



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6538

March 18, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Almost two weeks ago, I sent you a letter requesting to meet regarding the ongoing border crisis. I have yet to hear back from you or anyone in your Administration about scheduling a meeting, but in that time, the situation at the border has only continued to deteriorate.

There are now 13,000 migrant children being held in U.S. custody, one of the facilities is at 729 percent over capacity, and the inflow of migrants shows no signs of slowing down. Your own Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas admitted two days ago that the United States is “on pace to encounter more individuals on the southwest border than we have in the last 20 years.”

Securing our border should not be a partisan issue. The most basic function of government is to keep our citizens safe. During your primetime address on March 11, you said, “Put trust and faith in our government to fulfill its most important function, which is protecting the American people — no function more important.” But right now, without a coordinated approach to stop the massive flow of illegal immigrants attempting to cross our border in the midst of a pandemic, and some who have even been on the FBI’s Terror Watch List, the federal government is failing to carry out one of its most essential and critical responsibilities.

To gain a firsthand understanding of what is happening at the border, I led a Congressional delegation to El Paso this week. What we saw and learned confirmed that the situation at our southern border is even worse than we anticipated. The El Paso Processing Center, a 98,000 square foot facility equipped to handle more than a 1,000 migrants at a time, hit a record the morning we were there - it is now beyond capacity.

With the capacity hitting crisis levels, Border Patrol agents are being diverted away from the border to manage these facilities. At the same processing center in El Paso, 120 agents were taken off their regular patrols to take care of the unprecedented number of migrant children being held at the facility. The overcrowding is exacerbating the crisis and creating even more security vulnerabilities at our border.

The uncontrolled flow of migrants has also caused unique health challenges during a pandemic. A doctor we spoke to said that 10 percent of migrants are testing positive for Covid, but not all the migrants taken in by Border Patrol are being tested, so that number has the potential to be even higher. This not only risks the health of the Border Patrol Agents working at the facilities, but it will also make it harder for our own border communities to control the spread of this virus and will delay their return to normalcy.

Even more alarming, while in El Paso, we were briefed that Border Patrol agents have caught people attempting to enter our country who were suspected terrorists. According to media reports, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has confirmed that the Border Patrol has arrested four people over the past five months who matched names on the FBI’s Terrorist Screening Database. Even one terrorist trespassing into

our country is too great a gamble when it comes to the security of our citizens.

With the information we gathered on the trip, House Republicans gained a sense of understanding of the scope and for the solutions we need to implement now to stop the border crisis. Here are the policies we recommend:

1. Re-start construction on the wall in priority areas along the border and disperse the proper security technology needed to complement the physical structure.
2. Reinstate the "Remain-in-Mexico" program.
3. Maintain Title 42 authorities to quickly expel migrants shortly after they illegally cross the border during a pandemic, something Border Patrol agents on the ground specifically insist is a valuable tool.
4. Send a clear united message to the citizens of Mexico and Central America: do not make the dangerous journey to the United States to cross the border illegally. There are legal avenues to enter our country. Doing otherwise is in violation of our laws.
5. Create a robust Covid testing program for migrants who are detained to prevent outbreaks in our communities.

Once again, Mr. President, I am requesting a meeting to discuss the crisis and relay what I personally saw on my trip to the border. If you are serious about securing our border and solving this crisis, then let's put our political differences aside for the betterment of our country.

We can no longer continue to implement a strategy of inaction and denial. It is well past time we work together to stop the ongoing humanitarian and national security crisis happening at our southern border.

Sincerely,



KEVIN McCARTHY
House Republican Leader