Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 4, 2017

The Honorable Elaine C. Duke
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Ave NW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Duke:

We write regarding the Cuban Medical Professional Parole (CMPP) Program. The CMPP was started under President Bush in 2006 in an effort to support the doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals the Castro regime effectively held hostage under Cuban government control. Cuba has long championed its practice of outsourcing these skilled individuals to other countries who pay cash for their services that is directly funneled into the hands of the Castro regime.

Cuba has been sending medical brigades around the world, including Central and South America as well as Africa, for over forty years - in return for payments directly to the government estimated to be as much as $8 billion per year. While some Cuban doctors say they volunteer for these overseas assignments because they provide opportunities to earn significantly more money than at home, some defectors who have come forward claim that they were coerced into this program by authoritarian tactics, including withholding their passports. This blatant exploitation by the Castro regime of their healthcare professionals is not at all surprising, as they have long used the suffering of the Cuban people for their own personal gain.

The CMPP, which was terminated by the Obama Administration in January of this year, allowed Cuban Medical professionals who were on overseas assignments to apply for parole if they are (1) of Cuban nationality or citizenship, (2) a medical professional conscripted to work in a foreign country under the direction of the Government of Cuba, and (3) not otherwise ineligible for entry into the United States. The families of the applicants were also eligible for parole under the program. From 2006 until January 2017, the United States approved 7,117 Cuban medical personnel stationed in over 60 countries for parole.

Many Cuban-Americans applauded President Trump's cancellation of the Obama administration's "thaw" with Cuba, however we believe there is still more to be done. The repeal of the CMPP was a major flash point in negotiations with the Cuban government, and the Obama administration mistakenly caved into the Castro's demands in favor of a warmer relationship with the island. The CMPP provided a refuge for doctors who were forced into indentured servitude for the Castro regime, and we owe it to them to restore this program and continue to counter the oppression of the Cuban people all over the world.

We urge you to fully reinstate the Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program immediately and reaffirm our strong commitment to U.S. democratic values and human rights in Cuba.

Sincerely,

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Marco Rubio
United States Senator

Ted Cruz
United States Senator

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress

Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Carlos Curbelo
Member of Congress