



Hidalgo County Commissioners Court

Richard F. Cortez
County Judge

David L. Fuentes
Commissioner, Precinct 1

Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu
Commissioner, Precinct 2

Everardo "Ever" Villarreal
Commissioner, Precinct 3

Ellie Torres
Commissioner, Precinct 4

**OFFICE OF
COUNTY JUDGE
RICHARD F. CORTEZ**

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hidalgo County Judge calls on federal government to stop releasing infected migrants and calls on state to return the tools to contain the spread of COVID-19

EDINBURG – Faced with multiple reports that migrants are being released in Hidalgo County infected with COVID-19, Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez is calling on federal immigration officials to stop releasing these migrants into our communities.

Cortez is also calling on Texas Governor Greg Abbott to restore Hidalgo County's ability to implement safety measures, such as mask mandates, to contain the surge in infection of COVID-19 that is beginning to tax local resources.

"We have been doing well as a community in slowing the spread of this deadly virus," Cortez said. "But ill-conceived policies by both the federal and state governments are beginning to have serious consequences on Hidalgo County. I call on federal immigration officials to stop releasing infected migrants into our community and I am further calling on Governor Abbott to return to Hidalgo County the safety tools he took away that would help us slow the spread of this disease."

Cortez made the call after multiple reports that the number of migrants being processed and released into local nonprofit agencies assisting them were now overwhelming these agencies. Cortez is also learning of multiple reports of migrants infected with COVID-19 interacting in public as they cough and sneeze without observing safety protocols such as the use of facial coverings.

"We now face a potential crisis because of the federal policy of releasing infected migrants into our community, coupled with the state policy that prohibits us from implementing essential safety measures," Cortez said. "This is unacceptable."

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Hidalgo County is home to one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. We provide health and justice to the over 800,000 residents of our county. We strive to be accessible and responsive to our citizens by providing excellent public service through the values of leadership, transparency, fairness, collaboration, respect and fiscal responsibility. Follow our social media feed at www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/followus