December 1, 2016

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

Dear President Obama:

We urge you to rescind the regulatory framework behind the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) located at 8 CFR 264.1(f). While we commend your Administration for effectively ending the program in 2011, we believe that eliminating the apparatus of NSEERS is consistent with our country’s fundamental values of fairness and equality.

The NSEERS program was announced in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The most controversial portion of the NSEERS program involved a “domestic” registration system that targeted certain males who entered the United States on nonimmigrant visas from primarily Arab, Muslim-majority, African, and South Asian countries. The program was fundamentally flawed in its false assumption that people of a particular religion or nationality pose a greater national security risk and should be subject to racial profiling. The program is reminiscent of—and indeed has been compared to—the dark time in our history when innocent people were interned based on their Japanese ancestry.

When instituted in 2002, the program caused widespread and palpable fear in affected communities, separated families and caused much harm to people affected by it. Boys and men were required to register with local immigration offices, were interrogated, and subjected to serious due process violation. Communities saw family members and neighbors disappear in the middle of the night, held in overcrowded jails and deported without due process. More than 13,000 people were placed in removal proceedings, businesses closed down, and students were forced to leave school with degrees uncompleted.

In addition to the harm that NSEERS caused to communities, the program was ineffective as a counter-terrorism tool. A 2012 Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General report found the program to be inefficient and a waste of resources, costing American taxpayers more than $10 million annually. The report characterized the data collected through the program as unreliable. No known terrorism convictions have resulted from the program.

We stand together in opposition to policies that would target people based on their religion, race, ethnicity or national origin. We urge the Administration to immediately rescind the NSEERS regulation as a re-affirmation of its commitment to equal protection under the law.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Luis V. Gutiérrez
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress

Joseph Crowley
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Linda T. Sánchez
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Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
Member of Congress

André Carson
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Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress

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Ruben Gallego
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Cc: Secretary Jeh Johnson