

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 13, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

As leaders of the Bipartisan Southwest Caucus, we write to support the administration's efforts to combat cartels and to urge you to work with border legislators from both sides of the aisle to protect and bolster border communities. As the administration begins its efforts to dismantle these criminal organizations, it is also important that the Department of State continue working collaboratively with border communities and Mexico to combat the cartels while protecting essential cross-border trade.

Together, we have the privilege of representing over 200 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border. The cartels' use of violence and intimidation has permeated beyond Mexico, and their influence can be felt throughout border communities like ours. We are especially worried about the cartel's negative impact on American teens, their efforts to recruit American citizens to act as smugglers in communities like Sunland Park, New Mexico, and how their activities have led to an increase in high-speed pursuits in communities like Cochise County, Arizona. In light of President Trump's recent executive order *Designating Cartels and other Organizations as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and Specially Designated Global Terrorists*, we must work together to dismantle these criminal organizations and keep Americans safe.

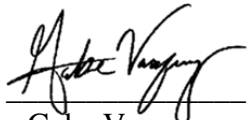
The Department of State is now responsible for crafting the list of cartels and criminal organizations designated as terrorist organizations based on the administration's executive order. We support additional efforts to combat the cartels, prevent terrorists from entering our country, and stop the flow of funding that supports their criminal enterprises. The most effective way to improve the safety of people on both sides of the border will be to work collaboratively with our Mexican neighbors on commonsense approaches that are mutually beneficial and strategically targeted at combating criminal cartels.

As the Department of State continues to work with other agencies to implement this executive order and target cartels, we urge this administration to maintain and bolster our trade relationship with Mexico. Efforts to combat cartels can be successful without hurting the American economy or disrupting legal commerce. We strongly support investments in border infrastructure, screening technology to detect illicit goods, and additional staffing to promote legal trade.

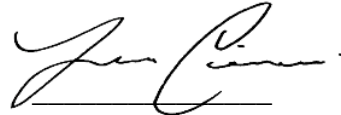
While our districts know firsthand the danger of cartels, they are also examples of how cross-border trade strengthens our country. That is why we request that you work with the Bipartisan Southwest Caucus as you implement this executive order and to find ways we can work together to ensure border communities' physical and economic safety.

We stand ready to support strategic and commonsense efforts to combat cartels, keep our nation safe, and foster a healthy relationship between the U.S. and Mexico. These efforts are integral to safeguarding Americans from the dangers posed by the cartels and ensuring that American businesses, consumers, and families can thrive. We look forward to your reply and the opportunity to work together.

Sincerely,



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



Juan Ciscomani
Member of Congress