

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 01, 2024

The Honorable Michelle Brané
Director
Ombudsman for Immigration Detention
Washington D.C. 20528

Dear Director Brané,

Last week I saw billboards in Arizona funded by your office which one member of Border Patrol has called “a slap in the face to all Americans.”¹ It’s clear that this isn’t an isolated incident – these billboards are now appearing in Texas, drawing massive public scrutiny.² Additionally, the National Border Patrol Union has stated that this campaign will “incentivize illegal immigration and the [continued] abuse of the asylum system.”³ This raises major concerns about DHS’s ability and willingness to uphold federal immigration laws.

The American people deserve transparency on how taxpayer funds are being spent on initiatives that go directly against DHS’s responsibility to enforce immigration laws. This advertising campaign is yet another example of the Biden-Harris administration’s continued failure to enforce the law and its ongoing support for policies that have proven ineffective.

In light of this, please answer the following questions by November 15, 2024:

1. What is the total amount of funds spent by the Office of Immigration Detention Ombudsman on these billboards?
2. Under what authority does OIDO have to create an advertising campaign?
3. Was an outside agency contracted to design and produce the billboards, or were they developed internally by OIDO?
4. How many billboards has OIDO purchased and where have they been placed?
5. How were the specific locations for these billboards determined?
6. What is the duration of the billboard campaign?
7. Does your office plan to expand this campaign further, and if so, why?

¹ Art Del Cueto (@ArtDelCuetoAZ), X.com (Oct. 29, 2024, 10:09PM), <https://x.com/ArtDelCuetoAZ/status/1851446401856913464>

² Bill Melugin, *DHS uses taxpayer money to fund Texas billboards countering immigration enforcement efforts*, FOX NEWS (Oct. 29, 2024), <https://www.foxnews.com/us/dhs-taxpayer-money-fund-texas-billboards-countering-immigration-enforcement-efforts>.

³ Border Patrol Union - NBPC (@BPUnion), X.com (Oct. 29, 2024, 2:13PM), <https://x.com/BPUnion/status/1851326606150901795>.

We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andy Biggs". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andy" written in a slightly larger, more prominent script than the last name "Biggs".

Andy Biggs
Member of Congress