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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

July 7, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

I write in advance of Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's visit to Washington. Although the agenda for this visit appears largely ceremonial to mark the start of our new trilateral trade agreement, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), I encourage you to use this visit to seriously enhance bilateral economic and security cooperation and address the shared challenges that confront our two nations. From addressing the mishandled federal responses to the COVID-19 pandemic to the severe economic consequences that followed, it is essential that this week's meeting advance solutions that matter to the citizens of both countries.

As President López Obrador's visit appears to have been intentionally scheduled for a time when many senior Congressional Democrats are not in Washington—rather than July 1, when the USMCA entered into force—it is important to recognize how Congressional Democrats contributed to the bipartisan effort to strengthen our new trade agreement. Because of Congressional Democratic efforts, the USMCA includes stronger labor standards, enforcement mechanisms, and inspection schedules, as well increased environmental standards. These contributions by Congressional Democrats directly delivered positive results for American workers and families.

Beyond the new trade deal, it is equally important that you use this meeting to address the interconnected security challenges our two countries face. During the last 19 months, violence and murder rates in Mexico have skyrocketed to unprecedented levels. Mexican criminal organizations have grown stronger, continuing to traffic narcotics—including heroin and fentanyl—into the United States and wielding violence with arms trafficked illegally from U.S. border states. These challenges cannot be addressed with wasteful, ineffective border walls or by coercing Mexico to use its National Guard to address irregular migration. These complex problems require serious leadership, not aspirational promises from President López Obrador or your administration's repeated efforts to cut the U.S. foreign assistance needed for bilateral cooperation with Mexico.

I also encourage you to utilize this week's meeting to chart a new course on immigration and collaboration on irregular migration. The U.S. Supreme Court has rightfully rejected your administration's effort to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and strip Dreamers—including more than 500,000 individuals from Mexico—of their legal

protections in the United States. I encourage you to announce at this meeting that you will not make another attempt to repeal DACA and direct DHS to reopen DACA to eligible individuals. And, it is time to recognize that your administration's "asylum ban" and initiatives such as the Migration Protection Protocols have failed to address irregular migration from Central America, and instead have created a refugee crisis in Mexican cities on our border. These developments underscore the need for humane immigration policies and a joint response to address the violence and poverty forcing vulnerable people to flee Central America.

In closing, the relationship between the United States and Mexico is too important to allow the meeting with President López Obrador to simply serve as a distraction from your administrations' mismanaged responses to COVID-19. Mexico is the United States' largest trade partner and many of the challenges we face—from the pandemic to transnational organized crime—extend across our border. It is imperative that you use this opportunity to expand economic and security collaboration between our governments and strengthen the historic bonds between our societies.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert Menendez
Ranking Member