

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Nielsen:

As part of your bilateral meetings with Mexico's Secretary of Interior, Alfonso Navarrete Prida, and Mexico's Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Luis Videgaray Caso, I am writing to request that you raise the issue of illicit alcohol in Mexico and the dangers posed to the health and safety of U.S. citizens.

Reports from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel have revealed that approximately 140 U.S. citizens have been involved in suspicious alcohol-related incidents in Mexico, including Wisconsin resident Abbey Conner, who tragically died at a Cancun resort in January 2017. These Americans' experiences, which are now being collected by the U.S. State Department following my request, detail a wide range of criminal behavior, including sexual assault, extortion, and robbery, as well as an indifferent Mexican law enforcement system and tourism sector. Indeed, the evidence is overwhelming that Mexico suffers from systemic problems related to illicit alcohol, weak and corrupt law enforcement and judicial institutions, an absence of the rule of law, and an overall dangerous environment for U.S. citizens.

I have written numerous times to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson requesting action on the issue of U.S. citizens falling victim to illicit alcohol, criminal activity, and weak governance in Mexico. Despite the State Department's efforts to press Mexican authorities and businesses for improvements, I remain disappointed by the lack of progress. Accordingly, I request that you call on Secretary Prida and Secretary Caso to take immediate action to address the problem of illicit alcohol and protect U.S. citizens in Mexico, including by strengthening regulation of the alcohol and tourism industry; improving security measures in locations visited by Americans; reducing corruption in law enforcement and the judiciary; and providing accessible and trusted assistance to American victims.

The safety of American citizens and home and abroad is the primary responsibility of the federal government. Given Mexico's demonstrated inability to provide a safe environment for our citizens, it is clear that continued strong U.S. engagement with Mexican law enforcement officials needs to occur. Your meetings are an important step in this process, and I look forward to hearing from you how the Department of Homeland Security can help address the issue of illicit alcohol in Mexico and better protect impacted individuals in Wisconsin and across the country.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator