

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-4305**

May 23, 2023

Dear Colleague,

I am reaching out regarding a matter that requires our immediate attention. Taxpayer-funded non-governmental organizations (NGO) play a disturbing role in the inflow and spread of illegal immigrants throughout the country. Given the rampant and widespread damage caused by the Biden administration's open border policies, it is no longer an issue that only concerns border states but requires vigilance from all of us.

Members of Congress and the American people should be made aware of our federal government's appalling role in granting taxpayer money to international organizations and NGOs for resettling undocumented migrants throughout our nation. NGOs encompass a wide range of non-profit organizations, including activist groups, social justice organizations, and charitable and religious organizations. Not only do many of these NGOs receive millions in grant funding from the federal government, but they also receive substantial subsidies - all at the expense of the American taxpayer. International organizations, including the United Nations, use federal funds to provide migrants with money, transportation, and housing, often before they even reach the southern border. Federal agencies complicit in providing these funds include offices and programs within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Department of State (DoS). Most notorious within DHS is the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP), which receives millions in funding each year to aid non-profits in border states.

These NGOs abuse their tax-exempt status and the trust of the very taxpayers that fund them by encouraging migrants to travel to the southern border illegally with resources from federal funds. An investigation into this operation revealed the following federally funded NGOs aid and abet migrants that illegally cross the border:<sup>1</sup>

- Annunciation House (El Paso)
- Casa Alitas in Tucson
- Catholic Charities
- Holding Institute
- International Rescue Committee
- Jewish Family Services (San Diego)
- La Frontera Shelter
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services
- Mission Border Hope (Del Rio)
- Regional Center for Border Health (Yuma)
- Valverde Border Humanitarian Coalition (Del Rio)

Oversight of charitable and religious organizations should not be ascertained as an attack on the religious groups in question but considered our duty as members of Congress to ensure the

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<sup>1</sup> "Tracking Movement of Illegal Aliens from NGOs to Interior of USA," Memorandum, The Heritage Foundation. Dec. 5, 2022. [http://thf\\_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2022/BorderNGOMemo.pdf](http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2022/BorderNGOMemo.pdf)

Biden administration and the NGO sector are transparent and legally operating under the purview of federal laws and regulations. To put this into perspective, Catholic Charitable Organizations received almost \$600 million in federal funding last year – nearly tripling what they received during the Trump administration.<sup>2</sup> The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) received over \$67 million in migrant-related funding from the federal government in 2021, which was its second-largest source of revenue that year.<sup>3</sup>

When these organizations act as relocation agencies, they circumvent essential immigration laws that protect American citizens and migrants from crime exacerbated by the open border. Among the many risks that illegal immigration poses to the safety and security of Americans and migrants, human and child trafficking is the most concerning. Unaccompanied alien children (UAC) crossing the border are at the highest risk of child trafficking. Republicans in Congress have long raised the alarm over criminal organizations operating trafficking rings at the southern border and abusing HHS’s UAC sponsor program to traffic children into the U.S.

Catholic Charities received over \$97 million in the form of awards for UACs in 2022 but, along with HHS, has failed to verify how the organization ensures migrant children are in safe hands.<sup>4</sup> Human trafficking is a multibillion-dollar industry further enabled by the current administration’s lax border policies. Despite the record number of UAC encounters since Biden took office (322,068), HHS has removed critical policies previously enforced in the vetting process of child sponsors, including immigration status and citizenship verification. Drug Cartels, human traffickers, and smugglers are using these weak policies and regulations to their benefit, and the Biden administration knows it. One former border agent recounted witnessing traffickers “providing” children to unrelated adults at the border, only for the adults to return the children to traffickers after reaching their destination within the U.S.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to their lack of respect for our immigration laws aimed at protecting migrant children and the American people, NGOs have been consistently uncooperative with investigations. Instead, they continue to lobby for more funds for migrant-related issues and oppose any efforts to secure the southern border. It appears these religious mega-charities and other NGOs have a vested interest in mass migration to the United States, which has only been more rewarding due to a weak border and weak administration. This alone calls for a serious investigation into current practices.

The most pressing issue that demands congressional attention is the misuse of taxpayer funds by the federal government and NGOs to facilitate illegal immigration. One of the most notorious examples of this practice dates to 2021 when I visited the border and uncovered non-profits (such as Catholic Charities of San Diego and Jewish Family Services) operating as

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<sup>2</sup> Jim Hoft, Are U.S. Bishops Complicit in the Trafficking and Exploitation of Migrant Children? Published Dec. 17, 2022. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2022/12/u-s-bishops-licit-trafficng-exploitation-migrant-children/>

<sup>3</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Affiliates. Consolidated Financial Statements with Supplemental Schedules, December 31, 2021, and 2020. <https://www.usccb.org/resources/2020%20and%202021%20Statements.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> “Are U.S. Bishops Complicit in the Trafficking and Exploitation of Migrant Children?” *Complicit Clergy*, December 8, 2022.

<https://www.complicitclergy.com/2022/12/08/are-u-s-bishops-licit-in-the-trafficng-of-migrant-children/>

<sup>5</sup> Robinson, Heather. “How Biden’s border policies will increase sex trafficking of children to US,” *New York Post*, April 17, 2021. <https://nypost.com/2021/04/17/how-bidens-border-policy-will-increase-child-sex-trafficng-to-us/>.

resettlement agencies to secretly transport and lodge undocumented migrants. This includes bussing and flying illegal aliens to a destination of their choice and housing them in hotels under the guise of COVID-19 until travel can be determined and scheduled. In addition, these NGOs provide guidance to illegal immigrants on how to bypass TSA security screening, navigate our legal system, and assimilate into their desired community. In my investigation into this operation, my office obtained a packet given to migrants that included flight information, copies of the Notice to Appear from Customs and Border Protection (CBP), a list of pro bono legal service providers, and information and legal assistance in Spanish. These organized and premeditated services are not limited to migrants already in the United States.

Before migrants even reach the southern border, they are provided debit cards loaded with hundreds of dollars that are refilled each month.<sup>6</sup> These gift cards are distributed by the United Nations agency, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which receives federal funding for a variety of services provided from South America to our southern border. One example of an area requiring much-needed oversight is the so-called “Refugee Travel Loan” program from the U.S. Department of State. The IOM provides these loans to refugees that are subsequently collected by non-profits. It has been reported that from 1952 to 2002, the IOM issued \$1,020,803,910 in “transportation” loans and recovered only \$584,219,453. These non-profits are often tasked with collecting these loans and are permitted to keep 25% of the loans they recoup, once again giving these organizations a vested financial interest in the number of refugees brought into the United States. Despite repeated requests to DoS for information on this matter, we have received no response as they continue to avoid reporting on the details of this program.

Because of the need to combat this on all fronts, I recently re-introduced [H.R.552](#), the No Tax Dollars for the United Nation’s Immigration Invasion Act, to require financial transparency from the DoS on taxpayer funds being sent to organizations and prohibit federal contributions to the IOM and other UN mass migration agencies taking advantage of our broken immigration system. The Refugee Travel Loan program is ripe for abuse, and the organizations in charge of collecting these loans have made millions on refugee resettlement. Congress must put a stop to this consistent funnelling of taxpayer dollars to international and non-profit organizations that incentivize mass migration to our country and should work to protect hardworking Americans from being forced to contribute to the border crisis destroying our nation.

For transgressing our border, these charities provide benefits most Americans consider difficult to afford on their own. It is clear these acts directly encourage migrant caravans to cross the border and incentivize them to stay.<sup>7</sup> Our immigration system has been destroyed by the Biden administration, whose leadership continues to fund the very groups that seek to abuse the

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<sup>6</sup> Betsey McCaughey. “Government using charities to hide just how much money is going to illegal immigration,” *New York Post*, July 22, 2022.

<https://nypost.com/2022/07/22/government-hides-money-for-illegal-immigration-in-charities/>

<sup>7</sup> Charles Creitz. “Migrants' refusal to leave New York hotel met with outrage: 'Absolutely insane',” *Fox News*, January 30, 2023.

<https://www.foxnews.com/media/migrants-refusal-leave-new-york-hotel-outrage-absolutely-insane>

system for their own interests. Crime is flooding across the border without the enforcement of a secure vetting process, which is destroying American cities and local resources.<sup>8</sup>

Given the widespread scale of this entire operation, including the distribution of federal funds and clear conflicts of interest within the non-profit sector, members of Congress must perform the oversight and accountability necessary to ensure taxpayer funds are not being misused.

To combat human trafficking and the role NGOs play in illegal border crossings, I am re-introducing [H.R. 6773](#), the Protecting Federal Funds from Human Trafficking and Smuggling Act, to hold complicit NGOs accountable by mandating the disclosure of any and all violations of Federal law and ensure that taxpayers funds are neither directly nor indirectly contributing to human trafficking. In addition, I have demanded information from federal agencies, non-profits and religious organizations, and the United Nations on the scope of their migrant operations within and beyond our southern border. Last week, I was joined by Chairman Jim Jordan in demanding detailed disclosures regarding federal funding for migration-related NGOs from Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas.<sup>9</sup> I thank Chairman Jordan for his support and commitment on this issue and for putting the full force of the Judiciary Committee's resources in securing the integrity of our border.

Instead of working to address this issue together, non-profits have refused to cooperate with Congressional requests for information and other documents. Heads of religious organizations attacked me, my colleagues, and our conservative constituents as those who only "call themselves Christians" and fail to remember that "the gospel compels us" to aid migrants.<sup>10</sup> Catholic Charities USA called my allegations "incredibly disturbing" and "fallacious and factually inaccurate." Even preliminary calls for an investigation were met with fervent responses from non-profits, who called it a "vile threat" and an "intimidation".<sup>11</sup> These responses against a just call for investigation are not just disappointing but further highlight how unwilling the NGO sector is to solve the border crisis. The financial partnership between these non-profits and the federal government is real. The facilitation of mass migration through taxpayer dollars is real. The crime and destruction many migrants bring with them are real, and still, this administration continues to promote open border policies.

By facilitating the mass inflow of illegal immigrants, NGOs risk our national security and expose migrants to exploitation through abusive labor practices, human trafficking, and smuggling. The hallmarks of a sovereign democratic nation call for a clearly defined and well-protected border, aside from a functioning and accountable government. As the representatives of the people, Congress has taken an oath to protect our country and the Constitution. We

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<sup>8</sup> Jeffrey Clark. "Migrants are 'drinking all day,' 'having sex in the stairs' in taxpayer-funded New York hotels: whistleblower," *Fox News*, January 12, 2023.

<https://www.foxnews.com/media/migrants-drinking-all-day-having-sex-in-stairs-taxpayer-funded-new-york-hotels-whistleblower>

<sup>9</sup> Joint letter from Jim Jordan, Chairman, H. Comm. on Judiciary, & Lance Gooden, Member, House of Representatives, to Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary, Dep't of Homeland Security (May 15, 2023) (on file with the Committee).

<sup>10</sup> Alejandra Molina, "Faith-based groups on border unfazed by lawmakers' call to investigate them" quoting Pedro De Velasco, the director of education and advocacy for Kino Border Initiative.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/2022/12/23/faith-based-groups-border-unfazed-by-lawmakers-call-investigate-them/>. Published: Dec. 23, 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Tweet by Dylan Corbett, Executive Director at Border Hope Initiative called Gov. Abbott's request to AG Paxton to investigate the role of NGOs in facilitating illegal border crossings.

<https://twitter.com/DylanCorbett23/status/1603097057144643584>

cannot be quiet, intimidated, or complicit in allowing taxpayer dollars to compromise our people's safety and the sanctity of our borders. I call upon you to join me in ending this open threat to our society by demanding transparency of taxpayer-funded NGOs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lance Gooden". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lance Gooden  
Member of Congress