

SECURE AMERICA'S SOUTHWEST BORDER

Immigrants violating federal law continue to flood across America's southwest border. The Federal Government must enforce existing law to ensure that America maintains a secure and orderly system of immigration.

BACKGROUND

Illegal immigration generally refers to improper entry into the United States by a noncitizen. Federal law imposes both civil and criminal penalties for such an act, which can result in potential incarceration and monetary fines, depending on the scope of the violation.¹

While attempts to illegally enter the U.S. occur across all border areas, apprehensions of deportable aliens along America's northern (4,408) and coastal borders (3,585) accounted for less than one percent of similar apprehensions along the southwest border (851,508) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019.² From FY2015 to FY2019, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) apprehended almost 2.3 million deportable aliens at the southwest border³ – more than enough to replace the current population of New Mexico⁴ and almost four times the population of Wyoming.⁵ In fact, the number of deportable aliens apprehended at the southwest border from FY2015 to FY2019 exceeds the populations of 15 states.⁶

Processing such a volume of apprehensions imposes extreme pressure on America's overburdened immigration system. From FY2014 to FY2018, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) compelled the removal of about 1.7 million deportable aliens and confirmed the departure of over 609,774 leaving voluntarily.⁷ With an estimated 12 million aliens already in the United States without legal status, Congress must take action to restore order to the U.S. immigration system.⁸

According to the International Boundary & Water Commission, the border between Mexico and the United States extends 1,954 miles.⁹ CBP data from September 2018 reports that 654 miles of the southwest border are protected by a mix of pedestrian (374 miles) and vehicle (280 miles) primary barrier sources,¹⁰ costing taxpayers a reported \$7 billion to maintain from FY2007 to FY2017.¹¹

Quick Take

Efforts to secure America's southwest border have proven ineffective.

Congress must consider the facts regarding border security, build physical barriers, and deploy monitoring and surveillance technology.

Map of the U.S.-Mexico Southern Border



Note: Due to the scale of the map, some gaps in the border fence may not be visible.

Sources: Reveal from The Center for Investigative Reporting and OpenStreetMap contributors (border fence); Oak Ridge National Laboratory's LandScan population data (population density); U.S. Customs and Border Protection (border patrol sectors)

Source: *Wall Street Journal*¹²

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY AND REPUBLICAN PRINCIPLES

The U.S. Constitution grants Congress the exclusive authority to “establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization.”¹³ The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and subsequent amendments¹⁴ establish such rules. As a matter of principle, the Federal Government must enforce existing immigration laws and secure our national borders.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

The United States must have a lawful system of immigration. Border security is paramount to this endeavor. Physical barriers should be funded and constructed at appropriate entry points. Congress must also provide adequate resources to support the use of technology at the border for surveillance and monitoring consistent with the constitutional rights and liberties of citizens living near the border.

Congress must ensure that individuals who violate immigration laws are apprehended and removed in a timely and humane manner. These efforts should include expedited removal of deportable aliens apprehended at the border who have not previously been detained or committed other criminal violations.

Please contact Cameron Smith or Kelsey Wall with the Republican Policy Committee at (202) 225-4921 with any questions.

¹ 8 U.S.C. § 1325.

² U.S. Border Patrol, *U.S. Border Patrol Nationwide Apprehensions by Citizenship and Sector FY2017-FY2019*, 37-39 (2020), <https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2020->

Jan/U.S.%20Border%20Patrol%20Nationwide%20Apprehensions%20by%20Citizenship%20and%20Sector%20%28FY2007%20-%20FY%202019%29_1.pdf.

³ *Id.* U.S. Border Patrol apprehended 2,292,206 deportable aliens from FY2015 to FY2019 at the Southwest Border.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, NST-EST2019-01, *Table 1. Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for the United States, Regions, States, and Puerto Rico: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019*. The population of New Mexico was 2,096,829 in 2019.

⁵ *Id.* The population of Wyoming was 578,759 in 2019.

⁶ *Id.* The states are Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

⁷ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *The 2018 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: Table 39. Aliens Removed or Returned: Fiscal Years 1892 to 2018* (2020), <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2018/table39>.

⁸ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, *Population Estimates, Illegal Alien Population Residing in the United States: January 2015* (Dec. 2018),

https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/18_1214_PLCY_pops-est-report.pdf

⁹ International Boundary & Water Commission, United States Section, *The International Boundary and Water Commission – Its Mission, Organization and Procures for Solution of Boundary and Water Problems*,

https://www.ibwc.gov/about_us/about_us.html.

¹⁰ U.S. Border Patrol, *Mileage of Pedestrian and Vehicle Barrier by State* (Sept. 30, 2018),

<https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2019-Mar/FY18%20Border%20Patrol%20Barrier%20Totals%20v3.pdf>.

¹¹ *The Border Wall: Strengthening Our National Security*: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on National Security, Comm. on Oversight and Government Reform, 115 Cong. 20 (2017), (Prepared statement of Brandon Judd, President, National Border Patrol Council).

¹² *A Look at the U.S.-Mexico Border Wall*, *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 5, 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/graphics/a-look-at-the-border-wall/>.

¹³ U.S. Const. art. I, § 8, cl. 4.

¹⁴ 8 U.S.C. §§ 1101-1537.