Dear Chair Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey, and Chair Carter and Ranking Member Roybal-Allard:

As you consider funding for Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19), we write to urge you to support U.S. national security, foreign policy, economic, and humanitarian interests by maintaining robust funding for international humanitarian assistance for refugees and other populations. The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program is a longstanding bipartisan humanitarian program that enables the United States to provide lifesaving protection to some of the world’s most vulnerable people. Forcibly displaced people lack access to the most basic necessities of life, including food and nutrition, clean water, safe shelter, healthcare, education, livelihood, and protection from conflict, war, and violence. Beyond these grave humanitarian concerns, the presence of large populations of forcibly displaced persons is an urgent strategic and security concern for the nations and regions in which they live. U.S. funding helps to ensure that the basic human needs of persons fleeing persecution are met while they are displaced, supports permanent solutions to their displacement, and supports the countries hosting them.
Refugee Assistance Appropriations Letter

Accordingly, we respectfully request that the Committee ensure we can meet the needs of these vulnerable communities by allocating $1.9 billion for the Department of Health and Human Services’ Refugee and Entrant Assistance (REA) account, $3.604 billion for the Department of State’s Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account, $50 million for the Department of State’s Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA) account, $4.4 billion for the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account, and explore options for enhancing funding for the Department of Homeland Security’s U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Labor, Health, and Human Services and Education:

The Refugee and Entrant Assistance (REA) account in the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (LHHS) appropriations bill funds the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which helps states and local communities welcome and support refugees and other vulnerable populations on their path to self-sufficiency. In addition to refugees, ORR also serves increasing numbers of unaccompanied children, asylees, Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients, Cuban and Haitian entrants, victims of human trafficking, and victims of torture. In particular, there is an increasing need for services for trafficking and torture survivors, yet funding has remained stagnant for years. We request that Congress allocate $1.9 billion for the agency to adequately serve all of the populations within its mandate and respond to unanticipated needs.

State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs:

The Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account funds the State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM). This account provides overseas assistance to displaced refugees, supporting refugee admissions, and funding lifesaving services in humanitarian emergencies. The crises in Syria and Iraq continue to escalate dramatically, and there are likewise serious humanitarian challenges in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Burma, and Central American countries. Therefore, we request $3.604 billion, which will be critical to ensure that PRM can continue to service currently displaced populations while responding to numerous emerging humanitarian crises.

Escalating violence and instability in many parts of the world have placed increasing demands on the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA) account—an emergency draw-down account that provides an important “safety valve” during emergencies. The ERMA authorized level has not been increased since the mid-1990s. We request the Committee fund this account at $50 million in order to enhance our country’s ability to respond quickly to unanticipated crises, and expeditious, draw-down authority provided to the Secretary of State.

The International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account funds humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons. Meeting the needs of internally displaced persons is one way to prevent the need for them to flee their countries of origin and become refugees. We request that the Committee allocates $4.4 billion in order to meet the needs of growing numbers of persons worldwide who are displaced within their own countries, including those inside Syria and Iraq.
Refugee Assistance Appropriations Letter

Homeland Security:

The Department of Homeland Security’s U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) plays an important role in processing applications for refugees, asylees, and other humanitarian programs. Currently, USCIS is fee-funded by applicants for non-immigrant visas and other immigration applications. Thus, USCIS faces the challenge of increased backlogs and delays in the processing of refugee and asylum applications. We urge appropriators to work with USCIS and other agencies involved in the refugee screening to identify whether additional funds could enhance USCIS’s ability to ensure timely processing of refugee and asylum applications, including the carrying out of security screening.

Our first priority is the safety of the American people. We remain deeply committed to safeguarding the public from terrorist attacks, just as we are committed to providing refuge to some of the world’s most vulnerable people. These goals are not mutually exclusive, and can be pursued in harmony. That’s why, even as the United States accepts more refugees we do so only after subjecting them to the most rigorous screening and security vetting of any category of traveler to the United States.

We deeply appreciate your support for these services and your consideration of these requests, as we seek to provide this critical funding to serve and protect some of the world’s most vulnerable people and maintain our legacy as a global humanitarian leader.

Sincerely,

Rep. Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

Rep. Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Rep. Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress

Rep. David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Rep. John K. Delaney
Member of Congress

Rep. Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Rep. Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Rep. Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

AILA Doc. No. 18032332. (Posted 3/23/18)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Ruben Gallego</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Gerald E. Connolly</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Anthony G. Brown</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Salud O. Carbajal</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Paul D. Tonko</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Janice D. Schakowsky</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. James R. Langevin</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Barbara Lee</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Gwen Moore</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Filemon Vela</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Keith Ellison</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. J. Luis Correa</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Luis V. Gutiérrez</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. John A. Yarmuth</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Refugee Assistance Appropriations Letter

Rep. Mark Takano
Member of Congress

Rep. Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress

Rep. Val B. Demings
Member of Congress

Rep. Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

Rep. Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

Rep. Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Rep. Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Rep. Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Rep. Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Rep. Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

Rep. Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Rep. Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

AILA Doc. No. 18032332. (Posted 3/23/18)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Member of Congress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Alan S. Lowenthal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Bobby L. Rush</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Adam Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Ted Deutch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Adriano Espaillat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Debbie Dingell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Judy Chu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. William R. Keating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Yvette D. Clarke</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. John P. Sarbanes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Eliot L. Engel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Jared Polis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. John Garamendi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Dwight Evans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Refugee Assistance Appropriations Letter

Rep. Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

Rep. Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress

Rep. Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

Rep. André Carson
Member of Congress

Rep. Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

Rep. Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

Rep. Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

Rep. Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Rep. Al Green
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Rep. Denny Heck
Member of Congress

Rep. Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress

Rep. Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Rep. Jared Huffman
Member of Congress
Refugee Assistance Appropriations Letter

Rep. Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

Rep. Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

Rep. Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Rep. Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

Rep. Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Rep. Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

Rep. Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Rep. John Lewis
Member of Congress

Rep. Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress

Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Rep. Timothy J. Walz
Member of Congress

Rep. Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress

AILA Doc. No. 18032332. (Posted 3/23/18)