



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3605

May 3, 2021

The Honorable Kamala D. Harris
Vice President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20515

Madam Vice President,

It is my understanding that on March 24, 2021, President Biden [said](#) you were “leading the effort” to address the current crisis on the southern border.

I remain highly skeptical that you appreciate the gravity of the situation, given the fact that, as the point-person in this effort, you have not made a single visit to the border since your designation and you have said that doing so would be “political games.” Instead, you have made time to visit a bakery in Chicago and a yarn shop in Virginia. At last week’s speech to a Joint Session of Congress, President Biden brushed off the crisis, spending very little time informing the American people. The citizens of our country deserve to hear directly from our leaders during a crisis, and we need to hear what the Biden-Harris administration is doing to solve it.

More troubling are your past statements about border enforcement. As a senator, you spoke at rallies advocating for the abolishment of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), compared ICE agents to the Ku Klux Klan, and introduced legislation that would, “decrease the number of detention beds by 50 percent.” This record, along with public statements by President Biden as a candidate, sent a message to illegal immigrants that upon his election, President Biden would pursue an open borders agenda. Since taking office, your administration has done just that. Your administration halted border wall construction. Your administration reinstated the Obama-era “catch and release” policy. Your administration no longer deports criminal illegal aliens for committing crimes like driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

What is most troubling is that you inherited a border situation that was under control. In February 2020, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) encountered 36,687 illegal aliens. In February of 2021, CBP encountered 100,441. In March 2021, CBP encountered 171,700. Since 2017, the policies of tough enforcement, physical barriers, and full support for our border patrol sent a clear signal to the world that the United States would not tolerate an open border. I saw the effectiveness of these policies myself when I personally visited the border in 2019.

I would suggest that the best way for you, as the point person, to tackle the current crisis is to suspend any negative partisanship you might harbor toward the previous administration and fully re-implement their proven approach. With so many innocent lives on the line, we need to do what works.

The present border crisis shows that President Trump's border policies made our country safer. President Biden's border policies are making our country vulnerable. Constructing a border wall, ending "catch and release," and deporting criminal aliens will disincentivize illegal immigration and allow CBP to regain operational control of the border. I urge your administration to take this crisis seriously by reimplementing proven methods to reduce illegal immigration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Ted Budd", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ted Budd (NC-13)
Member of Congress