



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

June 12, 2014

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson,

Texas is currently dealing with an extraordinary influx of unaccompanied minors illegally crossing our long international border with Mexico. With the Border Patrol's focus shifted to this crisis, we have grave concerns that dangerous cartel activity, including narcotics smuggling and human trafficking, will go unchecked because Border Patrol resources are stretched too thin. Securing the U.S.-Mexico border is the federal government's responsibility. Because that simply is not happening, the State of Texas is seeking emergency funding to help support state-based border security initiatives.

In the Texas Rio Grande Valley sector alone, the U. S. Border Patrol made more than 160,000 apprehensions between October 2013 and May 2014, an increase of 70 percent over the same period the year before. Authorities arrested 47,017 unaccompanied minors illegally crossing the border between October and May, up 92 percent from the same period a year earlier. More than two-thirds of these arrests—33,470—were in the Rio Grande Valley sector. A draft Border Patrol memorandum estimates that number could reach 90,000 in the fiscal year ending Sept. 30.

This crisis has been accelerated by federal government policies that, as U.S. District Judge Andrew S. Hanen recently wrote, are "rewarding criminal conduct instead of enforcing the current laws." Federal government policies that release unauthorized immigrants from custody with notices to appear in court, and that reunite minors apprehended alone in the U.S. illegally with family members already present in the country, only encourages the continued influx of unaccompanied minors that has helped create this urgent situation on our southwestern border.

I am appealing directly to you for immediate assistance with border security operations along the Texas-Mexico border. The influx of child immigrants has so overwhelmed the U.S. Border Patrol that federal agents are devoting time and resources to the humanitarian aspects of the influx. Therefore, we are concerned federal authorities are not available to secure the border and successfully stop cross-border criminal activity.

The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) has a proven track record of interdicting, intercepting and disrupting the criminal operations of transnational gangs and international drug cartels—including illegal smuggling operations by those criminal organizations. The Texas DPS is prepared to swiftly launch a significant and proven border security operation once funding is available. The cost for the operation is

approximately \$1.3 million per week and is necessary to stem the tide of unauthorized entries across the porous U.S.-Mexico border. The operational costs reflect overtime for State Troopers working 12-hour shifts and other expenses such as fuel and lodging, as well as overtime for local law enforcement agencies, which augment the DPS operations. An immediate \$30 million directed toward state and local law enforcement would help mitigate the crisis at hand and provide the Border Patrol the assistance it needs to regain control of the border.

The \$30 million requested is only two percent of the amount of aid the President is asking Congress to appropriate in *temporary* aid to deal with the consequences of the porous border. The short-term cost of border security enhancement provided by Texas should lead to significantly lower aid costs incurred by U.S. taxpayers in the future and would ensure law enforcement at the border continues to be available to focus on narcotics interdiction, human trafficking prevention and other cartel activity. Unless the Department of Homeland Security or another federal agency provides funding, the cartels—which are central to this crisis—will prevail because they profit from each illegal border crossing. With the requested aid, though, the Texas DPS can apply its proven record of success to help staunch this cartel-driven border security problem.

In addition to funds for the Texas Department of Public Safety, I urge the Department of Homeland Security to step up its efforts to prevent these illegal crossings before they occur. I applaud the members of the Border Patrol who defend our border, but they are overwhelmed. Since 2010, the number of apprehensions along the Texas Mexico border has increased by more than 90 percent. Our State needs an increased deployment from the Border Patrol to discourage young persons from making the dangerous and illegal journey so far from their homes.

Thank you for considering this urgent request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Abbott", written in a cursive style.

Greg Abbott
Attorney General of Texas