

January 17, 2024

Representative Mark E. Green, MD, Chairman

Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
2446 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member

Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
2466 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Opposition to the Impeachment of Secretary Mayorkas Sign-On Letter

As former senior homeland security officials who served in administrations of both parties, we are compelled to express our deep concern regarding the potential impeachment of Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas.

Impeaching Secretary Mayorkas over long-standing political differences on immigration and border policies would be a grave mistake with far-reaching consequences for our national security and economic prosperity. The U.S. southern border is undeniably facing challenges, but assigning blame solely based on political and partisan grounds will do little to address the complex issues at hand.

It is imperative to consider the historical context; Congress has not impeached a Cabinet Secretary in over a century. Impeachment is a tool to remove officers of the government for treason, bribery, and high crimes and misdemeanors. The Founders never intended it to be used as a tool for mitigating policy disagreements.

Initiating such proceedings not only threatens to undermine national security but sets a perilous precedent that could have dire implications for the stability of our government. Impeaching Secretary Mayorkas would only serve to distract from the pressing need to implement effective policy solutions to rectify our immigration system and fortify America's national security.

The bipartisan struggle to assert control over the southern border has persisted for more than two decades, transcending administrations of both Democratic and Republican orientations. Resorting to a partisan impeachment would be counterproductive, exacerbating the existing polarization around this critical issue without addressing its root causes.

Furthermore, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has grappled with challenges in attracting and confirming senior officials, a situation detrimental to its overall functionality. Impeaching a Senate-confirmed Secretary would only contribute to the chaotic leadership structure, hindering the crucial mission of DHS in ensuring the security and economic success of our nation.

The significance of DHS's mission cannot be overstated, ranging from processing legal travelers at air and seaports to confronting drug-related threats at the border to securing aviation and other critical infrastructure to cybersecurity and many other missions. The performance of DHS directly impacts the lives of everyday Americans, and it is incumbent upon us to navigate the current challenges with a focus on constructive solutions rather than divisive measures.

We urge both Republicans and Democrats to set aside political differences and collaborate to develop genuine and meaningful changes to address the situation at the border. Ongoing negotiations around border security and funding present a potential opportunity for constructive development. We advocate for legislative solutions, including adequate funding, to replace the outdated policies that currently characterize our immigration system. It is crucial that Congress prioritizes solutions that strengthen our borders, treat migrants with dignity, and reduce backlogs that delay decisions on asylum claims, legal immigration petitions, and other cases and applications.

To be clear, the signatories to this letter do not all agree with the wisdom or effectiveness of all the immigration and border policies Secretary Mayorkas oversees, just as we often disagreed with policies his predecessors implemented. However, escalating these policy disagreements into an impeachment proceeding is a dangerous distraction from the actual business of legislating, where Congress' focus should lie.

We urge the House of Representatives not to initiate or conclude impeachment proceedings against Secretary Mayorkas. If the House completes such an impeachment, we urge the Senate to reject the proposal.

Thank you,

Jayson Ahern

Former Commissioner (A), U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Hans Miller

Former Deputy Assistant Administrator for Policy, Transportation Security Administration

Ross Ashley

Former Assistant Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency

Thomas Atkin

Former Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Transborder Security, National Security Council

Douglas Baker

Former Special Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Senior Director for Border and Transportation Security Policy

Alan Bersin

Former Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

William Booher

Former Public Affairs Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency

Ed Cash

Former Director, Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Gus Coldebella

Former Deputy and Acting General Counsel, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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Former Commissioner, U.S. Customs and Border Protection

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Former Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Admiral James M. Loy

Former Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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