



CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS
Michelle Lujan Grisham | Chairwoman
115TH CONGRESS

November 27, 2018

Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Paul Ryan
House Majority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Ryan, Chairman Shelby and Chairman Frelinghuysen:

As negotiations continue on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriations bill, we write again to urge you to reject any proposed increases in funding for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), in particular for immigration detention, ICE agents and the border wall. We cannot allow for additional funding that would enable the Administration to further increase its indiscriminate enforcement of immigration law.

As President Trump continues to demand billions in funding for an unnecessary border wall, dehumanize refugees by blocking asylum-seeking women, children and families from entering the United States, and with 147 children still separated from their parents¹ more than seven months after this administration's cruel zero-tolerance border security policy, we must show our strong opposition to these disastrous policies by refusing to provide additional funds that would continue to carry out these xenophobic efforts.

We, therefore, ask that DHS decrease the number of detention beds in our nation's already overgrown, costly and inhumane immigration detention system. ICE is currently operating thousands of beds over its allocated budget, with the number of those detained hitting an all-time high of 44,000- 4,000 more than the funds provided by Congress.² These detention beds are increasingly being used to detain families, as the number of families apprehended at the border has increased in recent years.³ Instead of expanding

¹ <https://www.rollicall.com/news/politics/nearly-150-separated-migrant-children-remain-u-s-custody>

² <https://www.thedailybeast.com/ice-is-imprisoning-a-record-44000-people>

³ From October 2017 to June 2018, the number of families apprehended at the border increased from 4,836 to 9,449. U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, *Southwest Border Migration FY2018: U.S. Border Patrol Apprehensions FY2018 YTD (October 1 - June 30)*, updated July 2, 2018, available at <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration>. This follows a longer trend. In 2013, Border Patrol apprehended 15,056 families which grew to 75,802 families apprehended in 2017. See United States Border Patrol, *Total Family Unit Apprehensions By Month*,

funds to detain families in DHS facilities, which the American Academy of Pediatrics has reported, “do not meet the basic standards for the care of children in residential settings”⁴, the FY2019 DHS Appropriations bill should instead re-institute alternatives to detention like the Family Case Management Program. According to the DHS Office of the Inspector General, this program ensured that over 99 percent of program participants attended their court hearings and is the safest, most cost-effective option for children and families.⁵

We request that the Committee reduce funding for ICE agents and reject any increases in ICE law enforcement officers. As ICE continues to increase the number of arrests of individuals with no criminal conviction, DHS should instead focus its resources on prioritizing national security and public safety threats, rather than targeting the removal of millions of undocumented immigrants with long-standing ties to their communities.⁶ We ask that you support the demilitarization of southern border communities and reduce funding for Border Patrol agents.

Finally, we urge the Committee to provide zero funding for the border wall. Five billion dollars is a waste of taxpayer funding to build an unnecessary and operationally ineffective wall at our southern border. Furthermore, diverting taxpayer dollars toward the construction of a border wall cripples our response to other national security threats, which makes us all less safe.

This Administration’s immigration policies have been devastating to families, and we as members of Congress and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus have a responsibility to mitigate this harm by reducing the funding that goes toward further attacks on our country’s immigrants and their families. We urge you to oppose a costly mass deportation agenda that undermines our public safety, economic well-being and values.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your continued efforts on the FY2019 Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

available at <https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2017-Dec/BP%20Total%20Monthly%20Family%20Units%20by%20Sector%2C%20FY13-FY17.pdf>.

⁴ Linton JM, Griffin M, Shapiro AJ, AAP Council On Community Pediatrics. Detention of Immigrant Children. *Pediatrics*. 2017; 139(5) :e20170483, available at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2017/03/09/peds.2017-0483>

⁵ Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, *U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Award of the Family Case Management Program Contract (Redacted)*, November 30, 2017. OIG-18-22. <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2017-12/OIG-18-22-Nov17.pdf>.

⁶ From October 2017 to the end of March, nearly 60% of those arrested by ICE had no criminal convictions, a 21% increase from the same period the year before, according to data from ICE obtained by the Huffington Post. Foley, Elise, *Trump's ICE Is Increasingly Arresting Immigrants Without Criminal Convictions*, Huffington Post, May 17, 2018, available at https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-arresting-noncriminal-immigrants_us_5afdedf4e4b07309e0562f7d.



Michelle Lujan Grisham
CHC Chair



Joaquin Castro
CHC First Vice Chair

CC: Leader Pelosi, Minority Leader Schumer, Ranking Member Lowey, Ranking Member Leahy