

Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson
**“Unprecedented Migration at the U.S. Southern Border: Bipartisan Policy
Recommendations from the Homeland Security Advisory Council.”**

Wednesday, July 17, 2019

The migration crisis at our southern border continues. In May, U.S. Border Patrol apprehended 132,880 aliens as they illegally entered the United States. In June, the apprehension numbers dropped to 94,897, but even at that level, apprehensions are higher than they've been in over a decade. According to DHS, we are still on pace to apprehend more than one million illegal migrants at our southern border this fiscal year.

This is the fourth hearing that our committee has held this Congress regarding the crisis. The first three hearings focused on the magnitude of the crisis, perspectives from the frontlines, and the exploitation of migrants by human traffickers. Today we will turn our discussion toward solutions.

In April, a subcommittee of the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) issued a bipartisan report about this crisis that included recommendations for how we could fix many of the problems they identified. The bipartisan subcommittee consists of 10 members from different ends of the political spectrum and various, relevant walks of life. It includes doctors, lawyers, and immigration policy experts. These 10 distinguished professionals defined the problem, and then sat down and hammered out a set of policy recommendations that they believe will fix this problem. They visited CBP facilities, studied aspects of care for children and adults in short-term custody, identified best practices for law enforcement interactions with migrants, and provided recommendations for changes to the agency's policies and procedures. They grappled with complicated issues, such as how U.S. asylum standards combined with the *Flores* settlement agreement and a surge of migrants has created open borders for any migrant who travels here with a child. They identified resource limitations and proposed solutions for making the process more efficient. They also recommended cooperation with international partners.

Today we will discuss the bipartisan recommendations found in their April 16, 2019 Emergency Interim Report. The purpose of holding this hearing in a roundtable format is to promote a more in-depth and open discussion of the crisis and bipartisan solutions to mitigate it. Decades of failed laws and lack of action by Congress has led to this current crisis. The men and women of DHS continue to do their best, but they are not provided the resources or law changes they need. Although we will not solve the crisis overnight, we must work together to reduce the flow of illegal migrants and improve the situation. I know that the recommendations in the HSAC report did not include all of the changes that each member would like to have seen. But that is the essence of working together. The Council has provided an example and lesson in bipartisan accommodation that Congress would do well to emulate.