

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2306

The Honorable Mark Amodei
Chairman
Homeland Security Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Henry Cuellar
Ranking Member
Homeland Security Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

May 3, 2024

I am writing to urge the Homeland Security Subcommittee to provide no funding for the Shelter and Services Program (SSP) at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. Given the crisis at the southern border and the lack of answers from the Biden Administration on how federal funds are used by nonfederal entities to transport illegal immigrants – possibly including known terrorists – across the United States, the SSP program should receive no funds until abuse in the program has ended.

The Biden Administration has exacerbated the crisis at the southern border to unprecedented levels. Under the Biden Administration, there have been over 7.6 million encounters at the U.S.-Mexico border.¹ This influx has caused communities along the southern border to be overwhelmed with additional individuals that their infrastructure, hospitals, and other public resources cannot support. President Biden signed the FY23 Bipartisan Omnibus Appropriations, which created the SSP to manage the influx of migrants and overcrowding in CBP facilities.²

The SSP is distributed through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which awards grants to nonfederal entities to provide humanitarian aid to migrants after they are released from DHS custody. Nonfederal entities include local governments, state governments, nonprofits, and Indian tribes. These humanitarian services range drastically, but can include transportation to a different city, shelter, food, translation services, and medical care.³ In FY24, SSP received \$640.9 million in funding.⁴

However, federal reports conclude NGOs are not spending government funds in ways that are congruent with federal requirements. In a report titled, *FEMA Should Increase Oversight to Prevent*, which evaluated the use and misuse of funding within the *American Rescue Plan Act*,

¹ Green, Mark. (2024, March). March '24 Startling Stats. U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security. <https://homeland.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/March-24-Startling-Stats.pdf>.

² Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2023, March 1). Frequently Asked Questions about the Emergency Food and Shelter Program. <https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/frequently-asked-questions-about-shelter-and-services-grant-program>.

³ Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2023, August 21). Fiscal Year 2023 Shelter and Services Program Fact Sheet. <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/shelter-services-program/fy-23-fact-sheet>.

⁴ Federal Emergency Management Agency. FY24 Awards from the Shelter and Services Program. <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/shelter-services-program/fy24-awards>

the Office of the Inspector General at DHS found that FEMA did not provide sufficient oversight over the recipients of the funds and found that recipients of the humanitarian aid did not use the funds consistent with guidance and many did not have proper documentation.⁵ Clearly, there is cause for concern with FEMA's management of taxpayer resources.

The SSP funds distributed to nonfederal entities have been an important issue for me. I was alarmed to learn that an Al-Shabaab terrorist was found residing in Minnesota after being crossing the southern border illegally.⁶ I have personally written to Secretary Mayorkas to inquire if federal funds were utilized in providing transport to an Al-Shabaab terrorist to Minnesota. I have yet to hear back from Secretary Mayorkas about this much needed transparency.

Given that nonfederal entities may not be using funds distributed through SSP appropriately, they should not receive funding until SSP's requirements align with government intent. I respectfully request that the Subcommittee on Homeland Security provide no funds for the SSP.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and please know that my office is willing to assist your efforts in whatever way possible.

Sincerely,



Tom Emmer
Member of Congress

⁵ Cuffari, Joseph. (2023, March 28). FEMA Should Increase Oversight to Prevent Misuse of Humanitarian Relief Funds. Office of Inspector General at the Department of Homeland Security. <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2023-03/OIG-23-20-Mar23.pdf>.

⁶ Taer, J. (2024, January 29). Exclusive: Terrorist caught illegally crossing the border was allowed to roam free for nearly a year, Memo says. The Daily Caller. <https://dailycaller.com/2024/01/29/exclusive-terrorist-caught-illegally-crossing-border-allowed-roam-free-nearly-year-memo-says/>.