



**Statement of Lead Republican Michael McCaul (R-TX)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs**

“H.R. 2615, United States-Northern Triangle Enhanced Engagement”

July 15, 2019

Remarks as Delivered

I rise today in support of the United States Northern Triangle Enhanced Engagement Act, which I’m proud to be the Lead Republican to co-sponsor.

I want to thank Chairman Engel for his bipartisan work on this very important piece of legislation that was the product of a trip we took down to Latin America.

This bill requires the State Department and USAID to develop and fund a five-year strategy to address the drivers of illegal immigration to our Southern border.

The bill requires State and USAID to develop annual benchmarks to track the progress of programs in stemming migration flows. It requires those to be reported to Congress, increasing our ability to oversee the U.S. foreign assistance to the Northern Triangle.

As Chairman Engel mentioned, we recently traveled to El Salvador earlier this year and saw the hard work that the U.S. government is doing to support international law enforcement investigations to capture MS-13 gang members. The bill also prioritizes security systems to combat transnational crime and to improve security and counter narcotics at their borders and ports.



This legislation also supports the amazing work of faith-based organizations that are engaged with the private sector to provide employment for youth and prevent them from joining gangs.

This bill builds on existing efforts to increase coordination with Mexico and our shared efforts to curb illegal migration, spur economic development, and combat corruption in the Northern Triangle.

I understand and share the president's frustration with the continued stream of migrants to our Southern border. And as a native Texan, I understand the unique challenges caused by illegal migration to our border.

Addressing this problem requires a comprehensive solution, and utilizing all tools at our disposal – including foreign assistance – should be used.

I also agree with the President that the governments of the Northern Triangle countries can and must do more to address the drivers of migration. This bill includes conditions that these governments must meet to receive assistance and requires the State Department to engage with these governments to track and ensure they are doing their part to address the crisis.

Lastly, the bill authorizes targeted sanctions against individuals engaged in corruption that impacts the Northern Triangle.

I urge my colleagues to believe that we must do all we can to address this humanitarian crisis on the border to support this legislation.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Chairman, Mr. Engel, for his ongoing bipartisan work on this committee. I think we are probably the most bipartisan committee on the Hill.



I know Mr. Engel and I are both very proud of that accomplishment.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

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