

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 10, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger  
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 Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We write to you today to request additional federal funding to address one of the most critical challenges facing our nation: stemming the flow of deadly illicit fentanyl into our country and maintaining a secure southern border. We believe Congress ought to consider an emergency supplemental appropriations bill and increased funding for Fiscal Year 2024 for this urgent priority.

Deaths related to the use of illicit fentanyl and other synthetic opioids have risen by nearly 200% in the past decade, affecting nearly every American community in the process. Families across the country have suffered incalculable losses at the hands of these extremely potent narcotics. As the elected representatives of these families and communities, it is our duty to do all we can to disrupt the distribution of illicit fentanyl.

The vast majority of illicit fentanyl is trafficked by transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) based in Mexico at ports of entry along our southern border. Therefore, making critical investments in border security through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is essential to limiting the prevalence of illicit fentanyl in American communities. However, the partisan Republican budget proposal that recently passed the House forgoes these critical investments in favor of steep budgetary cuts. According to DHS, this proposal would reduce Customs and Border Protection (CBP) enforcement staffing by up to 2,400 agents and harm the department's ability to prevent illicit fentanyl from entering the country. At a time when CBP seizures of illicit substances doubled between FY21 and FY22 and quadrupled between FY19 and FY22, reducing enforcement is an unacceptable outcome that would put our constituents at even higher risk.

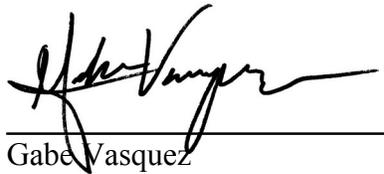
As an alternative to the harmful cuts put forward by the majority, we propose a strategy of making critical and targeted investments that give law enforcement the tools to prevent illicit fentanyl from ever reaching American communities. This includes building on the \$86.48 billion FY23 DHS appropriation that funded responsible border technology, inspections at ports of entry, and additional staffing initiatives. The FY23 appropriation led to record highs of illicit fentanyl seized at the southern border. Similarly, the most recent appropriation featured dedicated funding to address TCO weapons smuggling from the U.S. into Mexico, a principal source of funding for their illicit fentanyl trafficking operations. These investments made huge strides in addressing the challenges posed by illicit fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances. It is paramount that appropriators bolster these programs to capitalize on their effectiveness.

Beyond protecting and adding to the FY23 funding, we propose additional investments that will further degrade illicit fentanyl trafficking across the southern border. These investments include:

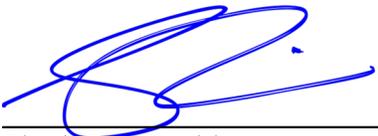
- 1) Hiring an additional 500 CBP Officers at points of entry to increase the number of vehicles scanned at the border.
- 2) Expanding the DHS' Fentanyl Abatement and Response Team (FAST) to better coordinate with state, local, and federal partners on disrupting fentanyl distribution networks.
- 3) Create additional Transnational Criminal Investigative Units (TCIUs) to improve U.S. and host country ability to investigate TCOs.
- 4) Invest in equipment, training, and medication to protect frontline officers from TCO elements and accidental fentanyl exposure.
- 5) Expedite acquisition and placement of non-intrusive inspection technology to reduce fentanyl smuggling at ports of entry.

Each of these investments would lead to less illicit fentanyl in our communities and save American lives. As members of Congress, we cannot afford to play politics with the health and safety of those we represent. We urge you to reject the proposed cuts to DHS and fund these programs at the appropriate level so that fewer American families will be subjected to the pain caused by illicit fentanyl.

Sincerely,



Gabe Vasquez  
Member of Congress



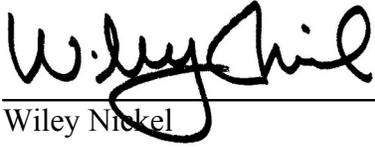
Sharice L. Davids  
Member of Congress



Angie Craig  
Member of Congress



Patrick Ryan  
Member of Congress



Wiley Nickel  
Member of Congress



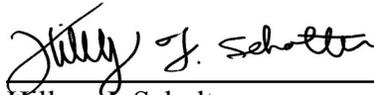
J. Luis Correa  
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Eric Sorensen  
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



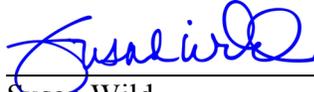
Hillary J. Scholten  
Member of Congress



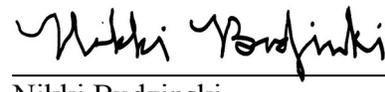
Greg Stanton  
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Chris Pappas  
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Susan Wild  
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Nikki Budzinski  
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Marilyn Strickland  
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Mikie Sherrill  
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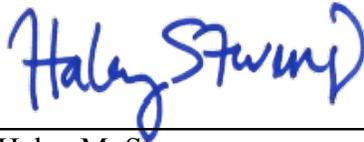


Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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