

JOAQUIN CASTRO
20TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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July 28, 2014

The Honorable Rick Perry
Governor
State of Texas
Post Office Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Governor Perry:

I received your letter dated July 23, 2014, related to your decision to deploy National Guard troops to our southern border. As a member of the House Armed Service Committee and the Representative for San Antonio, Military City USA, I am aware of the value of the National Guard. However, in this humanitarian situation, I disagree with your approach, which appears to be rooted in politics more than sound public policy.

First, because the law enforcement capabilities of the National Guard are severely limited by statute and training, Rio Grande Valley leaders agree that the \$12 million per month of taxpayer money you plan to spend (with no defined metrics to measure success) would be better invested in supporting local police and sheriff departments in those communities. Furthermore, any attempt to give domestic police power to soldiers is ill-advised. The people of South Texas do not want to and should not have to live in a police state.

Second, for too long the border has been used as a boogey man for political gain. Whether you acknowledge it or not, many of the cities along the Texas-Mexico region are among the safest in our nation. By sensationalizing the level of crime and violence in our border communities you damage the economic potential of places like McAllen, Brownsville, Laredo and El Paso.^[1] Moreover, the crime statistics you have used to support the deployment have been thoroughly debunked.^[2] For example, El Paso was ranked as the safest city in the nation with more than 500,000 people.^[3]

^[1] According to the FBI Uniform Crime Reports, these four cities had a combined 8 murders in the first 6 months of 2013. Grand Prairie, for example, had 9 murders in the same amount of time.

^[2] <http://www.politifact.com/texas/statements/2014/jul/23/rick-perry/rick-perry-claim-about-3000-homicides-illegal-immi/>

^[3] http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2013/preliminary-semiannual-uniform-crime-report-january-june-2013/tables/table-4-cuts/table_4_offenses_reported_to_law_enforcement_by_state_oklahoma_through_wisconsin_2013.xls

As the leader of our state, I hope you will set a more positive tone to help resolve this issue. I am disappointed that your first instinct was to head down to the Rio Grande to pose by mounted machine guns as if on a trophy hunt. These actions imply hostility toward young children fleeing violence in their home countries and give license to uglier demonstrations of hostility.

I invite you to meet with the *entire* Texas congressional delegation (which you have not done in several years), at your earliest convenience, to work together to get Congress to pass the supplemental funding necessary to stem the flow of minors making the dangerous trek while treating humanely the tens of thousands of children who have arrived in our great state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "JOAQUIN CASTRO". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress
20th Congressional District of Texas