



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

March 14, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20528

CC: Secretary of State Marco Rubio

Dear Secretary Noem:

We write to express our concern with Chile's participation in the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Visa Waiver Program (VWP). We are concerned that the VWP continues to be exploited by South American Theft Groups (SATG) – a majority of whom originate from Chile. Known as “burglary tourism,” certain eligible individuals travel to the U.S. through the VWP for the purpose of committing residential and commercial robberies before returning to their country of origin. As home invasions and burglaries continue to be widespread nationwide, we request that DHS, in coordination with the Department of State, suspend Chile's participation in the VWP until a review of its security and vetting efforts is ruled in full compliance with the July 2023 Implementation Agreement for Prevention and Combating of Serious Crime (PCSC IA) and other Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between the U.S. and Chile.

Under the VWP, individuals from participating countries can travel to the U.S. fairly easily. Currently, after the completion of a short online application and payment of a low-cost fee, Chilean nationals are permitted into the U.S. for 90 days or less without obtaining a visa. We understand that Chilean Foreign Minister Antonia Urrejola and then-Secretary of State Antony Blinken met in 2022 and agreed to continue working together to evaluate Chile's participation in the VWP – including determining whether Chile was fulfilling all information sharing requirements to continue participation in the Program.<sup>1</sup> Despite these efforts, we have heard from our local law enforcement partners that they have not seen an improvement in the reduction of SATG crimes in our communities. As foreign criminals continue to have a foothold in the U.S. – the safety of American citizens must come first and increased enforcement of the passenger vetting process is needed.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State, <https://2021-2025.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-and-chilean-foreign-minister-antonia-urrejola-at-a-joint-press-availability>

Though the State of California has recently passed initiatives to reduce drug and theft-related offences – such as Proposition 36 – additional measures must be taken on the federal level. Through Fiscal Years (FY) 2022 to 2023, over 880,000 Chilean nationals were admitted through the VWP.<sup>2</sup> In addition to having an impact on familial communities, SATGs continue to victimize Orange County companies and entrepreneurs, placing a burden on our local police departments, already beset by a lack of resources and a staffing deficit. In 2024, there were 59 residential burglaries suspected of being committed by SATGs in the Orange County Sheriff’s Department Southeast Patrol Area. Given the threat to public safety, we believe immediate action must be taken.

We appreciate your prompt consideration and look forward to working with your departments on protecting our national security – including our Southern California communities.


Sincerely,



Young Kim  
Member of Congress



Mike Levin  
Member of Congress



Derek T. Tran  
Member of Congress



Dave Min  
Member of Congress

<sup>2</sup> Office of Homeland Security Statistics, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, <https://ohss.dhs.gov/topics/immigration/yearbook>