

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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Thank you, Chairman Green, Ranking Member Payne, Members of the Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability Subcommittee, for the opportunity to appear before you all today and testify on the crisis on our Northern Border.

While a lot of attention, rightfully so, has been paid to our Southern Border, our Northern Border is also facing a crisis. The U.S.-Canada border is the longest international border between two countries in the world. Recent news reports, along with data compiled over the past two years, show a surge in illegal migrant crossings and drug trafficking across the Northern border. Specifically, in the North Country sector of the border, which I partially represent, there has been an 846% increase in illegal border crossings. As the national security threat at our Northern Border continues to grow exponentially, there has been no corresponding increase in U.S. Border Patrol staffing, which is still at the same level as it was in Fiscal Year 2009.

I am honored to represent New York's 24th Congressional District, which runs along our Northern Border with Canada across Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. This crisis is directly harming my constituents, as drugs and illegal aliens are trafficked along the border.

Under President Biden's failed leadership, our borders are less secure and our communities are at risk. It is critical now more than ever for members of Congress to come together with one voice to advocate against President Biden and Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas' reckless policies and to focus on delivering the resources needed for our brave Border Patrol agents at our Northern Border to do their jobs effectively.

Since President Biden has taken office there has been an almost 15 times increase in Northern land border encounters. There were only 997 Northern land border encounters in January 2021. But that number has increased each month since. In the month of October 2022, there were 15,938 Northern land border encounters. In FY2020, there were 32,376 border encounters. In FY2022, there were 109,535 encounters. Under the Biden administration, drug smuggling has increased by 596% along the Northern border, including a 26% increase in fentanyl.

Border Patrol staffing has remained flat since Fiscal Year 2009. Since Fiscal Year 2009, staffing levels along the Northern border sectors have been between 1,887 and 2,263 personnel. FY2020 Northern border sector staffing was 2,019. The longest international border in the world, measuring 5,525 miles, the U.S. Northern border has only 115 ports of entry with no performance measures to assess security between ports. This is especially important in my district, which shares a considerable border with Canada across Lake Ontario. Numerous traffickers utilize this large expanse of water to bypass more heavily guarded sections of the border, funneling drugs into our communities.

Just a few weeks ago I had the opportunity to meet with our Buffalo Border Patrol agents, and they discussed the many issues they are facing. However, by far, the biggest challenge these public servants face is the lack of resources and assistance to effectively do their jobs. For example, under Secretary Mayorkas, each border sector must individually apply and receive permission to perform counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (C-UAS) operations. It took Secretary Mayorkas roughly three weeks to approve the Buffalo Border Sector to perform C-UAS operations. During this time, drug smugglers continued to use UAS to traffic fentanyl and other drugs across the border that directly harms our communities.

Once again, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in front of the committee and I am glad to see the Northern Border crisis finally getting the attention it deserves.