

U.S. Sen. Johnson: On border crisis- 'We have to start doing something'

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Senator Comments on Photo of Father and 23-Month-Old Daughter at HSGAC Hearing

WASHINGTON — Chairman Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) opened the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee hearing on migrant exploitation today by addressing the photo published by the Associated Press of a migrant father and his 23-month-old daughter who recently drowned in the Rio Grande. Senator Johnson again urged Congress to act to address the crisis at the southern border, which has seen as many as 23,000 people per week arrive at the border as unaccompanied minors and members of family units.

Excerpts from the senator's opening statement are below, and video can be found here.

(8:10) "I didn't have time to have a picture blown up, but we've all seen it. Of Oscar Alberto Martinez Ramirez and his 23-month-old daughter, Valeria. Now, I realize tragedies occur all over this country, all over the world. I don't want to see another picture like that on the U.S. border. I hope that picture alone will catalyze this Congress, this Senate, this committee to do something."

(9:22) "What I have found in eight and a half years in the United States Senate, there's not much of a problem solving capability. Not for the big ones. Not for the big problems."

(10:32) “I want to go through a problem solving process. That’s what we’ve been doing with all these hearings – we’ve been gathering a lot of information. We still need more information. But I want to have an open and honest and genuine discussion about the scope of the problem, the root causes of this problem and what we can do to start solving it.”

(10:56) “We’re not going to solve this overnight, but we can make some improvement in the situation. We have to start doing something – Congress. The men and women of DHS are doing what you can do with limited resources. Congress has to act and it has to start with an honest and open discussion and conversation.”

(11:35) “We need to start doing something. It is well past time. And that picture that all Americans woke up this morning looking at, again should be used as a catalyst for that kind of action.”