

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 15, 2023

Dear Sheriff,

Over the past two years, the United States has experienced more than five million illegal border crossings, fueling a human trafficking crisis.¹ The federal government's response has been underwhelming, and at times inept. Our Southern Border is now open, the Department of Health and Human Services continues to place children with abusive sponsors and cartel operatives have set up shop in our country, including in Iowa.² Drug trafficking organizations have mutated into human trafficking organizations that exploit lax border enforcement and establish roots in communities across our country.³ The problem demands a coordinated response. That is why I am writing to you.

Iowa law enforcement is at the forefront of the fight against human trafficking, drug running and the cartels. Iowa holds the cross-section between major smuggling routes I-35 and I-80, and our law enforcement police those routes every day. Cartel associates have spread from major cities to rural communities in an effort to escape detection. We have to get ahead of this problem and send a clear message: Iowa's corridor is not open to cartels, and Iowa will not allow the enforcement failures on the Southern Border to jeopardize health and safety in our communities. I am asking your help to better understand the cartel's current footprint in Iowa and what federal resources and policies are needed to dismantle it.

Please e-mail my office over the next month using the instructions provided by my staff in the email transmitting this letter with information about which, if any, cartels operate in your local area; the number and type of criminal investigations tied to the cartels; human trafficking statistics; and what federal resources would help your office tackle these ongoing issues. Thank you for keeping our communities safe.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley

¹ FAIR Staff, FAIR Analysis: 5.5 Million Illegal Aliens Have Crossed Our Borders Since Biden Took Office—How is Secretary Mayorkas Still Employed?, Federation For American Immigration Reform (Oct. 25, 2022), <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/fair-analysis-5-5-million-illegal-aliens-have-crossed-our-borders-since-biden-took-officehow-is-secretary-mayorkas-still-employed-301658734.html>.

² Priscilla Alvarez, Border Chief Disputes DHS Has 'Operational Control' of the Entire US Southern Border, CNN (Mar. 15, 2023), [Border chief disputes DHS has 'operational control' of the entire US southern border | CNN Politics](#); Hannah Dreier, *As Migrant Children Were Put to Work, U.S. Ignored Warnings*, N.Y. Times (Apr. 17, 2023) [As Migrant Children Were Put to Work, U.S. Ignored Warnings - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#); Mills Hayes, *Iowa State Troopers Claim Fentanyl is Changing State From Drive-Through to Drug Distribution Center*, Fox News (May 25, 2023) [Iowa state troopers claim fentanyl is changing state from drive-through to drug distribution center | Fox News](#).

³ Reuters Staff, *First Drugs, Then Oil, Now Mexican Cartels Turn to Human trafficking*, NBC News (Apr. 29, 2020), [First drugs, then oil, now Mexican cartels turn to human trafficking \(nbcnews.com\)](#).