

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0926

1404 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2778

12851 SW 42ND STREET
SUITE 131
MIAMI, FL 33175
(305) 222-0160

1100 SIMONTON STREET
SUITE 1-213
KEY WEST, FL 33040
(305) 292-4485

May 21, 2018

The Honorable Kevin K. McAleenan
Commissioner, Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Commissioner McAleenan:

I am troubled by recent press accounts of an incident that took place in Havre, Montana, about 35 miles south of the U.S.-Canadian border. According to reports, two American citizens were held and questioned by a Customs and Border Protection officer for speaking Spanish.

Communities across the country have a long history of incorporating foreign language speakers into our society. In South Florida, it's not uncommon to hear people in public speaking Spanish, Portuguese, Creole, and many other languages. I myself speak in Spanish to my family regularly – especially to my two young daughters – and to some constituents. Young people who are attempting to learn a second language as part of their education often times practice outside of the classroom. The language someone speaks, regardless of geographic area, is not enough to suspect that an immigration violation has occurred.

It is my understanding that in this case, these American citizens were in line at a gas station, buying groceries, and conversing with each other in Spanish when the officer asked them for their identification. No crime was being committed by the two individuals, yet the officer questioned them for approximately 40 minutes, according to the women.

What exactly are the agency's policies regarding probable cause? How are the actions of agents reviewed, evaluated, recorded, and held accountable for abusing their authority, for both minor and major violations?

Furthermore, I ask that CBP review its current policies and training procedures to ensure the civil liberties of law-abiding American citizens are respected and upheld.

Thank you for your kind attention and look forward to your prompt response.

Cordially,



Carlos Curbelo