



May 9, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Senate Democratic Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Chairman Shelby & Vice Chairman Leahy:

As leaders in the aviation and travel industries, we urge you to support the Administration's request for supplemental appropriations to support CBP officer staffing and overtime to respond to the situation at the southern border of the United States. We support this supplemental funding request and encourage the Committee to expeditiously consider and pass the proposal in order to provide Customs and Border Protection (CBP) the funds necessary to address all aspects of its mission, including operations at the nation's airports. While we do not have a position on the myriad of border policy issues that are currently being debated, there is no doubt that additional funds are needed to address this crisis.

CBP informed stakeholders today that in addition to the 300 Customs and Border Protection Officers (CBPOs) already diverted from land, sea and airports, there will be an additional 186 CBPOs transferred to the Southwest Border in the coming weeks. CBP also indicated that there's potential for additional diversions. While understandable, a robbing Peter to pay Paul staffing paradigm is unsustainable. The traveling and shipping public should not be subjected to excessive wait times, and we need to avoid inflicting damage on commerce and the overall U.S. economy.

Without emergency funding, we are very concerned that CBP's budget is not adequate going into the busy summer travel season, starting with the Memorial Day weekend holiday rapidly approaching. CBP staffing levels already fall well short of the agency's workload staffing model. With international travel increasing at a steady rate, lack of sufficient CBP officer staffing at airports due to temporary reassignment, compounded with lack of overtime funding, will certainly put considerable strain on CBP ports, harming both passengers and cargo throughput.

We appreciate your consideration of the supplemental request and encourage its timely passage.

Airlines for America  
Airports Council International  
American Association of Airport Executives  
Global Business Travel Association  
International Air Transport Association  
U.S. Travel Association