

## NEWS ARTICLES ON KEY ISSUES – NOVEMBER 2019

### LATEST IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

#### BORDER AGENTS RESCUED MORE MIGRANTS FROM THE RIO GRANDE IN THE DEL RIO SECTOR THAN IN ANY OTHER REGION

By Silvia Foster-Frau – San Antonio Express-News – October 31, 2019

❖ Overall, border agents apprehended more than 977,500 asylum-seekers from October 2018 through September 2019, the most in a dozen years. More than 4,900 were rescued along the entire 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border. About 38 migrants drowned in the Del Rio sector, compared with 19 the year before. Federal officials recorded a total of 299 migrant deaths on the U.S.-Mexico border. Apprehensions of family members increased by more than 1,000 percent in the Del Rio region — the largest increase of any sector along the border, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection data. Border Patrol Agents from Lake Amistad near Del Rio to Eagle Pass have apprehended 57,269 migrants who crossed between ports of entry. More than half were family members traveling together. In its eight stations, the sector was equipped to hold about 865 migrants. But in the early summer, the facilities were holding up to 1,500 people and for longer than the couple days they are designed for. More than 55,000 migrants have been placed in the “Remain in Mexico” (RIM) program, according to a Homeland Security Department fact sheet. Federal officials conducted more than 7,400 interviews with migrants petitioning to live in the U.S. instead of Mexico, but only 13 percent of the migrants were granted parole — the rest were denied and sent back to Mexico.

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/Border-agents-rescued-more-migrants-from-the-Rio-14581942.php>



After wading across the Rio Grande at Eagle Pass, Texas, a Central American migrant family turns themselves into U.S. Border Patrol agents, April 4, 2019.

Photo Credit: Jerry Lara/San Antonio Express-News

#### TRUMP ADMINISTRATION WORKING TO CLOSE IMMIGRATION ‘LOOPHOLES’ — BUT BORDER IS STILL A CRISIS, OFFICIALS SAY

By Robert Moore and Abigail Hauslohner – The Washington Post – October 29, 2019

❖ Unauthorized migration across the U.S.-Mexico border has dropped significantly since a record influx of 140,000 people in May, but the border remains “in crisis” and Congress needs to act to address it, Trump administration officials said Tuesday, October 29. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents took 970,000 people into custody along the southern border in the past year — more than double the previous year’s total — including a “record-breaking” number of families, CBP’s acting commissioner Mark Morgan said. Border crossings in fiscal 2019 hit their highest number in more than a decade, despite a continuous drop in border crossings during the past four months, Morgan said. Authorities credit the significant drop in border crossings in recent months to the administration’s initiatives to close what Morgan called “loopholes” in the immigration system — exceptions within U.S. law that officials say draw people to the country. Morgan also said new partnerships with Mexico and Central American governments have made a difference because those countries have strengthened border security and slowed the northbound migration flow. The nearly 1 million people taken into custody along the southwest border included 851,000 apprehended between official entry points and 126,000 deemed inadmissible when they presented themselves at border crossings, according to CBP statistics released earlier this month. Earlier this year, the administration launched the experimental Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), a policy also known as “Remain in Mexico,” (RIM) that has forced thousands of migrants back across the border into Mexican cities while their cases are adjudicated in U.S. immigration courts. In September, the last month of the government’s fiscal year, the number of border crossers taken into custody dropped to about 52,000. Even with the decline, it was the highest number of migrants taken into custody during any September since 2007, according to CBP statistics. Department of Homeland Security officials on Monday, October 28, announced that the agency is expanding the MPP program to include the port of entry at Eagle Pass, Tex., bringing the total number of sites to six (San Ysidro, CA, Calexico, CA, San Diego, CA, El Centro, CA, and El Paso, TX).

❖ News Article Source: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/trump-administration-says-it-is-closing-immigration-loopholes-but-border-is-still-a-crisis/2019/10/29/99bbc9ac-fa62-11e9-ac8c-8ecedd29ca6ef\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/trump-administration-says-it-is-closing-immigration-loopholes-but-border-is-still-a-crisis/2019/10/29/99bbc9ac-fa62-11e9-ac8c-8ecedd29ca6ef_story.html)

## **DETENTIONS OF CHILD MIGRANTS AT THE U.S. BORDER SURGES TO RECORD LEVELS**

*By Paulina Villegas – The New York Times – October 29, 2019*

- ❖ The United States has detained more children trying to cross the nation's southwest border on their own over the last year than during any other period on record, surpassing the surge of unaccompanied minors that set off a crisis during the Obama administration, according to new figures released Tuesday, October 29. American immigration authorities apprehended 76,020 minors, most of them from Central America, traveling without their parents in the fiscal year that ended in September — 52 percent more than during the last fiscal year, according to United States Customs and Border Protection. Mexico is experiencing the same surge. Under pressure from the Trump administration, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador stepped up immigration enforcement and detained about 40,500 underage migrants traveling north without their parents in the same period — pushing the total number of these children taken into custody in the region to more than 115,000. In Mexico, when unaccompanied minors are detained, the law mandates that they be released right away into the custody of the national child protection agency, which finds them accommodation in shelters designed for children. But migrants' advocates say the government has been holding children in the nation's overcrowded detention centers for far too long, and that some children are quickly funneled into the deportation process rather than being given a fair chance to seek asylum or some other form of relief.
- ❖ News Article Source: [https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/29/world/americas/unaccompanied-minors-border-crossing.html?emc=edit\\_na\\_20191029&ref=cta&nl=breaking-news?campaign\\_id=60&instance\\_id=0&segment\\_id=18340&user\\_id=17f12e73eae14f98610bfe32205d547&regi\\_id=54832992ing-news](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/29/world/americas/unaccompanied-minors-border-crossing.html?emc=edit_na_20191029&ref=cta&nl=breaking-news?campaign_id=60&instance_id=0&segment_id=18340&user_id=17f12e73eae14f98610bfe32205d547&regi_id=54832992ing-news)

## **DETENTION CENTERS**

### **EDEN DETENTION CENTER TO REOPEN WITH GOVERNMENT CONTRACT TWO YEARS AFTER CLOSING**

*By Alana Edgin – San Angelo Standard-Times – May 23, 2019*

- ❖ On Thursday, May 23, it was announced the Eden Detention Center would be reopening, two years after it was mothballed. CoreCivic, the company that owns the detention center, announced it has signed a contract with the City of Eden and the U.S. Marshals Service to reopen the 1,422-bed facility. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) also could use the facility, the release states. This contract will start June 1 and has an indefinite term, according to a news release from CoreCivic. The detention center is just outside Eden in West Central Texas, roughly 45 miles southeast of San Angelo and 175 miles from the Texas-Mexico border. The agreement is for around 844 beds for male prisoners to support detention needs in the western and northern Texas districts, according to Lynzey Donahue, U.S. Marshals Headquarters office of public affairs. ICE is included in the agreement for 660 beds for male detainees. Prisoners may include people going through the federal criminal judicial process or awaiting transport after sentencing to the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The detention center will accept inmates in the third quarter of 2019. This contract is expected to create \$35-40 million in annual revenue.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.gosanangelo.com/story/news/local/2019/05/23/eden-texas-detention-center-reopen-ice-u-s-marshals-contract/1204626001/>

### **SUNNY GLEN TO RUN 500-CHILDREN SHELTER IN RAYMONDVILLE**

*By Fernando Del Valle – Valley Morning Star – August 24, 2019*

- ❖ A federally funded shelter to house up to 500 migrant children and create as many as 600 jobs is expected to pump millions of dollars into this farming area struggling with one of Texas' highest jobless rates. San Benito-based Sunny Glen Children's Home will operate the New Day Resiliency Center, expected to open around December at the site of the former Walmart store, a 100,000-square-foot building just south of town at 14091 FM 490. The project is hailed as the city's biggest economic boon in years in the area still reeling from the closure of the 3,000-bed Willacy County Correctional Center, which laid off 400 employees in early 2015. Sunny Glen, which has housed abused and neglected children in San Benito since 1936, will operate the shelter with a projected annual payroll of \$20 million to \$24 million. Sunny Glen is contracting with the federal government's Office of Refugee Resettlement to house migrant children detained without parents or guardians in the United States. The shelter will hire a wide range of employees, including nurses, nursing assistants, teachers and counselors, with wages starting at about \$12 to \$14 an hour, City Commissioner Edward Gonzalez said. To jump-start the operation, the shelter is borrowing \$3 million, Gonzales said. As collateral, he said, the city, over a two-year period, will put up 50 acres behind the El Valle Detention Center off State Highway 186. As part of an agreement, he said, the city's Economic Development Corporation will give the shelter \$25,000 a year during a three-year period.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.valleymorningstar.com/2019/08/24/sunny-glen-to-run-500-children-shelter-in-raymondville/>

## **DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA)**

### **SUPREME COURT APPEARS READY TO LET TRUMP END DACA PROGRAM**

By Adam Liptak – *The New York Times* – November 12, 2019

❖ The Supreme Court's conservative majority appeared ready on Tuesday, November 12, to side with the Trump administration in its efforts to shut down a program protecting about 700,000 young undocumented immigrants known as Dreamers. The court's liberal justices probed the administration's justifications for ending the program, expressing skepticism about its rationales for doing so. But other justices, including President Trump's two appointees, indicated that they would not second-guess the administration's reasoning and, in any event, considered its explanations sufficient. "I assume that was a very considered decision," Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh said of a second set of justifications offered by the administration in a memorandum last year after its decision to end the program was challenged in court. Justice Neil M. Gorsuch said he saw little point in requiring the administration to come forward with better or more elaborate reasons. "What good would another five years of litigation over the adequacy of that explanation serve?" he asked. Still, the justices agreed that the young people who signed up for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, were sympathetic and that they and their families, schools and employers had relied on it in good faith. "I hear a lot of facts, sympathetic facts, that you've put out there, and they speak to all of us," Justice Gorsuch said. Chief Justice Roberts added that both the Obama and Trump administrations have said they would not deport people eligible for the program, meaning that the main practical questions if the program is ended would be their ability to work legally, obtain driver's licenses and the like. "The whole thing was about work authorization and these other benefits," the chief justice said. "Both administrations have said they're not going to deport the people." The arguments in the case, one of the most important of the court's term, addressed the president's power over immigration, a critical issue for Mr. Trump and a divisive one, especially as it has played out in the debate over DACA, a program that has broad, bipartisan support.

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/12/us/supreme-court-dreamers.html>

### **TRUMP'S DECISION TO END DACA FACES SUPREME COURT SCRUTINY**

By Lomi Kriel and Peggy O'Hare – *San Antonio Express-News* – November 11, 2019

❖ Created in 2012 by the Obama administration, DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) gave certain young immigrants a work permit and temporary protection from deportation. Then President Donald Trump announced he was ending that program in 2017. His order was immediately challenged and two years later, the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments Tuesdays, November 12, on whether his administration had the authority to end the program. The case, one of the most important of the justices' term, will help define the scope of presidential powers over immigration. It also is seen as a test of Chief Justice John Roberts, who has lamented the politicization of the court and appeared reluctant to take on the DACA case, waiting until the last moment to do so. A majority of justices have consistently agreed that Trump has expansive latitude on immigration, green-lighting his travel ban preventing citizens of several Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States and declining to halt a policy ending asylum at the southern border. But in a 5-4 majority opinion, Roberts recently blocked the administration from adding a citizenship question to the 2020 census — seen by some as an attempt to suppress the participation of immigrant-heavy communities — by arguing that it had done so improperly, which is also at issue in the government's termination of DACA. The administration argues that it had no choice but to end the program because it was unlawful. In arguing DACA is unlawful, the White House relied on a related lawsuit the state of Texas brought against an attempt by Obama's administration to extend similar protections to the parents of American children who lack lawful status. Texas argued the program, known as Deferred Action for Parents of Americans or DAPA, was an executive overreach and that the state would be harmed by the cost of having to provide driver's licenses to such immigrants. The Obama administration contended the program was legal because it relied on well-established governmental authority to use discretion in deciding which immigrants to deport. In 2016, a shorthanded Supreme Court deadlocked 4-4 on the issue, leaving in place a ruling from the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in New Orleans that had blocked the program. The Trump administration argued that made it likely DACA would also be considered illegal. Last year, however, the same federal judge who initially halted the DAPA program delivered an unexpected victory to immigrant groups on DACA. Judge Andrew Hanen of the federal district court in Houston declined Texas' 2018 request to block DACA and declare the initiative unlawful. He said it had been relied upon by hundreds of thousands of immigrants since it was created in 2012 and should not abruptly be terminated.

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/Trump-s-decision-to-end-DACA-faces-Supreme-14827159.php>



A rally in support of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, outside the Supreme Court in Washington on Tuesday.

Photo Credit: Erin Schaff/The New York Times

## **ASYLUM SEEKERS**

### **TOP IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS DEFEND TRUMP'S REMAIN IN MEXICO PLAN**

*By Ursula Perano – Axios – November 11, 2019*

- ❖ In separate interviews for "Axios on HBO," two top immigration officials defended the Trump administration's so-called "Remain in Mexico" (RIM) plan. Mark Morgan and Ken Cuccinelli told "Axios on HBO" that it's meant to ease bureaucratic burdens on the U.S. and prevent the "catch and release situation" where asylum-seekers would be released into the interior of the U.S. Homeland Security claims Mexico will provide those affected by the plan "with all appropriate humanitarian protections for the duration of their stay." The plan, formally titled the Migrant Protection Protocol (MPP), pushes for some migrants seeking entry to the U.S. from Mexico to be returned to Mexico while waiting for the completion of their immigration proceedings.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.axios.com/remain-in-mexico-plan-cuccinelli-morgan-trump-0b4c2855-7b62-4870-ae0b-e5eaa61d478d.html>

### **U.S. BORDER AGENTS WROTE FAKE COURT DATES ON PAPERWORK TO SEND MIGRANTS BACK TO MEXICO**

*By Gustavo Solis – LA Times – November 7, 2019*

- ❖ Asylum seekers who have finished their court cases are being sent back to Mexico with documents that contain fraudulent future court dates, keeping some migrants south of the border indefinitely, records show. Under the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) policy, asylum seekers with cases in the United States have to wait in Mexico until those cases are resolved. The Mexican government agreed to only accept migrants with future court dates scheduled. Normally, when migrants conclude their immigration court cases, they are either paroled into the United States or kept in federal custody depending on the outcome of the case. However, records obtained by the San Diego Union-Tribune show that on at least 14 occasions, Customs and Border Protection agents in California and Texas gave migrants who had already concluded their court cases documents with fraudulent future court dates written on them and sent the migrants back to Mexico anyway. Those documents, unofficially known as tear sheets, are given to every migrant in the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program who is sent back to Mexico. The document tells the migrants where and when to appear at the border so that they can be transported to immigration court. What is different about the tear sheets that migrants with closed cases receive is that the future court date is not legitimate, according to multiple immigration lawyers whose clients have received these documents. This has happened both to migrants who have been granted asylum and those who had their cases terminated — meaning a judge closed the case without making a formal decision, usually on procedural grounds. Additionally, at least one migrant was physically assaulted after being sent back to Mexico this way, according to her lawyer. In most of these cases, immigration attorneys aren't aware that their clients were sent back to Mexico until it's too late. In one case, a Cuban asylum seeker was returned to Mexico after an immigration judge in Brownsville, Texas, granted her asylum.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2019-11-07/u-s-border-agents-wrote-fake-court-dates-on-paperwork-to-send-migrants-back-to-mexico>

### **TRUMP ADMINISTRATION TO BEGIN SENDING ASYLUM SEEKERS TO GUATEMALA**

*By Nick Miroff – The Washington Post – October 28, 2019*

- ❖ The Trump administration is preparing to finalize an agreement to begin sending asylum seekers from the U.S. border to Guatemala, implementing a deal the two countries reached in July. The pact gives the Department of Homeland Security the ability to send asylum seekers to Guatemala if they do not seek protection there while transiting through the country en route to the U.S. border. Homeland Security officials plan to start sending Hondurans and Salvadorans to Guatemala soon after the implementation of the deal. Guatemala's highest court initially ruled that the asylum accord could not go forward without the approval of Guatemala's congress, but a subsequent decision left open the possibility that outgoing President Jimmy Morales could implement the deal without lawmakers' approval. Morales is due to leave office in January. Guatemala's president-elect, Alejandro Giammattei, has criticized the deal, but Trump officials reiterated this month that the United States will slash government assistance if Guatemala backs out. Kevin McAleenan, who plans to step down as acting DHS secretary as soon as Thursday (October 31), has secured similar agreements with Honduras and El Salvador, but those deals have not been implemented. The Trump administration has pledged at least \$47 million to build up Guatemala's asylum system with help from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. President Trump suspended aid to Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador this spring amid a record surge of families from those nations traveling to the border in large groups and caravans. He announced that he would restore some of the assistance this month after the three countries agreed to accept U.S. asylum seekers. U.S. authorities took nearly 1 million migrants into custody along the Mexico border during the 2019 fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, the highest total since 2007. Unauthorized border crossings peaked at more than 144,000 in May but have since declined by two-thirds. Migration from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador has fallen by more than 80 percent, according to the latest statistics.
- ❖ News Article Source: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/trump-administration-to-begin-sending-asylum-seekers-to-guatemala-as-soon-as-this-week/2019/10/28/998868c4-f99e-11e9-8190-6be4deb56e01\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/trump-administration-to-begin-sending-asylum-seekers-to-guatemala-as-soon-as-this-week/2019/10/28/998868c4-f99e-11e9-8190-6be4deb56e01_story.html)

## THE DEMISE OF AMERICA'S ASYLUM SYSTEM UNDER TRUMP, EXPLAINED

By Nicole Narea – VOX – November 5, 2019

- ❖ The Trump administration wants to send migrants back to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador - Over 978,000 migrants have arrived at the southern border over the past year. They are mostly coming from the Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, where rampant crime, violence, and corruption is driving hundreds of thousands to flee. In those countries, migrants are commonly robbed, kidnapped for ransom, raped, tortured, and killed.
- ❖ Getting in line at the US-Mexico border doesn't work anymore - If asylum seekers reach the southern border, they face a choice: either line up at a port of entry and wait to be processed by CBP officers, or try to cross the border without authorization. Mexican immigration authorities keep lists of those who are waiting. The number of names on those lists exceeded 26,000 in August and there's no telling how long much longer they will have to remain there before they are processed at the port.
- ❖ There is no guarantee of entry to the US - Even if asylum seekers finally get in front of an immigration agent, they won't necessarily be allowed to enter the US. Most are quickly sent back to Mexico under the administration's "Remain in Mexico" (RIM) policy, also known as the "Migrant Protection Protocols" (MPP).
- ❖ Trump has massively expanded the detention of asylum seekers - Immigration agents who process asylum seekers at the border — either after they stood in line at a port of entry or after they were caught trying to cross without authorization — will usually send them back to Mexico under the Remain in Mexico (RIM) policy.
- ❖ Asylum seekers aren't getting a fair day in court - Usually while still detained, most migrants seeking asylum will have to make their case before an immigration judge in what is usually a lengthy process: As of June, migrants with active immigration cases have been waiting an average of almost two years for a decision. DHS has constructed temporary courts — which opened last month in tent complexes near ports in Laredo and Brownsville, Texas, — to hear cases from migrants affected by Remain in Mexico (RIM). Immigrants and their attorneys video conference with judges and DHS attorneys appearing virtually, streamed from brick-and-mortar immigration courts hundreds of miles away.
- ❖ Some migrants never set foot in a courtroom at all - The government has the power to put some migrants in what's called "expedited removal proceedings," under which they can be deported in a matter of days without seeing a judge or an attorney. It currently applies to individuals who are arrested within 100 miles of a land border within two weeks of their arrival. But in July, Trump tried to expand who can be subjected to expedited removal, issuing a rule that would have also included immigrants found anywhere in the US if they arrived within the last two years — an estimated 20,000 people annually. That rule has been blocked temporarily as part of an ongoing legal challenge, but it could still be revived.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.vox.com/2019/11/5/20947938/asylum-system-trump-demise-mexico-el-salvador-honduras-guatemala-immigration-court-border-ice-cbp>



U.S. Customs and Border Patrol officials check the papers of a Venezuelan family asking for asylum on the international bridge between Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, July 10, 2019.  
Photo Credit: Luis Antonio Rojas/The New York Times

## SAN ANTONIO REGION JUSTICE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS' (SARJFON) LEGAL TEAM PROVIDES HELP TO ASYLUM-SEEKERS FORCED TO REMAIN IN MEXICO

By The San Antonio Region Justice For Our Neighbors (SARJFON) – 2019

- ❖ Thanks to the overwhelming support of donors and the United Methodist Committee on Relief, SARJFON has deployed two immigration lawyers to the border to help asylum-seekers have a fighting chance in recently installed immigration tent courts in Brownsville. Under the new policies, most asylum-seekers are being forced to remain in Mexico and have no access to United States immigration experts. SARJFON is changing that by educating and advising asylum-seekers. "The cases we hear are heartbreaking," said Richard Newman, SARJFON Project Managing Attorney for the Border Mission Project. "No one has the man-power to help everyone with a solid asylum claim. To provide the most help we are educating groups about the asylum process, how to represent themselves in court and are reviewing asylum applications to ensure a technical error won't impact someone's eligibility to be heard." Additionally, the SARJFON team is working to coordinate application translation and is filing the applications in U.S. Immigration Court to ensure the files are properly stamped and recorded. "The people we help are fleeing situations we can't even imagine," Newman said. "It is amazing to see the hope in their eyes after they learn about the help we are offering. They often question who sent us and it is really cool to say 'UMCOR and the people of Texas pay your legal fees'. I wish everyone who has made our work possible could see and feel the gratitude of the asylum-seekers we help. It is overwhelming and keeps us going 14-hours a day, six days a week."
- ❖ For more information go to: <https://www.sarjfon.org/>
- ❖ If you would like to make a donation go to: <https://www.sarjfon.org/get-involved/donate/>

*Benedictine Sisters Corporate Responsibility Coalition*

## **ADMINISTRATION EXTENDS TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS TO MANY SALVADORANS IN U.S.**

*By Richard Gonzales – NPR – October 28, 2019*

- ❖ The Trump administration is extending protections from deportation to more than 200,000 Salvadoran citizens living and working in the United States in an announcement made Monday, October 28. Under the program called Temporary Protected Status (TPS) — usually reserved to help foreign nationals from countries embroiled in wars or facing natural disasters — thousands of Salvadorans were allowed to stay in the U.S. following earthquakes in 2001. The move apparently reverses a decision made in 2018 to end TPS for Salvadorans. The Trump administration also has tried to end TPS for people from Sudan, Haiti, and Nicaragua, among others. A federal judge has blocked the administration after a lawsuit was brought by the American Civil Liberties Union.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.npr.org/2019/10/28/774249816/administration-extends-temporary-protected-status-to-many-salvadorans-in-u-s>

## **U.S. EXTENDS TEMPORARY WORK PERMITS FOR EL SALVADOR IMMIGRANTS**

*By Miriam Jordan and Kirk Semple – The New York Times – October 28, 2019*

- ❖ Eager to seal a deal with El Salvador to curb a surge of migrants to the southwestern border, the Trump administration on Monday, October 28, agreed to special legal protections that would allow an estimated 250,000 Salvadorans to stay and work in the United States for an additional year. The announcement walks back an earlier decision to strip Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in January from these Salvadoran immigrants, many of whom have resided lawfully in the United States for nearly two decades. All told, about 400,000 immigrants from around the world are beneficiaries of Temporary Protected Status — a program that allows immigrants from countries that have suffered from natural disasters or other urgent situations to live and work in the United States. The United States and Guatemala have also signed a cooperation agreement to reduce the number of Central American asylum seekers traveling to the United States. Once the accord is enforced, the United States will begin returning asylum seekers who traveled through Guatemala back to that country, where they can choose to apply for asylum or to return home. In March, President Trump suspended aid to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras to exercise additional pressure. This month, the president announced he would restore some aid to those countries after they agreed to take in asylum seekers as requested. These agreements, in combination with policies that have pressured Mexico to shelter more asylum applicants, have contributed to a steep drop in unauthorized immigration in recent months. The number of migrants taken into custody at the southwestern border peaked at 144,200 in May; that number was down to 52,000 in September, though numbers are often down during the hot summer months. The agreement with El Salvador called for a new law enforcement partnership to identify air passengers linked to terrorism or to narcotics, weapons or currency smuggling. Under its provisions, the United States will send American law enforcement officials to help “mentor” their police, border security and immigration counterparts in El Salvador. But its most talked-about provision is the one that allows Salvadorans who have Temporary Protected Status to legally work in the United States until Jan. 4, 2021 — a year later than the deadline set earlier by the Trump administration. They could conceivably be allowed to remain longer because the order also guarantees that Salvadorans will have 365 days from the conclusion of litigation over the program — whenever that is — to “repatriate” back to their home country. The Salvadoran diaspora in the United States is by far the largest of any Central American nation, and it provides a hefty economic lifeline for that country. In 2018, remittances from Salvadorans living abroad, most of them in the United States, totaled nearly \$5.4 billion, equivalent to about 20 percent of El Salvador’s gross domestic product, according to the World Bank.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/28/us/el-salvador-temporary-protected-status-tps.html>

## **PROPOSED MIGRANT CENTERS FOR CHILDREN IN SAN ANTONIO, TX**

### **VISIONQUEST MOVES TO SHELTER MIGRANT CHILDREN IN SAN ANTONIO SUBURB**

*By Silvia Foster-Frau – San Antonio Express-News – October 17, 2019*

- ❖ VisionQuest, the company that wants to open a shelter for migrant children at Second Baptist Church on the East Side, has submitted a zoning request for a similar shelter in Universal City, Texas. San Antonio political leaders are trying to block the Second Baptist plan, voicing concerns about detention of young migrants for long periods. The two shelters would hold boys ages 11 to 17 who crossed the border without legal guardians. The shelters would be the first in the area operated by a for-profit company. VisionQuest, an Arizona company that operates migrant shelters and community-based programs for troubled youth in several states, wants to open the Universal City shelter in the suburb’s former Northview Student Resource Center, said City Manager Kim Turner. It would house 60 boys who would stay at the facility from 30 to 90 days while the government identifies and vets their family members or sponsors for more permanent residency. The company was awarded a \$14.6 million federal contract in August to operate both shelters. The Universal City location is estimated to cost \$6 million. Under VisionQuest’s federal contract, the children would get eight hours of school a day taught by state-certified teachers, according to its zoning request. The Universal City location would have 63 employees, earning an average salary of \$44,246.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/us-world/border-mexico/article/VisionQuest-moves-to-shelter-migrant-children-in-14542233.php>

## SAN ANTONIO CHURCH ARGUES IT HAS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM RIGHT TO HOUSE MIGRANTS

By Silvia Foster-Frau – San Antonio Express-News – October 23, 2019

- ❖ The East Side's Second Baptist Church says the city would violate its religious freedom rights if it blocks it from opening a shelter for migrant children. The church has asked the city to rezone its site so it can open a shelter to temporarily house up to 90 migrant boys ages 11 to 17. Expressing concerns with immigrant detention, Mayor Ron Nirenberg and two East Side city leaders said they oppose the shelter. In a letter to the city this week from its lawyers, the church says the migrant is part of the church's ministry, so "the city would be leaving Second Baptist Church with no alternative to carry out its ministry and would be forcing it to violate its beliefs." City Attorney Andy Segovia said the church's implied threat of litigation hinders the city's review. Second Baptist recently signed a \$3.2 million draft lease with federal contractor VisionQuest, which operates shelters in several states. The company wants to open a second local migrant shelter at an abandoned school building in Universal City, where it also seeks zoning approval for the plan. The federal government is paying VisionQuest \$14.5 million to operate both facilities for three years. Combined, they would hold up to 150 migrant youth. Rev. Robert Jemerson, the Second Baptist pastor, has said the lease would help the church pay \$1.5 million in debt that it owes for building the community center, which would become the shelter. Allegations of abuse and inappropriate staff behavior arose at facilities in Pennsylvania. And New Mexico officials rejected VisionQuest's application to house migrant children in that state because of those violations. Second Baptist submitted its zoning request last month. The zoning commission will review the request on Nov. 5 before it goes to the City Council. The church lawyers argue in a separate letter to the zoning department that the church does not need to rezone for the migrant shelter. There are some 5,000 migrant children currently in government custody. Their average length of stay is 50 days, though last November that average was 93.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/San-Antonio-church-argues-it-has-religious-14557181.php>



A group of migrants are apprehended after crossing the border from Mexico in May.  
Photo Credit: Usbpa Edward Butron/Getty Images

## UNIVERSAL CITY PLANNING & ZONING REJECTS PROPOSED IMMIGRANT CHILDREN'S SHELTER

By Jeff B. Flinn – San Antonio Express-News – November 5, 2019

- ❖ The vote echoed the voices — Universal City is refusing to create a detention center for young immigrant boys who have been separated from their families at the nation's southern border. By a 7-0 vote, the city's Planning & Zoning commission (P&Z) denied all three steps necessary to allow VisionQuest, a for-profit company, to open an immigrant housing facility at the former Northview Elementary School on West Byrd Boulevard. The P&Z's recommendations will go to the Universal City council Nov. 19 for a final vote, but given the overwhelming opposition among commission members and from the community, the site's fate seems all but sealed. Nate Tanpiengco, VisionQuest chief financial officer, made the company's case at the start of the meeting. He told of their plans to turn the long-vacant structure into housing for unaccompanied migrant youths detained at points along the border, many separated from their families there or along the way, or trekking from their native countries on their own. He said the boys would remain in the facility for no more than 90 days before they are reunited with their families or placed in foster care. They would receive eight hours of school each day by state-certified teachers. The facility would employ 63 people with staff monitoring the youth around the clock in three shifts. Average salary would be about \$44,000, according to public records. From state Rep. Leo Pacheco, D-San Antonio, and Bexar County Commissioner Tommy Calvert to a legislative staff attorney from the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and local residents, the parade of speakers were decidedly against allowing the center to occupy the 4.9-acre site, which closed in 2012 and has seen no full-time occupant since, due to the extensive work required to bring the 53-year-old structure up to building code compliance. The building last had elementary school students in 1999; after that, the Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City Independent School District used it as a resource center. It was later sold to a private individual. Vision Quest was started in the 1970s in Tucson, Arizona. It now operates six migrant shelters in five states and numerous community-based and residential programs for juveniles in several states. In August, the company was awarded a \$14.6 million federal contract to operate two shelters for migrant children in the San Antonio area. It is proposing to open one at Second Baptist Church on the East Side and the one in Universal City. The shelter proposed at Second Baptist Church, which requires approval by the San Antonio Planning & Zoning Commission and the San Antonio City Council, also has met opposition. While church leaders support it, Calver, Councilwoman Jada Andrews-Sullivan, Mayor Ron Nirenberg and others have said they are strongly against it.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/Universal-City-Planning-Zoning-rejects-proposed-14809794.php>

## **CITY OF SAN ANTONIO MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTER**

### **SAN ANTONIO RECEIVES FIRST REIMBURSEMENT FOR MIGRANT AID**

*By Silvia Foster-Frau – San Antonio Express-News – October 11, 2019*

- ❖ The federal government has reimbursed San Antonio about half of what it has spent to care for migrants who were released at the border. The city will receive more than \$280,200 from the first round of reimbursements, out of \$540,000 it had requested. It could receive more as Congress doles out more money. The Federal Emergency Management Agency reimbursement is part of a \$30 million package paying local governments and nonprofits for humanitarian aid they provided to migrants, mostly Central American families with young children, who have crossed the U.S.-Mexico border in overwhelming numbers. In the fiscal year that ended in September, U.S. Customs and Border Protection apprehended nearly 1 million migrants - the highest number in a dozen years. Only about \$7.8 million of the federal package has been dedicated, covering local costs from Jan. 1 to the end of June. The second round of reimbursements is expected to cover costs through December.
- ❖ **Reimbursements:** City of San Antonio: \$280,202, United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County: \$12,930, Catholic Charities of San Antonio: \$361,029, San Antonio Food Bank: \$62,569.
- ❖ Nonprofits that also provided aid — the San Antonio Food Bank, Catholic Charities and United Way — will receive more than \$436,500, Henry Cuellar said. Overall, the city and nonprofits are receiving more than \$643,600. Cuellar originally requested \$60 million in reimbursements in this year's budget deal, which passed in the House. But it was cut in half by the Republican-controlled Senate. San Antonio opened a Migrant Resource Center in late March after hundreds of asylum-seekers arrived at the Greyhound bus station. Most had been released from Border Patrol stations in Del Rio or Eagle Pass and were sent on buses to San Antonio. Many didn't know what city they were in, had no money and were in need of food and water. The resource center has served more than 32,200 migrants, providing more than 84,900 meals. Some 2,800 migrants received medical care. More than 22,200 had slept overnight at the Travis Park Church shelter. More than 1,200 city staffers pitched in to help the asylum-seekers, and 603 community members also volunteered at the center. Catholic Charities, the San Antonio Food Bank and other nonprofits pitched in with food, supplies and volunteers. Catholic Charities spent more than \$320,000 on transportation so migrants could reunite with their families who are scattered across the U.S. The city had helped fund the Travis Park church. But as of late July its pastor, Gavin Rogers, said it would have a \$40,000 to \$50,000 funding hole by the end of September. In the end, \$25 million was allocated for border states. The rest will be dispersed around the country.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/federal-migrant-reimbursement-14510035.php>

### **SAN ANTONIO CLOSING ITS MIGRANT CENTER FRIDAY**

*By Silvia Foster-Frau – San Antonio Express-News – October 23, 2019*

- ❖ The city of San Antonio's Migrant Resource Center, which opened seven months ago and provided aid to more than 32,000 asylum-seekers, is closing its doors Friday, October 25. The center opened amid an overwhelming flow of migrants who were released at the border with dates to appear before immigration officials. In recent months, the number of migrants approaching the border has plummeted and many of those who do make it there are subject to the Trump administration's "Remain in Mexico" (RIM) policy, which forces asylum-seekers to wait in Mexico for their U.S. court proceedings. In June, the center reached its peak weekly total, with 2,192 migrants spending the night at Travis Park Church in one week. But by late September, that number had dwindled to 175. The city's center was a brief way station for migrants attempting to reach relatives in the U.S. Border Patrol facilities became so full earlier this year that officials began releasing migrants instead of detaining them. Thousands of them were dumped in Laredo and Eagle Pass and put on buses to San Antonio. The city worked with the San Antonio Food Bank, the Interfaith Welcome Coalition and Catholic Charities to provide drinks, hot meals, clothes, toiletries, toys and medical exams for the migrants. The center provided more than 84,900 meals, and some 2,800 migrants received medical care. More than 1,200 city staff members and over 600 community volunteers worked there. Though the center has closed, the welcome coalition will continue providing aid and arranging bus tickets for a smaller number of migrants released from the border or transported from nearby detention facilities. The Travis Park Church, which has sheltered people fleeing hurricanes in years past, also opened its doors for the high volume of migrants — more than 22,200 slept there. It will be closing its overnight shelter, too. The church's associate pastor, Gavin Rogers, said the San Antonio Mennonite Church and Catholic Charities have the capacity to house around 20 migrants overnight. If the number rose above that once again, then he'd likely reopen the church doors. Because of a provision in this year's budget deal, the city and its nonprofits were eligible for federal reimbursements for the hundreds of thousands of dollars they spent on humanitarian aid. It requested \$590,000 from the beginning of March to the end of June, and it received \$280,000 in the first reimbursement round.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/us-world/border-mexico/article/San-Antonio-closing-its-migrant-center-Friday-14556851.php>



## MIGRANTS IN MEXICO

### CONDITIONS DETERIORATING AT MAKESHIFT CAMP ON THE RIO GRANDE

By Acacia Coronado – Texas Tribune – October 25, 2019

❖ The makeshift shelters are clustered just past the river's edge, a rainbow of tarp colors, woven with trash bags and held together with sticks, stones and metal rods that have become home to an estimated 2,000 migrants from Honduras to El Salvador, Nicaragua to Mexico. Some have lived here for months; all of them are waiting for decisions on asylum claims that may never succeed. Approximately 2,000 migrants have camped near the entrance of the bridge in hopes of obtaining asylum in the United States. Migrants have been piling into the camp at a rate of several dozen a day. With only two wooden shower stalls in the woods, less than 10 portable toilets and no cleaning supplies, the conditions are quickly deteriorating. Lack of running water and limited access to food have led the migrants to the river to bathe, fish and draw water; they use a wooded area nearby as a makeshift bathroom. When it rains, the migrants and all their belongings are quickly soaked. Mexican news outlet El Bravo reported that city and federal officials may relocate the migrants as early as Monday, October 28, to a stadium an estimated hour and 45-minute walk from the Gateway bridge. Matamoros city spokeswoman Cecilia Perez said that plan has been scrapped because the migrants don't want to relocate far from the bridge for fear of missing their asylum hearings. Perez said they cannot be forcibly removed because they are on federal land and added that officials have tentative plans to offer the migrants alternate shelter closer to the bridge.

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.texastribune.org/2019/10/25/conditions-deteriorating-migrant-camp-thousands-await-asylum/>



Rows of tents are clustered near the Gateway International Bridge in Matamoros, Mexico. Photo Credit: Miguel Gutierrez Jr./The Texas Tribune

### AS MATAMOROS TENT CAMP SWELLS, OFFICIALS PRESSURE MIGRANTS TO MOVE TO SHELTER

By Silvia Foster-Frau – San Antonio Express-News – November 2, 2019

❖ Mexican officials are increasingly agitated by the growing number of asylum-seekers waiting in a Matamoros tent camp for their U.S. hearings and are pressuring the migrants to move to a shelter a couple miles away. "They are visitors. They weren't invited, but they're here, so we have to attend to them," said Federico Fernandez Morales, the Matamoros City Council spokesman. Citing the health and safety of the migrants and complaints from residents, Morales said the city is attempting to fill its newest shelter at Alberca Chavez, a public pool. It has a capacity of 350, but only 80 migrants are staying there. There are more than 1,400 people in the tent encampment near the international bridge into Brownsville. Tensions escalated Friday, November 1, when a group of officials from a Mexican family services agency arrived at the camp and threatened to separate parents from their kids if they didn't agree to move to the new shelter. In a video sent to the San Antonio Express-News, an unidentified official from the National System for Integral Family Development, or DIF in Mexico, laid out the consequences to the migrants if the families don't leave the encampment. "I'm offering this, and if you don't want it — I'm just following the law. But it's not going to harm you, it's going to harm your child and your family. Because the child will get sent to his country, and there he'll be in another shelter," he said, standing in front of the DIF vehicle. The asylum-seekers — many of them Cubans and families from Central America — are staying in Mexico under the Trump administration's "Remain in Mexico" program, which sends migrants back into Mexico to await their hearings on the U.S. side. They often must wait months for their hearings. Morales said the government has no plans to separate families. Their main goal, he said, is to move the families with children to the recently opened facility that would provide better conditions. Matamoros residents are complaining, he said, and they worry about the migrants spreading illness. Asylum-seekers in the encampment bathe and wash their clothes in the Rio Grande, and they rely on donations for food and toiletries. The patchwork of tents is bear the foot of the international bridge, where Mexicans with work visas hustle by during morning and evening rush hours. Flu and colds spread quickly in the encampment, and Morales said the environment is not suitable for children. Reading from an Oct. 24 health department report, he said health officials found 61 migrants with respiratory infections, a handful with conjunctivitis and diarrhea and 48 with miscellaneous infections. They also found four cases of HIV. Morales said some migrants are sending their children into the streets to beg for money, which is illegal. Villanueva said Mexican officials from DIF brought the issue up when they visited the encampment Friday (November 1) and that he and many other migrants agreed with them on that point — that it's too dangerous for children. In Matamoros, and all along the border, the Remain in Mexico migrants are supposed to show up at the bridge four hours before their hearings and then get escorted across. Those who have 8 a.m. court appearances must show up at the bridge at 4 a.m. U.S. aid groups said the encampment provides them easy access.

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/us-world/border-mexico/article/As-Matamoros-tent-camp-swells-Mexican-officials-14804742.php>

## **MIGRANTS IN MEXICO TORTURED AND FORCED TO WITNESS COMPANIONS BEING RAPED**

*By Chantal Da Silva – NewsWeek – October 30, 2019*

- ❖ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) teams in southern Mexico say they are seeing an alarming rise in violence against migrants trying to make their way to the U.S. border, with criminal groups escalating the cruelty of their "torture methods." In a report published on Wednesday (October 30), MSF said it had seen a surge in reports of kidnappings and violence against migrants in Tenosique, a town just west of the Mexico-Guatemala border. The organization said it had already provided treatment to more people who were kidnapped in the span of less than a month than in the first eight months of this year, with migrants reporting having been "tortured, sexually assault and extorted." According to Gemma Pomares, MSF's head of medical activities in Tenosique, "in less than a month, the MSF team in Tenosique has treated 11 migrants who were victims of kidnapping and torture. This figure is the same as the total number of kidnapping cases treated in the first eight months of this year at this location". In medical and psychological consultation conducted by MSF, multiple survivors reported that they had been taken to abandoned houses where they were forced to remove their clothes and tied up outside for hours in high temperatures. Migrants said they were forced to endure difficult temperatures and inclement weather until they agreed to provide the phone numbers of their relatives, presumably so their families could be extorted. MSF said its teams have had to treat patients for gunshot and knife wounds, in addition to having treat victims of sexual assault. A report released by Human Rights First early October also raised concerns, with the organization identifying at least 343 cases in which asylum seekers forced to remain in Mexico had reported being "violently attacked or threatened" there, with some reporting having been kidnapped, assaulted and raped.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.newsweek.com/asylum-seekers-face-growing-torture-mexican-border-towns-guatemala-u-s-1468691>

## **COURT RULINGS**

### **A FEDERAL JUDGE TEMPORARILY BLOCKED TRUMP'S PLAN TO BLOCK IMMIGRANTS FROM ENTERING THE US WITHOUT PROVING THEY COULD GET HEALTH INSURANCE**

*By Hamed Aleaziz – BuzzFeed News – November 2, 2019*

- ❖ Federal Judge Michael Simon in Oregon, temporarily blocked a Trump administration policy Saturday, November 2, that was set to bar the entry of immigrants applying for visas who could not prove that they would be able to obtain health insurance within 30 days of entering the United States. Judge Simon issued a temporary restraining order that stops the administration from implementing the order as planned on Sunday, November 3. Trump's proclamation applied to those who apply for immigrant visas abroad and do not have health insurance set up within a month after their entry or the financial means to pay for medical costs. The judge is expected to hear the full merits of the case in the near future. Trump's proclamation cited the same provision of law he used in the 2017 travel ban to block people from coming into the US from certain countries and a later ban on asylum-seekers who crossed into the country without authorization. It was set to apply to US citizens' foreign national spouses who want to live in the country.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/trump-immigrant-health-care-court-block>

## **BORDER WALL**

### **BORDER WALL, IMPEACHMENT BATTLE IMPERIL BUDGET PROGRESS**

*By Andrew Taylor – Associated Press – October 31, 2019*

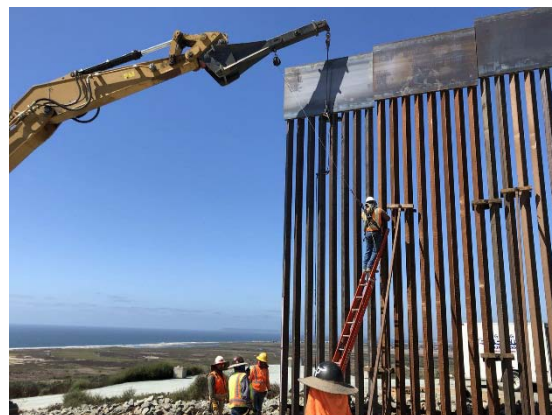
- ❖ The Senate passed a long-overdue, \$209 billion bundle of bipartisan spending bills Thursday, October 31, but a bitter fight over funding demanded by President Donald Trump for border fencing imperils broader Capitol Hill efforts to advance \$1.4 trillion worth of annual Cabinet agency budgets. The 84-9 vote sends the measure into House-Senate negotiations but doesn't much change the big picture. There has been little progress, if any, on the tricky trade-offs needed to balance Democratic demands for social programs with President Donald Trump's ballooning border wall demands. To amplify the point, Democrats shortly thereafter filibustered a much larger measure anchored by the \$695 billion Pentagon funding bill, protesting Trump's plans to again transfer billions of dollars from the Pentagon to the border wall project. At issue are the agency appropriations bills that Congress passes each year to keep the government running. Democrats say White House demands for \$5 billion for Trump's long-sought U.S.-Mexico border wall have led the GOP-controlled Senate to shortchange Democratic domestic priorities. They say negotiations can't begin in earnest until spending hikes permitted under the July budget deal are allocated among the 12 appropriations subcommittees more to their liking. Current stopgap spending authority expires Nov. 21, and another measure will be needed to prevent a shutdown reprising last year's 35-day partial shuttering of the government. All sides want to avert a repeat shutdown, but it can't be entirely ruled out because of the dysfunction and bitterness engulfing Washington these days. The White House is demanding \$5 billion in appropriations for the wall this budget year — up from \$1.4 billion now. It is also demanding to keep its powers to transfer Pentagon dollars as well — and to get Congress to refill Pentagon military base construction projects tapped last month to pay for up to \$3.6 billion worth of border fencing.
- ❖ News Article Source: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/congress/border-wall-impeachment-battle-imperil-budget-progress/2019/10/31/b7f3d210-fb94-11e9-9e02-1d45cb3dfa8f\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/congress/border-wall-impeachment-battle-imperil-budget-progress/2019/10/31/b7f3d210-fb94-11e9-9e02-1d45cb3dfa8f_story.html)

*Benedictine Sisters Corporate Responsibility Coalition*

## SMUGGLERS ARE SAWING THROUGH NEW SECTIONS OF TRUMP'S BORDER WALL

By Nick Miroff – *The Washington Post* – November 2, 2019

- ❖ Smuggling gangs in Mexico have repeatedly sawed through new sections of President Trump's border wall in recent months by using commercially available power tools, opening gaps large enough for people and drug loads to pass through, according to U.S. agents and officials with knowledge of the damage. The breaches have been made using a popular cordless household tool known as a reciprocating saw that retails at hardware stores for as little as \$100. When fitted with specialized blades, the saws can slice through one of the barrier's steel-and-concrete bollards in minutes, according to the agents, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the barrier-defeating techniques. After cutting through the base of a single bollard, smugglers can push the steel out of the way, creating an adult-size gap. Because the bollards are so tall — and are attached only to a panel at the top — their length makes them easier to push aside once they have been cut and are left dangling, according to engineers consulted by *The Washington Post*. The taxpayer-funded barrier — so far coming with a \$10 billion price tag — was a central theme of Trump's 2016 campaign, and he has made the project a physical symbol of his presidency, touting its construction progress in speeches, ads and tweets. The smuggling crews have been using other techniques, such as building makeshift ladders to scale the barriers, especially in the popular smuggling areas in the San Diego area, according to nearly a dozen U.S. agents and current and former administration officials. Mexican criminal organizations, which generate billions of dollars in smuggling profits, have enormous incentive to adapt their operations at the border to new obstacles and enforcement methods, officials say. The U.S. government has not disclosed the cutting incidents and breaches, and it is unclear how many times they have occurred. U.S. Customs and Border Protection declined to provide information about the number of breaches, the location of the incidents and the process for repairing them. Current and former CBP officials confirmed that there have been cutting breaches, but they said the new bollard system remains far superior and more formidable than any previous design. If damage is detected, welding crews are promptly sent to make fixes. The smugglers, however, have returned to the same bollards and cut through the welds, agents say, because the metal is softer and the concrete at the core of the bollard already has been compromised. The smugglers also have tried to trick agents by applying a type of putty with a color and texture that resembles a weld, making a severed bollard appear intact.
- ❖ News Article Source: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/smugglers-are-sawing-through-new-sections-of-trumps-border-wall/2019/11/01/25bf8ce0-fa72-11e9-ac8c-8eced29ca6ef\\_story.html?wpisrc=nl\\_most&wpmm=1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/smugglers-are-sawing-through-new-sections-of-trumps-border-wall/2019/11/01/25bf8ce0-fa72-11e9-ac8c-8eced29ca6ef_story.html?wpisrc=nl_most&wpmm=1)



Workers install panels of steel bollard fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border.  
Photo Credit: Nick Miroff/*The Washington Post*

## IT LOOKS LIKE THE BORDER WALL IS GOING UP IN SOUTH TEXAS. BUT LOOKS MAY BE DECEIVING.

By Carlos Sanchez – *Texas Monthly* – November 1, 2019

- ❖ This morning, things were busy at the site of a future border wall in South Texas. About two miles east of the Donna-Rio Bravo International Bridge, as trucks sprayed water on freshly graded dirt, roughly sixteen construction workers were busying themselves. A handful were working on a newly erected section of border wall, using a welding torch on the steel bollards that comprise it. About two weeks ago, two cranes and other heavy equipment started construction activity at the site, and rebar appeared to be staged along what's planned to be a 150-foot enforcement zone—a clear-cut strip of land hosting a road, lights, and sensors—just south of where the wall is supposed to go. At first glance, it looked like President Trump's long-promised border wall—or at least a 30-foot section of it—has been built. Two immigration officials, neither of whom wanted to be identified because they were not authorized to speak for the agency, said the section went up Wednesday, October 30. U.S. Customs and Border Protection tweeted images of heavy equipment working on or near the footprint of sections of border wall. "We're building the border wall in South Texas in the busiest USBP sector," the tweet stated. Like much of the 65 miles along which Congress has authorized building barriers through the Rio Grande Valley, the mile-long segment between the Donna and Progreso international bridges involves much more than just a wall. Right now, there's a modest earthen levee, owned and operated by the International Water and Boundary Commission, built for flood control purposes. The Trump administration plans to replace this levee with what's been termed a levee wall, a concrete levee topped by an eighteen-foot-tall bollard-style fence. *The Washington Post* reported that federal officials have acquired only 16 percent of the private land needed in Texas for its proposed border wall route. It wasn't immediately clear whether the federal government owned the land in question in Donna. Some Valley activists believe that much of what's going on is simply political theater. Contracts have already been awarded for the sixty-five miles of wall construction in the Rio Grande Valley, at a total estimated cost of between \$400 million and \$800 million.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.texasmonthly.com/news/border-wall-going-up-south-texas/>

## DEVELOPING STORIES

### U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS ELECT HISPANIC IMMIGRANT AS LEADER

By Elizabeth Dias – *The New York Times* – November 12, 2019

❖ The Roman Catholic bishops of the United States on Tuesday, November 12, elected a Hispanic immigrant as their president for the first time by elevating Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, who has long vowed to defend immigrants amid their fears of deportation. Archbishop Gomez, 67, has long been an outspoken, if largely uncontroversial, advocate for immigrants' rights. In preparation for the Supreme Court hearing, his archdiocese, the largest in the country and where Mass is celebrated in 42 languages, held a prayer service for the hundreds of thousands of young people DACA has shielded from deportation. "In this great country, we should not have our young people living under the threat of deportation, their lives dependent on the outcome of a court case," the archbishop wrote in a message that was read at the Mass. "So, we pray tonight that our president and Congress will come together, set aside their differences, and provide our young brothers and sisters with a path to legalization and citizenship," he added. Archbishop Gomez said he hoped the bishops would back solutions for the DACA recipients known as Dreamers; for the more than 10 million people who are in the country without documents; for those with Temporary Protected Status; and for migrant workers. Archbishop Gomez's focus on border detentions and family separations has often been more pastoral than overtly political. In September, he celebrated Mass during a three-day, 60-mile walking pilgrimage in solidarity with families separated at the border. He has created wallet-size cards for undocumented immigrants with instructions for what to do if they are approached by immigration officers. Other bishops have taken a more confrontational approach. Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, the archbishop of Newark, led hundreds of protesters in a chant of "stop the inhumanity" in front of an Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility there in September. Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso has personally escorted migrants across the border and called Mr. Trump's wall "a symbol of exclusion, especially when allied to an overt politics of xenophobia."

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/12/us/archbishop-jose-gomez-president.html>

### HOW THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ERODED ITS OWN LEGAL CASE ON DACA

By Michael D. Shear, Julie Hirschfeld Davis and Adam Liptak – *The New York Times* – November 11, 2019

❖ When Attorney General Jeff Sessions appeared before news cameras at the Justice Department in early September 2017 to announce that President Trump was ending deportation protections for young undocumented immigrants, he knew the administration had left itself more legally vulnerable than it should have. At a contentious meeting in the White House several days earlier, Elaine C. Duke, then the acting secretary of homeland security, had broken with the rest of Mr. Trump's team and balked at its demand that she issue a memo ending Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, the program known as DACA that shields immigrants who were brought to the United States as children. Ms. Duke was deeply bothered by the idea that she could be responsible for deporting hundreds of thousands of young people from the country they considered their own. And she did not want her name on the policy rationales put forth by Mr. Sessions; Stephen Miller, the president's powerful immigration adviser; and others who argued that the program encouraged new waves of illegal immigration and was an undeserved amnesty. She eventually relented under merciless pressure. But her refusal to cite their policy objections to the program is now at the heart of what legal experts say is a major weakness in the government's case defending the termination of the program, which will be argued at the Supreme Court. The bare-bones rescission memo by Ms. Duke, relied solely on an assertion by Mr. Sessions that it was unlawful. Even Mr. Sessions knew that was the thinnest possible rationale, according to several people familiar with his thinking who spoke on the condition of anonymity to reveal private deliberations. If courts disagreed, Mr. Sessions knew, the president would lose. That is just what happened in lower courts. Judges have ruled that by citing only a flawed legal rationale for ending DACA — and no policy justifications — the administration's decision was "arbitrary and capricious," an illegal exercise of presidential power without any legitimate basis to end a program relied on by about 700,000 people. Had the administration simply declared that it was changing direction as a matter of policy, the rulings indicated, the rescission would have been a routine exercise of executive discretion. Immigrant rights groups suing Mr. Trump have now zeroed in on the refusal by Ms. Duke, who resigned in early 2018 shortly after a permanent secretary was named, as evidence to bolster their defense of the program. Lawyers for the groups say the back story of her memo has shaped the oral arguments they will make to the justices on Tuesday, November 12. If they are persuasive, the court could rule against Mr. Trump in June, just as he enters the final stretch of his re-election campaign. To be eligible for DACA status, applicants had to show that they had arrived in the United States before they turned 16 and were no older than 30, had lived in the United States for at least the previous five years, were a high school graduate or a veteran, and had committed no serious crimes. The status lasts for two years, allows recipients to work legally and is renewable, but it does not provide a path to citizenship.

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/11/us/politics/supreme-court-dreamers-case.html>

## OPINION: THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS MANUFACTURED A CRISIS AT BORDER

By José Rodríguez – San Antonio Express-News – October 28, 2019

- ❖ If you have recently crossed a port of entry in the border region, you might have noticed hundreds of asylum-seekers, parents and their young children, camping under makeshift canopies near the bridges. There are approximately 3,000 Mexican citizens waiting on the streets of Ciudad Juarez with no assurance they will ever be allowed to cross the border and pursue an asylum claim. The 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol establish the principle of “non-refoulement,” stating, “no Contracting State shall expel or return a refugee in any matter whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.” Border officials have stated that these people are being turned away because there is no space in their facilities and they lack agents to carry out efficient processing. El Paso has been on the front line of this manufactured crisis since 2017. Individuals seeking asylum have a legal right under U.S. law to do so, no matter how they enter the country, as codified by the Immigration and Nationality Act and upheld by U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeal and the U.S. Supreme Court. To bypass this legal right, the administration’s Migrant Protection Protocols, or MPP, were created and have forced more than 47,000 Central American immigrants to wait in Mexico indefinitely. MPP establishes exemptions that allow vulnerable populations, people from non-Spanish speaking countries and individuals who can demonstrate credible fear to enter the United States legally. Because international law prevents asylum-seekers from being sent back to the country they are fleeing, Mexican citizens cannot be returned to Mexico under MPP. While law prevents the expulsion and rejection of this Mexican refugee population, CBP is using the unofficial policy of metering (selective admission) to keep Mexican asylum-seekers waiting on the streets of our sister city.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/opinion/commentary/article/Opinion-This-administration-has-manufactured-a-14568380.php>



Migrants gather next to the border fence after camping out on the Gateway International Bridge that connects downtown Matamoros with Brownsville, Oct. 10, 2019.  
Photo Credit: Fernando Llano/Associated Press