

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 6, 2024

## VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Merrick Garland  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Garland:

I am writing to express my deep concern about the persistent and increasingly sophisticated human smuggling and drug cartel operations at our nation's southern border. Given the severity of these threats, I urge the Department of Justice to prioritize its resources towards supporting investigations and prosecutions targeting high-level narcotics and human smuggling operations.

Human smuggling represents both a national security threat and a humanitarian catastrophe. Traffickers transport people who pose a security threat, as well as desperate migrants in cramped and dangerously overcrowded boats or vehicles, often with limited ventilation or access to basic necessities. This has resulted in a steady stream of horrific and deadly incidents. In 2017, authorities discovered a tractor-trailer packed with over 100 undocumented migrants, several of whom died from the broiling heat and suffocation.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in 2022, dozens of migrants were found dead in a sweltering truck in San Antonio in one of the deadliest migrant smuggling cases in U.S. history.<sup>2</sup> In 2023, at least eight people were killed when two migrant smuggling boats capsized amid rough surf and heavy fog off the coast of California.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, powerful criminal organizations exploit vulnerabilities in our border security to facilitate the flow of narcotics into the United States, fueling addiction, contributing to violent crime, and undermining the safety and well-being of our communities.

It is imperative that we dedicate whatever resources are necessary to dismantle these criminal networks operating in and through Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Mexico. By doing so, we can stem the flow of illicit drugs into our communities, prevent the exploitation of innocent individuals by human traffickers, and reduce the threat of terrorism at our southern border. I stand ready to work collaboratively with the Department of Justice to address these pressing challenges and ensure that our law enforcement agencies have the tools and support needed to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2017/07/24/us/san-antonio-trailer-migrants/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.texastribune.org/2022/06/30/texas-migrant-smuggling-truck-clone/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.kpbs.org/news/local/2023/03/13/migrant-deaths-in-san-diego-are-latest-example-of-how-deadly-the-border-has-become>

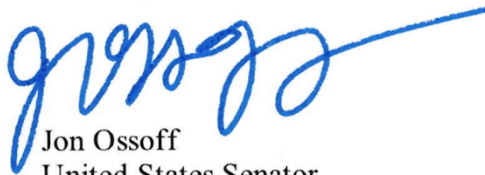
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effectively combat organized crime at the border. Together, we can uphold the rule of law and protect the safety and security of all Americans.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Ossoff", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jon Ossoff  
United States Senator