

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 11, 2021

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

Dear President Biden:

We write regarding your administration's efforts to severely weaken border security and immigration controls in the midst of an historic pandemic. Your re-implementation of the failed Obama-era policy of "catch-and-release," your planned rescission of international agreements like the Migrant Protection Protocols (also known as the "Remain in Mexico" program), and your attempts to dismantle immigration enforcement and halt deportations have predictably led to a surge of migration to our southern border. This endangers our economic recovery, weakens public safety, and imperils our nation's public health.

As we write this letter, main streets across America are shuttered, millions of parents can't go to work, and children are kept from school. In a nation where everything seems closed, our border is now open. In violation of the law and common sense, your administration is allowing large numbers of unvetted and likely unvaccinated illegal aliens to enter our nation.

Public news reporting indicates that Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents are being instructed to release illegal aliens they encounter at the border into our nation's interior. The only consequences that these illegal aliens appear to face is that they are given notices to appear in court—notice that we know from experience they will likely ignore.

It is no surprise that the news media is already reporting that there is an "immigration crisis" forming as these policies draw more illegal aliens to our borders. We are seeing reports of human smugglers increasing recruitment, and migrant caravans are again rushing toward the United States. The immigration surge caused by your policies has even forced your administration to reopen a child immigration detention facility that Democrats called to close during the previous administration.

The increased arrival of illegal aliens into American communities also poses a health threat to the average citizen. To date, Mexico is estimated to have vaccinated less than one percent of its population and Northern Triangle nations have vaccinated virtually none of their citizens. The vast majority of illegal aliens come from these four, mostly-unvaccinated nations. COVID-19 is



a highly contagious virus and a small percentage of infected migrants could unintentionally cause widespread harm. The arrival of hundreds of thousands of unvaccinated and illegally-present individuals is an unnecessary danger to our public health.

Your administration is enforcing pandemic-related restrictions on air travel into the United States, and is reportedly even considering requiring testing for American citizens before boarding domestic flights. Yet at our southern border you are giving illegal aliens a free pass to enter the United States without testing. There is no legitimate justification for your administration being more restrictive with American citizens traveling within our country than illegal aliens who are rushing across our borders.

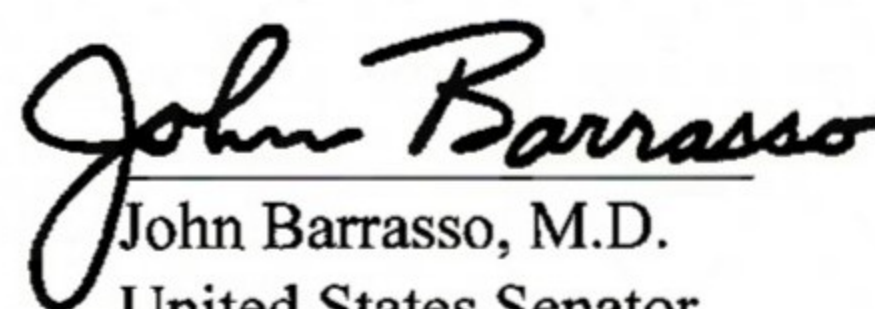
This is the beginning of what could rapidly turn into a public health and humanitarian disaster. If illegal immigration continues to surge as a result of your policies, our detention facilities will be overwhelmed and pandemic precautions would be difficult or impossible to maintain. Not only would this greatly endanger the American public, but the migrants themselves would face increased potential for viral spread.

You have mentioned many times that this virus, which has already claimed the lives of over 465,000 Americans, will get worse before it gets better. If that is true, we can't afford for you to create a crisis at the border or cause an increase in COVID-19 cases due to increased illegal immigration. We urge you to quickly reassess and rescind your administration's reckless immigration actions and focus instead on protecting the American people. Open our economy and our schools, not our border.

Sincerely,



Tom Cotton  
United States Senator



John Barrasso, M.D.  
United States Senator




Marsha Blackburn  
United States Senator

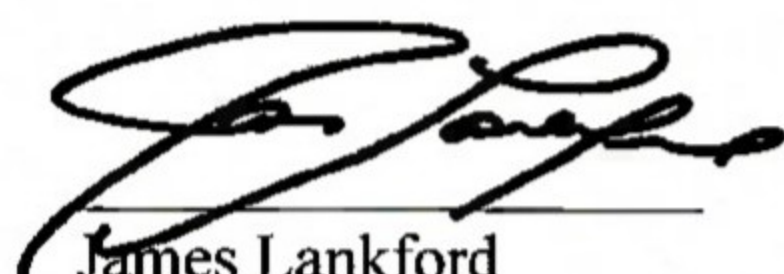


Ted Cruz  
United States Senator



  
Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator

  
James M. Inhofe  
United States Senator


  
James Lankford  
United States Senator

  
Michael S. Lee  
United States Senator

  
Marco Rubio  
United States Senator

  
Rick Scott  
United States Senator

  
John Thune  
United States Senator

  
Thom Tillis  
United States Senator