

Good morning, Chairman Gosar and Ranking Member. Thank you for inviting me to testify today. My name is Elizabeth Morrissey, a civic leader from the Marine Park/Madison/Homecrest Civic Association, a community in Southern Brooklyn, where Floyd Bennett field is located. I am also a retired New York City Police Department Lieutenant, and have lived in the area for 52 years.

As you are aware, the state and city sought assistance from the federal government, through the Department of the interior, to house thousands of migrants at Floyd Bennet Field.

As local civic leaders and residents, we were told the city had no other options. Floyd Bennett Field is a national park, with significant historic value to our community. If you have not visited, you would also understand that this park provided a lot of resources, including things like aviation club and outdoor spaces for our residents and visitors. That being said, it does not have proper infrastructure for housing people.

When we first heard the rumors of this lease being signed between the National Park Service and the City of New York, as involved citizens, we tried to find an official way to make our voices heard. However, we were repeatedly denied. Our community when we tried to explain the challenges of Floyd Bennett Field, including the fact that it lacks infrastructure and is located on a floodplain, but we were ignored.

Instead, the City chose to prioritize the rights of sheltering migrants at this site in particular. My question is, where do the rights of migrant's end, and our rights, as taxpayers, begin.

If you were to visit Floyd Bennett Field today, you would realize quickly that you are not allowed access to the migrant camp, unless you are a migrant. As a taxpayer and local civic leader, I have no right to enter the shelter. Even local NYPD officers have had difficulty entering the site when called, without first being approved by hired private security. However, migrants can enter our community with little to no documentation, and stay in this camp, which houses, families, primarily, all without the documentation you or I would need to get a basic drivers license.

Is it not humane to house thousands and thousands of migrants in a flood zone? Remember Sandy, we were under water? One storm over the past few months was so bad, the city had to evacuate the migrants and move them to our local high school's gym, James Madison for shelter, which resulted in the school being closed the next day to our kids. Is that right?

Is it right and humane for our community to observe migrant children sometimes accompanied and sometimes not with their parents begging and selling candy and fruit on the Flatbush Ave median between four lanes of traffic on each side. The children are sometimes doing t during school hours. Floyd Bennett field is at the very end of Brooklyn, so kids have to be bused all over the city to attend school, and no one is enforcing kids going to school. Is that right?

The community has to avoid migrants from jumping in front of their cars while driving. Migrants are trying to get hit or say they were hit to demand money, or they will call the police. The scheme has been reported on by several news publications as recently as last week. Is that right?

Basic errands to local business have become torturous between the begging in shopping parking lots and the aggressive panhandling of migrants to carry packages for money. Home Depot and Lowes parking lots are full of migrants causing fear to our elderly and anger to others. Our community members are trying to run simple errands on their days off from work for their families. Is that right?

There are videos of large fights breaking out in Floyd Bennett field, there are domestic calls, Emergency Medical Service calls, putting a greater strain on our first responders. Our city agencies are already low on manpower. The State and City cannot house thousands and thousands of migrants in close quarters, basically like caged animals and think violence will not happen. Is this right?

Again, the worse part are the children who are being used by the migrant parents to follow delivery trucks and steal packages from the truck and the communities stoops and area ways. Ringing door bells asking for money. Is this right?

Our local stores have migrants coming in and grabbing products, causing some to lock their doors. Our local stores are struggling already from the aftermaths of Covid. Kings Plaza has become a place migrants run into and steal merchandise while community members are shopping. Is this right?

The summer is coming, is it humane to leave the migrants on the tar mats in the blazing sun. For those of you who haven't visited Floyd Bennett Field, prior to becoming a national park, was once New York City's first airport. It serves as an incredible piece of history, but at its core, is an aviation base.

The specific area where the migrants camp is set up is on an old historic runway. This is not the ideal place to house thousands of people for months or even longer. Violence happened during the winter months, never mind what will happen when the temperatures rise in the summer months.

If our middle-class community sees how wrong and inhumane this is, I cannot understand how the rest of the world particularly officials from the City and State of New York are blind to this.

I will end with

" Things do not happen. Things are made to happen" John F. Kennedy

Our State is making things happen that are not humane for anybody, if there is loss of life this year from violence or heat, the State and City of New York made it happen.