

FEB. 28. 2003 1:44PM

CONGRESSMAN MEEKS

NO. 1573 P. 2/5

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 27, 2003

The Honorable John Ashcroft
Attorney General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Room 440
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Ashcroft:

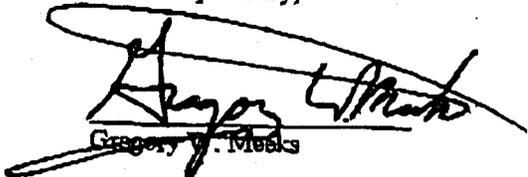
As representatives of the people of this great nation, we pride ourselves in providing a safe haven for those who are in search of one. For this reason, we are writing to express our concern regarding your possible issuance of new regulations that threaten women and girls seeking asylum in the United States. We urge you not to issue regulations that will reject gender-related violence as a basis for asylum.

We have learned that these new regulations could severely limit the ability of women fleeing trafficking, sexual slavery, honor killing, domestic violence, and other gender-related human rights abuses from seeking asylum in the United States. We also understand that you intend to issue the regulations sometime within the coming days. We also understand that during this time, the INS would have already transitioned into the new Department of Homeland Security, but possibly leaving you with jurisdiction over asylum regulations and the much discussed *Alvarado* case.

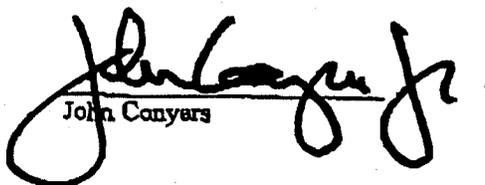
We are deeply concerned that the new regulations will reverse current policy and make it more difficult for anyone who has been persecuted by "non-state actors" to gain asylum protection. The implications of this change could be enormous. Potentially, this could mean denying protection to whole categories of extremely vulnerable people, including, for example, victims of horrific mutilation and abuse by "non-state actors" like the RUF, a rebel group in Sierra Leone notorious for its campaign of mutilation and organized sexual violence against girls and women. Furthermore, your new proposed regulation will condemn several women and girls to death.

The United States has had a tradition of protecting women from violence outside of their control. In honor of this tradition, we ask that you refrain from issuing regulations that would reject gender-related violence as a basis for asylum in the United States.

Most Respectfully,



Gregory J. Meeks



John Conyers

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Rx time:03/01/2003 03:46

Rx No.:122 P.002

Nancy Pelosi
Nancy Pelosi

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Lucille Roybal-Allard

Sheila Jackson-Lee
Sheila Jackson-Lee

Edolphus Towns
Edolphus Towns

Lanc Evans
Lanc Evans

Stephanie Tubbs Jones
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Elijah Cummings
Elijah Cummings

Lloyd Doggett
Lloyd Doggett

Barbara Lee
Barbara Lee

Albert Wynn
Albert Wynn

Zoe Lofgren
Zoe Lofgren

Julia Carson
Julia Carson

Donald Payne
Donald Payne

Juanita Millender-McDonald
Juanita Millender-McDonald

Ed Pastor
Ed Pastor

Corrine Brown
Corrine Brown

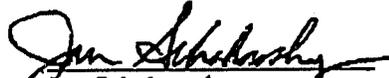
Neil Abercrombie
Neil Abercrombie

Wm. Lacy Clay
Wm. Lacy Clay

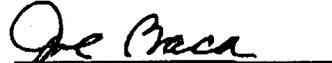
Charles Gonzalez
Charles Gonzalez

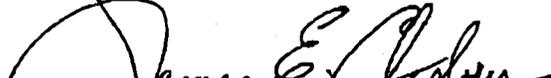
Bobby Rush
Bobby Rush


Eleanor Holmes Norton


Jan Schakowsky


Betty McCollum


Joe Baca

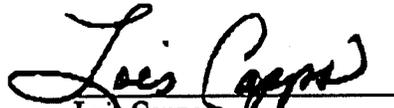

James E. Clyburn


David Wu


Anibal Acevedo-Vila

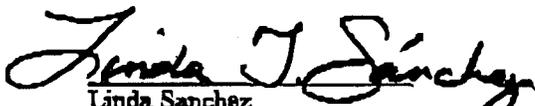

Eddie Bernice Johnson


Chaka Fattah


Lois Capps

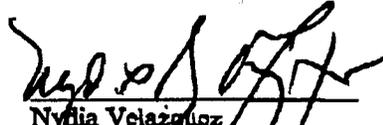

Loretta Sanchez


Melvin L. Watt

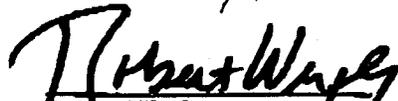

Linda Sanchez


Ciro Rodriguez

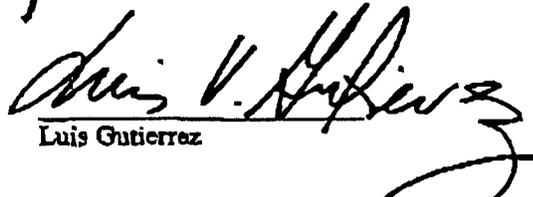

Hilda Solis


Nydia Velazquez


Xavier Becerra


Robert Waxler


Barney Frank


Luis V. Guterres

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Raul M. Grijalva
Raul Grijalva

Howard L. Berman
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George Miller
George Miller

Bernard Sanders
Bernard Sanders

Grace F. Napolitano
Grace Napolitano

Dennis J. Kucinich
Dennis Kucinich

Nita Lowey
Nita Lowey

CC: Andrew H. Card, Jr., Assitant to the President and Chief of Staff
David Hobbs, Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs (House)