



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Speaker Rusty Bowers (R-25)

Representative Tim Dunn (R-13)

Representative Joanne Osborne (R-13)

Representative Joel John (R-4)

Senator Sine Kerr (R-13)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

Friday, March 19, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Speaker Bowers and Southwest Republican Legislators Urge Action to End Border Crisis, Help Arizona Communities

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – House Speaker Rusty Bowers, Representatives Tim Dunn, Joanne Osborne, Joel John, and Senator Sine Kerr sent a letter Thursday to U.S. Senators Sinema and Kelly, Governor Ducey, and Attorney General Brnovich urging their assistance to bring an end to the immigration and humanitarian crisis occurring on the southern border, and to ensure Arizona communities are not left to bear the financial costs incurred by the failed federal policies fomenting the situation:

Dear Senator Sinema, Senator Kelly, Governor Ducey and Attorney General Brnovich:

The crisis at the border is only beginning to show its impacts. The cartels are utilizing the release policy of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to force innocent victims into horrific conditions. If the United States saw human smuggling of this magnitude anywhere else in the world, we would be outraged enough to stop it, yet we are encouraging it on our border. We believe this is a miscalculation in immigration policy that now is taking a tremendous human toll.

By law, the federal government is primarily responsible for addressing this crisis. To begin, the Biden Administration should send a clear message that migrants must enter through ports of entry and follow the law when they do. ICE Enforcement and Removal operations, along with the Office of Refugee Resettlement, must have the increased assets they need, including additional judges, to effectively perform their functions. More broadly, federal policy must address both the upstream backlog of migrants and the resulting overflow of individuals who have already been released into Arizona. To that end, the federal government needs to bear the costs currently being borne by state and local actors, including reimbursement of local hospitalization costs. And, of course, any policy response must account for the challenges posed by COVID-19, which has altered our ability to secure help from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and their volunteers. Proper COVID-19 protocols must extend to these migrants in order for our local NGOs and volunteers to safely participate in relief efforts. Unknowingly releasing infected persons into the community would only increase infection rates and tax already overwhelmed hospitals and city services.

State leaders also have a role to play in solving the border crisis. In Arizona, approximately 13 miles of border wall have not been completed. This allows for the cartels to outmaneuver the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol by concentrating large groups of migrants in one location and then strategically transporting drugs through a different one. We ask that you work together with us and

our colleagues in the Legislature to close these gaps, including by finishing the wall or securing the existing wall with the National Guard. Doing so would help channel migrants to the ports of entry to seek asylum lawfully, while interrupting the flow of the cartels' drug-trafficking operations.

For humanitarian reasons, we need to remove the cartels' stronghold over migrants. We also need to have a plan in place to facilitate the safe movement of migrants away from the border communities. The status quo is not the type of immigration policy any political party wants. It only encourages the cartels to continue smuggling—and victimizing—vulnerable migrants. This must stop.

We can work together to help fix this crisis. Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to a collaborative resolution.

*House Speaker Rusty Bowers, Legislative District 25
Representative Tim Dunn, Legislative District 13
Representative Joanne Osborne, Legislative District 13
Representative Joel John, Legislative District 4
Senator Sine Kerr, Legislative District 13*

A copy of the letter is attached.

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Arizona State Legislature

March 18, 2021

Senator Kyrsten Sinema
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Mark Kelly
404 Senate Dirksen Building Suite B40B
Washington, D.C. 20510

Governor Doug Ducey
1700 West Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Attorney General Mark Brnovich
2005 North Central Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85004

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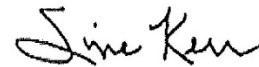
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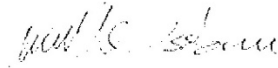
Speaker Russell Bowers
Arizona House of Representatives



Senator Sine Kerr
AZ LD13



Representative Tim Dunn
AZ LD13



Representative Joanne Osborne
AZ LD13



Representative Joel John
AZ LD4

cc: Congressman Tom O'Halleran
Congresswoman Ann Kirkpatrick
Congressman Raul M. Grijalva
Congressman Paul Gosar
Congressman Andy Biggs
Congressman David Schweikert

Congressman Ruben Gallego
Congresswoman Debbie Lesko
Congressman Greg Stanton
Karen Fann, AZ Senate President