

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 9, 2022

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20593

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

We write to you regarding the British national, Malik Faisal Akram, who took four hostages at the Beth Israel Congregation in Colleyville, Texas, on January 15th, 2022. **The circumstances allowing Akram to enter the United States remain unclear. The families and communities we represent deserve direct answers from the federal officials charged with ensuring the homeland is secure.**

The most serious and pressing issue is *how* and *why* Akram was permitted entry to the United States. Akram arrived in the U.S. in December of 2021 as part of the U.S. Visa Waiver Program despite public reports that he was a subject of counterterrorism investigations in Britain.¹ Additionally, Akram retained a lengthy criminal record, and was described by his brother — also a U.K. Citizen — as a “deeply troubled man.”² There were also reports that he lied on his Visa Waiver application.³ To better understand why this individual was allowed to enter the country and enable us to make informed policy changes, please provide a response to the following inquiries by February 18th, 2022:

- 1.) Did the U.K. government share information about Akram’s criminal record or that he was a subject of a counterterrorism investigation with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or other U.S. government agency before his entry?
- 2.) Did DHS’s protocol ignore critical information that should have prevented Akram from entering the United States?
- 3.) Please describe in detail the agency’s vetting process for the Visa Waiver Program. How does DHS share and receive information regarding potentially harmful individuals attempting to enter the United States?

¹ Gardner, Frank and Doug Faulkner. “Texas Synagogue Hostage-Taker Was Known to MI5.” BBC News, BBC, 18 Jan. 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60038207>.

² Prosser, Maggie. “Colleyville Hostage-Taker Dropped off at Dallas Homeless Shelter by Someone He Appeared to Know.” Dallas News, 18 Jan. 2022, <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/2022/01/17/colleyville-hostage-taker-had-declining-mental-health-issues-his-brother-says/>.

³ Hamilton, Fiona, and Emma Yeomans. “Texas Synagogue Siege: Malik Faisal Akram Was Investigated by MI5.” News | The Times, The Times, 19 Jan. 2022, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/texas-synagogue-siege-malik-faisal-akram-was-investigated-by-mi5-960spmbn>.

- 4.) Has DHS determined if Akram has ever engaged with Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs)?
- 5.) Did Akram provide any inaccurate information on his Visa Waiver application and did that have any bearing on whether or not he was admitted to the U.S.?
- 6.) Upon taking office, President Biden revoked several Executive Orders signed by President Trump that amplified the screening and vetting protocols associated with U.S. immigration processes.
 - a. Do you agree with President Biden's decision to rescind these Executive Orders?
 - b. Do you believe that reinstating the Executive Orders would enhance DHS's screening processes?
- 7.) Will Akram's entry into the U.S. prompt DHS to change current protocols to ensure Visa Waiver Applicants receive increased vetting and scrutiny?

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



August Pfluger
Member of Congress



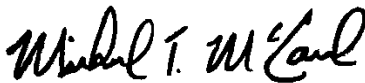
Beth Van Duyne
Member of Congress



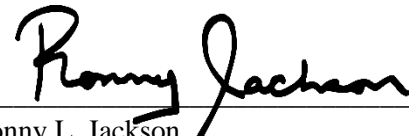
Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress



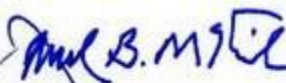
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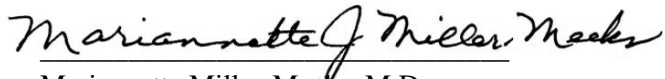
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