July 10, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

The Honorable Kevin McAleenan
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Dr. Mark T. Esper
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Acting Secretaries McAleenan and Esper:

We write in strong opposition to the proposed termination of the parole in place (PIP) program that protects military families from removal. Public reports indicate that the Trump administration may end PIP in the next few weeks, leaving immediate relatives of Veterans and active duty servicemembers vulnerable to deportation while their loved one is serving overseas for our Nation. Ending this important program is cruel, inhumane and will result in separating military families.

For more than a decade, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has used its discretionary legal authority to grant parole to minimize family separation and to promote readiness for servicemembers. Through this program, servicemembers are able to fight for the United States overseas and not worry that their spouse, children, or parents will be deported while they are away. Terminating PIP would not only cause personal hardship to our servicemen and women, but negatively impact them in combat. Military members deserve peace of mind while serving abroad.

Withdrawing protections from military families is a direct threat to our military readiness and our national security. At a time when our Armed Forces are fighting dangerous wars overseas, we must enact policies that support our men and women in combat, rather than repeal policies that cause unnecessary harm. The Trump administration should provide favorable immigration solutions for military families, not break them up.

The limited resources available for immigration removal must be prioritized for individuals with violent criminal convictions, public safety risks and threats to our national security. They should not be used to deport the families of our Armed Services members protecting our national security. Through PIP, the U.S. government recognizes the important sacrifices made by servicemembers, Veterans, enlistees and their families. Ending the program flies in the face of American values and signals that we do not value the contributions of military families. We urge you to honor our troops and immediately reverse any plan to rescind PIP and protect their families from unnecessary deportation.
Sincerely,

Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

Jack Reed  
United States Senator

Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator

Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

Ron Wyden  
United States Senator
United States Senator

Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Dick Durbin
United States Senator

Tina Smith
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator
September 12, 2019

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Duckworth:

Thank you for your July 10, 2019 letter. Acting Secretary McAleenan asked that I respond on his behalf.

Section 11(d) of Executive Order 13767 requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to “take appropriate action to ensure that parole authority under section 212(d)(5) of [the Immigration and Nationality Act] is exercised only on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the plain language of the statute, and in all circumstances only when an individual demonstrates urgent humanitarian reasons or a significant public benefit derived from such parole.”

Pursuant to Executive Order 13767, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has conducted an extensive review of categorical parole programs established under previous Administrations. As a result of that review, some categorical programs were terminated, and the Department of Homeland Security is assessing the status of remaining programs—including PIP. In the meantime, we would be pleased to offer our technical assistance to your office should you choose to address this issue through the legislative process.

We appreciate the concerns your letter raised regarding national security and military readiness, are working closely with the Department of Defense to ensure these matters are taken into account.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. The co-signers of your letter will receive a separate, identical response. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs at (202) 272-1940.

Respectfully,

Ken Cuccinelli II
Acting Director

cc: The Honorable Mark Esper
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense

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