



STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

February 17, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
MS 0525
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave SE
Washington, DC 20528-0525

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

Numerous mayors, sheriffs and non-governmental organizations across Arizona have contacted my office with serious concerns and questions surrounding recent policy changes occurring at the United States border with Mexico. It is my understanding that law enforcement, healthcare leaders, government officials, and community organizations and infrastructure have not been consulted throughout the planning process or before the announcement of these new policies. This policy decision has caused confusion and misinformation throughout Arizona communities. Arizonans deserve to understand what led to these changes and what steps are being taken to involve state government, law enforcement, community leaders, and non-profit organizations as this policy is implemented.

The hasty announcement repealing the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) and the lack of details provided to crucial stakeholders in a border state during the development of this action is troubling.

My office has heard concerns from law enforcement and border communities that repealing MPP will result in a significant influx of unvetted individuals into the United States across the national border with Mexico. It is necessary and beneficial to consider the infrastructure and resources needed to monitor, care for and protect both the incoming individuals and surrounding communities — especially as our country and state are still combatting the COVID-19 pandemic.

In light of this, the repeal of MPP has raised numerous questions:

- How will individuals be monitored for health concerns and protected from COVID-19?
- How do the healthcare workers and facilities prepare and deal with this coming increase in cases and patients?
- Does the administration have a plan to keep migrants distanced from one another while

- awaiting testing results?
- Will the administration commit to quarantining all migrants to who test positive for COVID-19 so they are not released into the community while contagious?
 - For migrants that present with health conditions other than COVID-19 that require medical treatment, will the administration be providing funding for their treatment as hospitals have been stretched thin by the pandemic and should not have to take on additional uncompensated care?
 - How will individuals be held accountable for attending their court hearings, their actions until those court dates, and the safe transfer to services once the court decides?
 - Does the administration have a plan to add additional judges to adjudicate asylum cases in a timely manner?
 - Does the administration have a plan to deal with asylum seekers who have a criminal record?

Arizona's many non-governmental organizations and faith-based partners represent a strong coalition that continue to do incredible work amid challenging circumstances. These partners have been vital in helping Arizona meet the challenges of the past year. However, their fundraising abilities and operations have been significantly impacted by the pandemic, and the repeal of MPP has raised questions about their ability to handle this change in policy. Among them:

- How and when is the federal government planning to fund the resources and personnel needed to provide services to asylum seekers?
- How will transportation of individuals be handled and funded, in addition to the current needs of these partners?
- Who is responsible for adequately assessing the needs of the individuals?

As you know, law enforcement has a duty to public safety and community protection. With such a consequential shift in policy, it is vital that state and local law enforcement are regularly consulted. It does not appear this has happened. I am concerned that such an unnecessarily hasty action will create dangerous cracks in the coordination efforts to keep Arizonans safe.

This policy appears to have been implemented without considering the expert insight available to you and has left the bill with the local and state authorities, not to mention our non-profit organizations, during an already difficult year.

For these reasons, I have significant concerns about this policy change and the impact it could have on Arizona. Because our communities, citizens and local leaders will be left to deal with the consequences of this decision, I look forward to your prompt attention to this important public safety and public health matter.

Sincerely,



Douglas A. Ducey
Governor
State of Arizona