

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 26, 2020

Mr. Matthew T. Albence  
Acting Director  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
500 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20536

Mr. Mark A. Morgan  
Acting Commissioner  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20229

Dear Acting Director Albence and Acting Commissioner Morgan,

On August 19, 2020, I wrote to you requesting an investigation into an apparent ongoing violation of United States immigration laws by persons or entities working on a construction site in my congressional district. As explained in the letter, information was brought to my attention that suggests the 33 Korean nationals arrested by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials in May at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta represent only a small fraction of the effort to undermine immigration and labor laws by persons involved in this construction project.

Shortly after my initial letter, an investigative reporter with Fox 5 Atlanta aired an investigative report which further substantiated my initial understanding that there is a large-scale, ongoing effort to subvert United States immigration laws in an effort to illegally employ Korean foreign nationals at the SK battery factory construction site in Commerce, Georgia. In Fox 5's report, they document widespread busing of foreign workers to and from the construction site and short-term housing rentals. When Fox 5 followed these workers as they bused from the construction site to rental housing and attempted to ask them about their presence in the United States, none of the workers were able to respond in English. Since Fox 5's report, I have received information from additional constituents reporting that more than 30 houses have been rented to support this illegal workforce.

If this was not enough to strongly suggest an ongoing conspiracy to subvert the laws of the United States in building the expansion of the SK battery factory using illegal labor from Korea, what I have learned in the short period following the report certainly is. In early July, local government officials were alerted to unusual commercial traffic to and from a non-operational chicken farm on an otherwise quiet road. Their investigation led to the discovery of over 200 persons, the overwhelming majority of apparent Korean nationality, working in a large-scale effort to train on-the-job welders. During inspection for apparent permit violations, officials were told that this was a training facility where the apparent Korean nationals were being taught to weld. This facility, which was shut down by local officials on early July, was less than five miles from the SK battery factory construction site mentioned in my August 19 letter.

This information also sheds light on rumors I have heard for weeks that American building inspectors had found the work done on the job site insufficient, having failed the welds made on mechanical systems. Experts have said that it is clear that proper welding procedures were not followed.

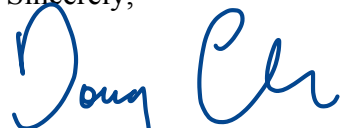
I find it hard, if not impossible, to believe it is a coincidence that there were over 200 Korean nationals engaged in a large-scale welding operation on a non-operational chicken farm a mere 5 miles from the construction project at the SK battery factory. Instead, the sad truth appears to be much simpler: either SK or a contractor of theirs large enough to illegally import, employ, and house hundreds of foreign nationals from halfway across the globe has broken the law in an effort to replace American workers with Korean foreign nationals. It is further apparent that, instead of taking remedial steps after CBP's enforcement action in May, those involved took steps to conceal their ongoing crimes.

Elected officials have gone above and beyond to encourage SK to bring good paying jobs to Georgia. The state of Georgia generously gave SK over \$300 million in tax breaks, grants, and land to encourage them to bring their battery factory to the state, and just recently, myself and a number of lawmakers in the Georgia delegation submitted a letter to the International Trade Commission (ITC) discouraging the ITC from imposing import restrictions — a remedy that would undoubtedly hurt Georgia workers — in response to SK's apparent theft of trade secrets from another South Korean foreign firm. Now, it appears the jobs SK had promised would employ hardworking Georgians might not even be safe as a result of welding work conducted by apparent novice foreign workers. These illegal and immoral actions are, quite frankly, disgusting and a betrayal to Georgia taxpayers who have invested heavily in SK's development in Jackson County.

On Friday, an SK official was quoted by the Korean Times stating “We hired those Korean workers because they are specialized in constructing battery factories.” Not only is this statement impossible to reconcile with the extensive training operation discovered in early August, but it is legally no excuse for breaking U.S. immigration laws. I implore ICE and CBP to use every resource in your power to investigate SK and their contractors to identify and deport this illegal workforce and hold responsible anyone involved. I also urge you to suspend visas for any SK employee traveling to Georgia from any part of the world until this matter is resolved. In a confidential addendum to this letter my office will be providing a list of locations where these illegal workers are apparently living as well as the location of the off-site welding operation. I hope that you act swiftly on this information and I look forward to an update from your respective agencies as soon as possible.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Doug Collins". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Doug Collins  
Member of Congress