

Chair Rodgers Opening Statement

Hearing on the Border

January 17, 2024

INTRODUCTION

Thank you, Chair Griffith.

America is less secure today because of President Biden's border crisis.

The administration's failure to enforce the law is harming the American people.

Our open borders have far reaching consequences on our nation's economy... our health care system... and our education system.

The Biden administration's refusal to act is a failure of leadership to protect and defend America.

American's faith and trust in their government suffers as a result.

Last December, a Pew Research poll showed that 67 percent of Americans are not confident in the President's ability to make wise decisions about immigration policies.

ONE YEAR AFTER MCALLEN

Last year, this subcommittee traveled to McAllen, Texas, where we saw the consequences of unprotected borders up close.

After what I witnessed down there... I had trouble sleeping.

We talked with everyday Americans...

...who were struggling to deal with their new reality of overwhelmed hospitals and schools.

We toured a path used by the cartels to smuggle migrants and illegal drugs into the United States...

...And, we met with border patrol personnel who shared how frustrated they are with this administration's policies, which are making their jobs nearly impossible.

In the year since our hearing, the crisis has only worsened.

FENTANYL STILL DESTROYING LIFE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

The Biden border crisis is allowing record amounts of fentanyl to pour into our communities.

More people than ever are dying from fentanyl poisoning. It remains the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45.

A record seventy-four and a half million fentanyl pills were seized in 2023.

While some may celebrate this... the sad truth is... for every batch seized, more slips through undetected, and more lives are lost.

That's the message Molly Cain shared with our Committee last year after her son, Carson, took a pill he thought would help his anxiety. It turned out to be laced with a lethal dose of fentanyl.

No one should feel the pain Molly felt. More can and must be done.

NOT JUST A BORDER TOWN PROBLEM

President Biden's border crisis is not only harming border communities, it is also harming communities across the country.

America's largest cities, often run by politicians who once proudly declared their cities to be so-called "sanctuary cities," are now begging migrants not to come... and pleading with the administration to do something.

New York City's homeless population is at an all-time high, fueled by the constant arrival of more migrants.

The migrant influx is projected to cost New York City alone 12 billion dollars over three years.

And the governor of New York announced just yesterday that she wants to spend another two point four billion dollars from the state to care for the massive increase in migrants... That's on top of the nearly two billion the state has already allocated in emergency funds.

Just this past week, students in New York City were sent home and told to return to remote learning...

...all because their school had to be converted into a temporary shelter for nearly two thousand migrants.

President Biden's open-border agenda is unsustainable, irresponsible, and inhumane.

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

The problems at our southern border could be mitigated in part by enforcing the existing immigration laws this administration is choosing to ignore.

House Republicans have made securing our border a top priority and passed sweeping border protection legislation at the start of this Congress.

H.R. 2 would go a long way to solving the Biden border crisis but unfortunately President Biden and Senate Democrats continue to show little interest in a solution.

House Republicans also passed the HALT Fentanyl Act, led by Chairs Griffith and Latta, to permanently give our law enforcement the tools they need to keep deadly fentanyl off our streets.

The Senate must take action. Every day they do not means another day that communities across the country struggle with the toll of the Biden border crisis.

The American people deserve better.

I yield back.