

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 1, 2019

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to strongly urge you to reinstate Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) for Liberians. We ask that you take this action immediately in order to prevent anxiety and legal uncertainty within our Liberian-American communities.

In 1989, a seven-year civil war broke out in Liberia that would claim the lives of over 200,000 people and displace more than half of the Liberian population. During the conflict, food production ceased, large populations were internally displaced or fled the country as refugees, and Liberia's infrastructure and economy were destroyed. A second civil war followed from 1999 to 2003. It ended with the departure from power of former President Charles Taylor, who is currently serving a 50-year prison sentence imposed by the Special Court of Sierra Leone after his conviction for war crimes. Subsequently, between 2014 and 2016, Liberia faced an extensive Ebola viral outbreak that killed an estimated nearly 5,000 of the over 10,000 persons who contracted the disease. The outbreak devastated the country's fragile health care system, infrastructure, and economy while exacerbating social tensions.


As a result of these uniquely tragic developments, thousands of Liberians were forced from their homes. Many fled to neighboring countries, while some sought refuge in the United States. Attorney General Thornburgh first granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Liberians present in the United States in 1991. Subsequent Administrations – citing a variety of compelling foreign policy issues, including challenges linked to ongoing post-Ebola and post-war recovery – have repeatedly extended TPS and/or DED for Liberians. However, on March 27, 2018, you announced the termination of DED for all Liberian beneficiaries. As a result, these persons will be at risk of deportation as of March 31, 2019.

Liberia has only just completed its first democratic transfer of power in decades, via a presidential election held at the end of 2017, and there are still serious concerns about the country's ability to maintain peace and deliver essential services to its population. The United States must pursue all possible efforts to help ensure regional stability, foster Liberia's continuing post-war recovery, and protect our country's substantial foreign policy interests, bilateral assistance, and peacekeeping investments. While few in number, an influx of Liberians from the United States could overburden the country's limited infrastructure and reverse the nascent advances that the Liberian people and government have made. Deporting this population would also prevent its members from contributing to the crucial private sector investment and socio-economic assistance that they have long provided in the form of remittances to their relatives in Liberia.

Given these challenges, we believe that it is in the strategic national security, foreign policy, and humanitarian interest of the United States for this population to remain in the United States. Moreover, for more than a quarter of a century the United States has been home to law-abiding and taxpaying Liberians. They have worked hard, played by the rules, and submitted to rigorous vetting. Uprooting them now would be cruel and harmful to them, their families, and employers. We therefore respectfully and urgently request that you reinstate DED for Liberians.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



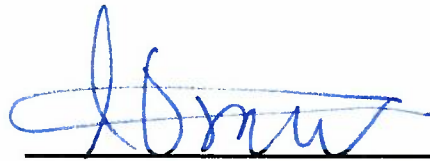
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



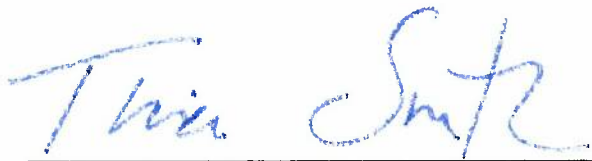
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



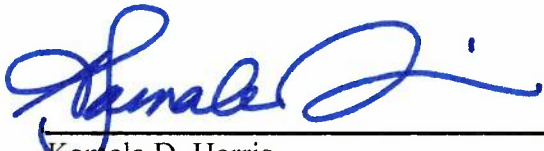
Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



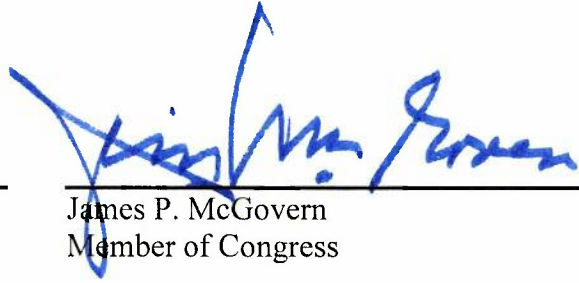
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



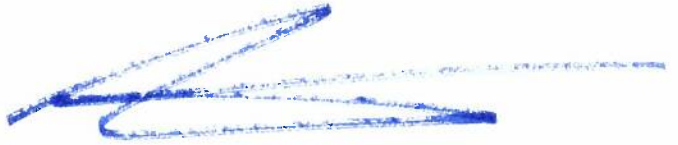
Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



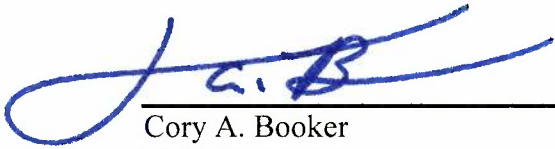
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



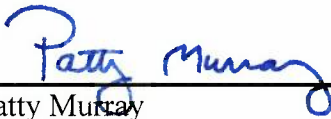
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



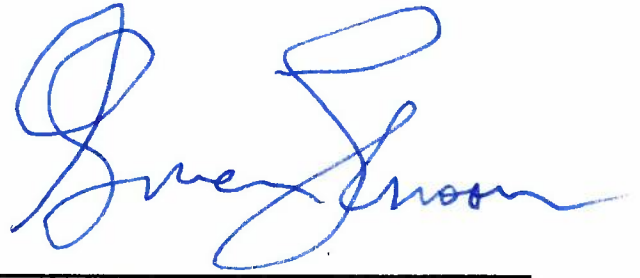
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



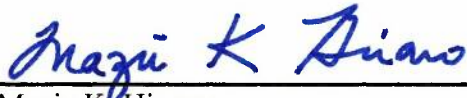
Angie Craig
Member of Congress



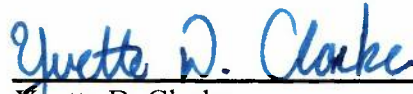
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



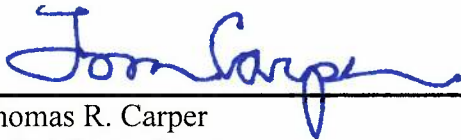
Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Karen Bass
Member of Congress



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



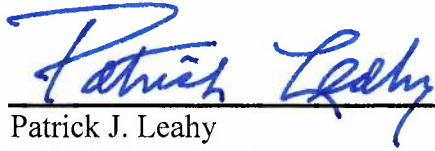
Susan Wild
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



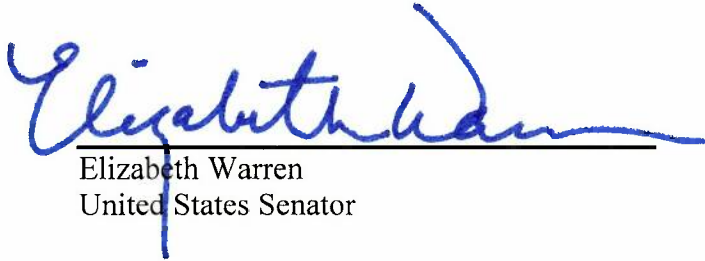
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator



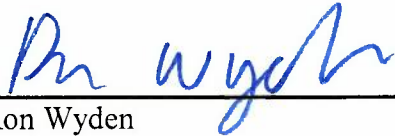
Max Rose
Member of Congress



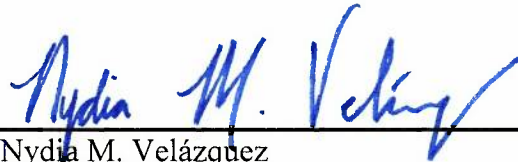
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



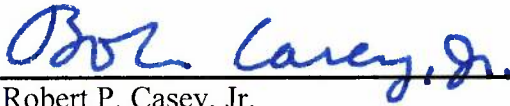
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



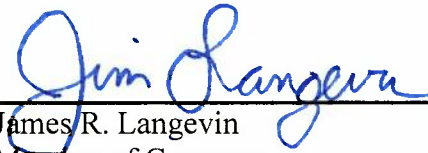
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



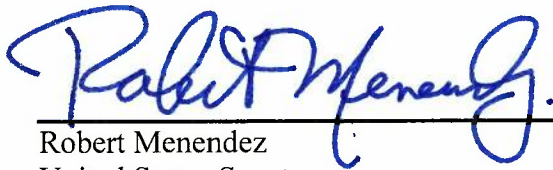
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



James R. Langevin
Member of Congress



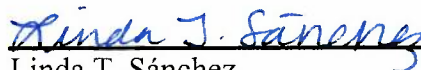
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress