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September 26, 2014

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson,

As you know, in this fiscal year we have seen an unprecedented number of illegal border crossings along our southern border. Like many of my colleagues, I believe this is a direct result of President Obama's June 2012 Rose Garden speech indicating his decision not to enforce some of our immigration laws.

As a member of Congress from the border state of Arizona, I have followed this issue very closely. Furthermore, I recently served on the Speaker's House Task Force on Securing our Southern Border and Humanitarian Crisis where I was also able to visit the holding facilities in Nogales, Arizona and McAllen, Texas as well as visit the Central American countries from which many of these individuals originate.

It is a well-known fact that our borders remain porous and our interior enforcement is lacking. With this in mind, it was with great dismay that I learned of your Department's new policy that would allow for the release of illegal aliens, so long as they promised to return for a court date fifteen days later.

Upon learning this fact, my colleagues and I warned that this was bad policy. It goes without saying that individuals willing to break our laws and enter a country illegally are certainly willing to break the legal commitment of appearing for a court date.

Unfortunately, we have been proven correct by the recent figures that indicate a lack of compliance by these illegal aliens across the board. The figures for this fiscal year indicate that family units entering illegally number more than 66,000. Additionally, recent media reports indicate that an estimated 70 percent did not appear for their court date.

To combat this bad policy and provide meaningful solutions to our nation's border crisis, I coauthored bipartisan legislation, which passed the House in July, to end the policy of catch-and-release. Due to the lack of action by the Senate on this important bill, this policy of catch and release continues.

Now, we as a nation have added 41,000 families to the ever-increasing numbers of illegal immigrants residing in the shadows of our communities. Recognizing the seriousness of these numbers, please provide us with answers to the following questions:

1. What is the DHS going to do to locate and remove the 41,000 illegal family units who failed to appear for their court date?
2. Under what specific authority did the DHS release illegal immigrant family units rather than immediately put them through deportation proceedings?
3. What policy changes is the DHS going to implement to ensure this will not happen in the future?
4. Why does the DHS refuse to enforce immigration laws as passed by the American people's representatives?

As our nation faces this perpetual wave of illegal border crossings, it is critical that we have answers to these questions in order for Congress to respond appropriately. I look forward to your swift response.

Sincerely,



Matt Salmon
Member of Congress