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CONGRESSWOMAN SHEILA JACKSON LEE OF TEXAS



HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION AND

CITIZENSHIP

HEARING ON OVERSIGHT OF THE TRUMP

ADMINISTRATION'S BORDER POLICIES AND THE

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANTI-IMMIGRATION

RHETORIC AND DOMESTIC TERRORISM

SEPTEMBER 5, 2019 – 10:00 AM

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS – EL PASO

- Thank you, Madam Chairwoman for convening this important hearing on Trump Administration's Border Policies and the Relationship Between Anti-Immigration Rhetoric and Domestic Terrorism.
- Thank you to our witnesses:

- Jo Anne Bernal, County Attorney, County of El Paso;
 - Monica Munoz Martinez, Assistant Professor of American and Ethnic Studies, Brown University;
 - Alejandra Castillo, Executive Director, Border Network for Human Rights;
 - Shaw Drake, Policy Counsel, ACLU of Texas and Border;
 - Linda Rivas, Executive Director, Las Americas; and
 - Fernando Garcia, Executive Director, Border Network for Human Rights.
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- This hearing examining the effects of the Migrant Protection Protocols, the metering of asylum seekers, and the treatment of children, families, and adults in U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) custody. Border Patrol agents told DHS inspectors that some of the individuals had been held in standing-room-only conditions for days or weeks.
 - We've heard about there being limited access to showers and clean clothing, and individuals have been wearing soiled clothing for days or weeks.
 - Individuals standing on toilets in the cells to make room and gain breathing space, thus limiting access to the toilets.
 - Border Patrol data indicating that 826 (31 percent) of the 2,669 children at these facilities had been held longer than the 72

hours generally permitted under the TEDS standards and the Flores Agreement.

- It has always been very concerning that CBP has reported the deaths of six adults in CBP custody and at least seven children, reminding me of **Baby Roger** in my arms.
- A July 2, 2019 DHS Inspector General report reveals that hundreds of children have fallen ill while in custody, including many requiring urgent medical attention.
- I is why applaud and supported Rep. Raul Ruiz's Humanitarian Standards for Individuals in Customs and Border Protection Custody Act (H.R. 3239), which would require CBP to perform an initial health screening on all individuals in CBP custody and ensure that each individual in custody has access to water, sanitation and hygiene, food and nutrition, and safe shelter, among other provisions.
- Although CBP headquarters management has been aware of the situation at PDT for months and detailed staff to assist with custody management, DHS had not identified a process to alleviate issues with overcrowding at PDT.
- Within DHS, providing long-term detention is the responsibility of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), not CBP.

- I also appreciate the Chairman holding this hearing because we will also examine the connection between anti-immigrant rhetoric and domestic terrorism, and the impact of such rhetoric on immigrant communities.
- I support this field hearing because violent extremism in America can no longer be swept under the rug, ignored or irrationally justified.
- We are in a state of national crisis and it is time to act.
- I held a Gun Violence Prevention Summit earlier this week in Houston, Texas, and one of the pressing concerning issues brought up during the Summit was hate crimes.
- According to the FBI, there were 7,175 hate crime incidents in 2017, a 17 percent increase from 2016 and the third year in a row with an increase.
- The number of incidents in 2017 was also the highest yearly total since 2008.
- About 58 percent of the hate crimes in 2017 were motivated by race/ethnicity/ancestry.

- The Southern Poverty Law Center reports a dramatic increase in the number of white nationalist groups in the U.S., from 100 chapters in 2017 to 148 in 2018.
- The Montgomery, Alabama-based Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks domestic extremism, last month reported a 7 percent rise in hate groups in the U.S. in 2018, with 1,020 groups identified.
- White nationalist groups, specifically, surged nearly 50 percent, growing from 100 chapters in 2017 to 148 in 2018.
- Our colleague Rep. Elijah Cummings held a hearing to investigate the social media activity of employees that showed bias and abuse by the people entrusted to keep everyone safe.
- This country is in a state of unrest.
- Our country has reacted to these types of hate-filled challenges to our democracy in the past, and it's up to us to speak truth to power and enact legislative measure that will shape what our future holds.
- Thank you for convening this hearing, Chairman and I look forward to hearing from the witnesses.
- I yield back.