

HAROLD ROGERS, KENTUCKY, CHAIRMAN
FRANK R. WOLF, VIRGINIA
JACK KINGSTON, GEORGIA
RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN, NEW JERSEY
TOM LATHAM, IOWA
ROBERT B. ADERHOLT, ALABAMA
KAY GRANGER, TEXAS
MICHAEL K. SIMPSON, IDAHO
JOHN ABNEY CULBERSON, TEXAS
ANDER CRENSHAW, FLORIDA
JOHN R. CARTER, TEXAS
KEN CALVERT, CALIFORNIA
TOM COLE, OKLAHOMA
MARIO DIAZ-BALART, FLORIDA
CHARLES W. DENT, PENNSYLVANIA
TOM GRAVES, GEORGIA
KEVIN YODER, KANSAS
STEVE WOMACK, ARKANSAS
ALAN NUNNELEE, MISSISSIPPI
JEFF FORTENBERRY, NEBRASKA
THOMAS J. ROONEY, FLORIDA
CHARLES J. FLEISCHMANN, TENNESSEE
JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER, WASHINGTON
DAVID P. JOYCE, OHIO
DAVID G. VALADAO, CALIFORNIA
ANDY HARRIS, MARYLAND
MARTHA ROBY, ALABAMA
MARK E. AMODEI, NEVADA
CHRIS STEWART, UTAH

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515-6015

NITA M. LOWEY, NEW YORK
MARCY KAPTUR, OHIO
PETER J. VISLOSKEY, INDIANA
JOSÉ E. SERRANO, NEW YORK
ROSÁ L. DELAURO, CONNECTICUT
JAMES P. MORAN, VIRGINIA
ED PASTOR, ARIZONA
DAVID E. PRICE, NORTH CAROLINA
LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, CALIFORNIA
SAM FARR, CALIFORNIA
CHAKA FATTAH, PENNSYLVANIA
SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR., GEORGIA
BARBARA LEE, CALIFORNIA
ADAM B. SCHIFF, CALIFORNIA
MICHAEL M. HONDA, CALIFORNIA
BETTY McCOLLUM, MINNESOTA
TIM RYAN, OHIO
DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, FLORIDA
HENRY CUELLAR, TEXAS
CHELLIE PINGREE, MAINE
MIKE QUIGLEY, ILLINOIS
WILLIAM L. OWENS, NEW YORK

WILLIAM E. SMITH
CLERK AND STAFF DIRECTOR

TELEPHONE:
(202) 225-2771

June 19, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, the number of unaccompanied children and families crossing the Southwest border illegally is skyrocketing. We understand that many of these children are confronted with conflict, discord, and economic strife in their countries. While a partial explanation for this migration surge, we are equally concerned that your Administration's immigration policies are creating a dangerous incentive for illicit networks to smuggle thousands of children into the United States.

The number of undocumented children apprehended by United States Customs and Border Protection in May 2014 increased by 267 percent over the number apprehended in May 2013. During the same period, the number of undocumented adults increased 72 percent. At a rate of \$5,000 per child, these criminal smuggling groups earned at least \$53,230,000 in May alone. These statistics are startling in their magnitude and illustrate the consequences of improper enforcement of our border and immigration laws. Moreover, the situation could have frightening consequences both from a humanitarian and a national security perspective.

Agents working along the Texas border find themselves regularly coming face to face with frightened mothers and children who have endured a grueling trip through Mexico, escorted by smugglers often tied or beholden to drug cartels. Many of these immigrants report being robbed or suffering sexual abuse. Even more worrisome are trend lines that indicate the number of illegal crossings is not decreasing as summer approaches – unlike in previous years. If circumstances do not change, we are concerned many of these children and adults face extremely poor, even life-threatening, physical conditions. These dire circumstances only increase the potential for many of these vulnerable children to be exploited or become victims of human trafficking.

To end this dangerous migration, it is essential that the U.S. enforce our immigration laws and create effective and necessary deterrents so that potential illegal immigrants understand that their dream of reaching and being allowed to remain in the U.S. is unrealistic, and it is a virtual certainty they will be repatriated to their home countries. Furthermore, they must understand the risks they are taking to enter the U.S. illegally are far outweighed by the costs – including the cost of human lives and the consequences of violating U.S. immigration laws. Therefore, Mr. President, we urge you to take the following actions immediately:

- 1) Detain families who are recent border crossers in appropriate shelters near the Southwest border where practical and consistent with current law.
- 2) Utilize existing expedited immigration proceedings to determine whether these families have arrived in the country illegally.
- 3) Remove and deport those families who are ineligible to remain in the United States (not eligible for an immigration benefit), including those who make false claims of credible fear.
- 4) Place family members who are ineligible for immigration relief in expedited removal proceedings where appropriate.
- 5) Deliver “notices to appear” via post or issue 210 letters (which order recidivists to leave the United States within 30 days) to family members living in the United States illegally and with whom an undocumented child has been reunited.
- 6) Broadcast public service announcements on U.S.-based, Spanish-speaking television reporting on the deprivations and dangers of crossing from Central America through Mexico to the United States.

All these actions comply with the laws of the land, and resources and funding are available to enact them immediately. Further, the fiscal year 2015 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill introduced in the House includes the funding necessary to continue to enforce the laws, providing substantially higher funding levels to compensate for these increased needs – needs that were not addressed in your budget request. In addition, the fiscal year 2015 State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill restores reductions proposed in the budget request to improve economic and security conditions, fight gangs and drug cartels, combat human trafficking, and enhance border security in Mexico and Central America.

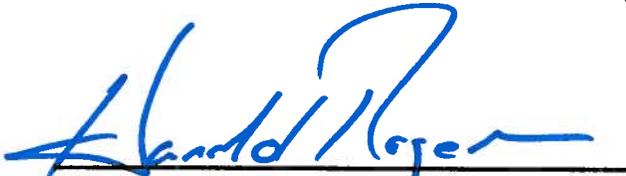
To determine whether the Southwest border is becoming increasingly vulnerable, the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee requested a briefing from the U.S. Border Patrol on June 17, 2014. Despite this request, the Department of Homeland Security has informed the Committee that such a briefing will be delayed indefinitely. As elected representatives of the American people, we demand that all Committees of jurisdiction be briefed immediately. We will not tolerate the withholding of such important and relevant information from Congress, particularly as the House considers appropriations bills that address border security and other funding needs related to this crisis.

Addressing how to repatriate unaccompanied children with responsible government officials in Central America will require substantial cooperation and participation from the countries of origin. Consequently, we, the undersigned Representatives, request that the State Department increase its efforts to work with Central American countries and Mexico to address this influx of unaccompanied children. We expect Department of State officials to accompany the Department of Homeland Security to brief Members on this aspect of the problem.

U.S. immigration laws are clear and must be administered appropriately to assure basic fairness to all legal immigrants, to maintain the integrity of the border and our national security, and to deter narco-traffickers, smugglers, and other illicit activities.

Mr. President, there is a crisis on the border. We must work together to solve it and urge you to implement the recommendations above.

Sincerely,



Representative Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations



Representative John Carter
Chairman
Homeland Security Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations



Representative Frank R. Wolf
Chairman
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations



Representative Jack Kingston
Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations



Representative Tom Cole
Chairman
Legislative Branch Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations



Representative Michael McCaul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security

cc: The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State

The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General

The Honorable Sylvia Burwell
Secretary of Health and Human Services

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary of Homeland Security