

Testimony-Jonathan W Lines

House Judiciary Committee

Chairman Jordan and Members of the Congressional Judiciary Committee,

My name is Jonathan Lines and I would Like to Welcome you to the Most Patriotic Community in Arizona as declared by Insurify. I serve my community in many different capacities as a County Supervisor and sitting on boards like the Yuma Community Food Bank, Amberly's Place and through service organizations. Yuma has been my family's home since the 1930s and Arizona our state since the 1870s prior to statehood. Here is where we choose to carve out an existence in the desert. I am sad to be before you today to discuss the failures of the Biden Administration on the Southwest Border in the Yuma Sector.

Since the first days of this Administration, we have seen a significant deterioration in border security despite a massive effort from men and women who have been working tirelessly to secure the border to safeguard our national security. Since President Biden took office, we saw a huge surge--a record number of people crossing the border illegally from 106 different countries, 17 of those countries are what is designated "special interest" because of the negative relationships with the United States and it has steadily continued these many months. Along with the illegal entry into the US across an open border the increase in the trafficking of narcotics. Both human trafficking and drug trafficking remain at an all-time high, significantly greater than under any other administration in our history.

In addition to the known 'give-ups' we are extremely concerned about the backgrounds and intentions of the 'got-aways' --those people who evade Law Enforcement, entering the United States illegally who are NOT willing to give themselves into the custody of Border Patrol officers for processing. There are estimated to be more than 1 million of those entries since President Biden took office. I have had many opportunities to visit the border with elected officials from all over the United States and the message they have shared with me is that this is not just a Yuma Arizona problem, but that illegal entry, human trafficking and narcotics, especially fentanyl and methamphetamines, has now compounded and pervaded across the States to affect every community across our nation, now making them too into border communities. These leaders stood with us in asking the President to fulfill his commitment through Secretary Mayorkas, at his visit last year, who had pledged to Mayor Nicholls and myself to close the Yuma gaps in the border wall and provide financial support, safety and security for the men and women who are on the front lines battling a very porous border; which support has not yet materialized from the Executive Branch.

Today you will have the opportunity to hear from Sheriff Leon Wilmot who will share some of the challenges experienced by his office, and of the unprecedented number of deaths in this county directly attributable to the illegal entry of people and substances across this border of the United States. You will also hear from Dr Robert Trenchel regarding his concerns about the unreimbursed, direct medical costs associated locally with the treatment of those who have

entered illegally into the United States. Last week we learned that the average number of people who entered illegally across this Yuma sector is at 2,500 per week from a prior 5,000 to 6000 per week, and yet at the same time, fentanyl and methamphetamine and cocaine seizures were up between 200-400 percent because the men and women in uniform were able to direct their attention and efforts to border security and national security.

Fentanyl is a scourge of our nation. It is being shipped to Mexico from China, and in conjunction with the cartels is being marketed and sold to children through social media apps. The stories are tragic when parents talk about the loss of life of their sons and daughters due to fentanyl and opioids.

My hope today through this hearing is that we can shed light on the challenges we face as a small community, as well as to remind the nation, like many elected officials have done after coming to see for themselves that every community in the United State is now a border community due to an abject failure by this administration to control and stem the tide of illegal entry along the Southwest Border and to commit the take back control of the border from the cartels.