



February 5, 2016

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

Dear Governor Abbott:

The Texas Conservative Coalition (TCC) supports your joint request with Congressman Henry Cuellar to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), asking for clear justifications for the agency's decision to halve aerial border security resources. We are deeply concerned by this decision and believe that it creates higher risk and lower security on the border for the National Guard, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) officers, local law enforcement, and all Texans.

Aerial observation resources have proven to be an instrumental tool at home and abroad; just as they have provided critical intelligence for soldiers overseas, they have also been shown to be useful technology for protecting the Texas border. At the state level, the Texas Department of Public Safety has one high altitude observation plane deployed to the border region and we recently voted to purchase an additional plane for this purpose. Due to the finite amount of border security personnel, aerial resources are paramount in helping decide where to deploy personnel. As you and Congressman Cuellar state in your letter to the DHS Secretary, Jeh Johnson, "[g]iven the recent surge of migrants from Central America and Cuba along the Southern Border, we believe DHS should be requesting more surveillance and security resources, not fewer[.]" It is imperative that we maintain a state of hyper-vigilance, and limiting our resources impairs our ability to do so.

In order to protect the border to the best of our abilities, we need a constant and accurate stream of intelligence from aerial resources. This information is received and analyzed by border security personnel who are able to incorporate it into concrete strategy. Without it, Operation Phalanx (the aerial- based border security support program), like its Greek namesake, a military formation that relied on every soldier's shield being interlocked in order to repel an enemy advance, will have a crucial gap that may leave the Texas border vulnerable.

The decision by DHS has placed a large financial and logistical burden upon Texas without any advance notice. TCC strongly supports you in holding the federal government accountable by requesting an explanation from DHS.

Sincerely,



Senator Brian Birdwell



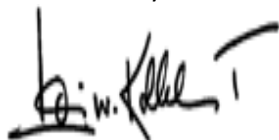
Senator Donna Campbell



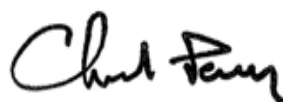
Senator Kelly Hancock



Senator Don Huffines



Senator Lois Kolkhorst



Senator Charles Perry



Senator Charles Schwertner



Senator Larry Taylor



Senator Van Taylor



Representative Charles "Doc" Anderson



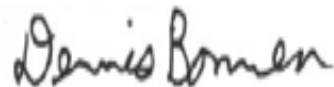
Representative Rodney Anderson



Representative Cecil Bell, Jr.



Representative Trent Ashby



Representative Dennis Bonnen



Representative Greg Bonnen



Representative Cindy Burkett



Representative DeWayne Burns



Representative Angie Chen Button



Representative Travis Clardy



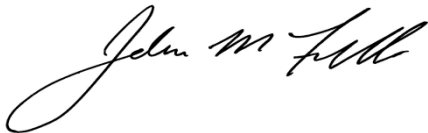
Representative Byron Cook



Representative John Cyrier



Representative Wayne Faircloth



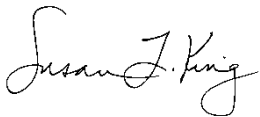
Representative John Frullo



Representative Bryan Hughes



Representative Mark Keough



Representative Susan King



Representative Matt Krause



Representative Jodie Laubenberg



Representative Myra Crownover



Representative Gary Elkins



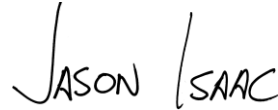
Representative Dan Flynn



Representative Craig Goldman



Representative Patricia Harless



Representative Jason Isaac



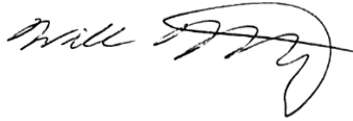
Representative Phil King



Representative Stephanie Klick



Representative Brooks Landgraf



Representative Will Metcalf



Representative Jeff Leach



Representative Rick Miller



Representative Doug Miller



Representative Chris Paddie



Representative Andrew Murr



Representative Dennis Paul



Representative Tan Parker



Representative Debbie Riddle



Representative Larry Phillips



Representative Matt Shaheen



Representative Matt Rinaldi



Representative Ron Simmons



Representative Kenneth Sheets



Representative David Spitzer



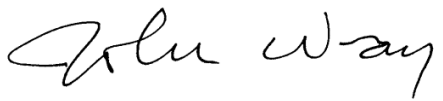
Representative David Simpson



Representative Gary VanDeaver



Representative Drew Springer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Wray". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Representative John Wray

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Workman". The signature is more stylized and dense than the one above.

Representative Paul Workman