

Dr. Burgess Weekly Address October 19, 2018

A Step Closer to Securing American Borders

Hello, this is your Congressman Michael Burgess.

As Texans, we have a unique perspective on our nation's immigration crisis. Every month, more than 30,000 people cross America's southern border without the benefit of citizenship, thousands of whom are children. Regardless of where we fall on the political divide, all of us can agree that our immigration system is broken.

The adults and children who leave Central America and travel through the Mexican desert to reach our southern border face immense danger, including potential violence from gangs and other hazards. So far this year, over 30 percent of those who were apprehended at the southern border had migrated from El Salvador, Honduras, or Guatemala. Of this group, 90 percent were unaccompanied alien children or family units.

As Congress seeks to end the immigration crisis, we must ask why families are willing to subject their children to such perilous journeys to reach our border.

Over the summer, I traveled to the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to learn firsthand about the immigration, humanitarian, and energy challenges in this region. While each country is taking an individual approach to end the factors that spur human migration, unfortunately, poverty and corruption contribute significantly to the region's humanitarian deficiencies.

I am encouraged by USAID's current work to end the cycle of poverty and violence in Central America, there is more to be done. Foreign leaders must be held accountable for the wellbeing of their fellow citizens. Aid can be a powerful motivator, particularly when its availability is tied to a nation's efforts to create a safe home for its people.

Last month, I introduced a resolution to redirect the American foreign aid given to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras away from the central governments and targeted to the entities working to address the drivers of illegal immigration from these countries to the United States.

In order to end the status quo, we must change our course of action. America's foreign aid funds are much better spent helping to provide a safe home for children in Central American countries than spent caring for these children in taxpayer-funded shelters once they reach our borders.

I am committed to securing American borders. As Congress returns to Washington, I will continue gathering support for this resolution, and will update you on my progress.

As always, I appreciate your comments and your questions on this issue or any other issue. May God bless you and your family, may God bless our men and women who work in U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and as the song says, God bless you Texas.