



One Hundred Seventeenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 24, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

I write regarding the Department of Homeland Security's treatment of Haitian migrants. The Biden Administration has promised the American people a humane approach to our borders. The handling of the asylum seekers in Del Rio does not live up to that commitment. The Department of Homeland Security must do better.

Doing better starts with immediately halting the repatriation flights to Haiti, as country conditions remain dire. Moreover, U.S. deportation flights to the island risk worsening conditions. In fact, just this week, Ambassador Daniel Foote, the U.S. Special Envoy for Haiti who resigned in protest explained that "[t]he people of Haiti [] simply cannot support the forced infusion of thousands of returned migrants lacking food, shelter, and money without additional human tragedy." He went on to say that "more refugees will fuel further desperation and crime. Surging migration to our borders will only grow as we add to Haiti's unacceptable misery." We must act in line with our values and uphold our legal obligation to provide Haitians, and other migrants, an opportunity to apply for asylum.

The horrifying treatment of Haitian migrants by some in the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) also demands decisive, unequivocal action. While it is good to know that those involved in reprehensible behavior were removed from the field and that a full investigation is underway, more must be done. It is incumbent on you to prioritize updating use of force policies within the Department and significantly improving training for the USBP workforce. It is unacceptable that the basic training program for the U.S. Border Patrol Academy is not accredited. According to Federal Law Enforcement Training Center leadership, accreditation "assigns rigor to [] training processes" and "results in the best product." The men and women of USBP should receive the highest caliber training before we put them on the frontlines to protect our border and interact with migrants and other vulnerable populations. As such, you should immediately direct USBP to seek accreditation of its training academy.

Additionally, the Department must ensure accountability for the unacceptable and horrifying conduct by certain Border Patrol agents witnessed earlier this week. As I said, I appreciate that the Department has launched an investigation into their actions and promised results within days.

That is a good first step but let me be clear, there must be timely and appropriate disciplinary action for any violations.

After four years of the Trump Administration, where migrants had their families torn apart and were vilified, Americans look to you and the President to deliver on the promise of more humane treatment of migrants. I look forward to hearing from you in the very near term on how my recommendations for action are received. The Department must be clear that all individuals are to be treated with human dignity and respect, and that actions to the contrary will not be tolerated.

I appreciate your urgent attention to these requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bennie Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bennie" and the last name "Thompson" clearly legible.

Chairman
House Committee on Homeland Security