

Good morning. My name is Mike Chapman, I am the elected Sheriff of Loudoun County, Virginia, and I appreciate the opportunity to appear before this Subcommittee today on behalf of the National Sheriffs' Association as you address border security, national security, and the effectiveness of local law enforcement.

Loudoun County sits about 30 miles southwest of Washington, DC, and is home to about 450,000 residents. While not a border county, we face many of the same challenges resulting from a porous border when it comes to illegal immigration, criminal activity, and the movement of illegal drugs.

I am in my 46<sup>th</sup> year of law enforcement, having served 7 in local law enforcement, 23 as a Special Agent with the DEA in four domestic assignments (to include McAllen, Texas), and in 3 foreign assignments. I am a four-time elected Sheriff in Loudoun County, having served over 12 years.

I serve as the Chair for Homeland Security for the National Sheriffs' Association and on the NSA's Board of Directors. I previously participated in numerous White House meetings on immigration reform, opioid and MS-13 roundtables, and other Congressional hearings and discussions.

Today, I would like to highlight 2 critical issues that are impacting law enforcement nationwide. These are:

1. The proliferation of fentanyl, which is killing more and more Americans, and is responsible for a dramatic rise in juvenile overdoses;
2. The influx of illegal immigrants and its impact on criminal activity.

In 2021, our nation experienced about 106,000 reported deaths from overdoses and poisonings. Last year, more than 112,000 died from overdoses, with over 70 percent of them due to fentanyl – more people than would fill a professional football stadium.

In Loudoun County we average only about 150 overdoses per year and about 24 deaths. Unfortunately, we have seen a significant increase in juvenile drug use and overdoses.

Last fall we had 11 overdoses reported within a six-week period among students who attend one high school. Almost all were fentanyl, four occurred on the school campus, and most required life-saving administration of Narcan (naloxone) and/or CPR. That was more than half of all juvenile overdoses for the year at just one of our 19 high schools. These overdoses made the national news because I let the public know, to the chagrin of school administrators.

Having served as a DEA agent in Miami during the mid and late 80s, I thought I had seen what the worst of the drug problem. I was wrong. So, what is causing this drug crisis?

First and foremost, wide-open borders. A few years ago, my agency worked with the DEA on “Operation Angels Envy”. Kilogram amounts of drugs originating from the Sinaloa Cartel, crossed the California – Mexican border and traversed the US to the Washington, DC area. These drugs included of enough fentanyl to kill every man, woman, and child in Loudoun County two times over. This demonstrates why every state is now a border state.

This gets me to my second point: illegal immigration. The porous border, lax enforcement policies, the refusal to return illegal migrants to their countries, the discouragement by this Administration for local authorities to turn over illegal migrants to ICE, and its overall lack of support to law enforcement in general has been a catalyst for increasing violent crime nationwide. A recent nationwide online survey entitled TIPP found that 72% of Americans perceive the southern border as a national security threat with the same percentage wanting strong enforcement of existing laws. To quote Cochise County Sheriff Mark Dannels, “President Biden

refuses to acknowledge and exercise his full authority to secure our borders.”

The study follows a letter to Speaker Johnson from NSA President Greg Champagne last November addressing, at that time, the over 7.5 million illegal immigrants crossing our border, to include the capture of 2000 Chinese aliens. He noted eight steps the US could immediately take to put the brakes on this problem to include, among others, building the remainder of the wall, immediately expelling anyone entering our country illegally, and ending the authority to issue parole.

Unfortunately, law enforcement agencies nationwide are suffering from the cascading criminal and social impacts of this Administration’s policies, now coupled with an increased threat of terrorism. An April 8th press release by the American Sheriffs Alliance noted that over 700 known or suspected terrorists were apprehended last year at the southern and northern borders.

This is a crisis, and we need your help. We need a Congress and Administration that will help provide better physical barriers, technology, collaborative intelligence, and human resources. But this isn’t simply about funding. We need an Administration that supports the dangerous work of our profession and encourages the enforcement of existing laws; one that will allow Customs and Border Protection, ICE and others to do their job. We need an Administration that backs all law enforcement.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to be here. I would be happy to answer any questions.