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3RD DISTRICT, ARIZONA

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The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20006

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Mail Stop 0020
Washington, D.C. 20528

February 18, 2021

Dear President Biden & Secretary Mayorkas,

Across the Southwest, families and unaccompanied children are presenting themselves at ports of entry along the U.S.-Mexico border seeking asylum from incredible violence and persecution in their countries of origin. Throughout the years in my congressional district, non-governmental organizations, counties, and cities have been at the forefront of assisting these families after they're released from Department of Homeland Security (DHS) custody. With limited support from the federal government, they are helping them navigate a difficult and complex asylum process as they pursue their asylum claim through immigration court proceedings.

These entities ensure that families receive basic necessities, medical care, and assistance with travel arrangements while providing them with important information on their immigration court proceedings. In addition, due to the pandemic, non-governmental organizations, counties, and cities will need to implement COVID-19 preventative measures to protect public health while assisting asylum seekers. As we continue to address this ongoing humanitarian crisis, I ask that you designate supplemental federal funds that can immediately be accessed by non-governmental organizations, counties, and cities that are assisting asylum seeking families at the U.S.-Mexico border.

In the past, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released a memorandum to state agencies outlining guidance for use of Homeland Security Grant Program funds for humanitarian relief to unaccompanied children and families presenting themselves at the Southern border seeking asylum. I would like for the Department of Homeland Security to brief my staff, non-governmental organizations, counties, and cities on how to access these funds if they will continue to be available.

As these organizations, cities, and counties continue to support asylum seekers and families, time is of the essence. Furthermore, any additional funds allocated to provide humanitarian relief, should only be used to support these efforts. I hope that you recognize the urgency and reply to this letter as soon as possible.

Please know that you have an open invitation to visit Southern Arizona. If you require additional information, do not hesitate to reach out. Thank you for your consideration.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R".

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress