

DEBBIE DINGELL
12TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

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April 8, 2020

Mr. Chad F. Wolf
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street S.W., Mail Stop 0501
Washington, D.C. 20528-0150

Mr. Mark A. Morgan
Acting Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20229

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf and Acting Commissioner Morgan:

This letter is in regards to reports our offices have received regarding working conditions for CBP officers at the US-Canada border in Detroit, Michigan. It is essential that we are doing everything we can to keep our brave CBP officers safe at the workplace during the COVID-19 epidemic.

We have received reports that CBP has ended the weather and safety leave scheduling program, which provides leave and flexible scheduling to CBP officers in an emergency situation such as the COVID-19 epidemic and is only available to those who do not have the option to telework. When this leave policy was in place over the past month, fewer officers were coming into work each day which made it easier for CBP officers to observe safe social distancing policies that are essential to stopping the spread of COVID-19.

Since this flexible scheduling policy has been rescinded and most CBP officers have been called back to work every day, we have received reports that there are over 30 officers congregating in a meeting room because they have nowhere else to go. This is especially concerning since the US-Canadian border is closed to non-essential travel and the amount of traffic crossing the border everyday has decreased dramatically, thereby lowering the amount of work the CBP officers have to do on a daily basis.

Not only does rescinding this flexible scheduling program make it harder to practice social distancing at the workplace, it is also increasing the chances that an outbreak could occur among CBP officers in Detroit. As you are aware, COVID-19 can be transmitted between asymptomatic patients, which makes it critical that social distancing guidelines be strictly followed and that people are not within six feet of one another at the workplace. If more CBP officers contract COVID-19 they will have to stay home and may be hospitalized, which will ultimately harm our readiness and jeopardize our national security.

Given these factors, we urge you to rescind your decision to revoke this flexible scheduling program and immediately resume this policy so that safe social distancing can continue to be practiced at the border in Detroit and across the country. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Dingell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress