

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 31, 2014

The Honorable R. Gil Kerlikowske
Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Commissioner Kerlikowske:

We are writing to congratulate you on your recent confirmation as Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and to extend to you an invitation to visit Miami International Airport (MIA) to witness firsthand MIA's critical need for additional CBP officers. As members of the Miami-Dade Congressional Delegation, we sent a letter earlier this month to the Secretary of Homeland Security requesting his assistance in addressing MIA's rapidly escalating CBP staffing crisis.

International passenger traffic at MIA has grown 30 percent in the last six years, which is more than any other U.S. gateway, but CBP has not increased staffing levels to keep up with this unprecedented growth. Despite numerous initiatives by the Miami-Dade Aviation Department (MDAD) to address CBP staffing shortfalls, long wait times and missed flights continue to plague arriving international passengers. MIA invested in a new 72-lane federal inspection services (FIS) facility in 2012 and recently installed 36 automated passport control kiosks with an additional 36 on order. MDAD has also increased FIS staffing by 18 percent to assist passengers at kiosks and is one of only three airports to volunteer for CBP's new reimbursable fee agreement pilot program to reimburse CBP for additional overtime costs.

MIA is the "Gateway to the Americas," serving as the port-of-entry for nearly 10 million international passengers annually and contributing approximately \$33 billion and 272,000 direct and indirect jobs to our economy. These numbers are expected to increase rapidly in the coming years, as MIA will be responsible for a large percentage of the Obama administration's National Travel and Tourism Strategy stated goal of 100 million annual international visitors to our nation by 2021. To meet the demand, MIA has added nine new international carriers in the past three years and is in discussions to add 11 more. In addition, MIA hub carrier American Airlines has added 12 new international routes in the last two years, and two of MIA's other carriers will expand service to Brazil for the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016.

As MIA enters its busiest period of the year and prepares for an influx of travelers for the 2014 World Cup, the CBP staffing shortage needs to be addressed immediately. Without adequate numbers of CBP officers, international passengers will continue to experience long wait times and missed flights, and MIA's reputation as a world-class travel and business destination will be in serious jeopardy. The economic impact of MIA on Miami-Dade County, the State of Florida and the entire nation is too important to allow these problems to continue, and we hope you will accept our invitation to visit MIA in the coming weeks to see for yourself.

As you begin your tenure as Commissioner, we believe your support in addressing this matter is of paramount importance. Therefore, we respectfully request that you consider visiting MIA personally as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress

Bill Nelson
United States Senator

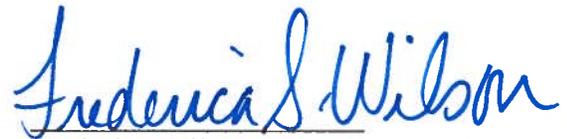
Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Frederica Wilson
Member of Congress



Joe Garcia
Member of Congress