

United States Senate

December 7, 2023

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

I write today about the need to prioritize bipartisan border security negotiations. America is the greatest country in the world and Congress needs to step up to the plate to strengthen our borders, while standing up to Russia and China, as part of the national security supplemental. Montana is facing a fentanyl crisis and we need to get the situation at the southern border under control now. We have an opportunity before us to come together.

I strongly believe we must do more to combat the fentanyl crisis and stop the dangerous cartels and criminals responsible for trafficking drugs across the southern border and into Montana. Additional resources are needed to support the men and women at U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Border Patrol, and other federal law enforcement agencies who put their lives on the line every day to keep our country safe. It is critical that we also continue to support local law enforcement agencies, drug taskforces, and those who are on the front lines of the fentanyl crisis. Congress must also continue to invest in technology at and between our ports of entry.

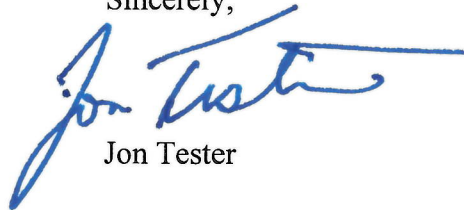
We must also work to fix our broken immigration system and improve control of the southern border. I have spoken with Democratic and Republican colleagues regarding bipartisan solutions that would provide additional funding to secure the southern border and implement policy changes that will improve our immigration system. Let's be clear, the status quo is not working regardless of what side you are on. Unfortunately, some in Washington, D.C. do not want to be a part of the solution. They would rather block progress in order to get more media attention and campaign contributions. I ask that you both work to ignore those voices and instead listen to the far majority of Americans that believe we can solve these issues with a little bit of common sense. Through my ongoing conversations with our colleagues, I know we can find bipartisan solutions to improve our asylum and immigration system while also holding those who break the rules accountable.

For years, it has been clear that the federal government needs to address the issue at the southern border and that there is the necessary bipartisan support to do so everywhere but in Washington, D.C. with both parties sharing in the blame. I have met with local elected leaders, from mayors to sheriffs, who can point to the negative impact the situation at the border is having in their towns in Montana. If you sit down with federal law enforcement officials, from

prosecutors to border patrol agents, they will tell you point blank that the cartels are taking advantage of the current state of play. Congress needs to stop pointing fingers and deliver some real solutions before things get worse.

Securing the southern border is critical to our national security. I will continue to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle that want to find real solutions, not play political games that only benefit their own personal agendas. I am asking both of you to do the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Tester", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jon Tester