

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2024

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 2025 are considered, we urgently 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 court judges to process the overwhelming backlog of cases; maintaining partnerships with Non-Governmental Organizations at the border; and investing in cutting edge technology to streamline and improve our ability to stymie the flow of illicit substances like fentanyl.

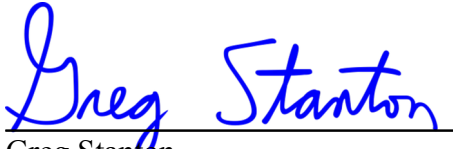
Without these necessary reforms, our operational capabilities at the border will continue to suffer. While the problems facing our southern border will not be solved through funding alone, making strategic investments in programs and personnel along the border can help us make strides towards a more 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". In just the first four months of the fiscal year, DHS in the Tucson Sector alone encountered more than 250,000 migrants—the highest number on record. We need to 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.
- **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. The Congressional Research Service states 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.
- **Shelter and Services Program (SSP).** SSP provides funding to local governments and nonprofits who provide essential resources to migrants after they have been processed by Border Patrol. These dollars mitigate the impact on local communities. In the absence of comprehensive immigration reform, Congress must provide robust funding for the Shelter and Services Program to ensure that local communities do not face the financial burden alone.
- **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, the CBP One app, 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.

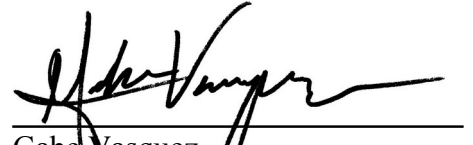
Meaningful investments in these programs will strengthen our operational posture at the southern border. By supporting our CBP workforce investing in technologies, strengthening our immigration courts, we can ensure that border communities have the tools they need to respond to the influx of migrants on the border.

We thank you for your consideration of these requests and look forward to working with you to pass FY25 appropriations.

Sincerely,



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



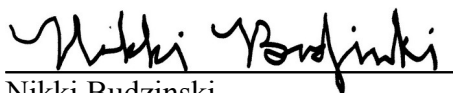
J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Wiley Nickel
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
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Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
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Bill Foster
Member of Congress



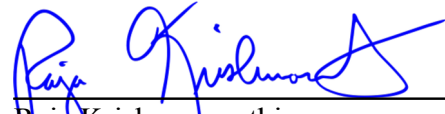
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



Patrick K. Ryan
Member of Congress



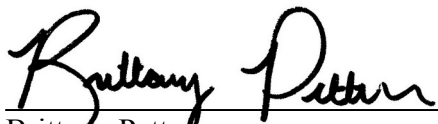
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress



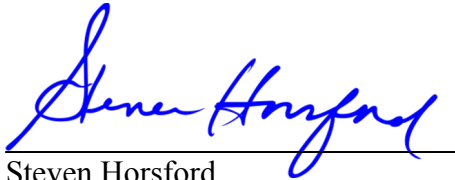
Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



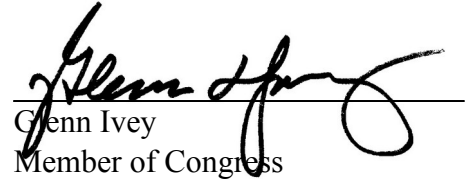
Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



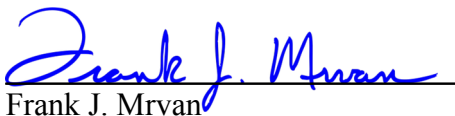
Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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