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Before the
House Homeland Security Committee

An Inside Job: How NGOs Facilitated the Biden Border Crisis
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Chairman Guest and Members of the House Committee on Homeland Security, thank you for inviting me to testify. My name is Mike Howell and I am the President of the Oversight Project as well as a Visiting Fellow for the Heritage Foundation and an advisory board member for the National Immigration Center for Enforcement.

I especially thank you for giving me a platform to plead with Members of this body, all on the Democrat side, to stand down on their threats against the personnel of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The violence is getting out of control, and it is a direct result of the demagoguery from Congress. Whether it is one of your Members telling Axios that “there needs to be blood to grab the attention of the press and the public,” another saying “civility isn’t working” and to prepare for “violence”, or even a Member of this very committee being arrested for forcibly impeding and interfering with federal officers, this escalation deserves condemnation from all regardless of politics. It needs to stop and stop now.

Now to the matter at hand today, the role of the so-called non-governmental organizations in facilitating illegal immigration and the subversion of the United States’ sovereignty, with a particular focus on their role in the Biden Border Crisis. The reason I call these groups so-called non-governmental organizations is because they, for the most part, draw government funds or have a preferential tax status from the government. They are more creatures of the government than non-governmental organizations. For the remainder of my testimony, I will call them what they are: open borders organizations that are part of the Border Industrial Complex.

The United States of America is still reeling from the consequences of the worst border invasion in its history. This was an invasion that was planned, promoted, encouraged, funded, and sustained by radical elements of the previous Administration. This invasion could not have been accomplished without a colossal “partnership” between the government and open borders organizations. It is the dramatic excesses of the previous four years, built on decades of lackadaisical enforcement at the border in the interior, that created the situation we are in now where there is an urgent need for mass deportation as the common-sense correction to the problem. This was plain as day for all those who cared to see it as most Americans united behind policies to promote the biggest enforcement activities in American history.

Simply put, under the Biden Administration’s open border policies, the government could only do so much to facilitate mass illegal migration, welcome the illegal aliens to the United States, and move them around the country. It needed help and open borders organizations jumped at the opportunity to fill the void. The Biden Administration repaid them by driving an estimated \$6 billion to a conglomerate of 15 UN agencies and 230 NGOs, as recently calculated

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by the Center for Immigration Studies, to do this work for them.¹ In doing so, the Biden Administration turned the Border Patrol into nothing more than a welcome center, a day care, and glorified Uber drivers that ferried illegal aliens to open borders organizations. In turn, the open borders organizations facilitated mass migration of illegal aliens throughout the interior of the United States.

The Oversight Project has led the way on exposing this border industrial complex. In December of 2022, we published a first-of-its-kind study tracking the movement of illegal aliens by their cell phones through these organizations at the border.² Our investigation was simple. We purchased the ad tech cell phone data of approximately 30,000 devices found at open borders organization facilities and tracked the movement of those devices throughout the U.S. during the month of January 2022. The results were staggering. We found that these devices traveled to 431 different congressional districts in the United States. Our research proved that indeed “every town is a border town.”

Our work provided much needed ammunition for the House of Representatives to write and pass H.R. 2 (118th Cong.), which notably contained a provision prohibiting DHS from providing funds to NGOs that facilitate or encourage illegal immigration or provide certain services such as lodging or legal services.³ This was a landmark shift for politicians in Washington, DC, with the dirty little secret being that many had a cozy relationship with these organizations. Moving forward, prohibiting the funding of the invasion itself through these groups should be a commonsense staple. To that end, DHS’s freezing of such money only makes sense and Congress should follow-on to legislate that no taxpayer dollar ever again goes towards any organization that advertises, promotes, facilitates, or provides assistance, including but not limited to transportation, lodging or shelter, legal services, or financial support to illegal aliens. And those are just the terms that I can think of today. To put it simply, our entire government and the money that flows from it should be opposed to illegal immigration and never spend a single penny to help illegal immigration.

I pause for a moment to discuss the entire point of H.R. 2, which was to close the loopholes that the Biden Administration weaponized to open the border and to prevent future Administrations adverse to border security from doing the same. There has been much misinformation on this very point, with some of your colleagues in the Senate and the previous Administration who united around a policy to maintain record numbers of illegal border crossings as a new normal. As President Trump said in his State of the Union, those people

¹ <https://nypost.com/2025/02/01/opinion/how-us-taxpayers-funded-the-largest-illegal-migration-in-history/>

² <https://www.heritage.org/the-oversight-project/securing-americas-borders/tracking-movement-illegal-aliens-ngos-the-us>

³ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/2>

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“kept saying we needed new legislation to secure the border—but it turned out that all we really needed was a new President.” How right he is.

In addition, the Oversight Project has uncovered instance after instance of seedy behaviors at open borders organizations promoting illegal immigration. In New York, we discovered a taxpayer-funded shelter providing false residency documents to illegals. In Mexico, we discovered flyers at an illegal alien staging camp encouraging illegals to remember to vote for Biden when they got to the United States. In Arizona, we found a former Mexican consulate official at an NGO advising illegals to lie to law enforcement to evade ICE—a probable violation of 8 U.S.C. § 1324. Additionally, we have produced documentary evidence of noncitizens admitting, on camera, to being registered to vote in Georgia, North Carolina, Illinois, and New York.⁴ Recently, we obtained video evidence of an open borders organization in New York City hosting a seminar on how to evade ICE. This is the new trend: open borders organizations are now in the obstruction-of-ICE business.

Where are the deep dives and accounting audits into the over \$6 billion spent by our government but outside the government to promote a border crisis? A scandal of such epic proportions deserves accountability of epic proportions. The Biden Border Crisis was a flagrant constitutional abuse, perhaps the greatest in American history for its scale and just complete contradiction of the very duties of our own government to secure our own borders and protect Americans, not to make them worse. This body funded the groups that facilitated Jose Ibarra's illegal entry into this country and multiple trips to New York and Georgia, where he killed Laken Riley. They are the poster children for this fiscal negligence.

I encourage all of you to commit to a deep investigation into the actions of these organizations over the last few years, not to mention the troubling trend of these groups working against the national interest to assist illegals in evading ICE. I am glad to hear that some steps have been taken in that direction. They should continue. This body funded these groups and retains the responsibility to the taxpayer to figure out who spent that money, how, and what information they retain about the illegals they moved and where.

But the one thing I want to leave you with, and perhaps most importantly, is that it took immense organizational sophistication and creative genius by open borders advocates to design a system where they could significantly augment the ability of the government to get illegal aliens into the country. You can now do the same to get them out.

⁴ <https://x.com/OversightPR/status/1836145827091210719>

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Now is the time to look at all available streams of funding to drive capacity towards those outside the Federal government who can help get this done. Whether it is educating illegals that their free ride is over and deportation is in the offing, helping arrange travel home, or empowering states, the same can be done in reverse. The funding from the reconciliation package makes this possible.

It is time for a complete modernization of the immigration enforcement system and border security. We do not need to secure our country for just 2025, but for the future. This means a renaissance in applying technological and scientific advancements. Currently, the stove-piped systems of various Federal agencies holding different sets of critical information for enforcement are outdated. We need to lean into the available technological and scientific advancements to make sure our immigration enforcement capabilities are the world's envy.

We should also be preparing for the cartels to fight back. These transnational criminals made a lot of money in cooperation with the Biden Administration. They aren't just going to give up territory and profit modes of human and drug trafficking. I encourage you all to think deeply about not just investing in traditional modes of border security and personnel, but about what it means to secure the border against drones, kinetic attacks, and evolving means of asymmetrical warfare. The events of October 7th in Israel should be instructive in this regard.

I thank Chairman Guest and Members of the committee for the opportunity to testify, and I am happy to answer any questions.