

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 13, 2018

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo  
U.S. Secretary of State  
United States Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

We write to express our deep concern about the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) intention to renegotiate the terms of the 2008 memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Vietnam and the United States.

This longstanding agreement, which was signed by the U.S. and Vietnamese governments in 2008 under President George W. Bush, did not outline a bilateral agreement regarding the deportation of any Vietnamese citizens who arrived in the United States before July 12, 1995, as this was subject to previous legal positions of the two countries. [Article 2, Para. 2]

Even for those who came to the U.S. after July 12, 1995, the agreement promises to "take into account the humanitarian aspect, family unity and circumstances" of each person being considered for repatriation and to carry out repatriation "in an orderly and safe way, and with respect for the individual human dignity of the person repatriated." [Article I, Para. 1,3]

The terms of this agreement recognize the complex history between the two countries and the dire circumstances under which hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese fled to the U.S. to seek refuge from political persecution in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Many of those who fled were South Vietnamese who had fought alongside or otherwise supported the U.S. government during the war.

Upon their arrival in the U.S., Vietnamese refugees, many of them young children or teenagers, were resettled in struggling neighborhoods without support or resources to cope with significant trauma from the war. As a result, some made mistakes that funneled them into the criminal justice system. However, these refugees have completed their time and are now positively contributing to their communities. These individuals and their families are Americans who are not familiar with the country they fled from.

Since 2008, the MOU has not been renegotiated. It has allowed families to stay together and enabled individuals not only to rebuild their lives but also to make a difference in their communities.

We strongly oppose any renegotiation of the MOU that strips the current protections afforded to Vietnamese refugees, including the exclusion from the agreement of pre-1995 immigrants and the humanitarian considerations provided to all others.

We further urge you to honor the humanitarian spirit and intention embodied in the current agreement. To do otherwise would send thousands of Vietnamese refugees back to a country they fled years ago, tear apart thousands of families, and significantly disrupt immigrant and refugee communities in the U.S.

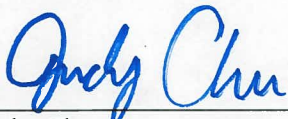
Sincerely,



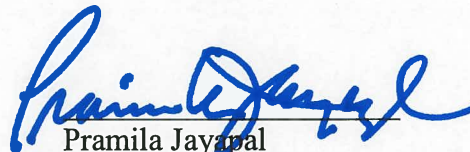
Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



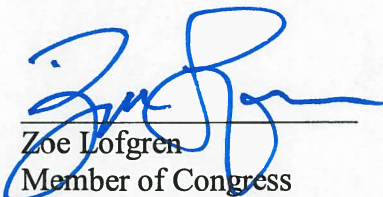
J. Luis Correa  
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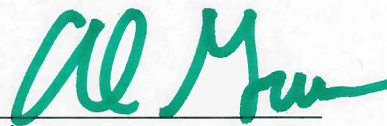
Judy Chu  
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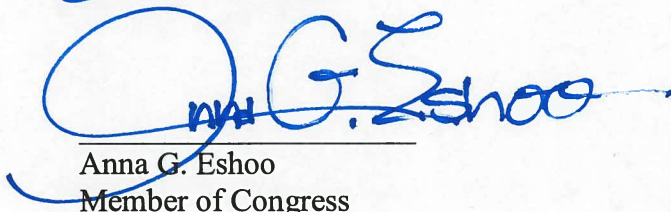
Pramila Jayapal  
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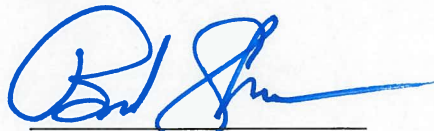
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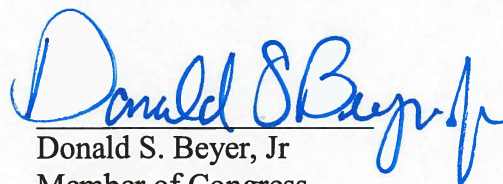
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Barbara Lee  
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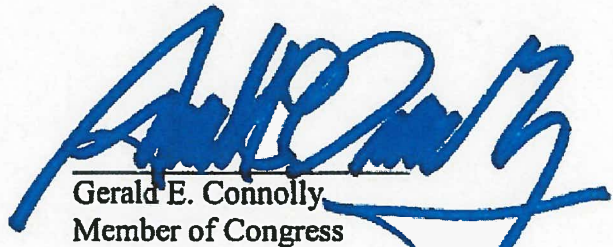
Brad Sherman  
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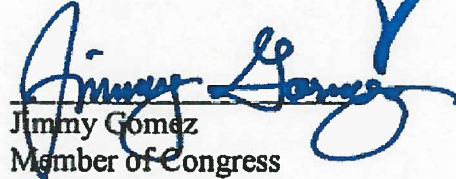
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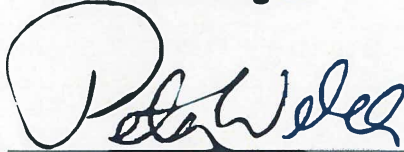
Jimmy Gomez  
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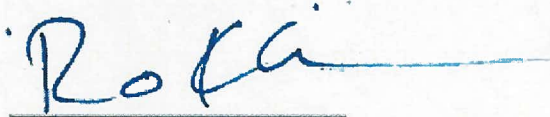
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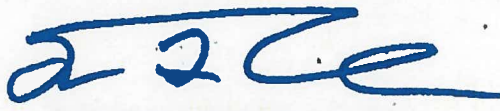
Scott Peters  
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Stephanie Murphy  
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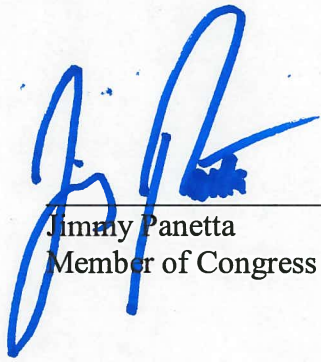
Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



Cedric L. Richmond  
Member of Congress

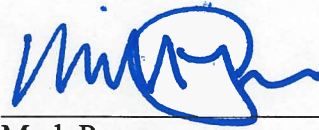


Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



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Mark Pocan  
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