

Border Patrol union chief says Biden must quit saying union backed border bill

President claimed backing in immigration pitch at State of the Union address



President Joe Biden, center, looks over the southern border, Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024, in Brownsville, Texas. Walking with Biden are from l-r., Peter Flores, Deputy Commissioner, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Jason Owens, Chief, U.S. Border Patrol and Gloria Chavez, ...
President Joe Biden, center, looks over ... more >

By Stephen Dinan
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National Border Patrol Council President Brandon Judd called on President Biden to stop “weaponizing” the union in the battle over border security, saying the White House is misrepresenting agents’ position on a recent border bill.

Mr. Judd was reacting to Mr. Biden's State of the Union address, where the president said the NBPC supported the bill that was negotiated by a bipartisan group of senators but fell to a bipartisan filibuster last month.

"It really upsets me when he uses our name and the reason it upsets me is he doesn't give context to anything," Mr. Judd told The Washington Times.

"What we wanted to see is, we wanted the bill to go the floor for debate and amendment."

Mr. Biden has made the bill the centerpiece of his immigration message, saying that the chaos at the southern border cannot be solved unless Congress gives him new powers while accusing former President Donald Trump and congressional Republicans of effectively tanking the legislation.

He said the bill includes the powers he needs to act.

Negotiated by Sen. James Lankford, a Republican, Sen. Christopher Murphy, a Democrat, and Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, an independent, the legislation would create a new expulsion authority to quickly oust some immigrants who are in the country illegally and would tighten asylum rules. It would also pump resources into more detention beds, asylum adjudicators and Border Patrol agents.

Mr. Biden ticked off those provisions in his speech to Congress on Thursday, then pointed to the NBPC's imprimatur as evidence the GOP should back it.

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“The Border Patrol union has endorsed this bill,” Mr. Biden said.

When the bill was announced in February, Mr. Judd said it was an improvement that would cut into the overall illegal crossings, particularly by adult migrants who didn’t come with children.

“I would expect that this absolutely would drop traffic,” he told The Times in February.

But he also pointed to things not in the bill — a point he reiterated this week.

“We thought it should be given the light of day for debate and amendment and if you don’t get the right amendments then we would be able to weigh in,” he said.

Mr. Judd said Mr. Biden doesn’t need the bill to improve border security.

“He’s weaponizing our support for this to go after the Republicans when he knows he has the executive authority right now to do what that bill would otherwise have done,” he told The Times.

• *Stephen Dinan can be reached at sdinan@washingtontimes.com.*