August 5, 2019

The Honorable Raul Ruiz  
United States House of Representatives  
2342 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  

Dear Representative Ruiz,

On behalf of the American Academy of Nursing (Academy), thank you for sponsoring the recently-passed Humanitarian Standards for Individuals in Customs and Border Protection Custody Act (H.R. 3239). The Academy serves the public by advancing health policy, practice, and science through organizational excellence and effective nursing leadership. The Academy’s more than 2,600 Fellows are nursing’s most accomplished leaders in education, management, practice, research, and policy. The Academy applauds this legislation as it aligns with one of our central policy priorities, to advance health equity and champion wellness.

The Academy has been highly critical of the Administration’s policies at the United States’ southern border which have negatively impacted the health and safety of immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. As you know, many of those crossing the border are fleeing stressful and traumatic situations such as extreme poverty, gang warfare, and domestic violence. The detention of these individuals, after they have completed the harrowing journey to the United States, without standardized medical screening or sufficient drinking water, food, hygiene products, and sanitation is unacceptable. H.R. 3239 will guarantee immigrants entering our country do not die in our care from preventable illnesses or conditions.

Again, the Academy thanks you for your introduction of the Humanitarian Standards for Individuals in Customs and Border Protection Custody Act and appreciates your commitment to ensuring the health and safety of those detained at the southern border. If the Academy can be of any assistance to you or your staff, please do not hesitate to contact the Academy’s Strategic Outreach Manager, Ellie Cook, at ecook@AANnet.org or at 202-777-1175.

Sincerely,

Karen Cox, PhD, RN, FACHE, FAAN  
President