



Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader

May 11, 2016

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
100 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, Ranking Democrat on the Immigration Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee, and several of our leaders on immigration and refugee issues, recently wrote to you urging a comprehensive refugee protection approach involving the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Mexican government, non-government organizations, and other governments in the region. I share my colleagues' concerns about the need for a more robust regional policy. The current approach either results in migrants being returned to the violent conditions they escaped from in the first place, or risks them falling victim to human trafficking and other criminal abuses on their dangerous journey to the United States.

Last week, I had the privilege of leading a bipartisan Congressional Delegation, mostly comprised of Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, to Mexico, Peru and Chile. In Mexico, we discussed migration issues with President Enrique Peña Nieto, congressional leaders, and civil society organizations. Delegation Members praised the success of U.S.-Mexico cooperation through the Merida initiative to enhance Mexico's southern border enforcement capacity. Members also highlighted our efforts in the U.S. Congress to provide the highest legal protections to unaccompanied children migrating from Central America.

We agreed on the importance of a regional approach that tackles the root causes of these migration flows. President Peña Nieto said that just as the U.S. favors a stable Mexico, Mexico favors a stable Central America. To that end, we offered to work with Mexico's incoming ambassador to the U.S. in leveraging our existing dialogue to further enhance our regional security.

In 2015, the Mexican government repatriated nearly 171,000 Central American migrants, but its capacity to absorb and resettle refugees is substantially limited. It is my understanding that UNHCR is well equipped to partner with the Mexican government, NGOs and other governments in the region to implement an approach that offers Central American refugees the protection they need, as well as a more viable, and more permanent, resettlement solution. Such an approach would complement your Administration's efforts, through the Alliance for Prosperity, to foster economic growth and improved governance in Northern Triangle countries.

Thank you for your leadership in addressing this important regional challenge, and I look forward to our continued work together on this and other important priorities for the American people.

best regards,



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