

May 8, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

I understand you are contemplating taking executive action to secure our Southern Border. I am hoping and praying that you take this urgent step in the right direction that all Americans can get behind. Illegal immigration is the most dangerous threat facing our country today. Most Americans come from the responsible middle, politically, and expect their government's policies to come from the same place and apply commonsense solutions to our most pressing problems. For the third month in a row, voters ranked immigration as the most pressing problem facing the country. You have an opportunity to reassure these individuals who simply want their country to enforce the law. Though I disagree with some of the policies your administration has pursued, my Republican friends in Congress and former President Donald Trump bear the responsibility of making the situation worse by refusing to even vote on one of the strongest, most sensible border security bills in decades. The current situation requires the leadership only the President can provide, and I urge you to act.

The situation on our Southern Border jeopardizes the security of our country and warrants that you exercise your authority to issue a presidential emergency declaration under the National Emergencies Act. You must use this emergency declaration, and the power it conveys, to shut down the Southern Border until order is restored. I opposed the previous administration's emergency declaration because the situation at the time did not warrant circumventing Congress. Now, however, we face an unprecedented number of encounters that the country simply cannot handle and Congress has failed to act. In January 2021, there was an average of 2,600 daily Southern Border encounters. On December 18, 2023, there was an historic record of 12,600 encounters in a single day. As of April 2024, there were an average of 6,000 daily encounters.

You must use emergency authority to surge resources to expand the expedited removal, detention, and deportation of individuals with no lawful basis for entering or remaining in the U.S. You should also end the practice of paroling individuals at the Southern Border. Finally, to fight the drug smugglers and the individuals deliberately avoiding Border Patrol detection, you should prohibit Border Patrol agents from performing non-mission humanitarian duties so they can do their jobs.

Make no mistake, we are a charitable people and a nation of immigrants. And once we stop the chaos, I am optimistic we can resume the consideration of sensible long-term solutions that

reduce our labor shortage and increase lawful pathways. But we cannot have those conversations until the border is secure.

Mr. President, you and I agree that we cannot allow the most cynical actors to rule the day. Though this may benefit the political extremes, the human smugglers, and the drug cartels, it harms the American people, including our border communities, and also harms exploited families. I urge you in the strongest possible terms to take all necessary action to deter illegal migration flows and secure our Southern Border.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to working with you to solve this crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator