



STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

July 13, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Director Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Rd.
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Director Walensky,

As Arizona continues to deal with the man-made crisis at our border, I am writing to you today to express serious concerns with reports that your administration may lift the Title 42 border restrictions issued on March 20, 2020. I urge you to keep these restrictions in place. Lifting them will threaten the health and safety of not only Arizonans, but all Americans, and our already broken border will explode, overwhelming border patrol, law enforcement, non-profits and health care professionals. By lifting this policy, the Biden administration will be responsible for not only exacerbating our border crisis, but in effect, proactively and knowingly importing COVID-19 variants into the United States, starting in our border states.

Under Title 42, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention may prohibit the entry of individuals into the country when “there is a serious danger of the introduction of a communicable disease into the United States.” With legal travel still limited between the United States, Mexico and Canada due to the pandemic, and the administration continuing to advocate for federal, state and local restrictions on schools and private businesses, lifting Title 42 would be nothing short of outrageous and an insult to all Americans who have been forced to deal with these restrictions.

Since the implementation of the Title 42 order, we have all seen that other countries — especially those south of the United States — have had difficulty in managing the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to struggle with testing and vaccination of those in their countries. Title 42 has ensured that the risk posed by migration to the United States of those to our southern border is mitigated to protect our citizens. In March, April, and May of this year alone, Title 42 has allowed Customs and Border Protection to swiftly expel over 329,000 individuals who had crossed into the United States without legal authorization to do so. Lifting Title 42 now would prohibit the vast majority of those expulsions and result in hundreds of thousands of additional migrants entering the United States and being permitted to stay, without a plan to test or vaccinate those that may spread not just COVID-19 but also the numerous variants that are beginning to spread throughout the world and are deadlier than COVID-19 itself.

It is clear that the administration does not have a plan, the resources, the facilities, or indeed the ability to deal with the unaccompanied minors and families currently being permitted to cross. In fact, the administration has resorted to using hotels and motels with little monitoring to house these unaccompanied minors and families due to the lack of infrastructure available to support such an influx of migrants. Adding hundreds of thousands of single adults will only exacerbate the problem.

Your administration has stated that “now is not the time for migrants to come to the US Border,” but revoking Title 42 is tantamount to issuing a cordial invitation and will certainly be used as such in communications by the cartels and human smugglers that entice people in Central America to make the dangerous journey north in order to turn a profit. These organizations have very little concern for the well-being of those being trafficked let alone those in the United States.

An open-borders strategy is never wise, but it is an even worse idea right now, as the number of COVID-19 cases continues to climb in many countries south of our border. Title 42 is one of the only measures remaining in place which allows not only the federal authorities but also state and local public health professionals to maintain public health that they have worked so hard for over the past 17 months of this pandemic. To continue to ensure the safety and security that we have achieved in this country following the COVID-19 outbreak, our borders cannot withstand a surge in migration that the lifting of Title 42 will cause.

I strongly urge you to keep the Title 42 order in place until all other COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted and the United States has some assurances that those countries to our south have implemented strategies to protect against its spread.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas A. Ducey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Douglas A. Ducey
Governor
State of Arizona