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## United States Senate

COMMITTEES  
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AND FORESTRY  
SMALL BUSINESS  
AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

December 4, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Biden,

Your border policies are failing, and it is abundantly clear change is needed. Your failed policies are directly harming military families.

According to reports, hotels have been cancelling reservations of those hoping to attend this year's Army-Navy Game at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts because "[local hotels] were leasing ... to the State of Massachusetts for refugees."<sup>1</sup> One travel agent alone claims "at least 70 of his reservations were impacted."<sup>2</sup> As you may know, this is an event for which "tens of thousands of veterans will pour into the greater Boston area" hoping to celebrate America's Game.<sup>3</sup>

It's clear: these cancellations are due to your administration's decision to ship illegal immigrants across the country to sanctuary cities at taxpayers' expense.<sup>4</sup> As you may know from the letter Governor Maura Healey (D-MA) sent Secretary Mayorkas, the demand for housing for illegal immigrants in Massachusetts has quadrupled from 25 families per day in March 2022 to over 100 families per day by July of this year.<sup>5</sup> According to reports, the State of Massachusetts "spends about \$45 million a month to house both homeless residents and migrants ... in existing shelters, as well as various hotels and motels across the state."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Brandon Truit, *Army-Navy game hotel reservations canceled due to influx of migrants*, CBSNEWS (Oct. 5, 2023), <https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/army-navy-hotel-rooms-migrants-massachusetts-foxboro/>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Gov. Maura Healey to Sec. Alejandro Mayorkas (Aug. 8, 2023) (on file with staff).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Kristina Rex, *Massachusetts emergency migrant shelters nearly full, families soon to be put on waitlist*, CBSNEWS (Oct. 31, 2023) <https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/migrants-waitlist-massachusetts-shelter-system-approaches-capacity/>.

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We are seeing your severe mismanagement take a tangible toll, not only for the local economies of all 50 states your administration has turned into border states, but also for those seeking to travel to these areas – like many Army and Navy veterans this weekend.

The Army-Navy Game is not a trivial thing. It fosters *esprit de corps* between American military families, potential future servicemembers, and the Armed Forces. This is an imperative when the military is faced with the worst recruiting crisis in decades, in part driven by your politicization of it.<sup>7</sup> “Of the five Defense Department service branches, only two met their active-duty enlisted recruiting goals for fiscal [year] 2023 -- the Marine Corps and the Space Force, by far the smallest services with the lightest recruiting burden.”<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, “68% of servicemembers... have witnessed either moderate or significant politicization in the military, with 65% expressing concern over it.”<sup>9</sup>

What’s more, military families attending the game often use it to interest their children in a career in the Armed Services. This is particularly valuable, as “[t]he military considers parents one of the biggest influencers for service.”<sup>10</sup> Now, due to your untenable border crisis which has allowed nearly eight million illegal immigrants entry into the country, veterans and future servicemembers and their families will be unable to attend this year.

Not only is this game a recruitment mechanism, those of us who have served know it is truly an opportunity to showcase America’s finest—the incredible young servicemembers who have stepped forward to serve their country—the Corps of Cadets and Brigade of Midshipmen. The Army-Navy Game gives attendees—many of whom are veterans themselves—the opportunity to honor the next generation of our fighting men and women, as well as our nation.

And despite the damage your policies have inflicted, demand for the game remains high. The president of the Kraft Group, which owns Gillette Stadium, says “ticket demand is greater than any AFC Championship game that we’ve hosted, greater than Taylor Swift.”<sup>11</sup>

It is flatly unacceptable for our veterans and military families to be displaced because of your administration’s failure to secure our southern border. Military families who have scrimped and saved to be able to afford a trip to the Army-Navy game should not have to compete with illegal immigrants for hotel room space.

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<sup>7</sup> Courtney Kube & Molly Boigon, *Every Branch of the military is struggling to make its 2022 recruiting goals, officials say*, NBCNEWS (June 27, 2022), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/military/every-branch-us-military-struggling-meet-2022-recruiting-goals-officia-rcna35078>.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Novelty et al., *Big Bonuses, Relaxed Policies, New Slogan: None of it Saved the Military from a Recruiting Crisis in 2023*, MILITARY.COM (Aug. 25, 2023), <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/10/13/big-bonuses-relaxed-policies-new-slogan-none-of-it-saved-military-recruiting-crisis-2023.html#:~:text=Of%20the%20five%20Defense%20Department,Force%20and%20Navy%2C%20fell%20short>.

<sup>9</sup> Patty-Jane Geller, *Within Ranks, Trust in Our Military Declines Amid Politicization of National Defense*, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION (Feb. 8, 2023), <https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/within-ranks-trust-our-military-declines-amid-politicization-national-defense>.

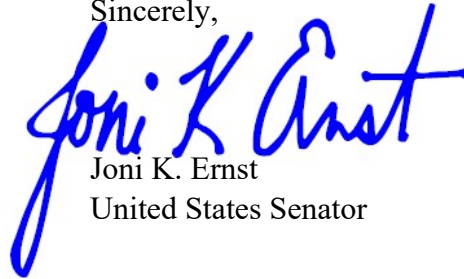
<sup>10</sup> Courtney Kube & Molly Boigon, *Every Branch of the military is struggling to make its 2022 recruiting goals, officials say*, NBCNEWS (June 27, 2022), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/military/every-branch-us-military-struggling-meet-2022-recruiting-goals-officia-rcna35078>.

<sup>11</sup> Nick Giovanni, *Army-Navy game ticket demand at Gillette Stadium greater than Taylor Swift, Jonathan Kraft says*, CBSNEWS (Nov. 30, 2023), <https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/army-navy-game-ticket-demand-gillette-stadium/>.

Simply put, your administration's mismanagement at the border is causing American cities to be overrun and vital resources to be stretched beyond capacity. These problems will continue to persist until you finally take your obligation to secure our border seriously.

Thank you for your time and attention to this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joni K. Ernst". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J".

Joni K. Ernst

United States Senator