

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 10, 2021

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chair DeLauro:

Illegal border crossings have skyrocketed this past month and are set to exceed the record-breaking numbers we saw in 2019. Just yesterday, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) agents and Army National Guard members encountered 5,204 individuals illegally crossing the border, adding to the more than 200,000 illegal border crossings so far this year.

In light of these alarming figures, we respectfully request that the House Appropriations Committee hold hearings on the ongoing security and humanitarian crisis at our southern border as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, one of the Biden Administration's first actions in office was ending the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) or "remain in Mexico" program that sent migrants with active asylum cases back to Mexico to wait for court dates. With the MPP no longer in place, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services are now overburdened and overwhelmed by the rapidly increasing border crossings.

Last week, the Washington Post reported that the Administration is planning to convert family detention centers into rapid-processing hubs, screening migrants within 72 hours and aiming to release over 100 families per day into the interior of the United States without proper tracking. Processing migrants at such an alarming rate raises grave concern with respect to the potential for human trafficking, child labor, and other criminal or fraudulent activity, and will only exacerbate the crisis at the border by creating an incentive to take the dangerous trip to the United States.

Due to COVID-19 distancing requirements, the ongoing pandemic has further limited the ability of agencies to move migrants and children out of CBP facilities quickly. In addition, the pandemic complicates the rapid repatriation of migrants because of home countries' testing, quarantine, and travel requirements.

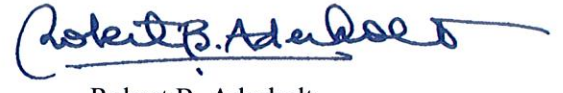
Furthermore, recent changes to Mexican law prohibit the detention of minors and instead require minors to be held in facilities operated by family and social services agencies. States in northern Mexico have expanded the interpretation of this law to include families with children; therefore, CBP cannot simply return minors and families to Mexico due to limited space available in family and social service facilities. This has been especially problematic in Tamaulipas, the state that borders Texas from Brownsville to Laredo.

Over the last two years, Congress and the previous administration passed legislation to strengthen our border and provide the resources needed to assist agencies with the surge of migrants. We are eager to continue working together to gather the facts about the current situation on the border and develop solutions to address this crisis. We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



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Committee on Appropriations


Harold Rogers
Committee on Appropriations


Robert B. Aderholt
Committee on Appropriations



Mike Simpson
Committee on Appropriations



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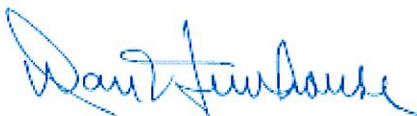

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