



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3605

February 22, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Mr. Norris Cochran  
Acting Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Secretary Mayorkas and Acting Secretary Cochran,

It has been nearly one year since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic and former President Trump declared a national emergency.<sup>1</sup> The coronavirus continues to ravage the world, and because of this, we write today to inquire about the emerging threat of COVID-19 and particularly the impact of the virus to our southern border considering the recent influx in illegal encounters.

The increasing surge at our southern border is once again enriching cartels and causing a growing humanitarian crisis. Through Biden Administration policies and deteriorating economic conditions caused by COVID-19 in Central and South America, a major flow of migrants are making their way to our southern border. 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.<sup>2</sup> As of last month, the number of families encountered increased to the highest number since January 2020.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, these numbers are not projected to decline anytime soon.

Due to the high number of encounters and limited resources, reports indicate that Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents are “catching-and-releasing” illegal migrants with little time in CBP custody. Not only is this concerning on the merits, but it is especially concerning considering the coronavirus pandemic America is battling.

Given the growing concern of both the rise in illegal encounters and threat of COVID-19, we ask that your respective agencies respond in writing within 14 days to the following questions:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/03/18/2020-05794/declaring-a-national-emergency-concerning-the-novel-coronavirus-disease-covid-19-outbreak>

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

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

1. Reportedly, the Biden Administration is not allowing U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) to return to Mexico the Unaccompanied Minors (UACs) that arrive at the southern border. At the same time, the Biden Administration is building a new UAC facility in Carrizo Springs, TX. Based on reports, the Biden Administration is also requiring any children above the age of 13 to complete quarantine prior to being sheltered in the facility.<sup>4</sup>
  - a. How does DHS plan to ensure migrants are indeed quarantining before being let into the Carrizo Spring facility, especially in light of the discontinuation of the Migrant Protection Protocols for these very migrants?
  - b. Where are migrants quarantining?
  - c. If indeed a migrant is able to quarantine for 14 days before entering the Carrizo Spring facility, how does DHS personnel plan to protect migrants and U.S. Border Patrol personnel against COVID-19?
    - i. What specific resources will be used including, but not limited to, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), testing supplies, vaccines, and personnel?
2. It has been reported that 10,000 COVID-19 tests have been sent to the border to test migrants being paroled by DHS personnel.<sup>5</sup>
  - a. What are DHS's protocols surrounding a positive COVID-19 test for both migrant adults and children?
3. If a migrant with COVID-19 requires medical care, including hospitalization, what are DHS's protocols?
  - a. Are local medical facilities used to treat illegal migrants for COVID-19?
4. How long does DHS and HHS plan to keep migrants in their care before releasing them into the interior?
5. How many migrants have been released from DHS and HHS care since January 20, 2021?
  - a. How did DHS and HHS ensure none of these migrants were carrying COVID-19, thus preventing the spread of coronavirus in the interior?

Thank you for your attention to this letter, and we look forward to a timely response.

Sincerely,



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Michael Cloud  
Member of Congress



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Chip Roy  
Member of Congress

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<sup>4</sup> Id.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.borderreport.com/regions/texas/exclusive-texas-sends-10000-covid-19-tests-to-mcallen-where-border-agents-are-releasing-migrant-families/>

Mary E Miller

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Mary Miller  
Member of Congress



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Bob Good  
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Dan Bishop  
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Andy Harris  
Member of Congress



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Mo Brooks  
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