

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 15, 2023

His Excellency Juan Gabriel Valdés
Ambassador of Chile to the United States
Embassy of Chile
1732 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Ambassador Valdés,

As you know, in 2014, the United States Department of Homeland Security designated Chile for the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) – a program which allows citizens and nationals of participating countries to travel to the United States for 90 days or fewer without obtaining a visa. We write today with strong concerns regarding Chile’s participation.

Qualifying VWP countries must meet specific criteria to be eligible for participation, including the requirement that participants share information regarding nationals of the country who represent a threat to U.S. security and participants refrain from compromising the law enforcement or security interests of the United States. Countries can be terminated from the VWP or placed on probation for failing to meet requirements or otherwise presenting a threat to U.S. security or immigration interests.

In May 2013, Chile and the United States signed an Agreement on Enhancing Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Serious Crime, which outlines a mutual understanding of and an accord to share information to prevent and combat serious crimes, including terrorism, while also protecting individual privacy.¹

We have deep concerns that Chile is neither meeting the information-sharing requirements for participation in the VWP nor complying with the Agreement on Enhancing Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Serious Crime. We request you raise such concerns to the relevant entities within the Government of Chile and strongly urge you to meet the requirements of the VWP for continued participation in the program. If you do not act to comply with such requirements, we are confident that Chile will be suspended or terminated from VWP participation.

Across the country, but especially in Southern California, burglaries and other related crimes committed by individuals entering the United States under the VWP have been dramatically increasing. In our Congressional districts in Orange County, California, constituents have lost thousands of dollars and precious jewelry, watches, and other items with sentimental value.²

¹ U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/17-920-4/>

² The Orange County Register, <https://www.ocregister.com/2023/02/10/tourist-burglars-target-upscale-residential-communities-in-orange-county/>

Businesses have lost as much as \$1.2 million, showcasing the complexity and intricacy of some of these crimes.³

Just in the last year, according to Orange County District Attorney's office, 14 Chilean nationals have been charged with burglaries and other related crimes in Orange County after entering the United States under the VWP. Officials have received inadequate background information and other history on such individuals.

We ask you to provide us with the steps that Chile will take to meet the information-sharing requirements and agreements immediately.

We understand and value the cultural and economic ties our country has with Chile. At the same time, we must ensure the safety and protection of our communities. We appreciate your commitment to maintaining U.S.-Chile relations while also ensuring the security of our respective countries.

Sincerely,



MIKE LEVIN
Member of Congress



J. LUIS CORREA
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security
The Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary, Department of State

³ The Orange County Register, <https://www.ocregister.com/2019/05/12/how-a-laguna-niguel-merchant-hatched-a-plan-to-nab-thieves-who-stole-1-2-million-in-jewels-from-him/>