

United States Senate

August 27, 2019

The Honorable Kevin McAleenan
Acting Secretary
United States Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Acting Secretary McAleenan:

We are in the middle of an immigration crisis at our southern border. That crisis affects Texas border communities immensely as these cities spend tens of millions caring for individuals who have crossed our border illegally. I write to ask for your support in reimbursing these border communities for their efforts in addressing this crisis.

For decades, Congress has failed to fully secure our southern border which has invited hundreds of thousands of illegal crossings per month. This is placing a substantial burden on border communities in Texas who are absorbing much of that overflow. Local governments have risen to this great challenge, providing food, transportation, housing, and medical services to asylum seekers and unaccompanied alien children. Yet they are worse positioned than the Department of Homeland Security and the federal government to meet these needs, and lack the capability to absorb a large influx.

For example, communities in the Rio Grande Valley have seen 163,423 additional aliens this calendar year alone. For El Paso, it is another 111,268. And this only counts those aliens that the Border Patrol has apprehended at the Southwest Border. Residents of these communities have seen basic local services—clean drinking water, power, public safety, and the like—taxed to their limit from a combination of additional use and resources diverted away to address aliens' needs.

I thus ask that, where possible, you prioritize working with and reimbursing Texas border communities for the costs of providing immigrant aliens with essential services. The Department has considerable discretion in how it obligates and spends the billions appropriated to it annually by Congress, and will receive billions more in urgently needed funding to address this border crisis. Necessity has compelled Texas border communities to assist you in your efforts to secure our border and deal fairly and humanely with those who have entered into the United States: two-thirds of apprehensions so far in this fiscal year have occurred in El Paso, Del Rio, and Rio Grande Valley. Please take all possible steps to ensure that the burden of paying for this crisis does not fall disproportionately on those border communities.

Thank you for your hard work in securing both our border and interior. My staff and I are glad to further assist you if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ted Cruz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ted Cruz
United States Senator