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Congress of the United States

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COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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April 4, 2017

The Honorable John F. Kelly
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Kelly:

I write to request information regarding the individuals allegedly responsible for the murder of my constituent, a 17-year-old boy from Lynchburg, Virginia. According to press reports, Jose Coreas-Ventura, Lisandro Posado-Vasquez, and Victor Rodas have each been charged with second degree murder for their alleged roles in this vicious crime.¹ Even more troubling is that Coreas-Ventura has an outstanding warrant in Montgomery County, Maryland and is charged with first degree murder there stemming from a June 2016 murder.²

Press reports further indicate that the Department of Homeland Security is working with the Bedford County Sheriff's Office as this investigation continues to unfold. I remain proud of the hard work done by Sheriff Mike Brown and the entire law enforcement community in Bedford County and Lynchburg and their commitment to working with federal partners including ICE.

Please provide case history information regarding Jose Coreas-Ventura, Lisandro Posado-Vasquez, and Victor Rodas, including but not limited to:

1. The complete alien file (A-file), including any temporary files, working files, or Service Center files, and all documents and items contained in them, all reports or notifications generated by DHS or in its possession about these individuals, whether currently in written or electronic form, including, but not limited to, the Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Executive Summary, criminal history or immigration summaries,

¹ Rachel Mahoney and Alissa Smith, *Suspects in death of teen are gang members, Bedford County Sheriff says*, The Roanoke Times, http://www.roanoke.com/news/crime/bedford_county/suspects-in-death-of-teen-are-gang-members-bedford-county/article_8977fb53-99f9-500b-965a-50e46dffeb9.html, Mar. 31, 2017

² *Id.*

detainers or requests for notification, I-213(s), and Notice(s) to Appear or other charging documents created to seek their removal from the United States.

2. Each and every date on which the individuals were encountered by a law enforcement agency in the United States, to include criminal and civil arrests, the nature of the charge, the jurisdiction where the arrest occurred, the disposition of that charge, the date(s) on which they were released from the custody of that law enforcement agency, and the reason(s) for the release. Please provide the arrest and disposition documentation for each encounter.
3. How and when did each individual enter the United States? Was each ever served with a Notice to Appear? If so, was it filed with an immigration court? Please explain.
4. Were any of the individuals processed as unaccompanied alien minors? If so, which ones and who were they released to?
5. Did any of the individuals ever apply for any immigration benefits, including deferred action? If so, was any application approved? Please provide copies of any applications that they may have submitted, whether or not adjudicated.
6. Has either individual been removed previously? If so, when?
7. Has ICE issued a detainer or request for notification to any entity regarding any of the individuals? Please explain.
8. Are any of the individuals a member of, or associated with any criminal gang? Please explain.

As you know, Privacy Act protections do not apply to this request made in my capacity as Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

This murder allegedly is tied to gang activity. Media reports indicate that these suspects were affiliated with MS-13, the invidious transnational criminal street gang. The threat posed by immigrant criminal gangs is becoming more and more severe. ICE has stated that these gangs “have grown to become a serious threat in American communities across the nation – not only in cities, but increasingly in suburban and even rural areas.”³ As ICE has found, “[e]ntire neighborhoods and sometimes communities are held hostage by and subjected to the violence of street gangs.”⁴ ICE has found that “membership of these violent transnational gangs [is] comprised largely of foreign-born nationals.”⁵ ICE believes that MS-13 is “one of the most violent and rapidly growing transnational street gangs.”⁶

The most effective mechanism to protect Americans from these gangs is to remove their members. ICE can currently remove alien gang members who are unlawful aliens without having to wait for them to be convicted of crimes. However, it cannot do so for legally present gang members. In addition, those unlawful aliens who have received asylum or temporary protected status (TPS) cannot be removed until conviction. Thus, the Michael Davis, Jr. and Danny Oliver in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act, which the Judiciary Committee has approved in the 113th and 114th Congresses, and will take up this year, makes

³ ICE, DHS, ICE Fiscal Year 2008 Annual Report 18 (2009).

⁴ MS-13 and Counting: Gang Activity in Northern Virginia: Hearing Before the Comm. on Government Reform, 109th Cong. (2006)(statement of James Spero, Acting Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Washington, D.C., ICE).

⁵ ICE, DHS, ICE Fiscal Year 2007 Annual Report 18 (2008).

⁶ DHS, Office of Investigations, Operation Community Shield Fact Sheet (2008).

aliens inadmissible and deportable on the basis of criminal gang membership and ineligible for asylum or TPS. I am encouraged that the interdiction and dismantling of criminal street gangs are a priority for this Administration, please update me on what the Department of Homeland Security is currently doing to accomplish this critical mission.

I appreciate your coordination with the law enforcement entities in Virginia responsible for this investigation, and will remain in close contact with Sheriff Brown as the investigation continues to unfold. As you know, the House Judiciary Committee has jurisdiction over enforcement of the immigration law. I look forward to working with you to ensure that your agency has the resources, both fiscal and legislative, to ensure you can remove dangerous aliens. Had the prior Administration had your commitment to the safety of the American public, a 17-year-old Lynchburg boy might still be alive today.

Please respond to this request by April 17, 2017. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Joseph Edlow, Counsel, Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security, House Judiciary Committee, at (202) 225-3926. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Bob Goodlatte
Chairman