

Committee on Homeland Security  
Subcommittee on Emergency Management and Technology  
“Given the Green Light: Open Border Policies and Threats to Law Enforcement”

Testimony of Sheriff Michael L. Chapman  
on Behalf of Major County Sheriffs of America  
December 10, 2024

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of this committee. I am Sheriff Mike Chapman of Loudoun County, Virginia. I am here representing the Major County Sheriffs of America.

As a 46-year career law enforcement professional having served in local and federal law enforcement, including 23 years with the DEA, as a four-time elected sheriff of Virginia’s largest full-service sheriff’s office, as former Vice President of Homeland Security for the Major County Sheriffs of America, and as two-time Chairman of the Washington-Baltimore HIDTA, I am astonished at how any elected official would support practices that would make their communities less safe.

The safety of our citizens should always be the number one priority of government. Unfortunately, over the past four years, the United States has seen an unmitigated flow of undocumented and criminal aliens enter this Country, with many localities throughout the United States encouraging their sanctuary despite minimal, if not a total lack of proper vetting. This has nothing to do with the efforts and desires of the brave men and women doing their best to secure our border.

Most notable are the of millions of illegal entries to this Country, that include those associated with MS-13 and 18<sup>th</sup> Street gangs from El Salvador, the Venezuelan gang known as Tren de Aragua (TDA), and known terrorists. No single issue has had more of an impact on crime throughout the United States, than our open borders. The impacts are stark from years in which over 100,000 citizens lost their lives each year due to fentanyl poisonings; to the increase in human trafficking; to unconscionable murders; to deadly threats against law enforcement, to major retail theft operations, the scope of crime and violence related to undocumented criminal aliens cannot be understated.

In Loudoun County, one of the safest localities in the entire US, we have seen an increase in unprecedented violence in recent years. Of our last five homicides, three were committed by suspects in this Country illegally, two of which were by a self-proclaimed MS-13 gang member. Just this week, a previously affiliated MS-13 gang member opened fire on another vehicle resulting from a simple “road rage” incident.

Addressing these increasing threats takes an “All Hands-on Deck” approach, one that requires all law enforcement to work together and respect the specific missions of our fellow agencies. First and foremost, cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is a must. Border Patrol and ICE are the front lines, with the next line of defense being our locally elected sheriffs. It is imperative that we get the resources we need to work with our federal partners to keep our communities safe.

But it cannot stop there. All our federal law enforcement agencies are part of the mix. Working with the DEA, for example, in “Operation Angel’s Envy,” our Sheriff’s Office was able to arrest a multitude of violators, many in this Country illegally, who were working with the Sinaloa Cartel to distribute fentanyl to the Washington, DC area – enough fentanyl to kill every man, woman and child in Loudoun County two times over.

Working with ATF, we have been able to focus on the guns being used – and shared by MS-13 gang members. Working with Postal Inspectors, we track packages and conduct controlled deliveries to stop this deadly scourge of drugs being distributed by mail. It is critical that our federal partners work more closely with local counterparts to put an end to this scourge that has killed hundreds of thousands of people over the past several years.

Starting with the border, we must continue to build a wall, refuse illegal entries, enhance technology, and encourage “Remain in Mexico” policies. If an “All Hands-on Deck” approach is not aggressively pursued, these problems will continue to migrate to our most populated areas, to our cities that were once beautiful which have now become unsafe. As law enforcement enforcers, we have a duty and responsibility to work together to protect our citizens and keep them safe – and Congress has a duty to support these efforts.

Consequently, sheriffs throughout this Country support the following policy initiatives of the incoming Administration. Just this week, Sheriff Mark Dannels of Cochise County, Arizona summarized the incoming Administration’s Rule of Law: Prevention, Enforcement, and Consequences.

Our requests consist of the following:

1. Congress must prioritize our efforts to secure the border, enforce immigration laws, and strengthen information sharing among federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement.
2. Congress must increase our access to technological investigative tools among law enforcement agencies. For example, facial recognition software, license plate readers, and social media analytical tools are integral to generating investigative leads and preventing crime and acts of terrorism.
3. Congress must support and adequately fund federal law enforcement agencies to partner with, and aid local law enforcement in solving crime.
4. Finally, all of us involved in enforcing the law and supporting our enforcement of the law, must work together in the fight against cartels and illicit drug trafficking, and provide enhanced funding for federal, state, and local narcotic enforcement efforts.
5. Only by working together toward a common goal can we make America safer.