

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

July 19, 2018

The Honorable Bob Corker  
Chairman  
United State Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-6225

The Honorable Robert Menendez  
Ranking Member  
United State Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-6225

Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Menendez:

We understand that Mr. Ronald Mortensen has been nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) at the U.S. Department of State. We urge you to oppose Mr. Mortensen's nomination because he is unqualified and has expressed extreme anti-immigrant views. At a time of crisis for our refugee program, we believe that Mr. Mortensen's anti-immigrant bias, as well as lack of experience, disqualify him for the role.

While Mr. Mortensen has spent much of his professional life in the foreign service, he has written extensively on immigration and immigrants, leaving little doubt of his views. For example, in 2014 Mr. Mortensen wrote an article entitled, "McCain Rolls Out Welcome Mat for ISIS on America's Southern Border,"<sup>1</sup> comparing Senator McCain's "dogged support for illegal aliens and open borders" to collaboration with terrorist organizations. He writes, "Should ISIS or some other terrorist group take advantage of McCain's welcome mat, he will only have himself to blame as he goes in the eyes of many from war hero to collaborator." Just last year, he drafted an article entitled, "Most illegal aliens routinely commit felonies"<sup>2</sup> and another arguing that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program is "destroying the futures of innocent American children."<sup>3</sup> These extreme anti-immigrant views have no place in federal service, let alone the individual charged with administering our refugee program.

His nomination should also be opposed because he lacks experience with refugees of any kind. Mr. Mortensen cannot lead a Bureau that is dedicated to refugee protection having never worked on refugee issues in any substantive way. This position requires deep expertise on a variety of complex issues, ranging from the logistics of refugee resettlement to the invaluable role that the

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald Mortensen, *McCain rolls out welcome mat for ISIS on America's Southern border*, [Center for Immigration Studies](#) (September 2, 2014)


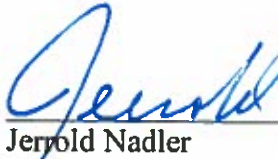
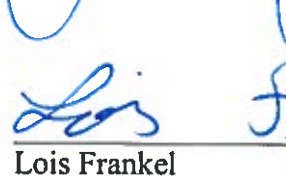
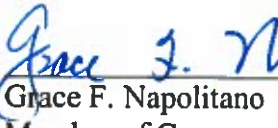
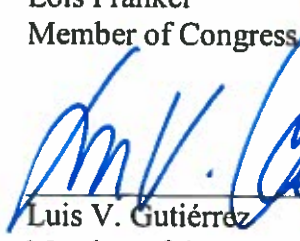


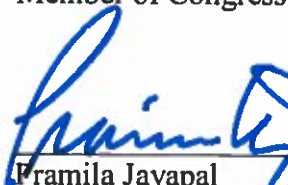
<sup>2</sup> Ronald Mortensen, *Most illegal aliens routinely commit felonies*, [The Hill](#) (March 29, 2017)

<sup>3</sup> Ronald Mortensen, *The Obama 'dreamer' program should be repealed*, [The Hill](#) (April 18, 2017)

U.S. historically plays in providing overseas humanitarian assistance during refugee crises. The Assistant Secretary serves as a diplomat—he or she must also understand that refugee resettlement in the United States is a key foreign policy tool, and necessary to convince other states to accept refugees as well, and his past rhetoric would make this difficult. Mr. Mortensen's lack of qualifications and relevant experience raise serious questions as to his fitness to perform the duties required by the office to which the President has nominated him, and puts our refugee program at further risk of irreversible damage.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR), the nearly 66 million forcibly displaced people worldwide – nearly 23 million of whom are refugees – represents the greatest displacement crisis in history. Now is not the time for our nation to turn our backs. PRM requires a leader who believes that the U.S. should be a leader on refugee protection issues, and who represents our tradition of leadership, not retreat. Mr. Mortenson is neither qualified for nor well-suited to the position to which he was nominated, and we strongly urge you to reject his nomination.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
André Carson  
Member of Congress  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress  
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Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress  
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Luis V. Gutiérrez  
Member of Congress  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Judy Chu  
Member of Congress  
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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



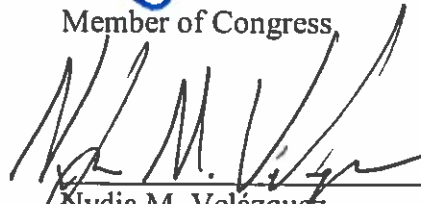
Salud O. Carbajal  
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



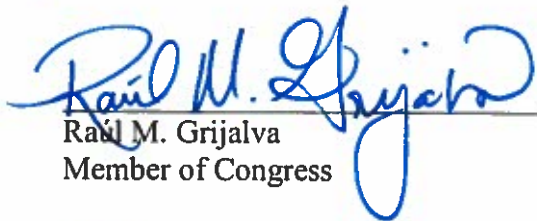
Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



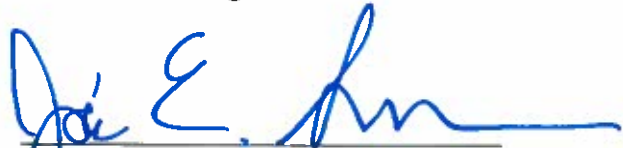
Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Albio Sires  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



Colleen Hanabusa  
Member of Congress