

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 11, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

I am writing to you to raise the level of awareness of the growing problem at our southern border.

A recent memo from the Acting Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Tae Johnson, suggests reprioritizing deportations to not include those who commit certain crimes in the United States. Certain crimes not included in prioritization of deportation listed in the memo are “drug-based crimes, simple assault, DUI, money laundering, property crimes, fraud, tax crimes, solicitation, or charges without convictions” and “only loose affiliation in records with gang activity.”¹ I am asking that your administration reconsider this reprioritization for deportation, given the severity of these crimes. This change is not only making life for American citizens more dangerous, but is empowering cartels and causing a spike of arrivals at the border not seen since early 2019.

During the first four months of fiscal year 2021, the number of single adult migrants encountered by Border Patrol increased 182 percent to 244,053 compared to the same period the year before and encounters with Unaccompanied Alien Children (UACs) increased 64 percent.² As of last month, the number of families encountered is the highest since January 2020.³ Additionally, it is being reported that one former official said Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) personnel on the border are now encountering 300 UACs a day – one of the fastest rates ever.⁴

I am strongly encouraging you to consider the impacts of these decisions on the country, but also the localities directly affected. The decisions by your administration and the rhetoric being used are helping spur greater numbers of migrants from Central and South America to the southern border, which is forcing CBP to resume the dangerous practice of “catch-and-release.”⁵ While the surge at the border, under normal circumstances, causes the migrants and our nation serious issues, it is a greater problem given the lack of rigorous Covid-19 testing at the border. This is especially devastating for those who live and work in districts and states on the border and feel the direct effects of these policies to an even greater degree than other states.

¹ <https://www.texastribune.org/2021/02/07/biden-immigration-ice/>

² <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters/usbp-sw-border-apprehensions>

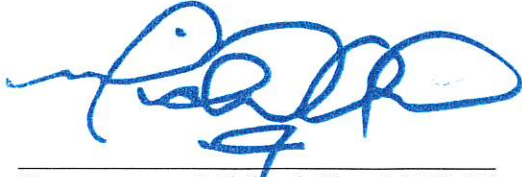
³ <https://nypost.com/2021/02/11/biden-admini-opens-tent-city-to-detain-illegal-migrants/>

⁴ <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/feb/9/bidens-dhs-opens-new-tent-city-process-illegal-imm/>

⁵ <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/feb/8/joe-biden-border-surge-prompts-catch-and-release-r/>

To prevent another surge like our country experienced in the summer of 2019, I am asking that you reverse your decision on banning deportations, restart construction on the border wall, and keep the successful Migrant Protection Protocols, all of which deter mass migration and mitigate cartel profits.

God bless,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Cloud", with a stylized flourish underneath.

Congressman Michael Cloud (TX-27)