

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 22, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington D.C. 20201

The Honorable Chad F. Wolf  
Under Secretary of the Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Pompeo, Secretary Azar, and Under Secretary Wolf:

We write to urgently express our concern regarding the President's report to Congress on the Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2021, which proposes a Presidential Determination of 15,000 refugees, a historical low since the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) was established in 1980.

The United States has a long, bipartisan legacy of providing refugees protection through resettlement—prior to 2016 we resettled an average of more than 80,000 refugees per year. Yet, during this time of soaring global resettlement needs, this Administration has once again abdicated America's global leadership role by further reducing the refugee admissions ceiling to its lowest level in the 40-year history of the program. We urge you to substantially increase the refugee admissions target for FY 2021, and end the current suspension of the refugee resettlement program.

As we face unprecedented levels of forced displacement around the world, with 29.6 million refugees worldwide, resettlement serves as a critical lifeline for those fleeing persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Survivors of sexual violence and torture, unaccompanied children, families traumatized by the loss of loved ones in war, and other highly vulnerable refugees may need resettlement as the only solution to their plight. Refugees resettled in the United States contribute greatly to the

communities that take them in. To that end, refugees have generated \$63 billion in net revenue alone over a decade for the United States.

In addition to advancing U.S. humanitarian objectives and economic interests, resettlement serves as an important foreign policy tool to support people facing oppression and human rights abuses. The United States' historical leadership on this issue has enhanced our global influence and demonstrated responsibility-sharing with refugee-hosting countries like Jordan, Uganda, and Bangladesh. Moreover, American leadership in refugee resettlement is critical in securing greater global support for this important lifeline, which is available to less than one percent of all refugees. As this Administration has slashed its annual refugee admissions goals, other leading resettlement countries have followed suit and lowered their resettlement numbers as well. A robust refugee admissions goal is necessary to ensure those under threat of persecution, like Hong Kongers fleeing political persecution in Hong Kong and refugees fleeing religious persecution in Iran, Iraq, and Myanmar, have a pathway to live freely and without abuse. For our allies in Iraq and Afghanistan, it means standing ready to help when under threat, just as they stood by our troops when we needed their help.

We urge you to substantially increase the refugee admissions ceiling for FY 2021. The Administration should immediately end the suspension of the refugee resettlement program in order to ensure the world's most vulnerable will no longer remain in harm's way and separated from their families.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



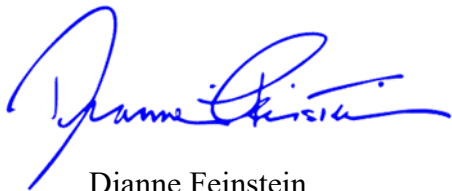
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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Tom Carper  
United States Senator



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator

/s/ **Robert P. Casey, Jr.**

Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



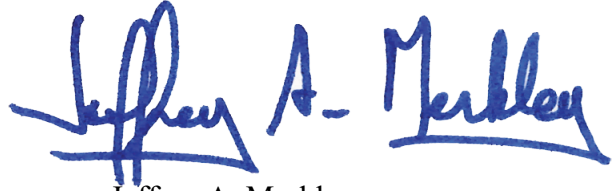
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