

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

August 22, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We write to you regarding the upcoming Presidential Determination decision on refugee admissions for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019. As the representative of the State Department responsible for promoting and securing the United States' diplomatic priorities in the inter-agency process, you know the value and importance of the U.S. refugee program and its role in mobilizing other nations. The program plays a critical role not only in promoting stability around the world, but in elevating our moral leadership on the global stage. We urge you to support a robust admissions level that aligns with global need and historical U.S. commitments, and that is certainly no less than the FY18 admissions decision of 45,000.

More than 25 million people around the world are currently refugees due to war, famine, and persecution, the highest number on record. As members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we see and hear first-hand accounts of human suffering and human rights violations around the world. We have a responsibility to oversee policy-making decisions and ensure that those decisions continue to position the United States as a global leader in addressing the world's most complex problems. U.S. support for refugees overseas, the countries that host them, and for U.S. refugee resettlement for the most at risk refugees are components of that leadership. In addition to its life-saving humanitarian impact, U.S. engagement to support displaced people also serves strategic foreign policy and national security interests that ultimately make this country safer. Refugee resettlement helps foster regional stability, assists close allies such as Jordan, and is a diplomatic tool for securing greater humanitarian engagement from other wealthy nations. Refugee resettlement has proven to be an important tool in our foreign policy toolkit.

Traditionally the United States has set an average refugee admissions decision of 95,000, with the highest refugee ceilings occurring under Republican administrations of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush (140,000 and 142,000, respectively). Refugee admissions has a long and proud bipartisan history in this country, with community groups around the country, including faith-based groups, joining together to help refugees begin new lives free from fear and to contribute to their new home communities. The FY18 refugee admissions decision of 45,000 was

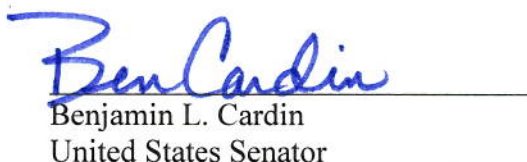
the lowest since the Refugee Act of 1980, and we are concerned about the foreign policy and national security impact of any further downward retreat on admission numbers.

We urge you to demonstrate strong support for a robust U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, and we stand ready for any further discussions you would like to have in advance of the decision.

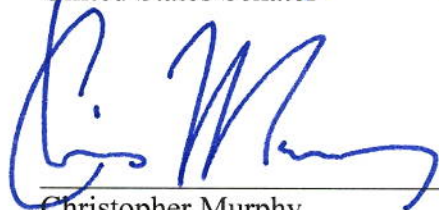
Sincerely,



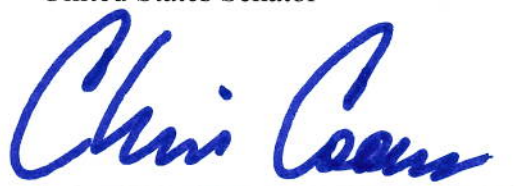
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



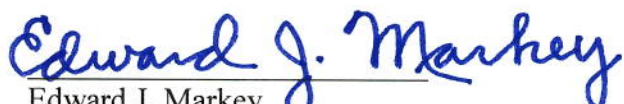
Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Christopher Murphy  
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Jeff A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Tom Udall  
United States Senator