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Granger Releases Border Crisis Working Group Recommendations

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WASHINGTON, DC – Congresswoman Kay Granger (TX-12), Chairwoman of the House Working Group to address the national security and humanitarian crisis at the southern border, issued the following statement announcing the group’s recommendations and solutions.

“This morning, I presented to the House GOP Conference the recommendations of Speaker Boehner’s working group. I am proud of the set of recommendations and solutions that the working group has crafted over the last few weeks. These recommendations reflect the immediate crisis this country faces by providing common-sense, compassionate, but tough solutions.

“Our focus has been to ensure the safety of the children and it has remained a top priority throughout this process. In our personal meetings with the Presidents of Honduras and Guatemala they both stated that they wanted their children back, and we believe that is in the best interest of all the countries involved in this crisis. We look forward to working with these countries as they prepare to receive their children back.

“Anyone who has been to South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley knows that the men and women of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection are doing a remarkable job, but they are stretched thin with the massive surge of children crossing the border, and the quickest way to provide relief is by

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deploying the National Guard. The National Guard would also assist with the humanitarian care and needs of the unaccompanied minors, which will free up the Border Patrol to focus on their primary mission.

“The recommendation to amend the Trafficking Victims Protection and Reauthorization Act of 2008 is something both parties agree on and modifications to the law can be done to expedite the process while ensuring proper protections are in place for the children who need them. We recommend amending the 2008 law, so that all unaccompanied minors are treated the same for the purpose of removal. This would be done by requiring unaccompanied minors who do not wish to be voluntarily returned to their home country to remain in Health and Human Services’ custody while they await an expedited immigration court hearing that must promptly occur after they are screened by child welfare officials.

“I appreciate the hard work the members of the working group have given to this process. Their insight and passion has been a crucial part of developing the recommendations we have set forth today.”

Recommendations and Solutions

- Deploy the National Guard to the Southern border to assist Border Patrol in the humanitarian care and needs of the unaccompanied minors. This will free up the Border Patrol to focus on their primary mission.
- Prohibit the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture (USDA) from denying or restricting U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) activities on federal land under their respective jurisdictions.
- Require a DHS strategy and implementation plan to gain operational control of the Southwest border.
- Establish independent third party commission to develop border security metrics as a means to accurately gauge progress on border

security.

- Establish border security in Central American countries and Mexico.
- Establish repatriation centers in originating countries in order to facilitate the return of family units and unaccompanied minors.
- Deploy aggressive messaging campaigns in originating countries and the U.S. to dispel immigration myths, clarify that individuals will be deported on arrival and advise on the dangers and legal penalties of traveling through Mexico to enter the United States illegally.
- Mandate the detention of all Family Units apprehended at the border with the ultimate goal of processing family units 5-7 days. Congress must continue stringent oversight to ensure this mandate is being met.
- Amend the Trafficking Victims Protection and Reauthorization Act of 2008 so all unaccompanied minors are treated the same as Mexicans for the purpose of removals. This would require unaccompanied children who do not wish to be voluntarily returned to their home country to remain in HHS custody while they await an expedited immigration court hearing that must occur not more than 7 days after they are screened by child welfare officials.
- Deploy additional judge teams and temporary judges to expedite the hearing of asylum and credible fear claims. Congress must address the occurrences of fraud in our asylum system. Baseless claims crowd the immigration court system and delay processing for those with legitimate claims. The standard under current law that allows an alien to show a "credible fear of persecution" needs to be examined and addressed to ensure a fraud-free system moving forward. In addition, criminal aliens and criminal gang members should not receive asylum.
- Establish tough penalties for those engaged in human smuggling,

including the smuggling of unaccompanied minors by strengthening penalties for human smugglers and those who assist them.

- Increase law enforcement operations domestically and in originating countries to disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal organizations and encourage originating countries to pass strict laws against human smuggling.