

U.S. lawmakers raise alarm over poor conditions during visit to Texas migrant jails



El Paso, July 3 (RHC)-- As U.S. President Donald Trump signed a \$4.6 billion border bill approved by Congress last week, a delegation led by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus visited two immigrant prisons, amid growing outrage at reports of inhumane conditions due to Trump's border policies.

Texas Congressman Joaquin Castro described the conditions at an adult facility as being just like a prison, where women were held in cells without access to running water and proper medical care. Some had been held for over 50 days. Others reported they had no information on the whereabouts of their separated children.

The congressional delegation also visited the Clint Border Patrol station that has come under fire after recent reports of overcrowding and inhumane conditions for the children being locked up there. Congressman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez tweeted after yesterday's visits: "It's not just the kids. It's everyone. People drinking out of toilets, officers laughing in front of members Congress. I brought it up to their superiors. They said 'officers are under stress & act out sometimes.' No accountability."

Congressmembers held a press conference outside of the children's prison in Clint amid boos and racist jeers from protesters. Congressmember Ayanna Presley said, over the shouts of racist supporters of Donald Trump: "Keep yelling! This is very appropriate: vile rhetoric for vile actions, hateful rhetoric for hateful behavior, racist words and venom for racist policies. Very apropos. This is bigger than a funding debate or about any speeches that we give here on the floor of the House of Representatives. This is about the preservation of our humanity, and this is about seeing every single person there as a member of your own family. I am tired of the health and the safety, the humanity and the full freedoms of Black and Brown children being negotiated and compromised and moderated. We need a system that works, that is humane and that is compassionate and that keeps families together."

Last week, a federal judge ordered Customs and Border Protection to let independent health monitors into detention facilities in Texas holding migrant children to ensure conditions are "safe and sanitary." Last week, lawyers asked U.S. District Court Judge Dolly Gee to hold the Trump administration in contempt over conditions in the facilities and to mandate immediate improvements.

In related news, NBC News is reporting a federal watchdog warned in May that border agents armed themselves and feared possible riots due to the conditions at an El Paso, Texas, immigration detention facility.

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