

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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March 18, 2021

The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee
Chair
Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Jackson Lee:

We write to request that you schedule a hearing of the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security to examine how the Biden Administration's crisis along the U.S. southern border affects U.S. homeland security and public safety.¹

Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and other criminals engage in human smuggling, a crime that happens on a "daily occurrence" at the U.S. southwest border in deliberate circumvention of U.S. immigration laws.² Because of the Biden Administration's immigration policies that have caused a surge of alien encounters along the U.S. southern border, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) now has to divert its resources away from its priority missions and law enforcement duties to secure the border and instead process illegal aliens.

According to a recent report, the Government of Mexico is concerned that the Biden Administration's "asylum policies" are "stoking illegal immigration and creating business for organized crime."³ The Subcommittee should hear directly from officials from the Department of State, Department of Justice, and Department of Homeland Security about what the Biden Administration is doing to address the criminal activity caused by the Biden Administration's radical policies.

In addition to human smuggling, the trafficking of illicit drugs carried out by Mexican TCOs is a prevalent and real concern along the southern border. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) most recent National Drug Threat Assessment, "Mexican TCOs are the greatest drug trafficking threat to the United States; they control most of the U.S.

¹ See, e.g., Stef W. Kight, *Scoop: Four people matching terror watchlist arrested at the border*, AXIOS (Mar. 16, 2021).

² U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, *Human smuggling equals grave danger, big money*, <https://www.ice.gov/features/human-smuggling-danger> (last visited Mar. 10, 2021).

³ Dave Graham, *Exclusive: 'Migrant president' Biden stirs Mexican angst over boom time for gangs*, REUTERS (Mar. 10, 2021).

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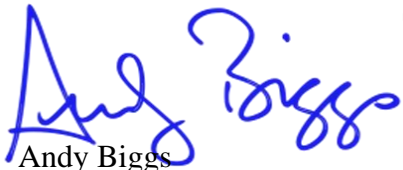
drug market and have established varied transportation routes, have advanced communications capabilities, and hold strong affiliations with criminal groups and gangs in the United States.”⁴ These TCOs “continue to control lucrative smuggling corridors,” mainly across the U.S. southern border to traffic large quantities of illicit drugs.⁵

These poisonous drugs are fueling the U.S. drug crisis. According to provisional data by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there have been over 83,000 drug overdose deaths in the U.S. in the twelve months ending in July 2020—representing the highest number of overdose deaths ever recorded in a twelve-month period.⁶ The CDC further reported that synthetic opioids, primarily illicitly manufactured fentanyl, appear to be the main catalyst of the increase in overdose deaths.⁷

The production and supply of illicit fentanyl into the U.S. market is increasingly driven by Mexican cartels and China remains a main source of supply for precursor chemicals—used to make dangerous drugs that cartels illegally smuggle into the country in large amounts.⁸ Between October 2020 and February 2021, CBP seized over 218,000 pounds of dangerous drugs at the southwest border, including more than 4,500 pounds of fentanyl, where only two milligrams can kill a person.⁹

We ask that you schedule a hearing so that Subcommittee Members have the opportunity to hear from, and question, Biden Administration officials about how the Biden Administration’s failure to secure the U.S. southern border has allowed TCOs, smugglers, and drug traffickers to engage in criminal activity and harm public safety. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Andy Biggs
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Crime,
Terrorism, and Homeland Security



Jim Jordan
Ranking Member

⁴ U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, *National Drug Threat Assessment*, at 4 (Mar. 2021).

⁵ *Id.* at 65.

⁶ Paul Sutton et al., *Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (Feb. 7, 2021), <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm#dashboard>.

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Overdose Deaths Accelerating During COVID-19*, <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p1218-overdose-deaths-covid-19.html> (last visited Mar. 4, 2021).

⁸ U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, *National Drug Threat Assessment*, at 14-16 (Mar. 2021); *see also*, Press Release, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, *DEA Releases 2020 National Drug Threat Assessment*, <https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2021/03/02/dea-releases-2020-national-drug-threat-assessment> (Mar. 2, 2021).

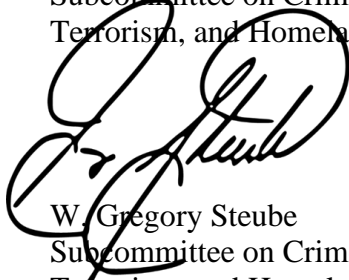
⁹ U.S. Customs and Border Protection, *Drug Seizure Statistics*, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/drug-seizure-statistics> (last visited Mar. 10, 2021).



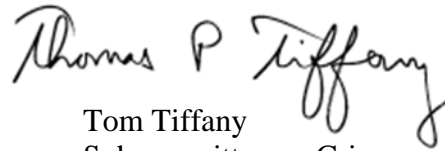
Steve Chabot
Subcommittee on Crime,
Terrorism, and Homeland Security



Louie Gohmert
Subcommittee on Crime,
Terrorism, and Homeland Security



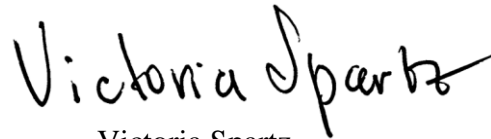
W. Gregory Steube
Subcommittee on Crime,
Terrorism, and Homeland Security



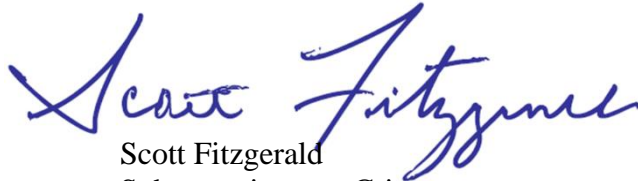
Tom Tiffany
Subcommittee on Crime,
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