

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 16, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

We write to inquire about serious concerns raised from our recent visit to the southern border. As you may know, we, the undersigned of the Texas delegation, visited the border in McAllen, Laredo, and Carrizo Springs at the end of last month. We left our tour displeased and gravely concerned by the management strategy of the record-breaking surge of migrants flooding the border, the overflowing holding facilities that completely disregard COVID-19 protocols, and the lack of support and resources the federal government is providing to our border communities who battle this crisis every day.

Specifically, we toured the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) holding facility in Donna, TX, and were extremely troubled by the dire situation this administration has created for both our federal agents and migrants. We saw individual pods designed to hold 33 unaccompanied alien children (UACs) housing more than 600 boys and girls. As you know, in the interest of public health and pandemic recovery, the Donna facility is intended to hold a maximum of 250 people. However, the current number of UACs being held there is roughly 5,700 children. Moreover, we were told that CBP is being forced to assign 700 agents per day to these types of holding facilities to babysit, distribute meals, change diapers, and more. This is not what our CBP agents were trained to do, nor is it the safest or most efficient use of their time and expertise. It is clear that this crisis is out of control and that our agents and the facilities they manage are completely overrun and receiving insufficient support from this administration.

Additionally, we toured the Carrizo Springs Influx Care Facility and spoke with UACs who told us that the Biden Administration made them believe they could cross the border illegally and stay here for free while bypassing our legal immigration system. This is the message that countries south of the border are receiving: our border is open. We were informed by Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) administrators of the process by which UACs are released into the country and, in more detail, whose care they are put in – or what this administration is calling “reunification.” While there are certain procedures in place to help protect these children, protocols are being abandoned because of the massive flow of illegal migrants and the statutory limit for how long we can hold them. Our agents are forced to simply release UACs into the country with minimal vetting of whose custody they will actually be in. This is neither humane nor compassionate.

Based on this information, we request that you provide answers to the following questions:

1. How much does the U.S. government, to include all applicable departments and agencies, spend on housing, feeding, educating, healthcare, and other needs per UAC every month?
2. In detail, what is the current process for vetting the sponsors of UACs?
3. Where are UACs transported to (exactly which states and specific shelters) when they do not have a designated sponsor to be released to?
4. How many illegal immigrants have been released into the United States without a notice to appear (NTA)? What is the protocol for distributing NTAs and holding immigration hearings given current COVID-19 safety protocols?
5. What is the process for ensuring that sponsors bring a UAC in their care to their mandatory immigration hearing? Are there consequences for either the sponsor or the UAC for not showing up to their immigration hearing? Is there a process in which the federal government follows up with the sponsor or the UAC? Are 30-day wellness calls still being made post-release to a sponsor?
6. Are all non-Americans apprehended at or in between ports of entry on our southern border being tested for COVID-19? If not, why? What are the current protocols when a person tests positive for COVID-19?

We thank you in advance for this information and look forward to working with you on developing and implementing commonsense policies that will secure our border and ensure the safety of both American citizens and migrants.

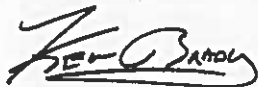
Sincerely,



Jodey C. Arrington



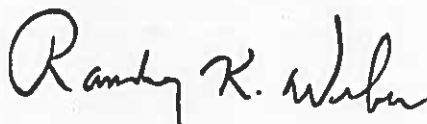
Brian Babin, D.D.S.



Kevin Brady




John R. Carter



Randy Weber




Michael C. Burgess, M.D.



Louie Gohmert



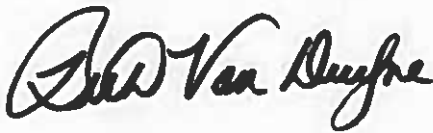
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Pete Sessions

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