Dear Parents,

I continue to receive questions regarding safety of our group while in Mexico so wanted to provide direct answers to everyone at the same time. Safety continues to be MVPC and Amor Ministries’ top priority for this trip. If I did not believe our group was going to be safe, I would not take us to Mexico and if Amor didn’t think we would be safe in the communities that we will build in, they would not send us or would pull us out immediately if the situation changed while we were there.

I have been watching for the US State Department to update their Mexico travel page (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/mexico-travel-advisory.html#Baja%20California>) but they have not had any updates since October of last year. They quite often will provide an update as we approach Spring Break due to the large number of college students that will head over the border. They may still update their site in next several weeks but currently their site gives me no concern for our travel.

Currently, they recommend that travel to Baja California be “reconsidered” due to the potential of violence. This seems to be especially true for the region in the eastern portion of the state near Mexicalli, as most of their travel warning centers on that region. They do suggest that travelers, “*remain on main highways and avoid remote locations.”* In conversations with Amor Ministries, they are not aware of any issues anywhere near the areas we will camp or build and assure me that this language refers to remote locations of Tijuana away from some of the high tourist areas and not the surrounding countryside. The fact that the State Dept has no travel restrictions for their employees anywhere near the Tijuana region gives me comfort- “*There are no other travel restrictions for U.S. government employees in Baja California state. These include high-traffic tourism areas of border and coastal communities, such as****Tijuana****,****Ensenada****, and****Rosarito****.”*

I will continue to monitor their website for any updates but do not anticipate hearing of anything that will jeopardize our trip.

As I mentioned, safety is a top priority for Amor Ministries and they issued some updates for groups travelling with them to Baja California in January which are attached to this email. MVPC fully complies with all their suggestions and we utilize Amor staff guiding us to and from the camp every day. We have never felt unsafe in the 30+ years of working with Amor and trust that they will continue to serve the people of Mexico and our group well into the future.

We are looking forward to our trip together in just a few weeks. I know the 9 families that we are building houses for are eagerly anticipating our arrival as well as they weather these storms in whatever housing they currently have.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out directly to me at dricketts@mvpctoday.org or text me at 925-899-0279. I will do my best to answer your questions.

Dave Ricketts