

strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. MOORE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I want to speak tonight about the very deep humanitarian situation at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Immigration has been the lifeblood of our Nation for generations. The United States has been blessed that people from all over the world have come to our country fleeing oppression, dictators, violence, poverty, desperation, and seeking opportunity in our Nation that has been built up by those very same people to become the most prosperous and powerful Nation on the face of this Earth.

But our immigration system is broken. Our enforcement system is broken.

And tonight, we want to talk about what we have learned, after repeated visits to Department of Homeland Security facilities, operated by Customs and Border Protection, ICE, and also HHS facilities operated by the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

I am going to be joined tonight by a few of my colleagues, JIMMY GOMEZ, who represents part of Los Angeles, DARREN SOTO, a Congressman from Florida, and perhaps other Members of Congress this evening.

Before I turn it over to DARREN, I want to speak for a second about what is known as the largest for-profit center that is operated to detain children. It is in a town called Homestead, Florida, and it is a massive operation. The operators of this facility, it is reported, make over \$700 per child per day, and its size continues to grow.

There are many troubling things going on at Homestead, and about a system that keeps growing and growing for the sake of profit, holding and detaining children, some of them infants and toddlers, longer and longer.

My colleague, DARREN SOTO, is here to describe Homestead and his visits there.

I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO).

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas, Congressman CASTRO, for putting together this Special Order hour. And it is timely, to say the least.

There are many borders that our Nation has. We have a lot of focus on the southwestern borders, such as in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and California. But there are also borders like what we have in Florida, with the Caribbean surrounding us, and a short, either plane ride or longer sea voyage to our peninsula.

We have immigrants from Venezuela coming in, fleeing tyranny. We had for generations Cuban-Americans escaping the issues down there. We have folks of Mexican descent who are farm workers in Polk County, and in other areas, that are now second and third generation.

And, yes, we have many refugees, particularly children, who have left the Triangle in Central America and are part of this great humanitarian crisis at the border.

I got the opportunity to be able to visit the Homestead facility, a facility that had blocked several of us from several requests of touring it. And I saw over 900 children, between the ages of 12 and 17, that were in a facility not made for over 500. And I suspect those numbers have grown since then.

There are a few of us who did speak Spanish, like myself, and were able to talk briefly to the children, even though they told us not to; but you know our responsibility that we have.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. That is an important point. When you went into that facility, this HHS facility, you were told, as a Member of Congress that has oversight authority over these Federal agencies and facilities, you were told not to speak to anybody that was inside that facility.

Mr. SOTO. Sure. No speaking to the kids there; no photos. And then we were given kind of a song and dance about how well everybody was treated.

These young people hailed from Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, countries that we hear over and over because of the strife from drug cartels down there that are warring.

I saw six to eight beds per room, sometimes more, in rooms that couldn't be any bigger than 10 to 15 by 15, with shared showers between two of those rooms. And then I saw classrooms and recreation facilities in giant makeshift tents, these big, kind of puffy ones that were clearly not permanent facilities.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. And there has been concern because of the weather in Florida, because you have a hurricane season in Florida, about the ability of these tents to withstand strong weather and the danger that that could present to the kids there.

Mr. SOTO. There is no question; those tents would be at great risk if a 3, 4, or Level 5 hurricane hit South Florida. And they are at the very end of it in Homestead, which is even south of Miami.

I want to talk a little bit about the root causes of it. We go back to the Triangle and what is happening. You know, these families are fleeing as an act of love because if their kids stay, they could be brought into these cartel drug wars and may not even survive to be 18 years of age, let alone go on to live productive lives.

So one of the root causes of this is that the funding, the foreign aid funding down in the Triangle hasn't been where it was under the Obama administration.

And of course, then, this idea that we have to detain all of these kids, which has really helped manufacture this border crisis. It could be easily resolved by getting them to families in the United States. I have been briefed that many of them are here to visit families, and we could have ways to track everybody; everything as tough as an ankle bracelet to having a case worker and having something less draconian.

But they chose not to do that. They chose to hold these kids back because they don't want them to go out into the general population of the United States.

So, if we just did things the way the last two to three Presidents did, Obama, Bush and Clinton, we wouldn't be in this situation right now, this deliberate holding of kids, as well as asylum seekers, in general, at the border that doesn't need to happen here in the United States.

And with asylum seekers, it violates many treaties that we are a part of.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. The gentleman mentioned the point about the Trump administration has done something fundamentally different than the prior administration in a few ways. First, its zero tolerance policy. So it started aggressively separating fathers and mothers from their young kids. Thousands of those kids were lost in the system. Literally, the administration had absolutely no way ahead of time to track them and to reunite them with their parents.

And also, what is known as the Remain in Mexico, or MPP policy; that once people come seeking asylum, the administration has done a few things: Number 1, for the people that do make it here, they then send many of them right back to Mexico. And these are, unfortunately, the cities that—some of these cities that the United States Government and the Department of State recommends that Americans do not travel to. And we are sending people back there, when we are recommending to our own folks that they don't go to these same cities.

Then the other thing they have been doing is metering, as you alluded to, and trying to block people from legally—remember, these people are legally presenting themselves for asylum. And they are blocking these folks from presenting themselves for asylum.

So what happens is, the situation that you have with the young man and his young daughter, 2-year-old daughter, the photo from about three weeks ago that the whole world saw. And I didn't speak to a single person who saw that photograph of the father and his 2-year-old daughter, dead in the water, with the young girl, her arm over her dad—I didn't speak to anybody who said that they saw that photo that didn't cry.

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership as our chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and that is why we are here tonight, for those injustices.

I am proud to be joined by my good friend, Congressman JIMMY GOMEZ, of Southern California, of L.A., who has been a champion of issues related to immigrants and related to Hispanics across the Nation.

JIMMY, thanks for being here.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Thank you, DARREN. Thank you for keeping an eye on the Homestead facility in Florida, for the CODELS, which are official congressional visits to these facilities. Thanks for all the work that you have been doing.

Mr. SOTO. And as we go into the budget, the protections that we couldn't get in recent bills, we will double down on to make sure we have them going into the appropriations process.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Absolutely.

JIMMY, I know you are from Los Angeles. You have also been on many of these CODELS. You have seen the horrific conditions that folks are being kept in, the separation of families, all of these things.

Mr. GOMEZ. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for inviting me to participate today.

I actually serve on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, and today we had a hearing about the conditions of the camps at the border, the conditions that the children are kept in.

We have lost six kids at the border, and I want to just highlight their names, because we need to recognize that there is a human face to the tragedy that we see; it is not just numbers.

We have Carlos Hernandez Vasquez; he was age 16. Wilmer Josue Ramirez Vasquez, age 2; Juan de Leon Gutierrez, age 16; Felipe Gomez Alonzo, age 8; and Jakelin Caal Maquin, age 7, and Mariee Juarez, age 1.

Mariee's mother actually testified in front of the committee to tell her story of what she was trying to accomplish by coming to this country and about the fear that she had as she crossed and as she was detained.

I want to remind people; a lot of people think that it is a crisis that is being created on its own. It is not. It is something that is a result of this administration's zero tolerance policy.

I want to remind people that the zero tolerance policy started because this President, as he was running for office, said that he was going to be tough on this issue, and that he would be the only one that could solve it. So what we ended up seeing is that we saw the zero tolerance policy.

And what is it? The zero tolerance policy states that anybody that crosses in between ports of entry will no longer be held civilly and administratively responsible; that they will be convicted criminally.

Jeff Sessions, the Attorney General when this policy was started to be implemented said: Zero tolerance policy shall supersede any existing policies.

And what this did is it caused people, when they are criminally convicted or

being held for breach of criminal law, the parents are being separated from the kids.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. That is an important point, JIMMY. People wonder, well how is it that these families got separated? Why would the government do that?

There is, in the law, which is known as Section 1325, a law that allows the government to basically charge the parents with a crime; therefore, separate them from their kids, and send the kids off somewhere else.

Mr. GOMEZ. Correct. And that is where we want to make sure people understand that this crisis, the separating of the children, was a direct result of this policy. It doesn't say, yeah, they will be separated. But it is that they would be—zero tolerance led to the separation. One triggered the other.

People then also try to make the argument that this happened under the Obama administration, but the Obama administration didn't do that. They were dealing with unaccompanied minors that were flowing into the country, and they had to deal with that humanitarian crisis at that moment.

So this administration has really taken a zero tolerance policy, which has had a ripple effect on capacity to handle influx, the metering issue, the Remain in Mexico issue, the separating of the kids and not keeping appropriate track of those children to make sure that they are actually returned to their parents.

And this administration, time and time again, now says that they never had a child separation policy.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. That was bizarre. You remember, several months ago now, when Secretary Nielsen was still the Secretary of Homeland Security in, I think it was the first hearing, where she was asked about the government's, the Trump administration's family separation policy. She said, flat out, that there was no child separation or family separation policy; very bizarrely said that there was no family separation policy.

Mr. GOMEZ. And it wasn't only Secretary Nielsen. It was Kelly Anne Conway. It is a fabrication and a lie that has been repeated by the administration; and that is something that we want to call out, to make sure people understand that what is going on now is a direct result of the zero tolerance policy.

Additionally, we want to make sure that people understand that a lot of the decisions were made based on, I believe, on politics. My own personal belief was this, they wanted to seem tough, so they implemented policies without really understanding how they implement it on the ground.

I have taken tours not only of Otay Mesa, Adelanto, I went out to Victorville; I went to Tornillo, Texas, so I have been to the border quite a bit of times, a number of times.

□ 2100

And when you start talking to the people who are responsible for implementing these policies, the men and women who are in Customs and Border Protection, some of them are trying to do a good job. They are saying that they are being put in an impossible situation by this administration by often determining policy at a whim. And the problem is, when you are making policy not on rational decisions but on politics, then you end up with this situation, which is a big mess on the border.

I actually spent a night at the border with one of my colleagues.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. That is right, you and NANETTE BARRAGÁN, who also represents part of southern California, and you saw the metering policy, what is known as the metering policy. Again, that is where they block people from legally presenting for asylum. You all saw it firsthand. In fact, you ended up spending almost the whole night, I think, sleeping there on the concrete.

Mr. GOMEZ. Yes, at Otay Mesa. We spent the night at the Mexican side of the border, literally on the line, and we were there just to observe migrants to present themselves for asylum. They were on U.S. soil. They presented themselves. They were told that it was full. Congresswoman BARRAGÁN and I asked to see the facility. They refused to show us.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. These were CBP agents who were refusing to show you.

Mr. GOMEZ. Yes, correct. Customs and Border Protection refused to let us in to see it. So the migrants sat down. We sat down with them. We got there around 1 o'clock in the afternoon, and we didn't leave until the next day, around 7 a.m. So we spent the night. It was cold. We slept on the ground.

The migrants couldn't leave the U.S. soil or the Mexican authorities would have grabbed them. So we actually got corralled, using bike racks, into kind of a cage to keep us in a certain area. Every so often, Customs and Border Patrol would wake us up to ask us who is here, how many kids, how old, but these were questions that we answered three or four times.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. So it is a purposeful way to disrupt your rest, your sleep, to try to get as many people out of there as possible?

Mr. GOMEZ. Correct. And what we were trying to remind them is that, by international law, by U.S. law, these migrants had a right to present themselves for asylum and then ask so that they can be processed. They ended up getting in. It was the woman who was tear-gassed at the border in that famous—

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. With her kids.

Mr. GOMEZ. With her kids. She was one of the folks, and she asked for a credible fear asylum hearing, and she went through the process. That is why we have this process, so that we don't

end up with just a backlog at the border that is more dangerous for the kids and the migrants, and it is unnecessary under what we believe under our rule of law.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. You mentioned the Trump administration's policies, and there was a really excellent article written not too long ago by a gentleman by the name of Adam Serwer, and I think he wrote it for *The Atlantic*, although I could be wrong. But his point is that the cruelty is the point, it seems like, and the further along we go, the more it seems that that is the case, that some of these policies are done for sheer harshness towards the people who these policies are directed toward.

And you know that last week there were a group of us from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus who went over to two Border Patrol stations in El Paso, Texas, first the El Paso Border Patrol Station number one, and then the Clint facility, which is now infamous.

This was the same day or the day after that a story had broken about a Facebook page. I think it is the I'm 10-15 Facebook page that was set up as a secret group, or a private group, set up for Border Patrol agents, former Border Patrol agents and current Border Patrol agents, 9,500 members of this group who had made some very vile and very vulgar comments about the people in their care, about Members of Congress, about the work that they do. A lot of it is stuff that I just can't read on the House floor because they would probably shut me down for being vulgar.

Mr. GOMEZ. And if I can interject.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Yes.

Mr. GOMEZ. I mentioned this article in the Oversight hearing. It is actually a ProPublica article, entitled: "Inside the Secret Border Patrol Facebook Group Where Agents Joke about Migrant Deaths and Post Sexist Memes."

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. And if our colleagues have not read that article, Republican and Democrat, you should read that ProPublica article that was published last week, because it tells you exactly the problems with CBP right now and the culture at CBP.

I want to read one thing. We were talking about the father, and when he and his daughter died they were face down on the river. She had her arm around him. So everybody saw that photo around the world and throughout the country. I want to tell you a post that was on this Facebook page, posted by a Border Patrol agent or a former Border Patrol agent, and so I am going to quote here. It says: "Okay. I'm gonna go ahead and ask, have y'all ever seen floaters this clean? I'm not trying to be an 'a,' but I have never seen floaters like this. Could this be another edited photo? We've all seen the Dems and liberal party do some pretty sick things."

Now, that was his post. There were a few responses to that post. Some of

them were memes. One of the memes had a Sesame Street character, and the language below the Sesame Street character says "oh, well" about these deaths.

Another meme from another agent or former agent has a picture. There is a famous scene in a movie "Rocky IV" of the Russian fighter, and he uses a famous line for anybody who has ever seen it. The meme says, "If he dies, he dies." They are talking about the little girl and the man who are hugging face down in the river.

I reached out to Secretary McAleenan, I think still the Acting Secretary of DHS. I think he is still acting. I think I am right about that. And I said, over the weekend: I would like to have a discussion with you this coming week. And we are trying to set it up about the accountability and disciplinary system for CBP agents who have made the most vile and vulgar comments.

Look, don't get me wrong. There were some people who were part of this group who I am sure never made a comment. There were people who were part of this group who never said anything close to some of the worst stuff on here, who would not be subject to discipline.

A big part of the problem right now is the culture at CBP, and as far as I can tell, there is close to zero accountability for anything like this or what happened in Maine on the northern border a few weeks ago.

It was reported, because if you take a Greyhound bus from McAllen, Texas, for example, and you are going to go to San Antonio or Dallas or Austin or whatever, you get stopped along the way by CBP agents. Same thing in California if you are coming up from San Diego or near the border. And the CBP agents will get onto the bus, go up to each person, or at least the people they suspect could possibly be immigrants, and they will ask you to basically prove your citizenship.

So we have been in a battle with Greyhound over that because of the rights that Americans have, having to prove citizenship. But here is my point. I think it was ACLU that got emails made public of a few agents on a few occasions, or it may have been one agent on a few occasions, saying to his agents who were going out to do these checks on the buses, his message to them was "happy hunting." Happy hunting.

I asked Secretary McAleenan: Well, what are you going to do about that person? Somebody is describing going after human beings here as hunting. What is the disciplinary process?

Congress has not gotten any answers about what the disciplinary and accountability process is at the Department of Homeland Security, at CBP for actions like this.

Then one more thing—and then, of course, I want to hear more of your perspective—is also, besides the fact that there is hardly any accountability

as far as we can tell, it is also very secretive. I mean, really, Border Patrol right now is probably the most—except for the Secret Service, probably the most secretive law enforcement agency in the country, the least transparent law enforcement agency in the country.

You and I both know when we have gone and visited the border, when we have gone to these facilities, there are good agents who are doing their work, who are doing it honestly and earnestly, who are not mistreating anybody, who are helping to defend and protect the United States. But those people are overwhelmed by a system that is undercut by a bad culture at this point and by these rogue agents who have essentially ruined the culture at CBP, and I don't know that the higher-ups, right now, are lifting a finger to do anything about it.

Mr. GOMEZ. I think you make some excellent points.

One point I want to kind of talk about, this culture that is permeating Customs and Border Protection, I think that it is also based because of the leadership of this administration. The attitude of zero tolerance, as in, like: Nope, it doesn't matter what conditions you are leaving, it doesn't matter if you are fleeing violence, it doesn't matter if you are a victim of domestic abuse, you can no longer use that as a rationale for seeking asylum. That zero tolerance mentality is what is also helping drive this rotting of the culture within Customs and Border Protection.

Changing the leadership makes a difference, but as long as there is a change in the civilian leadership.

Oversight is crucial. A lot of people ask: What is the difference between Democrats and Republicans? What is the difference between you guys being in charge versus Republicans being in charge?

One of the things that I noticed when I was on Oversight in the minority from my first year, year and a half in Congress is that we couldn't call in Customs and Border Protection and ICE and the Department of Homeland Security to have a public hearing on these issues. The only hearing we had regarding the zero-tolerance policy was behind closed doors, no cameras present. I don't even believe staff was allowed in the room.

So we had to sit there and ask, and we asked enough questions to get more information about how the zero-tolerance policy worked, how it was the nitty-gritty. But if people don't hear it, the public doesn't hear their testimony, then it lacks the credibility because some people think we are making it up.

So we need not only the right kind of leadership to reform the culture, we also need to make sure that there is direct oversight by Congress, and that is our job.

I voted against the emergency supplemental because I didn't feel that

there were enough constraints on the money that was going to be sent to the agencies, that they were going to actually use it to improve the humanitarian crisis that was going on on the ground at the border region.

So we need to continue pushing that oversight, and that is what I plan on doing. I know that, under your leadership, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus is doing so.

At the same time, I want to highlight another issue. People act like ICE has been around forever. We have to remind people that our system was restructured after 9/11 to make sure that we do have appropriate security at the border, at the ports of entry, through the airports, right, that we had major flaws. So reorganizing and changing and holding a bureaucracy accountable, that is the job of Congress. That is the job of everybody who gets elected.

So the idea of what should be done, I think that first we need to make sure that we are more specific on our money, make sure there is better leadership and, at the same time, never run away from our values that this country is based on immigrants and built by immigrants.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. In fact, I want to talk to you, because Americans ask the question, rightfully, of Members of Congress, "Okay. So you have identified a problem or you are complaining about a problem. What is your solution to it?" So I want to talk about that for a second.

But a few more examples on the Facebook group, because I really want our colleagues to have a sense of how deep this problem is and that it is not just imaginary.

□ 2115

This is right here in writing, in pictures, and in language.

There was a post, and this is one of the milder posts, but it is a meme. The language on the meme says: "You know what? I'm just going to say it. . . Hondurans have the stupidest names ever." Again, this is either a current or former Border Patrol agent.

One more, and before I read this, I want to explain something. In Border Patrol, they have their own language. One of the slurs that they use talking about the desperate people who are presenting themselves is the word "tonk." People probably wonder what that means. That word is supposed to be what it sounds like when they hit one of these folks over the head with a flashlight. It makes that sound, "tonk." They are using that as a slur to describe the folks who are at the border.

The meme is a picture of red, dead meat laid out flat. The caption says, "Little tonk blanket ideas!"

I mean, this is sick stuff.

I told McAleenan that some of these people need to be taken off the beat. These people, some of them are clearly a danger to human life, in the way they are talking and acting.

Combine that with a system where there is hardly any accountability, if any accountability at all, and it is very dangerous, very dangerous not only for the people who come into their care but dangerous for their coworkers as well.

These good agents are overrun. When they try to do the right thing, try to report abuse, try to report neglect, try to report malfeasance, they are thwarted by people higher up in Border Patrol who take that information and do absolutely zero about it.

What happens? A lot of people then figure, "Well, nothing is going to happen if I actually report it, and there is a chance that if these people find out I am reporting it, they are going to take retribution against me."

There is a whole group of people who are working in the system who actually want to do the right thing, do their jobs honestly, who are undercut, thwarted, and slowly brought into this rotten system because the people at the top will not do anything to change it.

Madam Speaker, Mr. GOMEZ mentioned some of the solutions. He mentioned the supplemental bill.

The supplemental bill was the Trump administration coming forward and asking for billions of dollars more in funding because, it argued: There is a surge at the border; there are more people coming; so we need more money for ICE, CBP, and HHS, which are the kids.

There was a House version of that bill. There was a Senate version of that bill. The Senate bill is what finally passed.

As Mr. GOMEZ mentioned, a big concern that we had was that this President likes to play games with funding in this administration. They like to take money that Congress appropriates for one purpose and then go use it for something else.

Madam Speaker, as Mr. GOMEZ knows, the biggest example of that was when they wanted to take this military money and use it to build a wall.

When I was in law school, and maybe every law student studied this, there is, of course, a famous jurist, Oliver Wendell Holmes. In legal theory, he had this "bad man" theory. The idea was that laws needed to be written in such a way that somebody who has no shame at all, a bad man who is looking to take advantage of any little crack in the law that he can, we need to write a law that prevents that from happening. Right now, we are not in that situation because the Trump administration is able to do all these things and move money around.

One of the big problems we had was a lack of guardrails. They could take this humanitarian aid and, instead of using it for humanitarian purposes, direct it toward a wall or toward something else, toward more ICE beds, toward more HHS beds so that the private contractors who run Homestead and who also run private prisons can

make another \$775 a day per child because they are growing their number by 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 10,000 people.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. GOMEZ. Madam Speaker, Mr. CASTRO makes a good point regarding the guardrails, the funding.

One of the things that I would like to point out is if this administration, this President, as he claimed, was the only one who could solve this problem, then why hasn't it been solved?

It is a bigger mess and a bigger disaster than we have ever seen, and that is resulting in these conditions on the border where people are mistreated. This culture that is becoming rotten to the core is starting to just fester. We have seen an uncounted number of children who have died.

According to Newsweek, there were no migrant children who died while in CBP custody during the final 6 years of the Obama administration. Former DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen previously admitted that it had been more than a decade since a child had died in CBP detention until December of last year when the 8-year-old Guatemalan national passed away on Christmas Eve. Since then, at least four other children have died while detained.

We are seeing this crisis get worse and worse, and my fear is that we haven't hit the bottom yet. Until Congress steps in and puts those guardrails in place, until we flex our constitutional muscle, we are going to see things deteriorating further.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, in order to make sure that we start to solve this problem, there is legislation that the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and others are pushing immediately.

There are a few specific things that we need to do. One of them is that we need to raise standards of care. Many of us went out to Antelope Wells, New Mexico, parts of rural New Mexico, and we witnessed that CBP is understaffed, underprepared, and under-resourced to handle medical emergencies by these asylum seekers, the folks who come in with medical emergencies. Maybe they go into diabetic shock. They encounter some respiratory illness, and they are very sick.

It is not that they were unprepared to handle medical emergencies by asylum seekers. They are also very unprepared to handle emergency situations by their own workers, Federal employees, CBP agents.

Dr. RAUL RUIZ, also from southern California, is an emergency room medical doctor. He was in Haiti after the earthquake. He has been in disaster situations. He and his staff have done an excellent job and spent a lot of time coming up with legislation that raises those standards of medical treatment and of care.

We believe, based on everything that we have seen, that some of these deaths of these young children could have been prevented if the standards of

care had been appropriate and if these kids had just been treated better. We have to raise the standard of care.

When we went over to Antelope Wells, they get 200 people who come to present themselves for asylum. They put them all in this sally port. They have 200 people there, including some infants, toddlers, et cetera.

What do they give them to eat? They give them frozen burritos that they heat up, frozen burritos for a 3-year-old.

Pumping more cash into the system is not the full answer to this. We don't just pump more cash into the system so they can buy people burritos and still not have nurses and doctors when there is an emergency. We have to raise the standard of care.

The second part is that we have to move people through the process faster. Remember, I said that with President Trump and the zero-tolerance policy, the remain-in-Mexico policy, all this stuff, it has created a situation where people are being held longer.

When we saw these dozen or so Cuban women who were in this cell at El Paso Border Station 1, some of them had been at that Border Patrol station for 50 days. Some of them said they had not showered or taken a bath for over 15 days. Some were grandmothers. Some had been separated from their kids and didn't know where their kids were. There were a few who said they had not been given their prescription medication. One of them had epilepsy, and she said she had not gotten her medication for epilepsy.

We walked over to what is this steel toilet, because it is basically like a prison cell. They are sleeping on concrete floors. There are painted cinder-block walls. We go over to this steel toilet. Directly above it, it has a sink. The sink is not working. There is no sink.

All these people going to the restroom, they can't wash their hands because the sink doesn't work. They are staying there many, many, many days, well beyond what the law prescribes and the court settlements have prescribed for how long somebody should be staying there.

The final piece, as we know, is a longer term thing, which is that we believe the United States and other countries in the Western Hemisphere—and I believe that we should wrangle our allies from around the world because whenever there is some major crisis in some other part of the world, those nations ask the United States to help out. We should ask the same of those countries when something happens in the Western Hemisphere, in this case, in Central America.

My point is that we need to make serious investments in the Northern Triangle countries of Central America because I don't believe that these people want to get up and leave their homes to make a 1,200-mile journey to the United States if they don't have to, if they weren't so desperate, if they

weren't fleeing violence, if they weren't fleeing oppression. But that is where they find themselves.

By the way, one more point on this: The President wants to spend billions and billions of dollars on the wall but over the last several years has committed only hundreds of millions of dollars in Central American aid.

I was speaking with MATT CARTWRIGHT the other day, our colleague from Pennsylvania. He made a great point, which is if we took those billions of dollars that we are spending on a wall and used that as seed money to start investing in Central America, what we would do is help create safety and opportunity in those countries so that people don't feel the need to come to the United States, and we wouldn't have a surge of migration.

Like I said, I think those people want to stay in their countries.

Also, Madam Speaker, even a few days ago, I saw an article where there was a very famous columnist, a writer who made the case that this is a different situation. This migration from Central America is a different situation from refugees who have fled to the United States in previous generations. His point was that they are not fleeing state-sponsored oppression.

I believe that kind of thinking is an anachronism. It is old thinking.

The fact is, somebody who is living in Central America or anywhere around the world can be just as oppressed and put in danger and have their life threatened and the lives of their family threatened systematically by a drug gang or a drug lord and these groups as some dictator did in the 1960s or 1970s in some other country.

I believe that threats to people have evolved, that the refugee situation, the asylee situation, has evolved and that the United States should recognize that evolution, just like other things have evolved.

We should recognize that evolution and recognize that the threats these people are facing, even though it may not be coming directly from the Central American governments, are just as dangerous as people who were fleeing Vietnam in the 1970s or are just as dangerous as the Cubans who were fleeing the dictatorial Castro regime in the early 1960s. We should recognize that.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. GOMEZ. Madam Speaker, I want to stress a few points.

Mr. CASTRO mentioned that this administration hasn't invested in aid to the Northern Triangle countries. One of the things that we need to recognize is that the zero-tolerance policy isn't working. It might feel good for hardliners to say: "It is zero tolerance. We are not going to take it anymore. We are going to push back," but it is not solving the problem.

For example, the statistics show that net migration from Mexico to the United States is zero. In some instances, it has declined, where more

Mexican nationals are returning to Mexico than ever before.

Why is that? Mexico still has issues regarding security, but its economy has built up more and more.

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I have family members who are in Mexico, and they have no desire to move to the United States because they believe that their opportunity there is just as good as it is here.

So imagine if we want to be serious about tackling the issue of undocumented immigration to the United States, especially from Latin American countries. The way you do it is first by, of course, creating a comprehensive immigration reform here in this country but, at the same time, investing the resources and the policies that build up the economies of Latin America, thereby creating a situation where people feel that, instead of risking their lives to get here, they would rather stay at home.

That is one thing that this administration doesn't understand, but we also need to highlight for the American people. The zero-tolerance policy, the tough on undocumented immigration hasn't worked.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. In fact, more people have come since the announcement of that policy. It is an abject failure.

Mr. GOMEZ. And they know about the conditions on the border, they know about the risk that they are taking, but they are leaving some desperate situations. So the way you make it so that they don't want to leave is that you make things better for them at home.

Some folks will say, well, that is not our responsibility; that is the responsibility of their home countries. But if you want to be a political realist about how we solve it, you have to have international aid, almost a Marshall Plan, for Latin America in order to build up their countries, their economies, their infrastructure, their training, and then make sure that we have a system here that has enough legal immigration in order for people to not try to come into this country illegally.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Absolutely. We talked about that piece, basically a Marshall Plan for Central America, the investment. And ZOE LOFGREN, another colleague of yours from California—northern California, San Jose—has got legislation that addresses, essentially, the start of a Marshall Plan for Central America, which I believe she has filed already.

And I mentioned RAUL RUIZ's bill on lifting standards.

Another bill that we are pushing very strongly is the accountability piece. We were talking about the CBP officers and the fact that I can't tell whether there is any legitimate accountability over there. My colleague from Texas, VERONICA ESCOBAR, who represents El Paso, has got a bill on accountability that she has also filed.

So we are pushing these pieces of legislation really hard, working with the Speaker and others, to try to get some of them passed before the end of this July, before we go on the long August recess.

LORI TRAHAN, another member of the CHC, from Massachusetts, has got a bill.

One of the problems, and you spoke to it, is that DHS and HHS will often try to deny Members of Congress access to the facilities. People might say: Okay, well, you are Members of Congress and they are a different agency. Why should you be able to go in when-ever you want; right?

Well, remember, the legislative branch has oversight over these executive agencies, and you can't do your job of oversight if they don't let you in. Or, if you have got to give 7 days' notice, they have a chance to just clean everything up. In fact, if you read that Facebook page by the Border Patrol agents, they are talking about the fact the facilities are cleaned up before Members of Congress actually have a chance to visit. So that is a problem.

Lori has got a bill that says that, with 24 hours' notice, we could, as Members of Congress, go in there and inspect these facilities.

So these are some of the pieces of legislation, practical solutions, that we are working on to overhaul the system and improve this situation.

And, real quick, I mentioned that trip last week to Clint and to El Paso Border Patrol station number one. It was a very intense visit and very tense, also, a lot of people on that trip. It was about half and half, half CHC members, half not CHC members, but there were many people who stepped up, and particularly the women who were on that trip.

I got some video that I released. But there are other portions of that, in that room, other times in that room, where MADELEINE DEAN, AYANNA PRESSLEY, and, of course, ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ were pressing the CBP officers and a doctor there to explain why these folks were being neglected.

In fact, to give a lot of credit to ALEXANDRIA, we would not have been able to go into that room and I would not have been able to document what had happened except for the fact that she basically insisted and barged into that room to go see and talk to those women.

NANETTE BARRAGÁN was great.

JOE KENNEDY, he and I went over to another cell, and we spoke to a woman who was in the early stages of pregnancy. She was there with another family that included a young boy. They had a seat that was working, actually. But what I noticed was, in their cell, they were reusing the same, like, seven or eight or nine paper cups over and over.

Paper cups are cups you throw away or you recycle and you get another one. They were making these people use the same paper cups day after day. For what?

Mr. GOMEZ. And we know, because of that, you have a situation where people are getting sick in these facilities, and then putting the kids and the people whose immune systems are compromised into more vulnerable positions.

We definitely have a lot of work to do, but in order to do that, we need to make sure that the American people know what is going on, to tell the story and to not let people forget about the kids who have passed away: Wilmer, Carlos, Juan, Jakelin, Felipe, and Mariee. Because if we forget, we turn away, only more kids will perish and more people will die at the border.

It is our moral obligation. It doesn't matter if they are not U.S. citizens. It is our moral obligation to ensure that doesn't happen.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. That is absolutely right.

These folks may not be citizens, they are not legal residents when they present themselves, but they are human beings. This is the most powerful, prosperous, and, we believe, humane country on the face of this Earth. We should be treating them a lot better than we are treating them. I firmly believe that the overwhelming majority of Americans believe that, regardless of their politics.

Madam Speaker, Mr. GOMEZ read the names of the six children who have died over the last several months. Over the last few years, there have been about 24 adults who have died. I have only been able to find 16 of their names, but I want to read their names also to remember them:

Yimi Alexis Balderramos-Torres;
Johana Medina Leon;
Simratpal Singh;
Abel Reyes-Clemente;
Guerman Volkov;
Mergensana Amar;
Wilfredo Padron;
Augustina Ramirez-Arreola;
Efrain De La Rosa;
Huy Chi Tran;
Zeresenay Ermias Testfatsion;
Roxana Hernandez;
Ronald Cruz;
Gourgen Mirimanian;
Luis Ramirez-Marcano, and
Yulio Castro-Garrido.

May all of them rest in peace. May the children who also died rest in peace. They were doing what people throughout the generations have tried to do from all over the world who were fleeing oppression, violence, and desperation. They were trying to make it to the United States of America. They were trying to live in the United States of America, and they died.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 39 minutes

p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, July 11, 2019, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1546. A letter from the Director, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting the Bureau's Fair Lending Report for 2018, pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 5493(c)(2)(D); Public Law 111-203, Sec. 1013(c)(2)(D); (124 Stat. 1970); to the Committee on Financial Services.

1547. A letter from the Deputy General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final Definitions and Requirements — Alaska Native Education (ANE) Program [Docket ID: ED-2018-OESE-0122; CFDA Number: 84.356A] received July 3, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

1548. A letter from the Deputy General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final regulations — Outdated Regulations—Expanding Opportunity Through Quality Charter Schools Program (CSP)—Grants for Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities (RIN: 1810-AB56) received July 3, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

1549. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Review of the Dust-Lead Hazard Standards and the Definition of Lead-Based Paint [EPA-HQ-OPPT-2018-0166; FRL-9995-49] (RIN: 2070-AJ82) received June 28, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1550. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; District of Columbia; Nonattainment New Source Review Requirements for 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard [EPA-R03-OAR-2018-0754; FRL-9995-97-Region 3] received June 28, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1551. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Idaho: Authorization of State Hazardous Waste Management Program Revisions [EPA-R10-RCRA-2018-0298; FRL-9995-77-Region 10] received June 28, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1552. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Valifenalate; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2017-0417; FRL-9994-93] received June 28, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1553. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Pennsylvania; Removal of Allegheny County Requirements Applicable to Gasoline Volatility