

Testimony of Mike Howell
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Before the
House Homeland Security Committee,
Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability

Eliminating Waste Fraud and Abuse at the Department of Homeland Security: Addressing the
Biden-Harris Administration's Failure
March 11, 2025

Chairman Brecheen, Ranking Member Thanedar, and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the role non-governmental organizations (“NGOs”) play in facilitating mass illegal immigration. I currently serve as the Executive Director of the Oversight Project and have previously served at the Department of Homeland Security and on Capitol Hill conducting oversight of immigration matters. I appear today in my personal capacity.

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 NGOs. The Federal government provided billions of dollars to NGOs to do the dirty work the federal government could not.

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 NGOs 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 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 NGOs. In turn, the NGOs facilitated mass migration of illegal aliens throughout the interior of the United States.

The Oversight Project has led the way on exposing what I call the 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 NGOs at the border.² Our investigation was simple. We purchased the ad tech cell phone data of approximately 30,000 devices found at border NGO 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 informed the House of Representatives’ passage of 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 and one even went as far as calling the bill “unchristian” in order to advocate on NGOs’ behalf. Moving forward, prohibiting the funding

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>

of the invasion itself through NGOs should be a commonsense staple. To that end, DHS's freezing of such money only makes sense.

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 last week, those people "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 NGOs 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 Southside Worker Center in Tucson 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

It is remarkable to me that law enforcement and policymakers haven't focused on similar investigations. Save for Attorney General Greg Abbott in Texas, there has not been much action. In the 117th Congress, when Democrats had complete control of Congress and the border crisis was spiraling out of control, a Senate Subcommittee devoted a year and a half investigating an ICE detention facility where there were allegations of a doctor performing forced hysterectomies on illegals. This was obviously false, and I said so at the time. The Senate Subcommittee also found the allegations were false. Just recently, NBC Universal had to settle a defamation suit against the doctor at the center of these allegations for pushing this fake news on MSNBC in segments with Rachel Maddow, Chris Hayes, and Nicole Wallace. So in effect, your Senate colleagues spent time investigating a fake "uterus collector" story during a very real border crisis.

In turn, the DHS Office of Inspector General releases report after report on the conditions in ICE facilities which are required to meet stringent standards of care for those who invade our country. In stark contrast, the non-governmental organizations shuttling illegals in and around the country are not required to meet such standards and have not been a sustained focus for the DHS OIG.

Where are the deep dives and accounting audits into the over \$6 billion spent by our government to promote a border crisis? How is this not an epic scandal? To me, this

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

represents 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. This body funded the NGO facilitation of 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 on the Subcommittee to commit to a deep dive investigation into the actions of these NGOs over the last few years, not to mention the troubling continuing trend of NGOs working against the national interest to assist illegals in evading ICE. This body funded them, and in doing so retains 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, perhaps most importantly, is that it took immense organizational sophistication 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.

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 illegal that their free ride is over and deportation is in the offing, or helping arrange them travel home,.

It is a 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. Don't take my word for it. Border Czar Tom Homan recently called for a new immigration enforcement lifecycle system. As a general matter, we should be giving Tom Homan what he wants. It is he who has the Herculean task and is in the arena.

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 the Subcommittee for the opportunity to testify and I am happy to answer any questions.

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