



National Border Patrol Council

Local 2455

Laredo, Texas

"Protecting Those Who Protect Our Borders"

Subject: Chief Patrol Agent Felix Chavez fails to protect Border Patrol Agents from COVID-19

For Immediate Release – April 8, 2020

Laredo, Texas - It has become abundantly clear that Laredo Sector Chief Patrol Agent (CPA) Felix Chavez and his sidekick, Watch Commander Charles "*Chuck*" Schlesinger are failing to protect Border Patrol Agents from COVID-19. We are not sure if CPA Chavez is just being a "*Lame Duck Chief*" since he will be retiring in less than 3 months or maybe he prefers to downplay the seriousness and dangers of COVID-19. In 5 different situations related to COVID-19, Border Patrol Agents in the Laredo Sector were directly and/or indirectly exposed to COVID-19. In all of those situations, CPA Chavez failed to approve Safety Leave for those employees, thus exposing the remainder of the workforce and their families to COVID-19. Keep in mind that a workplace exposure to COVID-19 will surely affect the American public and our family members, especially those with chronic medical issues like: Asthma, High Blood Pressure, Diabetes, Lung Disease, etc.

In one instance, CPA Chavez would not approve Safety Leave until the employee tested positive for COVID-19 and by that time, the potential for exposure to the remainder of the workforce and the American public had already taken place. In another instance, CPA Chavez would not approve safety leave to an employee who had just returned from "*International Travel*", which is considered a high risk for exposure to COVID-19. CPA Chavez can utilize the options and discretion afforded to him in order to protect Border Patrol agents from possible exposure to those who are either infected or who may have come in contact with someone else who is infected, but FAILS TO UTILIZE THESE OPTIONS OR HIS DISCRETION.

CPA Chavez is taking an unreasonable stance when approving Safety Leave to Border Patrol Agents. He will not approve Safety Leave to allow Border Patrol Agents that have been directly or indirectly exposed to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases to isolate, even when a doctor has ordered the employee to a mandatory quarantine. It is important for the U.S. Border Patrol to know that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines are a minimum requirement for Federal Agencies to follow. CPA Chavez has the option and discretion to provide WORKPLACE PROTECTIONS at a MUCH HIGHER LEVEL that will in turn protect Border Patrol Agents and the American public.

Chief Patrol Agents from other Sectors have taken a different approach to approving Safety Leave. These Chief Patrol Agents have exercised their discretion to protect the U.S. Border Patrol workforce and the American public. We call on CPA Chavez to do the same for the safety of our workforce, our families and the American public.

Your safety, health, and welfare and that of the American public is our number one priority. We encourage you to utilize appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during the performance of your duties to include activities such as: Dealing with the public; Performing primary inspection at the checkpoint; and when Arresting, Detaining, Searching, Processing and Transporting detainees/subjects. Utilizing PPE will protect you, the U.S. Border Patrol workforce and the American Public.

We urge you to continue contacting the National Border Patrol Council for any and all workplace related matters. Stay safe and thank you for protecting America's borders!

The National Border Patrol Council is the exclusive representative of approximately 18,000 Border Patrol Agents and support personnel assigned to the U.S. Border Patrol, which falls under the Department of Homeland Security.

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