

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

212 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
TELEPHONE: (202) 224-6154
FAX: (202) 228-0526
WWW.HAWLEY.SENATE.GOV

March 10, 2021

The Honorable Gary Peters
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Peters:

I write to request that you schedule a full committee hearing as soon as practicable on the growing emergency at the southern border. It is critical that the committee conduct oversight into recent actions of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and I ask that you use your authority as Chairman to call Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas to publicly testify. Today, I am also sending a letter to President Biden urging him to dispatch Secretary Mayorkas to Congress as soon as possible.

Recently, there has been a surge of illegal migration on the southern border.¹ This new crisis follows a series of actions by the Biden administration, such as steps to reverse the Trump administration's Migrant Protection Protocols,² an attempt to halt deportations,³ a suspension of border wall construction,⁴ and support for amnesty legislation.⁵ As members of the relevant congressional oversight committee, it's incumbent upon us to fully and publicly examine these recent changes and evaluate their impact on the "pull factors" that impact migration patterns and encourage illegal immigration into our country.

In addition, it's not clear that Secretary Mayorkas is providing a full account of the emergency at our southern border to the American public. On March 1st, when asked if there was a crisis on the southern border, Secretary Mayorkas responded "no."⁶ However, this past Monday, in an email to staff, the Secretary reportedly conceded that there are "overwhelming numbers of migrants seeking access to this country along the Southwest Border."⁷ If Secretary Mayorkas thinks this is a crisis, then he should be honest with the American people and say so.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/08/us/politics/immigration-mexico-border-biden.html>

² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-mexico-idUSKCN2AROKO>

³ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2021/01/21/biden-administration-halts-deportations-some-undocumented-immigrants-100-days/6663021002/>

⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/proclamation-termination-of-emergency-with-respect-to-southern-border-of-united-states-and-redirection-of-funds-diverted-to-border-wall-construction/>

⁵ <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/18/968989967/democrats-unveil-sweeping-immigration-bill>

⁶ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/biden-dhs-secretary-trump-admin-gutted-immigration-system>

⁷ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/dhs-chief-volunteers-southern-border-migrant-surge>

While every administration has the right to pursue policy changes, when those changes result in elevated levels of unrestricted, illegal border crossings, then rigorous oversight must be conducted. Such policy changes can have a major impact on both the safety of American communities and the livelihood of American workers. For these reasons, it's critical that we maintain vigorous security and enforcement measures on our southern border.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to working with you this Congress on issues related to border security.

Sincerely,

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

Josh Hawley
United States Senator

CC:

The Honorable Rob Portman
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510