

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 30, 2018

The Honorable Mike Pence
Vice President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President,

We write in advance of your travel to Mexico City to attend the inauguration of Mexico's President-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

The United States and Mexico share a bond deeper than just our close geography. Our countries are bound by our shared culture, history, and decades of close cooperation on economic and security issues. However, this relationship and U.S. public standing in Mexico have suffered in the last two years due to the tremendous damage President Trump has caused to U.S.-Mexico relations.

Under these circumstances, we encourage you to use your visit to reaffirm U.S. commitment to building a bilateral partnership that advances the prosperity and well-being of the citizens of both nations.

With over \$1.5 billion in goods crossing the U.S.-Mexico border each day, the economic opportunity of both countries has never been more closely intertwined. In this context, we urge the Trump Administration to strengthen this relationship and strongly support reforms of Mexico's labor laws in accordance with their constitutional amendments process. Doing so will improve opportunities for workers on both sides of the border and make North America a more competitive and equitable region in which to do business.

As you know, Congress recently passed comprehensive legislation to strengthen our domestic response to the U.S. opioid epidemic. It is also imperative that the Trump Administration works to address the transnational aspect of this crisis by pursuing greater cooperation with President-elect López Obrador to curb the flow of illicit heroin and fentanyl from Mexico to the United States. The vicious cycle of narcotics trafficking, arms trafficking, and illicit financial networks spans the U.S.-Mexico border and demands more effective cooperation between both countries.

We are encouraged by President-elect López Obrador's pledge to address the proliferation of public graft in Mexico and the impunity surrounding several high profile human rights cases, including the disappearance of 43 students in the Mexican state of Guerrero in 2014. We believe that U.S. investigative and financial support for these initiatives can be

beneficial as is our support for the establishment of an independent attorney general's office and Mexico's vibrant civil society.

Additionally, given current events at the U.S.-Mexico border, it is obvious that our two countries must forge a collaborative response to the challenges posed by regional migration in a manner that meets domestic and international legal standards and ensures appropriate protections for vulnerable populations. We welcome President-elect López Obrador's commitment to collaborate with the United States to address the factors driving Central American migration.

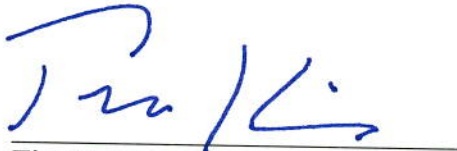
Regrettably, President Trump's militarization of our southern border and rampant politicization of these issues has made these joint efforts more difficult. Moreover, the President's efforts to cut the U.S. foreign assistance budgets to address security, drug trafficking, weak rule of law, and economic and social development issues in Central America undermine our response to these challenges.

On the eve of President-elect López Obrador's inauguration, as Mexico prepares to embark on a new era, your visit provides a unique opportunity to reframe bilateral relations in a manner that upholds our two nations' shared democratic values and common commitment to prosperity and security. Thank you for your attention to these important matters.

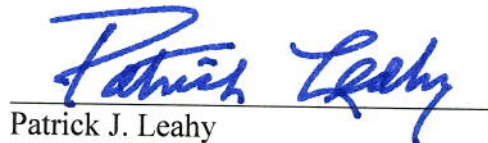
Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator