

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

January 8, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20502

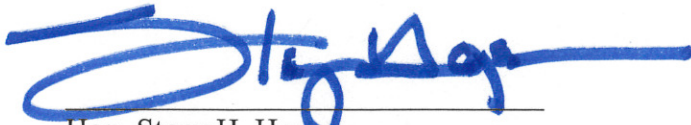
Dear Mr. President:

We strongly condemn the Department of Homeland Security's recent enforcement operation targeting refugee mothers and children from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. The DHS operation has generated widespread fear and panic in immigrant communities and has far-reaching impacts beyond the alleged targets for removal. The operation raises numerous due process concerns including meaningful access to legal counsel for mothers and children after apprehension and DHS officers reportedly using deceptive tactics to gain entrance into private residences. For these reasons and others, we believe that this operation should be immediately suspended until we can ensure no mother or child will be sent back to a country where they would face persecution, torture or death.

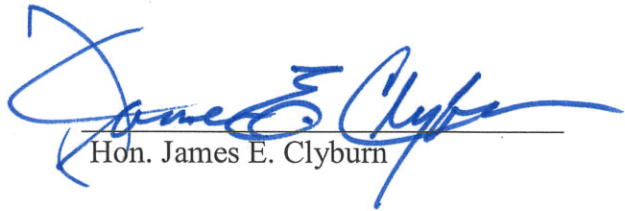
Globally, there are currently more refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons – an estimated 60 million – than at any time since World War II. You and your Administration have upheld time-honored American values by offering refuge to those fleeing violence and disorder in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. We commend you for that.

However, these same fundamental American values have not been applied in your Administration's policies towards Central American refugee mothers and children. The brutality of violence in Central America is undeniable, and yet this Administration has failed to provide a comprehensive refugee solution for those seeking international refugee protection. According to data shared by DHS, 85% of Central American families in detention have established threshold eligibility for refugee protection. Rather than preserving our commitment to refugee protection, your Administration continues to pursue policies that treat Central American refugees as an immigration enforcement matter.

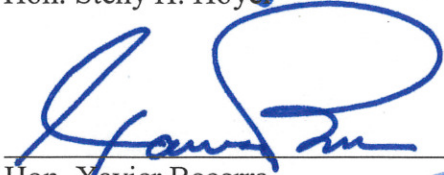
Thus far, your Administration has responded to the Central American refugee crisis with an emphasis on deterrence rather than the need for a regional refugee solution. Your Administration has used family detention, Spanish language communication campaigns in Central America urging people not to come to the United States, and financial assistance to Mexico to deter, arrest, and return those fleeing violence. This strategy has proven to be ineffective, as mothers and children continue to arrive at our Southwest border seeking refugee



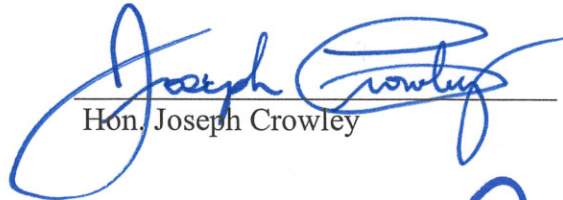
Hon. Steny H. Hoyer



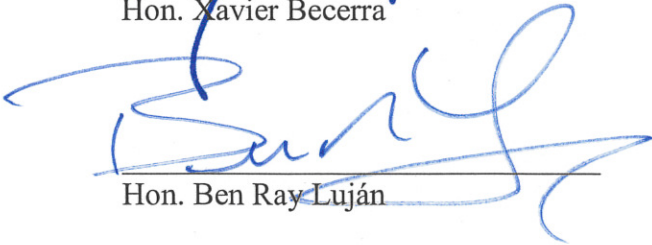
Hon. James E. Clyburn



Hon. Xavier Becerra



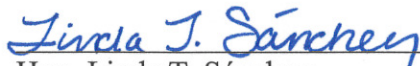
Hon. Joseph Crowley



Hon. Ben Ray Luján



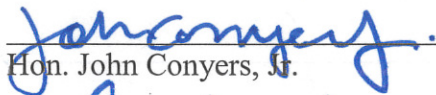
Hon. G. K. Butterfield



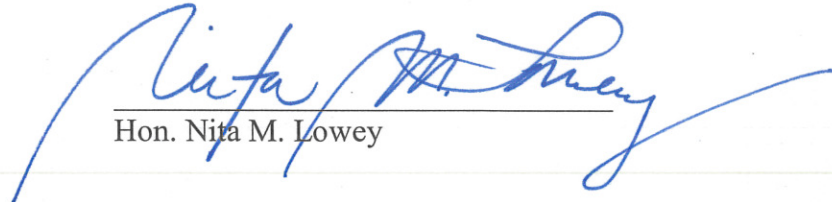
Hon. Linda T. Sánchez



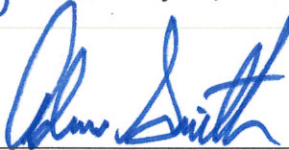
Hon. Judy Chu



Hon. John Conyers, Jr.



Hon. Nita M. Lowey



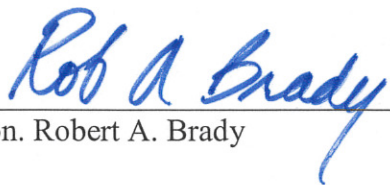
Hon. Adam Smith

Hon. Frank Pallone, Jr.

Hon. Maxine Waters



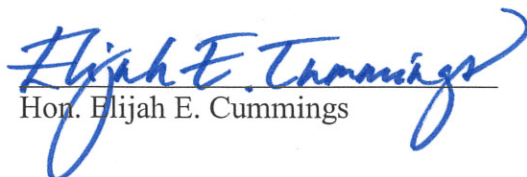
Hon. Eliot L. Engel



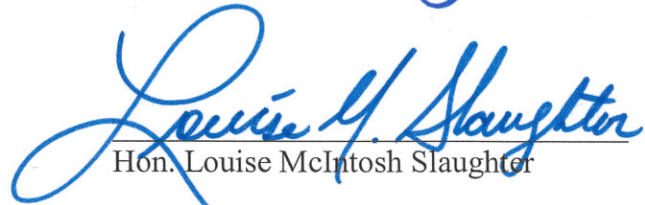
Hon. Robert A. Brady



Hon. Raúl M. Grijalva



Hon. Elijah E. Cummings



Hon. Louise McIntosh Slaughter