Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 19, 2013

The Honorable Rand Beers
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Acting Secretary Beers:

We write to express our deep concern over the devastation suffered by the Philippines as a result of Typhoon Haiyan. Possibly the largest typhoon ever to make landfall, Haiyan brought sustained devastating winds and waves that destroyed a wide swath of the Philippine island chain.

The Philippine government and relief agencies are still assessing the full extent of the damage, but early reports indicate that 2 million Filipinos are without adequate food and hundreds of thousands have no shelter or clean water. The Philippine Red Cross described the devastation caused by Typhoon Haiyan as "absolute bedlam," with thousands of fatalities and hundreds of thousands of people displaced.

We appreciate that the Administration and the military are directing much-needed food and relief aid to ameliorate the impact of the typhoon. In addition to these initial emergency response efforts, we believe it is imperative that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) exercise its authority to designate the Philippines for Temporary Protected Status ("TPS") pursuant to section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. That section allows you, as Acting Secretary of DHS, to designate a foreign state for special protection if a natural disaster prevents the state from being able to adequately handle the return of its nationals. Section 244 alternatively allows you to grant TPS if you find "extraordinary and temporary conditions in the foreign state that prevent . . . nationals of the state from returning to the state in safety."

Based on the level of destruction in the Philippines known to us already, it is clear the country meets either of the necessary requirements for TPS mentioned above. Due to natural disaster, the Philippine government is currently struggling to address significant loss of life, repair extensive damage to infrastructure, and provide sufficient and timely aid to millions of survivors. Considering the daunting rescue and restoration efforts before it, the country is not in

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a position to adequately handle returning nationals, many of whom will be unable to return to their homes. Additionally, given the extraordinary and life-threatening conditions currently present in the Philippines, it cannot be said that Filipinos are able to return to the state in anything approaching safe conditions.

We ask, therefore, that TPS status be afforded to nationals of the Philippines. We hope that you carefully consider this request and would appreciate your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Respectfully,

Rep. Zoe Lofgren

Rep. Trent Franks

Rep. Edward R. Royce

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Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Rep. Xavier Becerra

Rep. Peter T. King

Rep. Mike Thompson

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Rep. Tammy Duckworth

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Rep. Al Green

Rep. Eni F.H. Faleomavaega

Rep. Madeleine Z. Bordallo

Rep. Grace Meng