

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

March 10, 2021

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

Dear President Biden:

There is a crisis on the southern border. It is in fact a full-blown emergency. Illegal border crossings have accelerated in recent months, a trend that is correlated with several recent policy changes by your administration, and news reports suggest that the situation at the border continues to worsen. To help improve transparency about your plans to secure the border, I urge you to immediately send Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas to Congress to publicly testify to the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

Congress, not the President, makes immigration law. And while every administration has the right to pursue policy changes within the parameters set out in statute, when those changes result in elevated levels of unrestricted, illegal border crossings, then it's critical that the administration provide an explanation to Congress and to the American people. Unfortunately, so far, your administration refuses to accept reality and admit we are in a full-blown crisis. Yesterday, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said that "I don't think we need to sit here and put new labels on what we have already conveyed is challenging," and said in response to a question about the number of children detained in federal facilities along the border that "it's not our program."¹ You have also avoided answering questions by the press as they relate to our southern border.² It is my hope that Secretary Mayorkas' testimony will help to clarify the scale of the emergency and also provide confidence that as President you will do what is necessary to secure our nation's borders.

I believe that border security is national security. If we fail to demonstrate to the American public that we are operating a controlled, fair, and orderly immigration system, then it erodes public trust in our institutions and the laws passed by Congress. And this is not just about the border, scaling back immigration enforcement can have a major impact on both the safety of American communities and the livelihood of American workers across our nation.

¹ <https://nypost.com/2021/03/09/wh-refuses-to-call-mexico-border-rush-child-detainment-a-crisis/>

² <https://nypost.com/2021/03/09/press-corps-ushered-away-after-asking-biden-questions-again/>

Thank you for your attention to this matter of great urgency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long tail.

Josh Hawley
United States Senator

CC:

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