

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 2, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1036 Longworth
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As appropriation requests for Fiscal Year 2026 are considered, we write to request robust funding for resources at our southern border.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of Justice (DOJ) have long expressed the need for funding related to our southern border, including: training and recruitment to mitigate staffing shortages; increasing immigration court judges to process the overwhelming backlog of cases; and investing in cutting edge technology to streamline and improve our ability to stymie the flow of illicit substances like fentanyl.

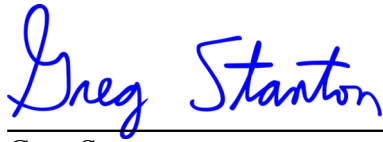
Without these necessary reforms, our operational capabilities at the border will suffer. While the problems facing our southern border will not be solved through funding alone, making strategic investments in programs and personnel along the border can help us make strides towards a more efficient and humane operating status both at and between our ports of entry.

- **Customs and Border Protection Personnel.** Customs and Border Protection personnel are integral to protecting America from illegal activity, narcotics, and human trafficking moving across ports of entry. According to a DHS Inspector General's May 2023 report, which detailed an audit involving interviews with over 9,000 law enforcement personnel, staffing shortages at the Southwest border led to law enforcement personnel "feeling overworked and unable to perform their primary law enforcement duties". We must provide robust funding to address staffing shortages and expand the number of CBP officers at ports of entry to allow them to effectively carry out their duties.
- **Technology Investments.** To stop the flow of illicit fentanyl and other deadly narcotics, Congress must continue to invest in cutting edge technology. This requires funding for non-intrusive inspection technology radar surveillance systems, remote and autonomous surveillance systems, manned and unmanned vehicles, drones, and CBP internal communications systems. Robust funding in innovative technologies is critical to assist our officers on the front lines in stopping the flow of illicit substances.
- **Addressing Backlogs.** U.S. Immigration Courts face an astounding backlog of nearly two million cases, with one judge handling an average of 5,000 cases to clear the backlog by 2032. Waiting years for a case to be adjudicated is insufficient for the asylum seekers and prolongs the removal process for individuals who lack valid claims. Frustratingly, the current administration has fired over two dozen immigration judges since taking office. Even prior to the firings, the Congressional Research Service found that the Department of Justice's Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) would need to hire 700 more judges for the caseload to be fully reduced by 2032 based on case completions. Robust funds to EOIR are essential to reduce the overwhelming backlog of cases.

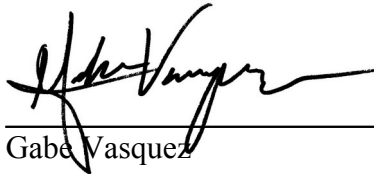
Meaningful investments in these programs will strengthen our operational posture at the southern border. By supporting our CBP workforce, investing in cutting-edge technologies, and strengthening our immigration courts, we can ensure that border communities have the tools they need to respond to the evolving challenges at our southern border.

We thank you for your consideration of these requests and look forward to working with you to pass FY26 appropriations.

Sincerely,



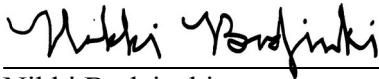
Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



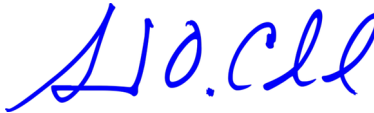
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Laura A. Gillen
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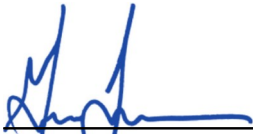
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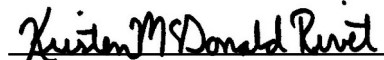
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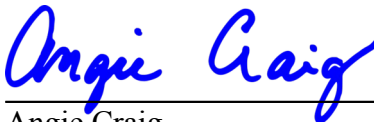
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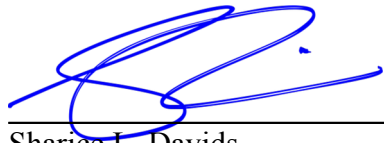
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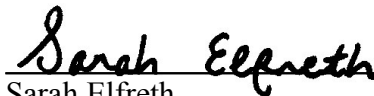
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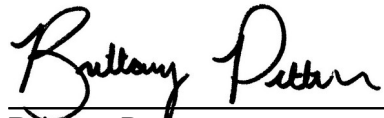
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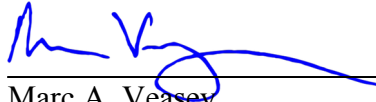
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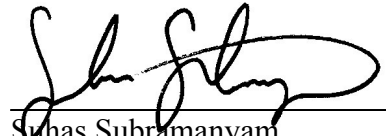
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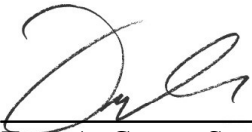
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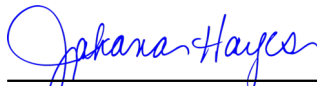
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