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Grace Meng

Congress of the United States

Sixth District, New York

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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

According to reporting in yesterday's *Washington Post*, "U.S. immigration courts will temporarily halt a program that offers legal assistance to detained foreign nationals facing deportation while it audits the program's cost-effectiveness." Respectfully, but forcefully, if foreign nationals continue to be deported then the Legal Orientation Program (LOP) should be continued as well.

I have heard rumors that you may allow LOP to lapse altogether at the end of this month. Again, I strenuously urge you to reconsider such a decision.

According to the Department's own website:¹

"Experience has shown that the LOP has had positive effects on the immigration court process: detained individuals make wiser, more informed, decisions and are more likely to obtain representation; non-profit organizations reach a wider audience of people with minimal resources; and, cases are more likely to be completed faster, resulting in fewer court hearings and less time spent in detention."

The evidence for the continuation of this program is clear in the agency's own public statements. Should you choose not to fully reinstate LOP prior to your appearance before the House Appropriations Committee on April 26th, I ask that you provide my office the following no less than 72 hours before you testify:


- 1) all documents and communications relating to the halting or eliminating of LOP;

¹ <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/legal-orientation-program>

- 2) all existing analyses of the effectiveness of LOP;
- 3) all communications between or among officials from the Department of Justice, and any other office or entity inside or outside of the government regarding the halting or elimination of LOP; and
- 4) all documents, communications, and analyses relating to the impact that halting or eliminating LOP will have on detained foreign nationals.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to discussing this with you in more detail on April 26th.

Sincerely,



Grace Meng
Member of Congress