



**COMMITTEE *on* APPROPRIATIONS**  
**CHAIRWOMAN BARBARA A. MIKULSKI**

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**CHAIRWOMAN MIKULSKI SAYS MUSCULAR  
DETERRENCE NEEDED TO STEM TIDE OF  
CHILDREN SEEKING REFUGE ON SOUTHWEST  
BORDER**

*Senator says we must meet humanitarian needs of children while going after gangs and organized crime syndicates encouraging families to send children on dangerous journey*

**WASHINGTON, DC**— Today, **U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.)**, Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, chaired a hearing to examine the President’s \$3.7 billion emergency supplemental funding request in response to the growing humanitarian crisis of children seeking refuge crossing our Southwest border.

*Senator Mikulski’s statement, as prepared for delivery, follows:*

“The purpose of today’s hearing is to examine the President’s emergency request for funding of \$3.7 billion to address the crisis of children from Central American crossing our Southwestern border by the thousands.

“Their situation is extremely dire. The United States has both a security and moral obligation to help resolve this emergency.

“These children are seeking refuge from organized crime, gangs and human traffickers who are exploiting and profiting from human misery and desperation in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

“The President’s emergency request totals \$3.7 billion for caring for the humanitarian needs of the children, detention and enforcement at the border, identifying their legal status under our rule of law, robust deterrence in children’s home countries by breaking down and prosecuting organized crime syndicates of smugglers and traffickers, conducting a massive education campaign warning Central America families about the dangers and false hopes of the journey, and guiding Central American countries’ institutions for repatriation and reintegration of deportees.

“Our witnesses today are Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Burwell, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson, Ambassador Thomas Shannon of the State Department and Juan Osuna, Director, with the Executive Office of Immigration Review in the Department of Justice.

“My Appropriations Subcommittee chairs and I realized early on that the President’s fiscal year 2015 budget request was inadequate to address this emergency.

“We had to make some hard choices in the bills we’ve already marked up to increase funding for the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services, the State Department, and the Department of Justice. Because though the Murray-Ryan budget deal gave us tremendous certainty, the actual budget is still Spartan.

“Our job as Appropriators is making sure resources are at the border now for food and shelter for the children seeking refuge, for border agents who are overworked and detention facilities with too few beds, for transportation to shelters and to home countries, for immigration judges and legal services so they can bring final resolution to cases, and for muscular deterrence to go after criminals and gangs who mislead and misinform Central American families.

“And while I support comprehensive immigration reform, that’s not the topic of today’s hearing. Today is about meeting emergency funding needs. The best way to make this surge of children temporary is to pass an emergency supplemental and undertake a substantial deterrent strategy so we can attack the smugglers and traffickers and inform families of the risks of coming here.

“Already this year, 57,000 unaccompanied children have arrived, and we expect 90,000 by the end of the year. In addition, more than 39,000 parents with children have arrived. I saw the crisis last week when I toured the border with our witnesses. Young children, ages five, seven and nine years old, are given one instruction: cross the border and turn yourselves in.

“Border agents find them dehydrated, malnourished, scared and abused. They come here relying on smugglers’ false promises. Smugglers are part of dangerous gangs and cartels that see everything as a commodity – women, children and drugs. Children leave home based on lies to endure the dangerous journey and the threat of being trafficked into vile situations.

“President Obama has designated these funds as an emergency. There are very specific criteria in the law for this designation. The Budget Control Act of 2011 defines ‘emergency’ funding as spending for ‘the prevention or mitigation of, or response to, loss of life or property, or a threat to national security that is sudden, urgent, unforeseen and temporary.’

“I agree with President Obama that this funding meets those criteria. The situation along our border is dire.

“Our first goal must be to protect the safety and health of children and to make sure we provide the resources to do that.

“Our second goal must be a muscular deterrence strategy that discourages families from sending their children with smugglers out for profit. But a great nation can’t let these children suffer once they turn themselves in at our border.

“Children as young as five years old need food and housing while the Justice Department ascertains the legal status of children seeking refuge under the rule of law.

“I look forward to hearing from the representatives of the Administration about their plans to address this emergency. We also received testimony from faith-based and social service organizations that we will make a part of the official record. We will leave the official record open for 15 days so we can hear from many voices on this issue.

“I note for the Committee that the Administration has also requested supplemental funds to prevent and fight wildfires, totaling \$615 million. I have asked Senators Reed and Murkowski to closely examine this request, as chair and ranking member of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee.”

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