



## HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

### Statement of Chairman Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX) Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee Hearing

*“Stopping the Daily Border Caravan: Time to Build a Policy Wall”*

May 22, 2018

Remarks as Prepared

First, I would like to thank Chairwoman McCaul for her leadership on this important issue and for holding this hearing.

Almost two months ago, a caravan of more than 1,000 Central American migrants began a 2,000-mile-long journey from the Guatemalan-Mexico border and headed towards the United States.

The journey was not easy and the migrants were met with great difficulties: hunger, sickness, and even exploitation by criminal gangs. What motivated them to make this dangerous journey?

A lawless immigrant advocacy group called “Pueblo Sin Fronteras”, whose specific goal is the circumvention of U.S. immigration law.

They organized, what they thought, would be their largest blitz on the U.S. border. The goal was simple, overwhelm U.S. law enforcement, and tax an already overburdened immigration system with baseless asylum claims.

This was not the first caravan, and if we do not change our immigration policies, and laws, this will not be the last.

While this particular caravan drew lots of media attention, CBP agents and officers have seen a troubling trend. Family units and unaccompanied alien children flood across the border— many of them claiming “credible fear.”

Almost every single person who claims “credible fear” meets the existing threshold in the law.

Loopholes in our immigration system are well known to organized illegal immigration groups and the brutal drug cartels who facilitate the movement of aliens across the border.

In fact, cartels use these weaknesses as a shrewd marketing tool that further enriches the cartel. This harms stability and the rule of law in Mexico.

Building a physical wall along key parts of the Southwest Border is absolutely necessary. In tandem, we must also construct a wall of sensible policy to close loopholes that put families and children at risk.

Last month, we saw the number of illegal border crossings triple over the same period as last year. We have to take dramatic action to reverse this disturbing development.

I was pleased to see that the Department recently enacted a zero-tolerance policy for those that come here illegally.

Prosecuting those who enter the country illegally is the right policy. This will send a powerful message to those who are trying to take advantage of our immigration laws.

We have used prosecution successfully in the past.

Under Operation Streamline, nearly every alien apprehended was prosecuted. And when that policy was enacted, in every instance, we saw a dramatic decline in crossings.

I, along with Chairman Goodlatte, Representative Labrador, and Chairwoman McSally have proposed a robust border security and immigration enforcement bill to close the loopholes that Secretary Nielsen and the witnesses on the panel have raised in the past.

Without changes to the way we treat unaccompanied alien children and family units, and without tightening our asylum standards, there will always be powerful incentives for aliens to come to this country illegally. This must stop.

The time for change has come. I'm committed to working with this Administration and other like-minded Members to make that a reality.

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