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March 8, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Acting Secretary Norris Cochran
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear President Biden, Secretary Mayorkas, and Acting Secretary Cochran,

I have a responsibility to my constituents to report to you that the current situation on the border is precarious and in need of our immediate attention. According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, there were 1,800 apprehensions in my district in a single day last week. There were also 10 admissions to our hospitals per day last week as a result of the influx and no indications that these numbers will decrease. Given the gravity of the situation, it is imperative that I meet with all of you.

The Rio Grande Valley has been ravaged by the pandemic. Our region amounts to 4.7% of the entire state population, but it accounts for approximately 10% of COVID-related deaths in Texas. We recently survived a winter weather disaster that left our citizens without water or power. While you may have paused the processing of those affected by the Migrant Protection Protocol, or the "Remain in Mexico" Policy, the processing of migrants at the border has not stopped. Agents are being pulled from their posts to process migrants, away from their duty securing our borders.

The number of unaccompanied minors that are arriving is staggering. Children under the age of five years old are being left on the river banks with nothing more than a phone number written on their clothing. It appears that the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement has not adequately responded to the call to action, leaving children in Border Patrol

custody for longer than 72 hours. The message in Central America seems to be that now is the time to come, and cartels are profiting in the process.

We must provide immediate solutions to this problem. Here are three common-sense solutions that I believe will help immediately:

1. We need to make available the manpower and facilities needed to safely, efficiently, and compassionately process migrants and transport them to other regions when local facilities are at capacity.
2. Our local resources, including hospitals, local governments, and non-Governmental organizations should not be overwhelmed. I urge coordination with them and when they are full, we need to be ready to designate additional facilities north of the Falfurrias Checkpoint.
3. Process asylum requests in the home country of the applicant and provide these important resources and infrastructure in advance of any policy changes.

These requests are merely a starting point from which we need to operate, and if we cannot achieve these goals through existing law, please let me know what additional authorities are needed.

I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vicente Gonzalez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress