

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES
COMMISSIONER

July 3, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

Your recent announcement directing the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Attorney General to move additional resources to the Texas-Mexico border is most welcomed news. While I wholeheartedly support additional resources be moved to the border, I remain concerned that your announcement also noted your intention to attempt to fix as much of our broken immigration system as possible via additional administrative action and would strongly caution against many actions. To be successful to stop the current conditions that give cover to transnational criminal organizations and allow criminal aliens to slip through the process, I hope our nation's energy and resources will be focused on stopping all forms of unlawful entry and reversing policies that contribute to the untenable conditions that now persist.

For almost four years now, I have repeatedly pointed out the fact that there is a grossly disproportionate number of Border Patrol agents in Texas compared to other states bordering Mexico. This disturbing trend has continued even while there has been a dramatic shift in illegal activity from Arizona to Texas. Further, current policies that encourage unlawful entry have created a legitimate crisis for our nation. I look forward to working with you to resolve this years-old threat.

As your agencies begin the process of submitting to you specific proposals by the end of the summer, it is my sincere desire you will give full and favorable consideration to implementing the following steps. I bring these to you from a lengthy and immersed involvement in search of workable solutions:

- Immediately deploy the National Guard to join the Border Patrol in conducting border security operations and deterring continued illegal entry. This would include relaxing their extremely limited rules of engagement.
- Increase the number of Border Patrol agents per border mile in Texas comparable to what is present in Arizona, New Mexico, and California.
- Allow Border Patrol to use forceful engagement where necessary and effective, cross-border enforcement.
- Use willing and able relief agencies to feed and secure the unaccompanied alien children in custody in order to place all Border Patrol agents on the front lines.



- Co-locate immigration judges and magistrates alongside any initial detention facility so that deportation can occur immediately rather than incurring the expense of several moves and delays.
- Cease the practice of giving apprehended illegal aliens a bus or airline ticket further into the United States. This practice is counterproductive and sends the wrong message to those wishing to gain entry.
- Demand Mexico use Mérida Initiative funding or other U.S. supported resources to combat unlawful transport through Mexico.
- Categorize cartel activity that threatens our allies and citizens as a global terroristic threat to unlock additional resources to combat these terroristic activities.
- Equip landowners with tools to secure their property, including security cameras, brush eradication programs and reporting hotlines.
- Fully fund local and state law enforcement with overtime pay, additional staff and the necessary surveillance equipment to help address the immediate crisis.
- Work with Central American countries to improve economic conditions in their countries which will encourage would-be illegal aliens from attempting to enter the United States.
- Cease deferred action programs because this is undoubtedly a cause for the surge. I acknowledge the deteriorating conditions in the country of origin of the children, but they could certainly seek refuge without traveling 1,700 miles to unlawfully enter the United States.
- Once these steps are implemented, conduct a sustained public relations campaign in Central American countries that the United States will repel illegal entry.

While it is best to process all illegal aliens in the country as close to the point of apprehension as possible and return to their country of origin as quickly as possible, Texas does have ready-to-use options to safely detain individuals while they await deportation. A prime example of the turn-key facilities available is a 1,100 bed facility in Jones County, which was constructed in 2010 and has never been used. It has office space for staff and humane living conditions for detainees, far superior to the conditions recently encountered during their treacherous trek to the United States.

I stand ready to meet and discuss these issues with the sole purpose and goal of providing the security our nation needs and ending the crisis at hand. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Todd Staples

TS/NC/er

cc: The Honorable Jeh Johnson, Secretary of Homeland Security
The Honorable Eric Holder, Attorney General