

January 31, 2017

Dear Honorable Members of the House of Representatives and Senate:

We write to you as members of the vibrant U.S. Mexico Border community. We are asking you to stand with us to oppose President Trump's reckless policies regarding our U.S. Border and Mexico, our neighbor and trading partner. The President's recent executive actions and rhetoric threaten not only lasting damage to our country's relationship with Mexico but severe economic consequences to Border communities and the United States as a whole. Specifically, we note the following.

The proposed Border wall is a colossally expensive and ineffective deterrent to undocumented immigration and, given that such immigration has been at historic lows, an unnecessary one at that. It will also divert resources away from more productive pursuits, such as improving and modernizing infrastructure at ports of entry, which are the lifeline of cross border trade. In short, the wall, which will be paid for by the American taxpayer no matter what funding scheme is ultimately employed, will create the illusion of security while providing no economic benefit.

Retreating from NAFTA without engaging in good-faith negotiations with Mexico would cripple trade and cause recessions in Border communities and elsewhere. As the Wall Street Journal's editorial board recently observed, "It took the United States nearly a decade to recover from the economic wreckage of the last recession. A wealth-destroying trade war with one of America's closest partners would threaten that long-sought recovery." In the face of recent threats to impose huge tariffs on Mexican imports, Mexican officials are already discussing the possibility of abandoning NAFTA. Furthermore, Mexico will no doubt immediately respond to a "border tax" with tariffs of its own or begin buying elsewhere. This will severely impact the American economy. As an example, the Wall Street Journal has observed that U.S. "sales of food and farm products to Mexico totaled a record \$19.5 billion in fiscal year 2014," representing 13% of all U.S. agricultural exports.

Anti-Mexico rhetoric has already had a chilling effect on the peso. A declining peso directly affects Border economies, which are closely intertwined with their Mexican sister cities and the Mexican economy as a whole, and it also will severely dampen U.S. exports to Mexico, the second-largest destination for U.S.-made products. In addition, a declining peso threatens to destabilize Mexico and halt its progress toward establishing a mature economy.

Selective changes to America's immigration laws or immigration policy will not address the fundamental flaws in our country's immigration system or make us safer. And, to the extent such changes include a policy of arresting non-criminal immigrants or those with minor criminal records, this will result in significantly increased expenditures on detention, the removal of productive workers from the U.S. economy, and placing the immigrants' family members at risk.

We encourage you to visit the Border communities that will be impacted by President Trump's tactics. We would welcome the opportunity for you to learn first-hand about our already safe and secure communities as well as the economic importance of the U.S. Mexico border.

We have much to lose as a nation with the approach that the President is taking and we urge you to stand up for our communities and economy in the face of this divisive and dangerous antagonism toward the Border and Mexico.

Respectfully,



Veronica Escobar
County Judge, El Paso, Texas



Oscar Leeser
Mayor, El Paso, Texas



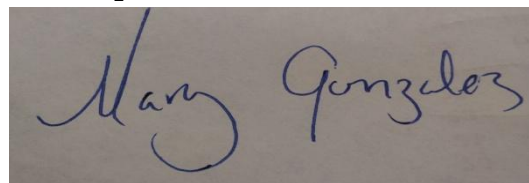
Jose Rodriguez
State Senator, Texas, District 29



Joe C. Pickett
State Representative, Texas, District 79



Joe Moody
State Representative, Texas, District 78



Mary Gonzalez
State Representative, Texas, District 75



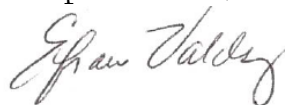
Cesar Blanco
State Representative, Texas, District 76



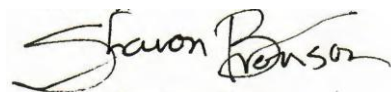
Lina Ortega
State Representative, Texas, District 77



Ramon Garcia
County Judge, Hidalgo County, Texas



Efrain Valdez
County Judge, Val Verde County, Texas




Sharon Bronson
Chair, Pima County Board of Supervisors
Pima County, Arizona



Ann English
Chair, Cochise County Board of Supervisors
Cochise County, Arizona



David R. Saucedo
County Judge, Maverick County, Texas



Maya Sanchez
Mayor, San Elizario, Texas



Manuel Leos, Sr.
Mayor, Village of Vinton, Texas



Javier Perea
Mayor, Sunland Park, New Mexico



Martin Lerma
Mayor, Town of Anthony, Texas



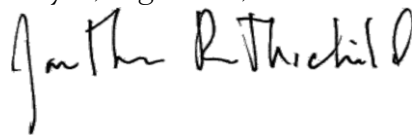
Ken Miyagishima
Mayor, Las Cruces, New Mexico



Ramsey English Cantu
Mayor, Eagle Pass, Texas



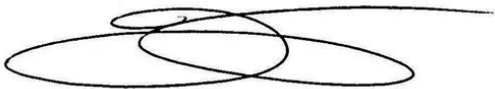
Joel Villareal
Mayor, Rio Grande City, Texas



Jonathan Rothschild
Mayor, Tucson, Arizona



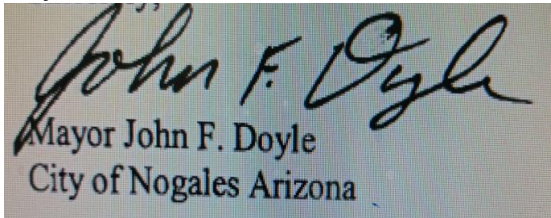
Richard H. Garcia
Mayor, City Of Edinburg, Texas



Antonio "Tony" Martinez
Mayor, Brownsville, Texas



Arthur Clark Smith
Mayor, Lordsburg, New Mexico



Mayor John F. Doyle
City of Nogales Arizona



Benny L. Jasso
Mayor, Deming, New Mexico



Richard Dayoub, President and CEO
The Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce



Jon Barela
CEO, The Borderplex Alliance, El Paso, Texas



Cindy Ramos Davidson
Chief Operating Officer
El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce