



October \_\_\_\_, 2004

The Honorable (INSERT NAME)  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

or

The Honorable (INSERT NAME)  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Representative/Senator (INSERT NAME),

We are writing to ask for your help in addressing the needs of an extremely vulnerable population of refugees in (INSERT STATE) as part of the "omnibus" appropriations bill that Congress is scheduled to consider in November.

Currently, (hundreds/thousands) of refugees and asylees (and Cuban-Haitian entrants) in our state are facing the loss of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. These are people who fled persecution or torture in countries such as (LIST EXAMPLES), and now are too elderly or disabled to support themselves. SSI benefits are modest stipends that help keep them from falling too deeply into poverty.

In the mid-1990s, Congress set a seven-year time limit on SSI eligibility for refugees and asylees. The expectation was that this would provide sufficient time for people to become naturalized citizens, and thereby preserve their SSI eligibility. However, due in part to processing delays at federal immigration offices, particularly after the September 11 tragedy, many refugees and asylees have not been able to make it all the way through the citizenship process in seven years. This became apparent last year, when the first wave of refugees and asylees started to hit the time limit through no fault of their own.

The President's fiscal year 2005 budget recognized this problem, and proposed to extend SSI eligibility. There is bipartisan legislation pending in both houses, H.R. 4035 and S. 2623, that provides a two-year extension for refugees and asylees. We strongly urge you to include this measure in the "omnibus" appropriations bill that will be considered in November. This is the last opportunity for Congress to help this vulnerable population before the year's end.

If you have any questions, please contact (INSERT NAME) at (INSERT PHONE) or (INSERT EMAIL). We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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To sign on, send the following information to Luis Campillo by email at [campillo@nilc-dc.org](mailto:campillo@nilc-dc.org) or by fax at 202-216-0266.

Yes, my organization will sign on to the letter supporting the extension of SSI benefits for elderly and disabled refugees and asylees.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of your organization (as you would like it printed):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Type of Organization (please check one):  National  State or Local

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

The sign-on letter is from:

Adey Fisseha  
Policy Analyst  
National Immigration Law Center  
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