

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 28, 2015

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson:

We are deeply concerned about the influx of refugees from Syria and elsewhere to Greece. As you know, Europe is currently experiencing its most challenging migration and refugee crisis since World War II, with many entering the continent by way of Greece's island coastline. The Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues asks that DHS explore ways that we can draw from our own experience with border and migration challenges, and help our Eastern Mediterranean ally manage and monitor the daily entry of refugees.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that over 680,000 people have crossed the Mediterranean into Europe so far in 2015, up from nearly 219,000 in all of 2014, with Syrians the largest group by nationality. Nearly 80% of these refugees are arriving to Greece. Refugees from Syria and other Middle Eastern and African countries are also crossing over land through Turkey's porous borders. Migrants and refugees are increasingly attempting to enter Greece and then enter countries that belong to the Schengen Agreement, which allows individuals to travel without passport checks among 26 participating European Union states. The Greek islands of Lesbos and Kos are common landing spots for Syrian refugees on boats from Turkey, creating an overwhelming humanitarian challenge for the country at the same time it is handling a major debt crisis.

While the European Union continues to develop and enforce a common migration and asylum policy, we believe that DHS can assist in educating and sharing best practice policies with our ally on the frontline of this continent-wide epidemic. The need for improvements to fingerprinting, migrant tracking, and other intake protocols in Greece is evident and urgent. DHS's expertise in border control and management can assist Greece in accelerating the speed and efficiency of implementing sound procedures with little cost to our own resources.

We in the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues seek to start productive and meaningful discussions of ways that DHS and other agencies can provide technical assistance with the European migration crisis. We urge you to formulate and provide practical recommendations to share with Greece and her respective border control agencies for direct support combating this crisis, and look forward to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely,



GUS M. BILIRAKIS
Member of Congress



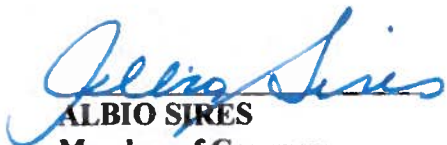
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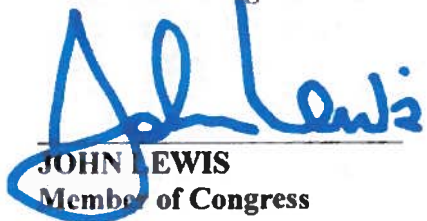
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Member of Congress



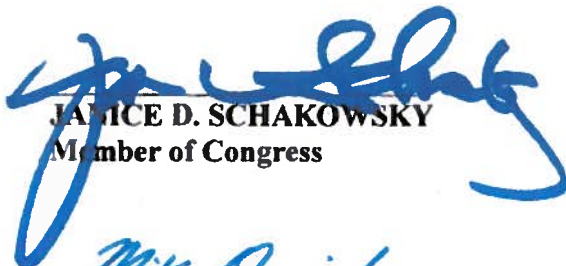
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ROBERT DOLD
Member of Congress



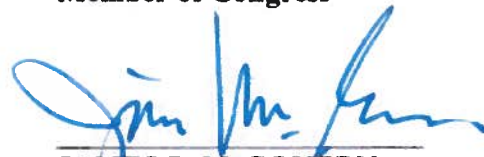
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