

# **Views from the Biden Border Crisis and How To Resolve It:**

## **An Open Letter to Vice President Kamala Harris**



**Compiled by the House Republican Policy Committee**

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

Vice President Harris,

It is our understanding you have not had an opportunity to visit the southern border and witness the crisis your Administration has created in less than 100 days. The crisis at the border is a direct result of easing common sense immigration controls, placing a moratorium on deportations, and ending the Migrant Protection Protocols commonly known as the “remain in Mexico” policy.

One of the results of these decisions are 5,000 migrants, many of them children, being held in facilities designed to only hold 250 people. This poses a grave health risk not only from COVID-19 but other communicable diseases like tuberculosis and chicken pox. Without question, this is an unprecedented crisis. Your own Homeland Security Secretary, Alejandro Mayorkas, has issued a statement saying the agency, “was on pace to encounter more individuals on the southwest border than we have in the last 20 years.”<sup>i</sup>

Perhaps you have missed the unfolding crisis because you have not personally visited, and your “open and transparent” Administration has limited media access. To assist you in understanding the crisis, a number of Republicans members have visited the border and witnessed the sad conditions your policies have created. We have compiled an overview of their trips, including pictures for you to consider.

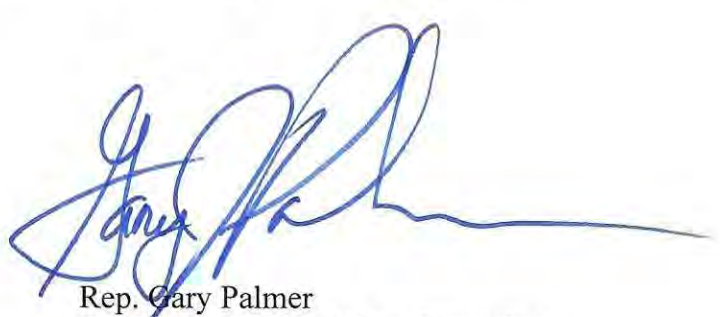
Madam Vice President, you were tasked with leading the efforts to relieve migration at the southern border with Mexico on March 24<sup>th</sup>. At the very least a day trip from Washington DC to the border should be a priority for any elected official in charge of solving this problem. As members who are concerned about this crisis, we desire to work with you to help resolve it. To that end, in addition to the views from on the ground, please find included a list of proven policy solutions.

We await your reply and look forward to your visit to the border and the opportunity to discuss implementing solutions that resecure our southern border and that protect the nation.

Sincerely,



Kevin McCarthy  
House Republican Leader



Rep. Gary Palmer  
Chair, Republican Policy Committee



## Republican Leader's Trip March 15th – El Paso

**Attendees:** Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy (CA-23), Ranking Member John Katko (NY-24), Tony Gonzales (TX-23), Mariannette Miller Meeks (IA-2), August Pfluger (TX-11), Carlos Gimenez (FL-26), David Joyce (OH-14), Yvette Herrell (NM-2), Chuck Fleischman (TN-3), Clay Higgins (LA-3), Maria Salazar (FL-27), Michael Cloud (TX-27), John Rose (TN-6)

**“It’s more than a crisis, this is a human heartbreak,” said Republican Leader McCarthy.**



*Aerial photo of litter left behind from migrants as they cross illegally into the United States*

The delegation toured an El Paso Processing Center, a facility that was built less than a year ago by the Trump Administration. It is a 98,000 sq. ft. facility equipped to handle up to 1,040 migrants at a time — more than the capacity they ever thought they would have to meet. Today this facility broke a record, and it is now beyond capacity. The overcrowding, especially of migrant children, is also further eroding security at the border.

**“For all those children that are unaccompanied, and sitting in there, there’s 120 border patrol agents that are in [the facility], and not on the border protecting us when a surge is coming,” – Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy.” (CA-23)**



*Members of the delegation meet with Customs and Border Protection Agents*

“Today, I joined Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy and some of my Republican colleagues on the southern border. I can tell you first hand, that what we are seeing is a humanitarian crisis of a tremendous scale.... The long-term effects of this crisis will be devastating for our nation if we do not act immediately.” – Rep. Chuck Fleishman (TN-3)



*Rep. Cloud highlights the roads used by the cartels to drop off busloads of migrants at the border*

“It’s unfortunate we needed to go to the border to see this, but it’s important in order to shed light on the situation. The open border policies of the Biden Administration have precipitated this humanitarian and national security crisis at our southern border. What’s extremely tragic about the crisis we find ourselves in today is all that President Biden had to do to avoid it was nothing,” he added. “We can fix this. We can secure our border. We can protect the lives of these people, and we can keep our nation strong.” – Rep. Michael Cloud (TX-27)



“You can fix this thing, working with us. If America is paying attention, and I believe they are, your phone is going to start ringing. I implore you, good sir. Let us in. **We can fix this thing. It’s beyond a crisis at the border. It’s a threat to our Republic.** And you, Mr. President, have a responsibility to listen to the citizens that we serve.” – Rep. Clay Higgins (LA-3)



*Rep. John Rose speaks to reporters following meetings with border agents*

“The United States is a nation of immigrants, and most immigrants are here legally. However, there's little question that Biden’s failed immigration policies are undermining America's border security efforts and exacerbating the growing surge of illegal immigrants at our southern border. What's happening here is more than a crisis. It's a scandal and it's at the feet of President Joe Biden. **Border agents continue to be overwhelmed with reports indicating that border crossings are up to 6,000 per day. This is on top of the numbers from March that demonstrate how dire the situation is with 172,331 migrants taken into custody, 19,000 of which were unaccompanied minors.**” – Rep. John Rose (TN-6)



*Rep. August Pfluger speaks with border patrol*

“President Biden’s dangerous immigration policies and senseless rhetoric have triggered a massive surge in illegal migration. Our border patrol facilities and officers lack the capacity and resources to handle the influx of illegal crossings, and **facilities have become so overwhelmed that the Biden Administration has begun busing migrants away from the border to holding sites in the interior of the U.S., including one in Midland County, which was set up without proper notification given to myself or other state and local officials.**

It is heartbreaking to see this crisis unfold. The Midland community deserves action and answers from the Biden Administration. **We are outraged by the decision to unexpectedly move migrants into the county without proper consultation and explanation. I have nothing but compassion for the children who are being exploited by coyotes and cartel traffickers emboldened by President Biden and his ‘open-border’ policies.**” – Rep. August Pfluger (TX-11)

## Texas Delegation Trip

### March 28 – 31 – Rio Grande Valley

**Attendees:** Jodey Arrington (TX-19), Ranking Member Kevin Brady (TX-8), Michael Burgess (TX-26), Brian Babin (TX-36), Louis Gohmert (TX-1), Ronny Jackson (TX-13), Pete Sessions (TX-17), Beth Van Duyne (TX-24), Randy Weber (TX-14), Pat Fallon (TX-4), Troy Nehls (TX-22), John Carter (TX-31), Chip Roy (TX-21)

“To see into the faces of these poor and vulnerable folks...to see the despair from the abuse...to look into the faces of our Border Patrol agents who were completely demoralized or to listen to Richard the rancher [Richard Guerra] and other private property or landowners there along the border who say they've seen unprecedented numbers of firearms, fences being cut, property being destroyed, dead bodies... **What a shameful situation that we've been left with, but you have to listen to these folks the voice of the despair from folks along the border, who feel like their federal government has failed them.**” – Rep. Jodey Arrington (TX-19)

“I’ve seen firsthand health and safety protocols being utterly abandoned at our overflowing migrant holding facilities along the southern border. **These facilities are functioning at unsustainable levels with no end in sight as this border crisis rages on.** Although this administration likes to pretend that nothing is happening on the border, my colleagues and I are forcing them to give the American people answers by exposing this crisis and demanding answers for how they plan to solve this dangerous, humanitarian disaster they created.” – Rep. Brian Babin (TX-36)

The impact of this historic surge at the border<sup>iii</sup> has been immediately felt at the local level. Rep. Jodey Arrington spoke with a local rancher, Richard Guerra, who explained how landowners on the border are seeing their lives threatened as violence and property damage have increased exponentially over the past few months.<sup>iv</sup>



*Rep. Arrington speaks with a local rancher about the increase in violence at the border*

Beyond the immediate threat to life and property, the increase in illegal drugs coming across the border presents a danger to millions of Americans in the interior. Long before the COVID-19 pandemic, the country was experiencing an opioid epidemic that ripped apart the lives of Americans from all walks of life. Now, CBP is reporting **increases in fentanyl seizures at the border that are 233% higher than March of last year.**<sup>v</sup>

Congresswoman Beth Van Duyne spoke with DEA agents while at the border with Rep. Arrington and other members of the Texas delegation at the end of March and saw some of the drugs that were being seized. Congresswoman Van Duyne also observed the conditions at a processing facility in Donna, Texas.



*Rep. Beth Van Duyne poses with illegal drugs seized by CBP agents at the border*

“Contrary to what the Press Secretary says, there are no “CDC guidelines” in place. Unaccompanied minors are packed together to the point at which the cement floor – where they sleep – is not visible. No one is tested for COVID-19 *unless* they are showing symptoms. **Many children are left at the river with only a phone number on their shirt or their body.** Yesterday morning alone, the center processed over 1,000 kids who are all pending placements. There were over 15,000 National Guard troops in DC in January. As of yesterday, there are only 706 National Guard troops at the border. Our Border Patrol agents are stretched thin. 34% of agents have been pulled off the border to babysit instead of protecting the front lines.” – Rep. Beth Van Duyne (TX-24)



*Children being held in a makeshift enclosure at Donna Processing Facility*

“The Customs and Border Protection holding facility in Donna, Texas, was packed with unaccompanied children. The older children slept on the hard ground behind plastic dividers. Fundamentally, stacked on top of each other with barely enough room to move around. **The younger children were lying in a pink and purple play pen with no comforts that a child should enjoy... You can’t truly understand what’s happening at the border until you visit and see it for yourself. The conditions are abysmal. It is a humanitarian and national security crisis and to see the Biden Administration blatantly ignore what’s going on, is simply a dereliction of duty.**” – Rep. John Carter (TX-31)

“Children are particularly vulnerable to become trafficked, as various news stories (abandoned child, 2 children dropped over the wall) demonstrate. The extraordinary number of women and children crossing is evident upon observation. Property owners on the border continue to suffer property damage and even threats to their safety due to the extreme illegality. **We know that with the high numbers of those crossing and the fact that many are released, every community in the U.S. is in danger of becoming a border town. Border Patrol and State officials serving in border regions are suffering as well and to say they’ve been ill-served by this administration is an understatement.**” – Rep. Louie Gohmert (TX-1)





*From Left to Right: Rep. Jackson, Rep. Troy Nehls, and Rep. Arrington speak with a law enforcement officer at the border with Mexico*

**“Cartels are profiting from the exploitation of vulnerable families by charging them to get their children into America illegally, putting the children in grave danger.** We have already seen deeply troubling evidence of what this looks like. Smugglers dropped two small children off of the 14-foot border wall in New Mexico, a brave Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) officer saved a drowning baby who was thrown off a raft

by smugglers, **DPS pulled over a vehicle and found a smuggler with multiple illegal immigrants including a 14-year-old girl who had been sexually assaulted, and a young boy was found sobbing alone because smugglers had abandoned him in the middle of the desert, to name a few examples.**

**Illegal immigrants I spoke with at the Carrizo Springs influx facility made the point that their families will never be able to pay the cartels for bringing them and acknowledged they will have to “pay off” their debt by “working” for the cartels in America.** This situation ultimately continues a cycle of crime and violence that cannot be ignored!” – Rep. Ronny Jackson (TX-13)

“So, we now have a full-blown crisis. That is evidenced by the skyrocketing detention numbers and the increased crime in towns near the border. **It is evidenced by the fact that the administration is scrambling to find hotel rooms and open up new facilities to deal with the volume of people trying to enter the country.** The challenge before us is to address this the right way, respecting both the rule of law and the consent of the American people.”<sup>vi</sup> – Rep. Chip Roy (TX-21)

**“Before Congress can fully address our broken immigration system, we must end the crisis at the border.** I joined fellow House Budget Committee Republicans in sending a letter to President Biden seeking a hearing on why we have frozen the funds appropriated to build a border wall. In addition to abandoning equipment and still having to pay the contracts, abruptly halting work on the wall at our southern border may in fact have been illegal and violation to the Impoundment Control Act.” – Rep. Michael Burgess (TX-26)

## Judiciary Committee Trip

### April 5 -7 – Rio Grande Valley

**Attendees:** Ranking Member Jim Jordan (OH-4), Andy Biggs (AZ-5), Tom McClintock (CA-4), Tom Tiffany (WI-7), Dan Bishop (NC-9), Victoria Spartz (IN-5), Burgess Owens (UT-4)

“They said there are 16,000 kids, as we speak, who have moved from Custom and Borders to HHS, and they’re housing these kids, and these kids are going to be sent somewhere in the country to some relative — maybe a parent, maybe someone else — but they’re going to be moved in the country, and that turnover is every 24 days. **They told us that that 16,000 number turning over every 24 days, that number’s going to go to 60,000 turning over every 24 days. So you do the math. That’s hundreds of thousands of children just coming into the country over the next year, and you couple that with all the other immigrants we’re seeing coming into the country.** It is two to three million people in one year’s time that they’re all coming in, and what does that mean for communities? What does that mean for our public education system? What does that mean for our hospital systems?” – Ranking Member Jim Jordan (OH-4)

This delegation heard from the (station) Chief that so far this fiscal year, the aliens that Border Patrol has apprehended crossing illegally into the U.S have included 951 aliens with criminal convictions in the U.S., 102 sex offenders, 63 gang members, and 19 aliens who potentially pose a national security risk to the United States or its interests. The delegation met with a Border Patrol agent who led the effort to construct the Temporary Outdoor Processing Site under the Anzalduas Bridge on January 23, 2021, in an attempt to more quickly process the growing number of family units encountered walking from the Rio Grande River.



*Temporary Outdoor Processing Site under the Anzalduas Bridge*



“During my visit to Texas this month I got a first-hand look at the chaotic situation that is spiraling out of control on America’s southern border. I saw temporary detention spaces designed to hold a few hundred people holding thousands. **I saw a makeshift processing center under a bridge, crammed with hundreds of illegal aliens wrapped in “space blankets” that reminded me of the livestock pens I saw growing up on a farm in Wisconsin.** At both sites, fully loaded tour buses arrived one after another to drop off a never-ending stream of migrants.”  
- Rep. Tom Tiffany (WI-7)



*Unfinished portions of the border wall with equipment and materials rusting away*

“With Border Patrol overwhelmed, the **Mexican drug cartels are now dictating the rules on the U.S. side of the border.** President Biden must act now to get our border under control.” – Rep. Victoria Spartz (IN-5)

**Here are some of the numbers from this sector of the border as reported by Rep. Spartz:**

- **40% of the Border Patrol workforce processing migrants instead of safeguarding the border.**
- **2,400 migrants per day being processed.**
- **1,000 migrants per day not being detained due to resource limitations.**
- **12,000 migrants in the last few weeks alone were released by Border Patrol into the country.**
- **\$400M per month in estimated profits for the drug cartels just from human trafficking.**



**Firearm, currency and drug seizures for FY 2021 from the Laredo Field Office compared to FY 2020:**

- **400 pounds of fentanyl, up 2,067%.**
- **4,995 pounds of cocaine, up 187%.**
- **35,213 pounds of marijuana, up 89%.**
- **13,840 pounds of methamphetamine.**
- **240 weapons, up 131%.**
- **\$5.7 million in currency, up 64%**

The delegation toured the Donna Processing facility and saw firsthand pods that were built to accommodate 33 individuals under COVID protocols but currently held over 500 women and children. While at the Donna facility, the delegation heard that Border Patrol agents are seeing a marked increase in the number of special needs children being left alone on the U.S. side of the border. The delegation saw one young girl who was severely autistic and had been in CBP custody at Donna for 11 days because HHS did not have a facility that could house her.



*Border wall materials left to rust in the elements*

## Republican Study Committee Trip April 8<sup>th</sup> - Del Rio, Texas

**Attendees:** RSC Chairman Jim Banks (IN-3), Tony Gonzales (TX-23), Kelly Armstrong (ND-AL), Kevin Hern (OK-1), Ashley Hinson (IA-1), Chris Jacobs (NY-27), Lloyd Smucker (PA-11), Victoria Spartz (IN-5)



*Rep. Victoria Spartz & Rep. Jim Banks inspect a crowded holding facility*

“As we could clearly see with our own eyes what the Biden Administration desperately wants to hide from the American public: the situation is devolving and deteriorating by the day. When we met with local sheriffs, mayors and judges at the border, they told us in no uncertain terms that this is an indisputable crisis. **Facilities are overwhelmed, inundated and stretched far beyond capacity.... This trip has only strengthened my resolve to fight for the American people against Biden’s radical immigration and border agenda.**” – Rep. Jim Banks, Chairman, Republican Study Committee (IN-3)

“The lives of those on the border are drastically different and tremendously more dangerous than anything we’re used to. Crime and violence follow the cartels, who are making \$11 million/week in the Del Rio sector smuggling drugs, weapons, and dangerous individuals across the border and into communities across the country. **It’s the American people who suffer the consequences of the Biden Administration’s inaction. Border Patrol agents are struggling under the sheer volume of illegal entries, resulting in less manpower to combat the cartels. If Biden doesn’t take action soon, the cartels will win the border war.**” – Rep. Kevin Hern (OK-1)

“**After meeting with Customs and Border Protection officials (CBP), local sheriffs, and leaders, it is clear the failed policies of President Biden have directly resulted in a humanitarian and national security crisis at our border as the number of crossings last month reached a fifteen-year high.** Unaccompanied children crossing the border are at an all-time high as well, despite President Biden’s suggestions that what is happening is normal. The fact of the matter is the situation is simply out of control and President Biden’s administration continues to turn a blind eye to this growing crisis.” Rep. Lloyd Smucker (PA-11)



*Unfinished wall abruptly stopped on January 20th*

“With 35 percent of Border Patrol officers no longer manning their regular posts and instead tending to migrants in facilities like the one we visited in Eagle Pass, there are now major vulnerabilities along our border where we need boots on the ground to manage the surge. Law enforcement and Border Patrol officers told me that they are completely overwhelmed and are not currently equipped to handle the emboldened cartels and traffickers who are exploiting the security gaps at the border. **They are not only seeing significant increases in illegal crossings but in violent encounters, human trafficking, and drug smuggling. To fix this crisis, the Administration should immediately end catch and release and re-start construction of our border wall. Until this situation is addressed, every state is a border state.**” – Rep. Ashley Hinson (IA-1)

“Border Patrol and local law enforcement in Del Rio and Eagle Pass are working tirelessly under increasingly unmanageable circumstances. **Illegal entries have increased 340% from last year, child trafficking is hitting record highs, and local communities are living in fear – one small town had 27 car chases in one week.** The President’s decision to reverse and remove successful policies, such as “Remain in Mexico,” have directly contributed to this surge, and the cartels are taking advantage of the White House’s weak approach to border security – making over 11 million (dollars) per week from trafficking in this sector alone. To make matters worse, the President and Vice President have refused to visit the southern border and see the mess they have created. **This situation demands immediate action from the White House; my colleagues and I stand ready to address this issue urgently.**” – Rep. Chris Jacobs (NY-27)

“I met a six-year-old girl at the El Paso Central Processing Center who was in tears. We had a short conversation and she shared with me her devastation at being separated from her eight-year-old brother. **They had to be separated due to gender differences for safety reasons. I was disturbed to learn that these two young kids were sent across the border alone by their father in hopes of maybe finding some relative or acquaintance here in the U.S. while they waited for their father to maybe come later. It breaks my heart seeing thousands of unaccompanied children in these facilities.** As an American mother, if I would put my kids in a similar situation, I would be sent to jail.” – Victoria Spartz (IN-5)



# Doctor's Caucus Trip

## April 9<sup>th</sup> – Rio Grande Valley

**Attendees:** Brad Wenstrup (OH-2), Greg Murphy (NC-3), Larry Buschon (IN-8), Buddy Carter (GA-1), Rick Crawford (AR-1)



*Left: Overcrowded holding cell at a processing facility in Donna, Texas*

“The capacity of one facility we visited is 250 but they’ve had up to 5,000 people. Additionally, border patrol agents told us that the coyotes are successfully diverting attention at the border. So, agents are being moved away from critical border security needs to humanitarian positions that they may not be trained for. **This seriously threatens our national security, especially when it comes to smuggling deadly drugs into the US.**” – Rep. Buddy Carter (GA-1)

*Below: Children with suspected Chicken Pox placed into one cell*



“We were the first CODEL to the Delphi Long-Term Care Site. Our border patrol is doing the best they can, but they’ve been overwhelmed trying to do jobs they haven’t been fully trained for and didn’t sign up for. **The site had seen cases of lice, scabies, meningitis, chicken pox, and flu of unknown origin.**

**They’re only testing symptomatic people for COVID, so it’s hard to say how many cases have been brought here or contracted in the**

**facilities. In addition to the President and Vice President, Dr. Fauci and Dr. Walensky, need to come to the border and see this. It is a humanitarian crisis and a national security crisis, but it’s also a national health security crisis.” -Rep. Brad Wenstrup, D.P.M. (OH-2)**

## Republican Whip's Trip April 9<sup>th</sup> – Rio Grande Valley

**Attendees:** Whip Steve Scalise (LA-1), Rodney Davis (IL-13), Ranking Member Michael McCaul (TX-10), Ranking Member Devin Nunes (CA-22), Richard Hudson (NC-8), French Hill (AR-2), Bob Latta (OH-5), Nicole Malliotakis (NY-11), Steve Stivers (OH-15), Ann Wagner (MO-02), Steve Womack (AR-3)

**“We went into a facility — in the middle of a pandemic — that is designed to hold no more than 250 people. Today, there [are] more than 4,000 people. And then we looked in some of President Biden’s holding cells that he set up for these young kids. Most of these cells were designed for 33 people. They have over 400 in each of these cells. One of the first people we encountered was a young girl, maybe no more than 10 years old, who was crying. And we asked her, ‘Why are you crying?’ And she said, ‘Because, I don’t want to be here.’<sup>vii</sup> — Whip Steve Scalise (LA-1) after his trip to the Donna processing facility.**

Pods at this facility in Donna, Texas currently have ten times the number of people they were designed to hold.<sup>viii</sup> According to CBP the current Covid positive rate is 10%.<sup>ix</sup>



*Children in an overcrowded pod in Donna, Texas*



*More overcrowded pods at the Donna, Texas facility*



*The Donna Facility is designed to hold 250, at the time of this photo it was holding nearly 4,000 people*



“Our southern border has seen an out-of-control surge of migrants in recent weeks, overwhelming migrant holding facilities. In one case, a CBP facility is holding at 1600% of its holding capacity. **In February alone, nearly 100,000 illegal immigrants were detained by law enforcement. In March, that number was 172,000, including nearly 19,000 unaccompanied teens and children.** CBP and Texas state troopers have had to redirect some of their focus to operating and maintaining migrant holding facilities instead of engaging in their typical border protection efforts of combating drug smuggling, human trafficking, and other criminal activities of drug cartels and other criminal organizations. **This puts our national security at risk.**”<sup>x</sup> – Rep Rodney Davis (IL-13)



*Another view of an overcrowded holding cell in Donna, Texas*

“During my time at the border, I spoke to Border Patrol agents who need our help and who need us to build the wall and secure the border. **We have to go back to strong immigration policies that deter illegal immigration and prevent people from making the dangerous trek across the border. Our facilities have been overwhelmed by the surge of illegal immigrants, and too many children and families are living in unacceptable conditions because they are so full.**” – Rep. Ann Wagner (MO-2)



*Rep. Ann Wagner meets with Border Patrol Agents*



**“As a dad, these conditions are truly heartbreaking. Even worse, agents described how smugglers and cartels making up to \$14 million a day are using these children to tie up resources at the border so that they can continue trafficking and bringing in illicit drugs through gaps that are created. Adding to these national security concerns, just in the last week, agents apprehended the second person from Yemen on the FBI’s terror watch list and an MS-13 gang member.” – Rep. Richard Hudson (NC-8)**



*Rusting material that was being used to build the border wall*

"I represent Fayetteville, North Carolina, a population of 210,000 people. 210,000 people that we know of crossed the border last month - 172,000 that were detained and 38,000, they tell me, that they could see but couldn't get to. **The entire population of Fayetteville, North Carolina came across our border last month,**"<sup>xi</sup> – Rep. Richard Hudson (NC-8)

**“Instead of people claiming asylum in their home countries, the Biden Administration’s policies are encouraging them to take dangerous journeys to the border and cross it illegally.** The resulting flood of migrants is overwhelming law enforcement as well as our detention capabilities. This was the predictable result of the Biden Administration’s cancellation of numerous Republican policies that had successfully stemmed the tide of illegal immigration. **What I saw at the border was nothing short of a catastrophe that threatens our national security as well as the safety of both American citizens and the migrants themselves.” –** Ranking Member Rep. Devin Nunes (CA-22)

# Committee on Oversight and Reform Trip

## April 12 – El Paso & New Mexico

**Attendees:** Ranking Member James Comer (KY-1), Yvette Herrell (NM-2), Glenn Grothman (WI-6), Ralph Norman (SC-5), Fred Keller (PA-12), Andy Biggs (AZ-5), Scott Franklin (FL-15), Jake LaTurner (KS-02), Bryon Donalds (FL-19)

“My trip to the border was an educational opportunity to learn about the current migrant crisis and use listening sessions with local law enforcement and residents to bring solutions back to Washington. **Based on conversations with people on the ground, there is zero doubt that the dramatic rise in illegal immigration since January is a direct result of President Biden stopping construction of the border wall and reversing other effective policies from President Trump that deterred illegal immigration.**”- Ranking Member James Comer (KY-1)

Border Patrol agents on the ground described facilities being overwhelmed by the surge of illegal immigrants. The sheer number of unaccompanied children alone has forced the agency to divert operational resources away from strengthening border enforcement. Border Patrol agents emphasized the importance of policy-driven solutions to stem the flow of migrants and noted President Biden’s decision to end the Migrant Protection Protocols is fueling the crisis.<sup>xii</sup>



*Members meet with CBP agents at a processing facility in El Paso, Texas*

After departing El Paso, the lawmakers travelled to New Mexico to join the Johnson family and other ranchers who have been especially impacted by President Biden’s decision to halt border wall construction. At a roundtable luncheon, ranchers told lawmakers they thought the government was at least trying to help them in 2004 and 2005, but they now feel completely abandoned by the Biden Administration.<sup>xiii</sup>





*The Johnson family speaks about the violence they have seen on their ranch*

The border wall abruptly stops on the Johnson's ranch and migrants are now traveling through the opening, onto their property, and into the U.S. Lawmakers toured the ranch and saw how President Biden's decision to cease construction is placing Americans, like the Johnsons, at risk.<sup>xiv</sup>

"During our trip to the southern border, I saw first-hand how hard our Customs and Border Patrol agents must work as a result of the detrimental policies and rhetoric of the Biden administration. **These hardworking men and women operate in an incredibly dangerous environment to defend American sovereignty, and their service is well-deserving of formal recognition from Congress.**" – Rep. Fred Keller (PA-12)

"What I saw and experienced evoked a wide range of emotions: Heartbreaking instances of young, unaccompanied children abandoned at the border. **The fear and trauma of our citizens living along the border who are confronted with the drug smuggling and human trafficking operations of murderous cartels. The frustration of solid, law-abiding American citizens who feel their government has betrayed and abandoned them.**

**We must end 'Catch and Release' and reinstate the Migrant Protection Protocols that successfully reduced the numbers of border incursions. Officials confirmed that only 10-12% of people who come here seeking asylum are deemed to have legitimate cases; the rest are sent back.** By requiring them to remain in Mexico instead of being released into the U.S. while their asylum requests are adjudicated, the roughly 90% whose cases are false won't risk the journey, and those with legitimate cause to seek asylum can obtain it expeditiously." – Rep. Scott Franklin (FL-15)



*Rep. Yvette Herrell inspects unfinished portions of the border wall*

“We heard from a number of ranchers along our southern border who fear for their safety and that of their families as well as the ability to keep operations productive while enduring the threat and presence of the cartel who monitor their every move. **Those crossing on the New Mexico border are not generally those seeking asylum. Rather, they are aiming to enter our nation illegally and undetected, by any means necessary.** It was jarring to learn of the amount of property damage, stolen vehicles, downed fences, and broken water lines among other impacts of this crisis on cattle and other livestock. **Ranchers on the southern border are unable to let their children play alone outside at any time of the day or night because of the danger the migrants pose. The vast majority of those crossing in this area are in camouflage and do not want to be detected.** They pose a significant threat to anyone who crosses their paths. Moreover, the ranchers feel they have no recourse for the loss of property, livestock, and livelihoods.” – Rep. Yvette Herrell (NM-2)



*This aerial view shows gaping holes in the border wall*



## Homeland Security Committee Trip April 12th – Rio Grande Valley

**Attendees:** Ranking Member John Katko (NY-24), Michael Guest (MS-3), Carlos Gimenez (FL-26), Mariannette Miller Meeks (IA-2), Kat Cammack (FL-3), Peter Meijer (MI-3), Andrew Clyde (GA-9), Harshbarger (TN-1)

“Even though DHS denied our request to bring press into border facilities, we will continue to shine a light on the impact these policies have on our homeland security and for communities across the country. **Every state is now a border state and every community is affected by these destructive policies. Whether it is the overwhelming presence of MS-13 gang violence in Long Island, New York, or the crippling impact of the opioid crisis in Tennessee and in my district in Central New York, every American community bears the brunt of weak border security.**” – Ranking Member John Katko (NY-24)

This trip was comprised of members serving on the House Homeland Security Committee. Their observations are as follows:

**Gotaways:** In FY21 to date, there have been an estimated 15,000 gotaways in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) sector alone.

**Over Capacity:** On Monday, CBP’s Donna Processing Facility was at 420% capacity. The facility’s COVID-19 capacity is 500 individuals, yet 2,600 individuals were in custody. Members were told two tender-age children currently at the facility have been there for 17 days – two weeks longer than the 72 hour legal requirement.

**High Cost:** The Donna Processing Facility costs \$19.2 million per month to operate. Members were told that \$50,000 per month is coming out of CBP’s operational funds to pay for diapers and other consumables that were not budgeted for.

**Forced To Release Thousands:** CBP in the RGV sector has been forced to release over 30,000 illegal family units into the interior in FY21 to date. They have also had to release illegal single adults into the interior who cannot be expelled under Title 42. Chief Patrol Agent Hastings has previously said if we lose the ability to hold single adults, we lose the border.

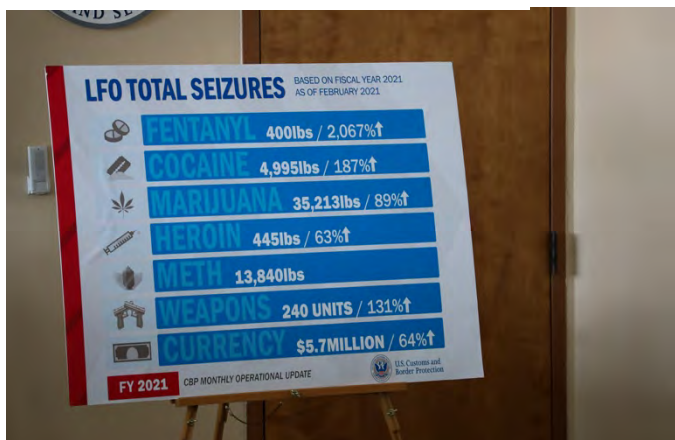
**Testing Positive:** 10% of individuals leaving CBP custody in the RGV sector are testing positive for COVID-19, a major public health concern for CBP personnel and American citizens who encounter these individuals.



*Above: Packet given to illegal immigrants with taxpayer funded plane tickets into the interior of the country*

**Cartel Activity:** Cartels have scouts constantly monitoring Texas DPS and CBP law enforcement. During a night ride along with Texas DPS Special Operations Group, suspected smugglers were using music to signal law enforcement movements along the brush. **Texas DPS has also discovered TikTok videos showing armed cartel members monitoring U.S. law enforcement.**

**Drug & Human Smuggling:** Agents said, “the federal government is becoming the biggest facilitator of human smuggling across the border” by not delivering consequences when people break the law. Smugglers are advertising on Facebook about safe passage for migrants who want to come to the United States. Agents also shared that cartels place advertisements for drivers on Craigslist to smuggle people and goods across the border and also try to recruit Uber drivers.



*CBP chart showing the number of illegal drugs crossing the border*



*Rep. Kat Cammack holds confiscated illegal drugs captured at the border.*

**Walls Work:** In places where the border wall system was built in the RGV sector, Border Patrol relayed that they were able to gain operational control of the border. The wall system shifted 80% of illicit activity away from areas where it was constructed to areas without physical barriers. Because the Biden Administration suspended wall construction, large amounts of rebar and building materials are currently scattered across communities. In one neighborhood, a road was fully deconstructed and has yet to be repaired.





*Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks and other members of the delegation inspect unfinished portions of the border wall*

**“Nothing goes through the border without the knowledge of the cartels. They have had children as young as one-year-old dropped off at the gate with a phone number written on paper pinned to their shirt or written on their shirt (with) a marker.**

When we were at the Donna facility in McAllen, they had brought their numbers down from over 5,000-6,000 per day in the facility to 3,500 per day. At an average of 3,500 people per day and \$4,000 per person that would be \$14.5 million per day the cartels make on human smuggling. It was reiterated to us that no one and nothing goes through the border without the cartel’s knowledge.

In both El Paso and McAllen, they informed us that the wall works. The new wall also has important technology which is also necessary. The construction of all stopped on January 20. **The construction companies were already funded to build a wall and are continuing to be paid even though construction has been halted. All the construction materials and metals are lying on the ground and as a medical doctor and his mother I think they post significant risk of injury to people who live in the area, in addition to being a true waste of money.** It is also possible that we are paying penalties to the contracted construction entities because the construction stopped.” – Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (IA-2)

## Problem Solvers Caucus Trip April 12th- Rio Grande Valley

**Attendees:** Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-1), Young Kim (CA-39), Dan Meuser (PA-9)

I traveled to the Mexican border with members of the Problem Solvers Caucus to speak with Customs and Border Protection agents in McAllen, Texas. I visited several migrant processing facilities and joined Operation Lone Star on patrol on the Rio Grande. **It is overtly evident that the recent policy changes from President Biden created incentives for this mass amount of illegal immigrants, primarily from the northern triangle of Central America.** These perceived incentives need to be corrected and we must provide CBP all that is necessary to increase border security and help bring this crisis to an end. I hope we can engage in a bipartisan effort to rectify this situation.” – Rep. Dan Meuser (PA-9)



*Rep. Dan Meuser inspects confiscated illegal drugs seized by CBP agents at the southern border*

“...seeing families risk their lives in the perilous journey to the U.S. breaks my heart. We saw firsthand how criminal organizations are taking advantage of these migrants. We must secure our border & create an immigration system that is fair & considerate.” – Rep. Young Kim (CA-39)



*Rep. Young Kim speaks with detained migrants*





Vice President Harris,

As you can see from the observations and photos provided this crisis at our southern border must be addressed immediately. The Republican Policy Committee recommends reinstating several policies to mitigate this crisis at our border.

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## **POLICIES THAT LED TO THE BIDEN BORDER CRISIS**

The Trump Administration implemented numerous immigration policies to secure the border and keep Americans safe. The Biden Administration's dismantling of these policies, lack of enforcement, and open border rhetoric has led to a humanitarian crisis at the southern border. The unprecedented number of illegal immigrants attempting to cross the border will not end unless the Biden Administration works to reverse its actions and change its rhetoric.

- Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas stated, "We are on pace to encounter more individuals on the southwest border than we have in the last 20 years."<sup>xv</sup> In March 2021, more than 172,000 immigrants illegally crossed the southwest border, including 18,890 unaccompanied children—a 100 percent increase over February. Unlike the 2014 and 2019 immigration surges of families, in 2021, 82 percent of the illegal crossings are single adults, many in search of work.<sup>xvi</sup>
- The flood of immigrants distracts border agents from their national security mission as they provide child-care to thousands of immigrants.<sup>xvii</sup> Meanwhile, drug smugglers have not taken a holiday. In March, border agents were also responsible for seizing over 54,000 pounds of illegal drugs, include 653 pounds of fentanyl—enough to give a lethal dose to 147 million Americans.<sup>xviii</sup> Further, cartels are expanding their business model and robbing immigrants of over \$14 million per day for smuggling families, minors, and individuals to the border.<sup>xix</sup>

The crisis at the border is largely due to the dismantling of four important policies used by the Trump Administration. **These policies must immediately be reinstated to alleviate this crisis.**

### Five Border Policies that the Biden Administration Has Dismantled:

#### **1. Constructing a Border Wall:**

- Proper border security is essential to maintaining a legal and orderly system of immigration.<sup>xx</sup> The Trump Administration finished over 452 miles of physical barriers, access roads, lighting, and advanced technologies to secure the Southern border.<sup>xxi</sup> However, on January 20, 2021, President Biden signed an executive order ending the emergency declaration at the southern border and halting construction of the border wall.<sup>xxii</sup>
- By halting border wall construction, President Biden communicated that enforcing immigration law and enhancing national security at the border are meaningless to his administration.

#### **2. Enforcing Title 42 during a pandemic:**

- The Department of Health and Human Services has the authority through Title 42 of federal law to require a medical examination, including a negative COVID-19 test, for all migrants before being admitted in the United States.<sup>xxiii</sup> The Trump Administration used this title during the COVID-19 pandemic to limit the spread of the virus at the border and among immigrants.
- The Biden Administration, on the other hand, exempted unaccompanied children from this provision.<sup>xxiv</sup> This change has become a green light for minors crossing the border. In fact, children are unable to take any health precautions in their overcrowded holding facilities. For example, on March 23, 2021, in Donna, Texas, 400 children were held in pods made for 250 children.<sup>xxv</sup>

### **3. Using Migrant Protection Protocols (MPPs):**

- MPPs were enacted in 2019 to allow certain individuals seeking asylum to wait in Mexico for their immigration proceedings rather than granting free entry into the United States. On January 20, 2021, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) suspended new enrollment in MPP.<sup>xxvi</sup>
- By ending this policy, the Biden Administration loosened limits on the coyotes' smuggling business and encouraged Central American asylum-seekers to come illegally and dangerously before applying for asylum.<sup>xxvii</sup> Team Brownsville, a volunteer group that helps migrants seeking asylum, describes how this policy is negatively affecting children and parents: Because asylum-seekers may enter and stay, mothers and children are encouraged to make the treacherous journey to the border and then face the trauma of sending their children on with only a hope of reuniting.<sup>xxviii</sup> Republicans, on the other hand, support creating safe and lawful opportunities for families to seek asylum, including MPPs.

### **4. Upholding Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACAs):**

- ACAs were formed in 2019 between United States and El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala in order to expand asylum capabilities. Under ACAs, the U.S. partners with another country to offer humanitarian aid to asylum-seekers. These agreements allow DHS to use every tool available to provide timely humanitarian aid by sharing the load of asylum-seekers.
- On February 6, 2021, the Department of State cancelled all ACAs. In this move the Biden Administration eliminated an essential tool for aiding asylees and disrupted relationships with countries in the Northern Triangle. Republicans are prepared to use every tool available to help asylees, including ACAs.

### **5. Deterring Illegal Border Crossings:**

- The Trump Administration used policies prohibiting illegal border crossing and a clear message condemning illegal immigration in order to discourage illegal immigrants from making the dangerous journey to the border. However, the Biden Administration has reversed this message.
- The Biden Administration set the stage for amnesty on his first day in office. On January 20, 2021, President Biden sent a bill to Congress, the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021. This bill would give amnesty to millions of immigrants regardless of if they came legally. It would also give permanent work authorization to minors of H-1B visa holders and remove the requirement for immigrants to claim asylum within one year of arrival in the United States.<sup>xxix</sup> By proposing this bill, President Biden promised illegal immigrants that they would become a citizen for free if they can get into the United States.

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