

January 25, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Restoring Accountability, Oversight & Transparency to Our Border Enforcement Strategy

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer:

Today, we write to you to express our support for increased accountability, oversight, and transparency at our borders and ports of entry. The current border enforcement system has failed our border communities, the vulnerable people arriving at our nation's front door, and even agents and officers themselves. As a result, our country is in desperate and urgent need of legislative reforms included in Rep. Veronica Escobar's *Homeland Security Improvement Act* (H.R.3557) and Sen. Ben Ray Lujan's *Border Accountability, Oversight, and Community Engagement Act* (S.3160).

Enacting companion legislation will establish a New Ellis Island at our southern border that lives up to the ideals of protecting the human and constitutional rights of migrants and border residents by holding agents accountable. Overhauls to immigration enforcement at the U.S. border are long overdue, and border communities have long advocated for changes, including annual reviews of ICE and CBP training protocols, body camera requirements, and creating an independent and neutral Border Oversight Panel.

It remains critical that DHS reestablish procedures that help protect the rights of immigrants and border communities alike and uphold our nation's values. Immigrants and their families are entitled to respect for their humanity and freedoms under the law. Unfortunately, the current system will continue to perpetuate inhumane treatment and repeated violations of citizen and migrant civil rights.

Federal immigration officers and agencies are accountable to the people. We must engage in more transparent accountability and enforcement policies at the border, and Congress must do more to reign in these notoriously abusive immigration agencies. Congress should hold these rogue agencies accountable for the harm and trauma they inflict. Congress can do so by exercising oversight, authorizing community engagement requirements, mandating the collection of agency misconduct data, and establishing an ICE and CBP ombudsman office.

We urge Congress to act in the best interest of our communities, economy, and the nation to pass legislation in the House—as it did in the 116th Congress—and the Senate. We look forward to working with our champions in both chambers to strengthen the bill as it moves towards passage, and we count on your leadership, support, and understanding that enacting measures to hold officers accountable for misconduct is paramount and constitutes a moral imperative.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Border Network for Human Rights
Bridges Faith Initiative
Chispa LCV
Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel
Doctors for Camp Closure
F.I.R.E.
Freedom Network USA
Government Accountability Project
Haitian Bridge Alliance
Hispanic Federation
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice
Kino Border Initiative

Justice In Motion
League of Conservation Voters
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Madres e Hijos
National Immigration Law Center
NETWORK Lobby For Catholic Social Justice
People's Tribune
Quixote Center
The Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe of Texas
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team
Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice

State Organizations

African Bureau for Immigration and Social Affairs
Chispa Texas
Immigrant Defenders Law Center
La Monarca Foundation
OUISA D. DAVIS, Attorney at Law

Proyecto Immigrante ICS, Inc.
RITA-Reform Immigration for Texas Alliance
Texas Civil Rights Project
The Advocates for Human Rights
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

Local Organizations

Adelante Alabama Worker Center
Al Otro Lado
ARISE Adelante
Border Workers United
California Central Valley Journey for Justice
Community Asylum Seekers Project
Community First Coalition of El Paso
El Paso County Commissioner David C. Stout
El Paso Police Department Accountability Task Force

Grupo Dignidad, Igualdad, y Oportunidad
La Unión del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)
Laredo Immigrant Alliance
Prince of Peace Christian Fellowship, Inc.
San Antonio Interfaith Welcome Coalition
Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration (WJCI)
Woori Juntos

cc: The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary
Department of Homeland Security

The Honorable Bennie Thompson, Chair
House Committee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Nanette Barragan, Chair
House Subcommittee on Border Security, Facilitation, and Operations

The Honorable Gary Peters, Chair
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema, Chair
Senate Subcommittee on Government Operations and Border Management

The Honorable Veronica Escobar, Sponsor of H.R.3557

The Honorable Adriano Espaillat, Cosponsor of H.R.3557

The Honorable Ruben Gallego, Cosponsor of H.R.3557

The Honorable Sylvia Garcia, Cosponsor of H.R.3557

The Honorable Al Green, Cosponsor of H.R.3557

The Honorable Jahana Hayes, Cosponsor of H.R.3557

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton, Cosponsor of H.R.3557

The Honorable James McGovern, Cosponsor of H.R.3557

The Honorable Tim Ryan, Cosponsor of H.R.3557

The Honorable Greg Stanton, Cosponsor of H.R.3557

The Honorable Juan Vargas, Cosponsor of H.R.3557

The Honorable Ben Ray Luján, Sponsor of S.3160

The Honorable Cory Booker, Cosponsor of S.3160

The Honorable Martin Heinrich, Cosponsor of S.3160

The Honorable Robert Menendez, Cosponsor of S.3160

The Honorable Alex Padilla, Cosponsor of S.3160

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren, Cosponsor of S.3160