

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 2, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We write today to express deep concern about recent reports indicating that nearly 600 migrants—from Guatemala, Venezuela, Honduras, and Mexico—intend to travel to the Nashville area. Specifically, the City of Franklin was recently notified by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that these immigrants, following their release from DHS custody, will likely settle in Nashville, Franklin, Murfreesboro, and the surrounding communities.¹ While this is not surprising given this administration’s continued utilization of the disastrous catch-and-release policy, the people of Tennessee should not have to bear the brunt of your failure to secure our border.

This troubling news comes as Biden’s border crisis continues to worsen by the day under your watch. Since President Biden took office, there have been over 8.5 million migrant encounters at our southern border.² Last December, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) encountered more than 302,000 migrants along our southern border—the most encounters in a single month we have seen in nearly two decades.³ Worse still, CBP has encountered 49 individuals on the terrorist watchlist *in this fiscal year alone*.⁴ The Biden administration is single-handedly responsible for the humanitarian and national security crisis at our southern border, but you are forcing the American people to bear the consequences. This administration’s policy of releasing migrants into communities across the country is a dangerous and irresponsible attempt to hide the true extent of the Biden border crisis, and it is making every town in America less safe.

At minimum, Tennesseans deserve to know the full details about when these immigrants are moving to Tennessee, how many will be arriving, and the extent of their vetting. We are requesting more information about this disturbing news. Please respond to the following questions by **February 9, 2024**:

¹ Caleb Wethington, *Nearly 600 Immigrants Could Travel to Middle Tennessee, Homeland Security Says*, WSMV (Jan. 31, 2024), <https://www.wsmv.com/2024/01/31/city-franklin-notified-by-homeland-security-nearly-600-immigrants-being-brought-middle-tennessee/>.

² U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION, CBP SOUTHWEST LAND BORDER ENCOUNTERS, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters>.


³ Timothy H.J. Nerozzi & Griff Jenkins, *Migrant Encounters at Southern Border Hit Record 302K in December, Sources Say*, FOX NEWS (Jan. 1, 2024), <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/migrant-encounters-southern-border-hit-record-302k-december-sources-say>.

⁴ U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION, CBP ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/cbp-enforcement-statistics>.

1. What procedures were used to vet these migrants and what information was gathered?
2. Have these migrants been issued notices to appear?
3. What procedures are being used to track these migrants within the United States?
4. Your Department notified the City of Franklin that, “[f]or the week ending September 16, 2023, 573 noncitizens provided an intended destination” of the Nashville area. Since September 16, how many migrants have expressed interest in traveling to Nashville?
5. Can you confirm that none of the 573 individuals who have expressed their intent to travel to the Nashville area are associated with a terrorist organization?
6. Will the Department provide—or has the Department already provided—transportation for these migrants to the Nashville area? If the Department intends to provide transportation, what means of transportation will be used, how many migrants will be transported, and when will this transportation occur? If the Department has already provided transportation, how many migrants were transported?
7. Have you confirmed that none of these migrants have a criminal history in their home country, the United States, or any other country?

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,


Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator


Bill Hagerty
United States Senator