

KIM SCHRIER, M.D.
Member of Congress
8th District, Washington

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Committee on Agriculture



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April 18, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

I am writing today to share my serious concerns regarding whether we are prepared to manage the expected surge of migrants at our Southern border once the Title 42 Public Health authority restrictions are lifted. Title 42 has guided Department of Homeland Security border policies throughout the pandemic. While I agree, as a physician, that the public health assessment regarding Covid-19 has changed (our hospital capacity is not currently strained and hospitalizations are preventable thanks to the current availability of vaccinations and treatments), I believe strongly that the Biden Administration should not end Title 42 without a comprehensive plan that provides order and security, ensures safety, and prevents a humanitarian crisis on either side of the border.

What we are doing right now at the Southern border is not working. The situation is chaotic, even with Title 42 in place. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) arrests are at record highs and border security resources are stretched thin. Our capacity for housing unaccompanied minors is already strained. There are not enough immigration lawyers and judges to allow each potential immigrant the opportunity to make their case and to fairly evaluate the merits of each claim for asylum. To exacerbate matters, spring and summer months historically see large influxes of migrants, and we need to be prepared right now to humanely manage this expected surge.

Ending Title 42 without adequate resources and significant preparation will likely add to the existing chaos, overwhelm CBP agents, jeopardize safety, and make it difficult to keep the process humane.

As a pediatrician, I am particularly concerned that we have not taken the steps necessary to be prepared to care for increased numbers of unaccompanied children, regardless of Title 42 changes.

I ask that you provide a detailed briefing for Members of Congress and present a public plan before implementation. Specifically, I ask that you please outline the following:

- Number of officials and specific resources that will be deployed to the border, including health care providers, and why you believe those numbers are adequate

- Current capacity and surge capacity of Office of Refugee Resettlement beds and staffing for unaccompanied children
- Total number and percent of unaccompanied children who have spent longer than 72 hours in Customs and Border Patrol facilities in 2022
- Timeline for bringing additional Office of Refugee Resettlement beds and staffing online for unaccompanied children
- Number of immigration cases and credible fear assessments that can be processed per day
- How cases will be prioritized
- How relationships of children to the adults with them will be verified
- Whether additional families in the U.S. have been vetted as potential foster homes
- Any additional resources needed from Congress

Title 42 was a stopgap measure whose justification is no longer medically sound. While we ultimately need comprehensive immigration reform to fix our broken system, I stress in the short-term the Administration should provide a robust plan to ensure order, security, and humane treatment before rescinding Title 42. Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kim Schrier", with a stylized, flowing script.

Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress