

House Committee on Education and the Workforce
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Hearing
The Consequences of Biden's Border Chaos on K-12 Schools

June 4, 2023

Remarks of Rep. Grijalva

Instead of addressing bona fide threats to our education system, my Republican colleagues have once again called a hearing to fearmonger and promote anti-immigrant sentiment in our communities and school systems. Let's be clear: all children, regardless of immigration status, deserve a quality education. To cement this universal truth, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Plyler vs. Doe* that states and local educational agencies are required to provide all children with equal access to elementary and secondary education, regardless of immigration status.

Republicans want to believe that our education system is under attack from a barrage of migrant children, while the data shows that the number of undocumented students in the country has actually decreased.

Republicans claim that undocumented students drain our education funds, yet they simultaneously propose billions in cuts for our public education funding last year. Meanwhile, voucher schemes to privatize education are now funneling millions from already underfunded public school systems, in many cases giving public dollars to wealthy families already sending their children to private schools.

In Arizona, as a result of Republicans misguided priorities, Arizona schools are facing a \$1.8 billion budget deficit with the Republican voucher program, costing [\\$825 million](#) in taxpayer funding in fiscal year 2024.

This hearing today offers no concrete policy solutions.

Republicans balked at their own border bill, preferring to use it to their political benefit instead of addressing what they claim is an urgent crisis. They continue to ignore actual economic data, including a recent Congressional Budget Office outlook that proves immigrants are boosting our economy by trillions of dollars by expanding our labor force and increasing consumer demand.

We know for a fact that Republicans' decades-long commitment to underfunding and cutting public education funding is the true threat to our ability to provide for our students. It's time for Republicans to stop the xenophobic rhetoric and politicizing the border.

We owe our constituents and border communities a fully funded public education system that meets the needs of all students and educators.

We must refocus our efforts on ensuring that our schools are receiving funding that equitably guarantees all children can receive a high-quality education.