

United States Senate

September 17, 2021

Administrator Steve Dickson
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Dickson,

I write with deep concerns about a recent Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) decision to restrict the airspace over Del Rio, Texas.

As you know, in recent days thousands of illegal aliens have poured over the U.S.-Mexico border into Del Rio, Texas. The U.S. Customs and Border Patrol estimates that over 9,000 aliens, including many Haitians, are currently sheltering under the Del Rio International Bridge. Authorities expect thousands more to illegally cross the border in the coming days.

Last night, the FAA implemented a two-week Temporary Flight Restriction over the migrant camp. This decision has forced media organizations covering the ongoing border crisis to ground their aircraft. I'm disturbed by the possibility that the FAA closed the airspace over the border for political reasons, perhaps to blackout unfavorable media coverage of the humanitarian disaster. The American people deserve to have access to information about this crisis.

I ask that you promptly answer the following questions:

1. Why did the FAA implement a Temporary Flight Restriction over this area of Texas?
2. Who at the FAA made the decision to restrict this airspace?
3. In making this decision, did FAA leadership have any direct contact with the White House? If so, did White House officials order or pressure the FAA to make this decision?

I appreciate your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Tom Cotton
United States Senator