Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 23, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Trump:

We write to encourage you to set the Presidential Determination (PD) for Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2020 at 110,000. Your decision to set the cap at 18,000 is unconscionable in a world where nearly one person is forcibly uprooted every two seconds.

For several years now, the world has remained mired in what is the largest refugee crisis in recorded history. Over 70 million people spanning the earth have been displaced for terrible causes ranging from violence and famine to persecution and war. Over 25 million refugees are included in that dreadful toll, including over half of whom are under the age of 18. Our responsibility to help more of these victims is imperative. Throughout our history, the United States has been a beacon of hope and sanctuary for refugees fleeing for their lives. And, importantly, these refugees are already the most thoroughly vetted people who enter our borders, ensuring that they pose no national security threat to our communities.

Indeed, as both Republican and Democratic administrations have confirmed, the United States screens refugees more stringently than any other traveler allowed to enter the United States. The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program has safely and successfully resettled more than three million refugees from around the world to American communities across the country since 1975. Refugee applicants must undergo a robust and thorough screening process that takes roughly two years and involves our nation's top security and counterterror experts. The exhaustive vetting process includes checking fingerprints and other biometric data against terrorist and criminal databases and multiple interviews through various Federal agencies.

Since the enactment of the 1980 Refugee Act, the average annual goal for refugee admissions has been 95,000. In Fiscal Year 2016, the U.S. resettled approximately 85,000 refugees, and the Presidential Determination for Fiscal Year 2017 was 110,000. During the worst refugee crisis in the world, these resettlement numbers pale in comparison to the support our allies are providing and that our moral leadership commands. Since Executive Order 13769 was signed, the number of refugees coming to the United States each month has dropped precipitously. Australia, Norway, Canada, Sweden, and Finland all accept more refugees per capita than the United States. Failing

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to do our part to alleviate this global crisis undermines our leadership, diplomacy, and national security.

Your administration's prior PD of 30,000 for Fiscal Year 2019 was already the lowest number ever set by a U.S. executive. It was a dereliction that was rightly scorned in Congress and across the world. The lowering the number to 18,000 is an unprecedented embarrassment. It is a complete, perhaps final dereliction of our generations of American international stewardship.

In his final official speech as President, Ronald Reagan spoke about immigration and the future of America. He observed that America's welcoming of people from all over the world "continuously renew and enrich our nation." In profound words, he said that "[t]hanks to each wave of new arrivals to this land of opportunity, we're a nation forever young, forever bursting with energy and new ideas, and always on the cutting, always leading the world to the next frontier." Reagan warned that if America ever closed its "golden door" to "new Americans, our leadership in the world would soon be lost."

Your decision to set this PD at 18,000 runs counter to these intonations and fulfill your predecessor's worst fears about our national future. We reiterate our call for you to increase the Presidential Determination for Refugee Admissions to 110,000. Our future depends on that charity and far-sightedness.

Sincerely,

Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Rep. Don Beyer

Rep. David Cicilline

Rep. Pramila Jayapal

Rep. Juan Vargas

Rep. Betty McCollum

Rep. Steve Cohen

Rep. Tom Suozzi

Rep. Earl Blumenauer

Rep. Deb Haaland

Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton

Rep. Mark Pocan

Rep. Jamie Raskin

Rep. Jan Schakowsky

Rep. Ro Khanna

Rep. Derek Kilmer

Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee

Rep. Jared Huffman

Rep. Alan Lowenthal

Rep. André Carson

Rep. Adriano Espaillat

Rep. Raúl Grijalva

Rep. Gwen Moore

Rep. Darren Soto

Rep. Hank Johnson

Rep. Joseph Kennedy

Rep. Bobby Rush

Rep. James P. McGovern

Rep. Peter Visclosky

Rep. Nanette Diaz Barragán

Rep. Gerald E. Connolly

Rep. Joaquin Castro

Rep. Alcee L. Hastings

Rep. Ruben Gallego

Rep. Tony Cárdenas

Rep. David E. Price

Rep. Debbie Dingell

Rep. Jim Himes

Rep. Gregory Meeks

Rep. Linda T. Sánchez

Rep. Ted Deutch

Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney

Rep. Peter Welch

Rep. Dina Titus

Rep. Daniel T. Kildee

Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson

Rep. Bill Foster

Rep. Chellie Pingree

Rep. William R. Keating

Rep. Eliot L. Engel

Rep. Joe Courtney

Rep. Adam Smith

Rep. Zoe Lofgren

Rep. Grace Meng

Rep. Brian Higgins

Rep. Nita M. Lowey

Rep. Suzanne Bonamici