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August 18, 2015

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Secretary Johnson,

On November 7, 2014, I alerted you to a very serious flaw in our current immigration enforcement system that continues to result in senseless tragedies across the nation. In my letter, I highlighted the high recidivism rate of criminal illegal aliens who had been turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

I also explained that this Administration's failed interior enforcement policies had resulted in the murder of two California sheriff's deputies by an illegal alien with an extensive criminal history. In fact, this lengthy criminal history included at least four arrests for various offenses in Maricopa County, Arizona alone.

This individual is one among many others who have been turned over to ICE, only to be later apprehended by local law enforcement on charges including kidnapping, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, armed robbery, sexual abuse, and child molestation. Obviously, this is a direct result of this Administration's dangerous policy of releasing tens of thousands of criminal illegal aliens onto our streets and into our communities. Unfortunately, cases like the one in California are only the beginning.

Earlier this year, another disgusting and senseless tragedy occurred in my district as a result of this Administration's dangerous policy of "catch and release." In the early morning hours of January 22, 2015, an illegal immigrant with a criminal record, a history of violence, known ties to criminal gangs, and who had been released by ICE, entered a popular convenience store and shot the young store clerk, Grant Ronnebeck, in the face – killing him.

After this terrible act, the gunman added further insult by stepping over Grant's lifeless body and stealing a couple packs of cigarettes, before jumping into a car and leading local police on a dangerous 25-mile, high-speed chase through densely populated areas. Again, this case is not at all unique.

Even more recently, a similar tragedy took the nation by storm. The unprovoked and senseless killing of Kate Steinle, a promising young woman who was enjoying a casual stroll with her father on San Francisco's Pier 14, was committed by a seven-time felon and illegal alien. Again, this case of cold-blooded murder was entirely preventable.

Fortunately, many in Congress have recognized that the cost of inaction on the issue of interior immigration enforcement is blood. As a result, many have joined me in calling for an end to this Administration's policy of "catch and release" by cosponsoring H.R. 2942, the Stop Catch and Release Act, or "Grant's Law", and H.R. 3011, the Establishing Mandatory Minimums for Illegal Reentry Act of 2015, or "Kate's Law." Furthermore, the House of Representatives took a strong step toward ensuring that our nation's interior enforcement efforts are supported and sustained when it passed H.R. 3009, the Enforce the Law for Sanctuary Cities Act of 2015.

Today, it was announced that ICE released three violent criminals in Pinal County, Arizona. According to the Pinal County Sheriff's Office, the three criminal illegal aliens have been charged, convicted, and sentenced for crimes including kidnapping, aggravated assault, and murder. In fact, one of these individuals kidnapped and murdered a police informant by taking him to a wilderness area where he beat, stabbed, and lit his gasoline-soaked body on fire. Another one of these criminals was charged with the murder of an infant. Instead of immediately deporting them to their country of origin, ICE released these criminals into Arizona and, according to the Pinal County Sheriff's Office, chose not to inform local law enforcement before the release of these criminals was completed.

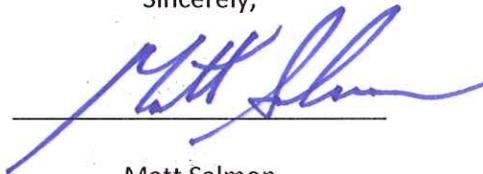
The decision to release these individuals in the wake of such senseless murders and violence is appalling. Simply put, there is no excuse for ICE to be releasing violent, criminal illegal aliens back onto our streets and into our communities. Of course, we have heard the weak and baseless arguments made by this Administration defending the release of these criminal illegal aliens before. In fact, those who defend the release of such individuals onto our streets claim to do so under the auspices of ensuring public safety.

So, I ask: How is the release of these three criminals, including one who beat, stabbed, and set a living man on fire, making our families, our children, and our communities safer? Why has ICE chosen to release these three specific individuals? Does this Administration intend to release more of these criminal illegal aliens? How many criminal illegal aliens have been released in Arizona over the last year? What criteria are being used to determine which individuals with violent criminal histories ought to be released into our communities instead of being expeditiously deported?

To help ensure the safety of the American people, I ask that you act immediately to ensure that these three criminal aliens are not allowed to continue to roam our streets. As you well know, the cost of inaction is just too high.

Thank you for your attention in this matter. I look forward to swift action to ensure that the protection of the American people remains the highest priority and I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Matt Salmon
Member of Congress