October 31, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Dave Joyce  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Henry Cuellar  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you consider potential supplemental appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, we request that any supplemental funding package include funding for critical programs to aid first-responders in communities impacted by immigration. Across the country, local officials, including police departments, fire departments, and Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), face significant resource strains related to the migrant crisis.

As you may know, in recent months we have seen a dramatic uptick in crossings at the southwestern border. The over 269,000 crossings in the last month contributed to a historic 2.4 million total in the last twelve months – the highest number on record, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

Local police departments are barred from directly enforcing immigration laws. However, first responders, particularly local law enforcement, are fielding significantly more calls, including for organized criminal activity, loitering, trespassing, and emergency response. Even without violent criminal conduct, every call to a police department, fire department, or EOC increases the strain on resources and personnel that makes it harder for them to help taxpaying permanent residents.

Increased operations are stretching the resources of local governments, police, and fire departments to the limit. Without additional funding, many local leaders and decision-makers face a choice – provide only vital services to long-term residents and ignore certain emergency calls they determine to not be top priority or devote resources towards responding to a ballooning migrant population with no end in sight.
To that end, should Congress consider any supplemental funding under the Department of Homeland Security or Department of Justice, we request that you consider additional funding for programs that help first responders in the communities being hit hardest by the crisis at the border, including Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants, Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG), and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) grants. This funding is critical to providing state and local agencies with the resources they need to hire more police officers, firefighters, and emergency responders, as much-needed equipment and overtime pay for first responders who are already on the frontlines of this crisis.

We urge your full and fair consideration of providing additional resources for first responders as part of any supplemental funding package that may come the floor.

Sincerely,

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress