

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 13, 2022

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to you regarding the Biden Administration's continued mishandling of the migrant crisis occurring on the United States' southern border with Mexico. A recent news report suggested that the Biden Administration, through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), is considering a disturbing new policy initiative that would send VA medical professionals to the southern border. We write to learn more about this policy proposal and the current status of the southern border.

As you know, in March 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an order under its Title 42 authority that allows U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to immediately turn away migrants at the border who may spread communicable diseases. Unfortunately, the Biden Administration recently announced that this authority will expire in May 2022.

On March 29, 2022, a CBP report indicated a surge of border crossings was imminent due to the rescinding of this authority. The report presents a dire situation that may result in as many as 18,000 possible encounters per day. If this number proves accurate, this could result in over 540,000 encounters in a single month.¹ The previous highest record of monthly encounters was 220,063 in March 2000.²

¹ Luke Barr [US Bracing for influx of migrants at southern border if Title 42 revoked:DHS](https://abcnews.go.com/US/us-bracing-influx-migrants-southern-border-title-42/story?id=83751437), ABCNews (Mar. 29, 2022) <https://abcnews.go.com/US/us-bracing-influx-migrants-southern-border-title-42/story?id=83751437>

² John Gramlich, [Migrant encounters at U.S.-Mexico border are at a 21-year high](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/08/13/migrant-encounters-at-u-s-mexico-border-are-at-a-21-year-high/), Pew Research Center (Aug. 13, 2021) <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/08/13/migrant-encounters-at-u-s-mexico-border-are-at-a-21-year-high/>

Currently, CBP does not have the facilities or manpower to handle the anticipated massive surge. On March 31, a CBP source told a reporter, “If half a million people come in one month –that’s an emergency. There is no way we have enough federal agents and NGOs, and NGAs. There’s not enough people going around.” The source says that one of the ideas was to send VA medical professionals to the border to aid in examining migrants at detention centers.³ If this proposal is truly being considered, this is deeply troubling.

Moving VA medical staff away from our veterans’ healthcare needs to examine illegal immigrants is a recipe for disaster. Wait times for a veteran to see their doctor can average 22 days and reach as high as 42 days.⁴ This is unacceptable mismanagement of federal government resources by the Biden administration.

We request answers on the following:

1. Is there a plan to send medical personnel from the Department of Veterans Affairs to the southern border?
2. We request all documents and communications between officials at the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and/or the White House pertaining to the possible deployment of VA medical professionals to the southern border.

We look forward to your Department’s response. Please provide this information and all documents no later than April 27, 2022.

Sincerely,



Jody Hice (GA-10)
Member of Congress

³ Hillary Vaughn, (Mar, 31 2022)

https://twitter.com/hillary__vaughn/status/1509530954569682951?s=20&t=JYpcsZpyRNw6O0vkIA-bNg

⁴<https://www.accesstocare.va.gov/PWT/FindFacilities?LocationText=30233&ApptType=12&PatientType=1&SameDayServiceView=False&SortOrder=0&Radius=50&UserLatitude=-1&UserLongitude=-1&SameDayServiceView=false>



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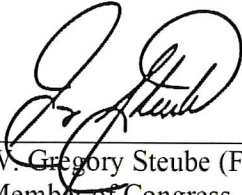
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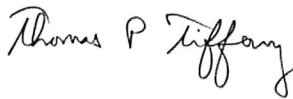
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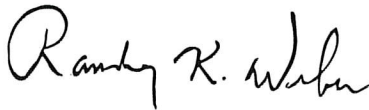
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CC: Secretary of Veteran Affairs