

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 19, 2018

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We write to express our strong opposition to President Trump's recent nomination of Ronald Mortensen to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration. While we appreciate your efforts to address the Department's staffing needs and look forward to confirming a qualified nominee for this important position, we are deeply concerned about the possibility of a virulent opponent of immigration serving as the United States' senior diplomat for migration and refugee policies.

As a fellow for the anti-immigrant Center for Immigration Studies, Mr. Mortensen has spread misinformation about immigrants and displayed a lack of empathy for innocent men, women, and children fleeing violence and oppression. For example, Mr. Mortensen attacked American religious leaders for sheltering and assisting immigrants, accusing them of "turning their back on Americans" and focusing on "illegal aliens because they are willing to join their churches"¹. He also referred to providing work authorizations for Dreamers as "elite-driven child abuse"². This rhetoric is both unfitting for a potential diplomat and antithetical to America's long history of welcoming immigrants.

The Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration oversees the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and U.S. assistance for refugees, victims of conflict, and stateless people abroad. At a time when more than 65 million people are displaced worldwide, the nomination of Mr. Mortensen for this position sends a chilling message to all those around the world who look to the United States as a beacon of hope and security for persecuted peoples.

We encourage the administration to withdraw Mr. Mortensen's nomination to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration and to work with President Trump to nominate a qualified individual who is committed to the United States' legacy of promoting the

¹ <https://cis.org/Mortensen/Religious-Leaders-Love-Their-Neighbors-Long-They-Are-Illegal-Aliens>

² <https://cis.org/Mortensen/Obama-Administrations-DREAM-Decree-Compassion-or-Child-Abuse>

human rights of displaced people. We look forward to working with you in advancing this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Coons". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names clearly legible.

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John McCain". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names clearly legible.

John McCain
United States Senator