

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0305

April 1, 2019

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Nielsen,

Thank you for your continued efforts to secure our southern border and effectively respond to the illegal immigration crisis.

I have received alarming reports that illegal aliens are being released in Arizona communities by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Border Patrol agents. A report from March 28 indicates that Border Patrol agents assigned to the Yuma Sector have begun releasing detainees on their own recognizance with little more than a notice to appear for immigration hearings. I have also received reports from agents that similar instructions have been given to release aliens apprehended and detained in the Tucson Sector. Reports at the end of 2018 indicated that more than 5,000 illegal aliens were released in Mesa between mid-October and November.

In a recent letter to my office, councilmembers from the City of Phoenix detailed that groups of illegal aliens have been dropped off by ICE at bus stations and churches with only a packet of information. The drop-offs have increased in frequency and quantity in the last several months. The drastic increase is overwhelming the community and posing a crisis to which Phoenix has no solution.

The release of these individuals should be of concern to every American, as their behavior is a flagrant exploitation of our immigration laws; our inability to properly vet and monitor them puts our communities at risk. Cities and communities should not be forced to bear the brunt of this crisis, which is inherently a federal responsibility. Moreover, I fear that this will only worsen the overall low-morale of ICE and Border Patrol agents who are grossly under-resourced and overworked.

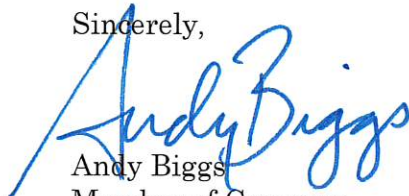
Given these reports, I respectfully request additional information on the release of these individuals.

1. How does CBP and ICE determine which illegal aliens are safe to be released? Are aliens with a criminal record, no matter how minor, released?
2. Are aliens given any tracking device so ICE can track their movement after release?
3. Are aliens required to provide an address of their destination prior to release? Is that address verified? Are they required to check in with any immigration officials once they have arrived at that address?

4. Has Department of Homeland Security or any other agency provided resources or guidance to cities to assist them in serving or monitoring those released?
5. What resources, if any, are given to aliens being released?
6. Is DHS taking steps to identify additional detention space to prevent a greater number of aliens from being released?
7. Is there any other information you believe would be helpful for Members of Congress to know about this situation?

I look forward to your responses and to continuing to work with you to restore our nation's immigration laws and gain operational control of our southern border. Please let me know if there is any way I can assist you in those efforts.

Sincerely,



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress