



CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS  
*Michelle Lujan Grisham | Chairwoman*  
115TH CONGRESS

March 7, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Senate Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Office of the Speaker  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader  
H-204, US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Democratic Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan and Democratic Leader Pelosi:

As negotiations continue on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 omnibus appropriations bill, we urge you to reject any increased funding for DHS's wasteful and harmful enforcement system—in particular, we urge cuts to appropriations for detention beds, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents, and further militarization of the border. We strongly oppose funding that includes construction of any border wall and pedestrian fencing on the southern border, especially in the absence of a legislative solution for Dreamers. Instead, funds should be used to support vital areas within DHS, such as Coast Guard ships, including much needed polar icebreakers; funding for CBP officers and for our country's ports of entry to facilitate trade and detect incoming contraband; support for cyber security; and increased support for DHS oversight and accountability.

The reality is apprehensions along the southern border have been dropping for decades and, according to a recent report from DHS, hit a near-50-year low<sup>[i]</sup>. This has resulted in CBP ramping up community raids in border neighborhoods and targeting vulnerable non-criminal immigrants, including children, Dreamers and their families living near the border. In addition, CBP is conducting enforcement on public transit across the country, including Greyhound buses and Amtrak trains, far from any border.

ICE has similarly increased its enforcement activity with almost no consideration of equities, including length of time in the U.S., having U.S. citizen children, or proof of other strong ties to the community. Under the Trump Administration, ICE has made arrests at sensitive locations like courthouses<sup>[ii]</sup>, outside hospitals<sup>[iii]</sup> and schools<sup>[iiii]</sup>. These cruel enforcement tactics are silencing survivors of domestic violence<sup>[v]</sup>, deterring immigrants from seeking necessary healthcare<sup>[vi]</sup>, and discouraging children from attending school. In addition, many police chiefs have blamed Trump's deportation force for a breakdown in police-community relations and an overall decline in immigrants reporting crime, including sexual assault and domestic violence cases<sup>[vii]</sup>.

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It is clear that under the Trump Administration, CBP and ICE have used available funds to aggressively ramp up interior enforcement efforts, which has resulted in the rapid expansion and use of detention beds and Trump's deportation force. This rapid growth without the necessary proper oversight and accountability measures has resulted in reports of abuse and corruption by CBP<sup>(i)</sup> and ICE<sup>(ii)</sup> agents as well as concerns about the conditions and treatment of detainees in detention facilities<sup>(iii)</sup>. A number of published reports by the Office of the Inspector General<sup>(iv)</sup> and other groups have found a number of instances of abuse by CBP and ICE agents as well as reports of sexual abuse, assault, harassment and even a number of deaths<sup>(v)</sup> due to unsafe and unhealthy conditions in detention facilities.

These troubling reports now raise concerns about the possible treatment of Dreamers as their protections begin to expire due to President Trump and Republican leadership's inability to bring a bipartisan agreement to the floor for a vote. With one in five Dreamers living in border counties, DACA recipients and Dreamers are vulnerable to Trump's detention and deportation forces. Absent any Congressional action to permanently protect these young people, it is crucial that appropriators reduce funds that can be used towards Trump's mass deportation force, which will target and deport Dreamers and those that lose their DACA status.

Congress should not fund the deportation of Dreamers. Instead, we urge you to allocate DHS funds where they are appropriately needed and call on you to reduce funding for detention beds, ICE and CBP agents, and further militarization of our border communities.

Sincerely,

Michelle Lujan Grisham  
CHC Chairwoman

Joaquin Castro  
CHC First Vice Chair

Ruben Gallego  
CHC Second Vice Chair

Pete Aguilar  
CHC Whip

Adriano Espaillat  
CHC Freshman Representative

CC: Chairman Cochran, Ranking Member Leahy, Chairman Frelinghuysen, and Ranking Member Lowey

<sup>(i)</sup> <https://www.aclu.org/blog/immigrants-rights/ice-and-border-patrol-abuses/immigration-arrests-state-courthouses-are-rise>  
<sup>(ii)</sup> <http://www.wweek.com/news/courts/2017/10/31/ice-arrested-an-undocumented-immigrant-just-outside-a-portland-hospital/>  
<sup>(iii)</sup> <https://www.abc15.com/news/national/ice-attempted-to-arrest-3-fathers-dropping-kids-off-for-school-in-nj>  
<sup>(iv)</sup> <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/immigration/ct-domestic-violence-immigration-met-20170626-story.html>  
<sup>(v)</sup> <https://www.rollcall.com/news/politics/immigration-crackdown-raises-fears-seeking-health-care>  
<sup>(vi)</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-undocumented-crime-reporting-20171009-story.html>  
<sup>(vii)</sup> <https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa825.pdf>  
<sup>(viii)</sup> <https://www.aclu.org/blog/immigrants-rights/ice-and-border-patrol-abuses/congress-needs-hold-ice-accountable-abuses>  
<sup>(ix)</sup> <http://www.endisolation.org/sexual-assault>  
<sup>(x)</sup> <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2017-12/OIG-18-32-Dec17.pdf>  
<sup>(xi)</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/07/us-deaths-immigration-detention>