

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 29, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

We write to reiterate the letter we sent you on September 22, 2022, regarding concerns about a U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) intelligence report received by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) that instructed agents to look for violent criminals from Venezuela among the migrant caravans heading towards the U.S.-Mexico border. Not only have you failed to respond to our letter from over a year ago, but you have also failed to effectively secure our homeland and prevent violent criminal illegal aliens from infiltrating our communities and inflicting harm on our citizens. Specifically, the recent wave of violent crimes being carried out across America by Venezuelan nationals poses an emerging threat to the American people.

As you know, in September 2022, the Venezuelan regime, under the control of Nicolás Maduro Moros, was reportedly releasing violent prisoners early, including inmates convicted of “murder, rape, and extortion,” and pushing them to join caravans heading to the United States.¹ Since then, we have seen the tragic consequences of allowing Venezuelan nationals into the interior of the United States.

Most recently, the country mourned the brutal murder of 22-year-old Laken Riley, a nursing student at the University of Georgia, who was attacked while on a run by a Venezuelan national who was paroled into the U.S. in September 2022 after entering illegally and had been arrested at least once before.² The same day, Virginia authorities arrested a 32-year-old Venezuelan national in connection with sexual assault against a 14-year-old female, who had been previously detained and released by U.S. authorities after entering illegally in September 2023.³ Both of these vicious attacks were completely preventable, if not for your disastrous border policies.

Our country is also facing the effects of Venezuelan gangs, posing as asylum seekers, who are turning our cities into war zones. Specifically, the Venezuelan Tren de Aragua gang, known for torturing victims, has established its presence in New York City.⁴ This Venezuelan robbery gang recruits its new members from

¹ Randy Clark, EXCLUSIVE: Venezuela Empties Prisons, Sends Violent Criminals to U.S. Border, Says DHS Report, Breitbart (Sept. 18, 2022), <https://www.breitbart.com/border/2022/09/18/exclusive-venezuela-empties-prisons-sends-violent-criminals-to-u-s-says-dhs-report>

² Tina Moore & Georgia Worrell, Migrant suspect in Laken Riley murder crossed border in El Paso before being busted in NYC and released, wife reveals, NY Post (Feb. 24, 2024, 6:44 PM), <https://nypost.com/2024/02/24/us-news/migrant-suspect-in-laken-reilly-murder-was-busted-in-nyc-for-child-endangerment>

³ Chris Pandolfo, Venezuelan illegal immigrant charged with sexual assault against 14-year-old in Virginia, Fox News (Feb. 27, 2024, 2:19 PM), <https://www.foxnews.com/us/venezuelan-illegal-immigrant-charged-sexual-assault-14-year-old-virginia>

⁴ Tina Moore & Steve Janoski, Migrant moped gang hired hacker to breach banking apps as NYPD reveals new details about ‘sophisticated’ high-tech crime ring, NY Post (Feb. 5, 2024, 4:51 PM), <https://nypost.com/2024/02/06/metro/migrant-moped-gang-hired-hacker-to-breach-banking-apps-as-nypd-reveals-new-details-about-sophisticated-high-tech-crime-ring>

migrant shelters and off migrant busses, where they have committed more than 60 robberies in New York City, including the aggravated robbery of a woman in her 60s, who was dragged down the sidewalk and slammed into a pole, sustaining injuries.⁵ The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) fears as the Venezuelan gang expands its strength, it may team up with the infamous MS-13 international criminal gang, which is known to form alliances with other criminal groups.⁶ Should this happen, we fear the additional consequences innocent Americans will face.

While in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, during President Donald J. Trump's final year of his first term, just 4,520 Venezuelans were encountered by CBP at America's borders, this number grew significantly upon President Joe Biden taking office.⁷ Following his inauguration, the number of Venezuelans encountered at our borders surged to 50,499 in FY 2021, 189,520 in FY 2022, and 334,914 in FY 2023.⁸ Unfortunately, it is unknown how many Venezuelan prisoners and criminals have been released into the interior of the U.S. during the Biden Administration's tenure, as identifying Venezuelans with criminal records is nearly impossible unless the individual admits their records to U.S. authorities.⁹

Despite over half a million Venezuelans having entered the U.S. illegally, reports indicate that Venezuela is refusing to cooperate with deportation requests after President Biden reimposed some of the economic sanctions it had previously lifted on Venezuela.¹⁰ If Venezuela does not want these Venezuelans back, it is common sense that we do not want them here.

In addition to answering the questions in our September 2022 letter that were never addressed, we urge you to prevent Venezuelans from entering our interior and immediately deport those you have released pending immigration proceedings. We cannot continue to apologize to families for the tragic consequences of your disastrous border policies without action. Therefore, we encourage you to initiate a moratorium on all Venezuelan migration until they agree to cooperate with deportation requests.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter. We look forward to your prompt response.

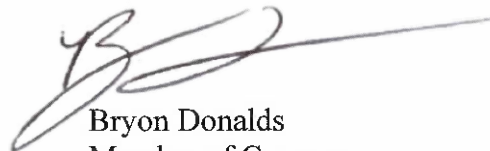
Sincerely,



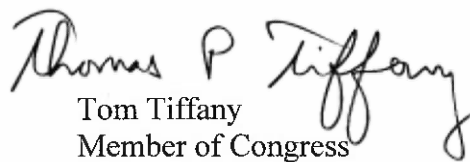
Troy E. Nehls
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert
Member of Congress



Bryon Donalds
Member of Congress



Tom Tiffany
Member of Congress

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Isabel Vincent, Deadly alliance brewing between MS-13 and bloodthirsty Venezuelan Tren de Aragua gang behind NYC cellphone robberies, FBI fears, NY Post (Feb. 13, 2024, 5:00 AM), <https://nypost.com/2024/02/13/metro/fbi-venezuelan-gang-tren-de-aragua-could-team-up-with-ms-13>

⁷ Federation for American Immigration Reform, Country Brief: Venezuela (Jan. 17, 2024), available at <https://www.fairus.org/country-brief-venezuela>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.* at 1.

¹⁰ Michael Dorgan, Venezuela reportedly scraps US deal to deport illegal migrants as some commit crimes to be deported, Fox News (Feb. 23, 2024, 11:00 AM), <https://www.foxnews.com/world/venezuela-scraps-us-deal-deport-illegal-migrants-report>