

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 1, 2017

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our dismay at reports that you are considering transferring the bureaus of Consular Affairs and Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) from the Department of State to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). We respect the mission and the officers of both departments, and though the two agencies have complementary missions, we believe strongly that these functions must remain at the State Department.

The Bureau of Consular Affairs was founded in 1792, before most Cabinet Departments, and several provisions of U.S. law codify Consular Affairs as part of the Department of State. In addition to issuing visas – which it already does in close consultation with DHS - the Bureau performs a number of other critical functions. These include issuing travel warnings to alert Americans to potentially dangerous environments abroad, assisting American citizens travelling overseas, and working with host governments when tragedy strikes outside the United States. These are inherently diplomatic tasks, best carried out by Foreign Service Officers trained to evaluate and interpret foreign politics, history and customs, and are not appropriate for a law enforcement agency like DHS.

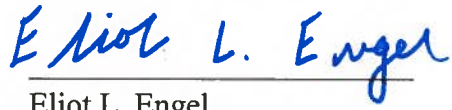
The same holds true about the work of PRM. There is no substitute for knowledge of country conditions, the origins and parties to the conflicts, and the ability to use diplomatic tools to address challenges. PRM's expertise lies in humanitarian diplomacy and assistance, which is reflected in its work with a variety of key international humanitarian organizations. Moving PRM to the DHS would diminish that expertise, and erode the U.S. role in global humanitarian issues. Indeed, with the international community currently coping with the greatest humanitarian crisis in human history – with the number of refugees and internally displaced persons exceeding the number after either World War – it strikes us as a particularly bad time to even contemplate this major organizational change.

We respectfully urge you to follow the law and preserve the effectiveness of the bureaus of Consular Affairs and PRM by keeping them within the Department of State where they can best protect our national interests.

Sincerely,



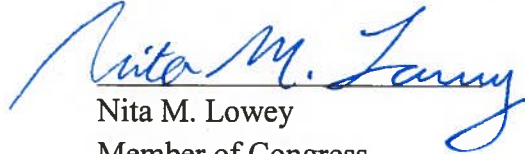
Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



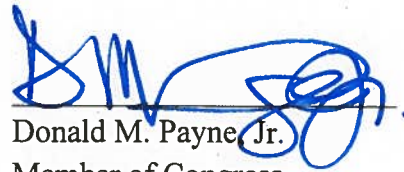
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



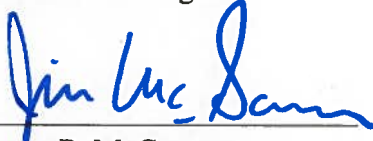
Nita M. Lowey
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress

Cc: The Hon. Rex W. Tillerson
The Hon. Elaine C. Duke