

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 23, 2022

The Honorable Merrick B. Garland  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Garland,

We write to express our deep concern following reports that the Governor of Florida flew 50 Venezuelan migrants seeking asylum from the Maduro regime to Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts from Texas. We respectfully request the Department of Justice determine whether officials who ordered and executed this political stunt in Texas and Florida violated federal law.

Harrowing interviews and reports reveal officials in Florida intentionally misled the migrants to believe they would be flown to Boston to receive expedited work papers. Instead, the deceived migrants were packed onto buses, put onto two privately chartered flights, and prohibited from taking photos of the journey that made two unannounced stops before landing in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.

It is alleged that immigration officials knowingly falsified mailing addresses for the migrants by selecting arbitrary homeless shelters across the United States, with the expectation that migrants would be required to attend court proceedings as early as next week in states thousands of miles away or face forced removal.

Packets given to the migrants promised access to refugee support programs only available to those who ultimately are granted asylum, not to asylum seekers and allegedly instructed the migrants to contact the wrong agency, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to change their address upon arrival in Massachusetts.

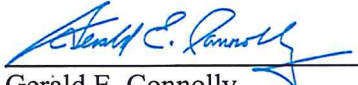
It has also come to light that a person who identified themselves as "Perla" paid \$200 in cash to at least one migrant to recruit others to board charter flights that eventually landed in Martha's Vineyard on Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup>.

As the federal government retains jurisdiction over cases that involve interstate travel, we request the Department of Justice investigate whether any federal funds were used to operate a fraudulent scheme and request the Department of Justice make a determination as to whether officials in Texas and Florida violated federal law. The migrants who were used in this political stunt were fleeing communism, authoritarianism, and violence, having crossed 10 countries and walked thousands of miles in search of a dignified life for them and their families. Our nation has a long tradition of welcoming migrants fleeing persecution and conflict. These individuals become essential pillars to our economy, diversity, and culture. The actions of the officials in Texas and Florida were not only fundamentally cruel and uniquely un-American; there remains a likelihood that federal laws were violated.

The Bexar County, Texas Sheriff's office has already opened a criminal investigation into this scheme. We urge your Department to do the same and conduct a thorough investigation and deliver accountability to those that violated the law.


---


Sincerely,


  
Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress


  
Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress

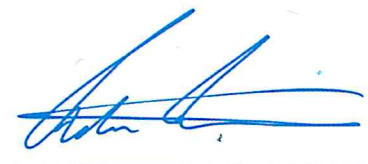
  
Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress


  
Mondaire Jones  
Member of Congress

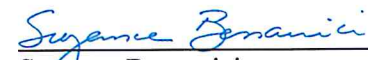
  
Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Member of Congress

  
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

  
Jésús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress

  
Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

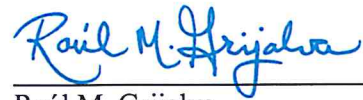
  
Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress

  
Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



---

Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



---

Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



---

Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress



---

Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress



---

Gwen S. Moore  
Member of Congress



---

Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress



---

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



---

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress



---

Shontel M. Brown  
Member of Congress



---

Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



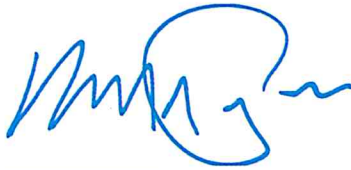
---

Darren Soto  
Member of Congress




---

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



---

Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



---

Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress



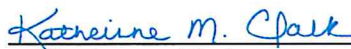
---

Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress



---

Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress



---

Katherine M. Clark  
Member of Congress



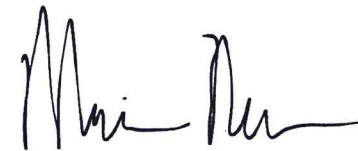
---

Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



---

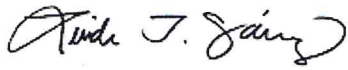
Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



---

Marie Newman  
Member of Congress





---

Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



---

Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress



---

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



---

Dean Phillips  
Member of Congress



---

Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress



---

Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



---

Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress



---

Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress




---


Judy Chu  
Member of Congress





---


Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress

  
Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

  
Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress

  
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress

  
Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress

  
Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress