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February 22, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. President,

In early November, I wrote my second letter to you regarding the increasing violence on our Southwestern Border. On December 22, 2010 I received a letter from the Department of Homeland Security assuring me that it was doing everything in its power to quell the violence. Words cannot express my displeasure upon receiving a form letter, from a mid-level bureaucrat in the Department of Homeland Security, when it was originally addressed to you. Given the weight of the issue discussed in my letter, it was my sincerest hope that my communication to you would have solicited greater personal consideration.

Even more disturbing, Mr. President is the way that your empty gesture now echoes hollowly within the context of the recent acts of violence committed against Americans in Mexico. In the past few weeks, we have seen American Missionary Nancy Shuman Davis, a former member of my constituency, shot in the head and killed in close proximity to our border; two American teenagers brutally murdered in Ciudad Juarez; and perhaps most shockingly, two Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Agents victimized in what can only be described as a military style assault, one of whom Agent Jaime Zapata, ultimately succumbed to his injuries.

These events have left me at a loss for words. That these events have been allowed to happen without a clear and definitive response from the United States Government is an outrage. I, along with many of my colleagues, have repeatedly pleaded with you to take the encroaching threat on our southern border seriously and the only

response I have seen your office muster, to date, is a paltry form letter. I do not think that I have to tell you that I find this circumstance to be categorically unacceptable. Quite frankly, the American people deserve more, Mr. President.

This is no longer a matter of political debate, Mr. President, but rather the systemic reality of a harsh and unforgiving environment your inaction has helped create. It has been cultivated by thugs who have been allowed to act with impunity, unchecked by repercussions for their actions. We must now accept that our antagonists in Mexico are targeting American Citizens. I again implore you to take this matter seriously, engage this burgeoning threat, and secure a safe environment for Americans who live and work on our Southwestern border and in Mexico before it's too late. You may not think that we are at war, but the Americans living on our Southern border know we are. Action is necessary Mr. President. Do what is necessary now.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Burton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dan Burton
Member of Congress