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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4204

October 3, 2024

Patrick J. Lechleitner
Deputy Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Deputy Director Lechleitner,

In light of the recent data made public by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that hundreds of thousands of illegal migrants with criminal histories are actively living in our country, I have grave concerns about the safety and security of our communities. In addition to the 662,566 illegal aliens with criminal records that are freely roaming the U.S.¹, creating broad national security risks, it appears that no government entity is currently tracking undocumented minors with criminal history, nor are minors attempting to seek entry undergoing any sort of vetting process.

The tragic and shocking reports of increasing juvenile crime across the country have led many in my district and across the country to worry for the safety of their families and communities. In my home state of Tennessee, just this past summer, four undocumented juvenile teenagers broke into a gun store by ramming a stolen car through the entrance at Sumner Gun & Supply. This is the third break-in at this establishment and police believed the suspects could be responsible for the other two break-ins as well.²

In August of 2024, a migrant 11-year-old Venezuelan boy was arrested for being the primary aggressor in a subway robbery along with a 17-year-old migrant male who was helping him. Police have linked these suspects to a group of up to 12 migrant young men who have committed several robberies across New York City.³

¹ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/tens-thousands-illegal-immigrants-sexual-assault-homicide-convictions-roaming-us-streets>

² <https://mainstreetmediatn.com/articles/gallatinnews/undocumented-juveniles-from-central-america-arrested-for-gun-thefts/?pubid=gallatinnews>

³ <https://nypost.com/2024/08/18/opinion/11-year-old-migrant-robs-a-strap-hanger-on-the-7-train-letters/>

In a February 2024 interview, according to Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry, it is well documented that illegals in his state are recruiting juveniles who have crossed the border into organized crime.⁴ This is an issue plaguing states all across the country. Under this Administration's failed border policy, every state is a border state. These stories represent just a few of the mounting criminal reports nationwide. It is baffling to me and millions of other Americans that even though there has been a significant number of crimes reported amongst juvenile illegal immigrants, the Biden-Harris Administration has not instituted any type of vetting for gang affiliation or a simple criminal background check of minors crossing the border illegally.⁵

Questions for Immigration and Customs Enforcement:

1. Out of the 662,566 known illegal migrants with either criminal records or pending criminal charges, how many are illegal migrant juveniles being tried as adults?
 - a. What are the ages of these illegal migrant juveniles being tried as adults?
 - b. What criminal charges are they being tried for or have they been previously convicted of?
2. Is Immigration and Customs Enforcement compiling data on how many illegal minor migrants are being convicted on criminal charges in the United States?
 - a. Are any other U.S. government departments, to your knowledge, compiling data on how many illegal minor migrants are being convicted on criminal charges in the United States?
 - i. If this information is not being tracked, what are the reasons for this lack of transparency and data collection?
 - ii. What resources would be required to track and share this data with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies?
3. Are state and local law enforcement agencies required to report when a criminal charge has been filed against a juvenile illegal migrant to federal law enforcement agencies?
 - a. If so, what agency is involved, and how is that information shared?
4. How many illegal migrant juveniles are awaiting trial in the U.S.?
 - a. How many illegal migrant juveniles are awaiting trial in a detention center?
 - b. How many illegal migrant juveniles are awaiting trial under a conditional release or have paid bail prior to their trial or hearing?
5. Have any illegal migrant juveniles that have been encountered by a border patrol agent or other law enforcement agent been listed on the terrorist watch list?

⁴ <https://www.bizpacreview.com/2024/02/15/south-american-crime-rings-have-spread-across-america-stealing-millions-just-like-wed-been-warned-1437383/>

⁵ <https://www.nationalreview.com/news/administration-official-admits-that-unaccompanied-minors-crossing-border-arent-checked-for-criminal-records/>

6. How many illegal migrant juveniles have been deported as a result of a criminal conviction?
 - a. How many illegal migrant juveniles who have been previously deported due to a criminal conviction have been reencountered at the border by an immigration officer or other law enforcement agencies across the country?

While I understand that juvenile criminal records are sealed to protect the identity of the individual, the information that can be gained by sharing this data with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies about the criminal record of previously undocumented criminal migrants would be an invaluable tool for our border patrol and law enforcement officers for the protection of our communities and nation. I respectfully request that you respond to the questions included in this letter by October 21, 2024.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, sweeping arch over several horizontal strokes.

Scott DesJarlais, M.D.
Member of Congress