

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 22, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Deanne Criswell
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Administrator Criswell,

Earlier today, the House of Representatives passed the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2024, which includes \$650 million to replenish the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Shelter and Services Program (SSP). We expect this to pass the Senate and be signed into law by the President shortly. As you know, the last award was allocated in September 2023, and communities in Southern Arizona are set to run out of federal funds on March 31.

We write today to **urge you to immediately allocate funding and ensure border communities on the front lines of the crisis are prioritized.**

Congress designed the SSP program to reimburse local governments and nonprofits that provide essential services to migrants after they're processed by Border Patrol. After funding runs dry at the end of the month, these critical organizations will be forced to close their doors. In Pima, Cochise, and Santa Cruz counties, an average of over 1,000 migrants a day are currently benefitting from SSP services. If funding runs out, federal law enforcement in Arizona will instead begin to release migrants onto the streets, creating what one local official calls 'homelessness on steroids.' This will cause street releases to surge and burden our local communities.

We ask you to ensure border communities are prioritized for funding. Last year, the Southern Arizona Coalition—a group of cities, counties, and NGOs—was only eligible to apply for \$12 million in assistance through the SSP, while New York received nearly nine times that amount. But despite this disproportionate allocation, Arizona has experienced dramatic surges of migrant crossings—in just the first four months of this fiscal year, Border Patrol in the Tucson Sector apprehended more than 250,000 migrants.

Organizations like Tucson's Casa Alitas provide essential services that help asylum-seekers find sponsors—so that migrants arrive in interior cities with a travel plan and a place to stay as they await adjudication of their cases, relieving the burden on their city services.

We urge FEMA and DHS to quickly award an initial round of funding to border communities so they can continue their necessary operations and minimize the impact on local communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Stanton". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop on the "G" and a long, sweeping tail on the "S".

Greg Stanton
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, decorative flourish on the "R" and a long, sweeping tail on the "G".

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress