

TONY GONZALES  
23RD DISTRICT, TEXAS



COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION,  
VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION,  
HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND  
RELATED AGENCIES

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September 16, 2021

Hon. Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20528-0525

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

I am deeply concerned about the migrant surge that is reaching a breaking point in my congressional district. As you know, the Del Rio Sector has been at the center of this year's influx, with apprehensions and border crossings at historic highs. I just visited the border today for a firsthand update from our border patrol agents. As the situation appears to be worsening, I urge your agency to provide my office with a detailed response strategy.

For over a month now, large groups of migrants have gathered under the International Bridge in Del Rio, Texas, awaiting further processing by border patrol agents. With detention facilities in the region at full capacity, the bridge has served as a temporary holding site for migrants that have crossed our southern border.

Last week, approximately 150 migrants were held under the bridge. As of today, there are more than 8,000, with thousands more reportedly on the way from the interior of Mexico. Patrol stations in Del Rio are already at capacity, and the sheer number of detainees at the camp has prevented agents from placing individuals on official detention rolls. Of even greater concern, agents are being shifted away from their patrolling duties on the front lines to assist with processing. This has created serious vulnerabilities for our national security.

The rate at which this spike has accelerated creates enormous challenges for a Sector that operates with half the capacity of its counterparts. It is also deeply troubling for a rural community that lacks the resources, infrastructure, and manpower to manage these ongoing strains. In addition, the living conditions that migrants have been subjected to are unacceptable by any human standard. Instances of women prostituting themselves for basic goods have been reported, and the severe overcrowding that has resulted creates the potential for serious health issues.

It goes without saying that an outbreak of an infectious disease would be devastating to the local community, which is still struggling to contain the threat of COVID-19. Put simply, local healthcare facilities, NGOs, and border constituents are unequipped to deal with such an overwhelming number of arrivals.

This is a national security issue and a humanitarian crisis that is visible on an international scale. To prevent it from deteriorating, I urge you to take immediate action by deploying the necessary number of agents and resources needed to contain this crisis. I also request that your agency provide my office with a written record of its plans to manage the ongoing influx. The Administration and Congress must continually work together on this issue. My district represents more than 40 percent of our southern border, and I stand ready to collaborate with you for tangible solutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tony G', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tony Gonzales  
Member of Congress