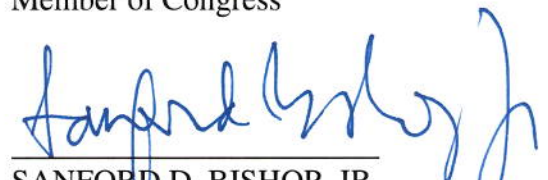

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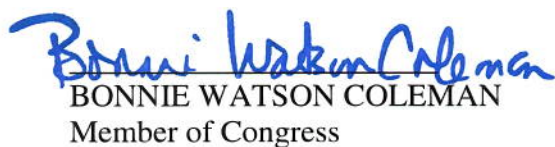

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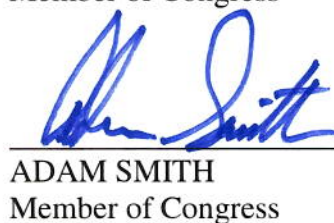

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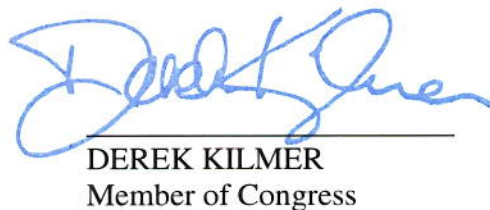

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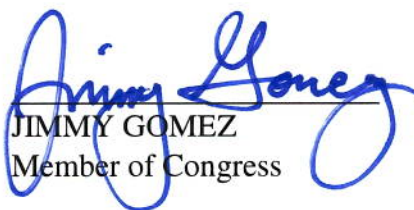

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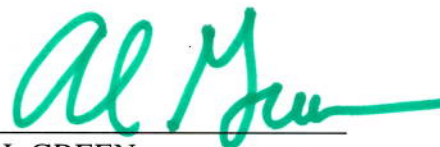
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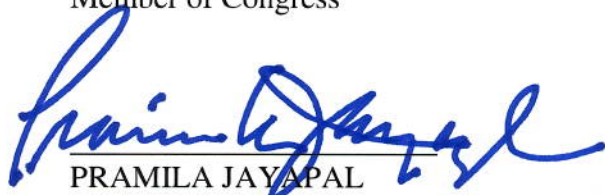
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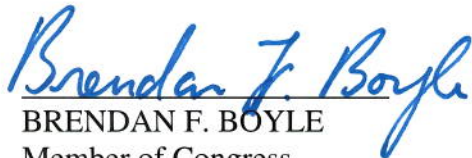
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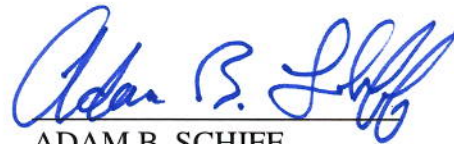
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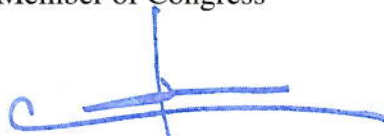
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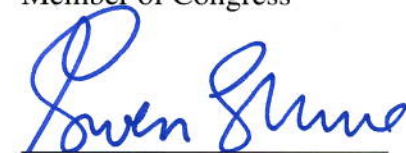
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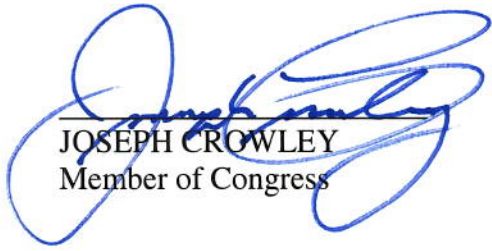


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