

NEWS ARTICLES ON KEY ISSUES – FEBRUARY 14, 2023

LATEST STATISTICS

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Encounters FY2019		
USBP	Demographic	Total
Southwest Border	Unaccompanied Alien Child	76,020
	Family Units*	473,682
	Single Adult	301,806
Southwest Border Total Apprehensions		851,508

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Encounters FY2020		
USBP	Demographic	Total
Southwest Border	Unaccompanied Alien Child	30,557
	Family Units*	52,230
	Single Adult	317,864
Southwest Border Total Apprehensions		400,651

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Encounters FY2021		
USBP	Demographic	Total
Southwest Border	Unaccompanied Alien Child	144,834
	Family Units*	451,087
	Single Adult	1,063,285
Southwest Border Total Apprehensions		1,659,206

Data Sources:

<https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration/fy-2019> ; <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration-fy2020> ;
<https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters>

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Encounters FY2022														
USBP	Demographic	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	Total
Southwest Border	Unaccompanied Alien Child	12,625	13,745	11,704	8,607	11,779	13,892	11,857	14,420	14,929	13,003	10,993	11,539	149,093
	Family Units*	41,556	43,279	49,437	30,419	25,165	34,052	37,082	51,166	44,071	42,851	39,305	44,579	482,962
	Single Adult	104,932	109,991	109,461	108,851	122,226	163,237	154,565	158,784	133,399	125,980	131,476	151,479	1,574,381
Southwest Border Total Apprehensions		159,113	167,015	170,602	147,877	159,063	211,181	203,504	224,370	192,399	181,834	181,774	207,597	2,206,436

Data Source: <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters>

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Encounters FY2023						
USBP	Demographic	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	Total
Southwest Border	Unaccompanied Alien Child	11,653	12,792	11,835	9,044	45,324
	Family Units*	46,667	49,675	60,678	25,479	182,499
	Single Adult	146,549	144,962	149,162	93,887	534,560
Southwest Border Total Apprehensions		204,869	207,429	221,675	128,410	762,383

Data Source: <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters>

LATEST NEWS

Illegal border crossings fell sharply in January, U.S. figures show

By Nick Miroff, *Washington Post*, February 1, 2023

- ❖ Tighter restrictions applied by the Biden administration against migrants from Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua and Haiti along the southern border last month led to a precipitous drop in the number of people from those countries crossing into the United States illegally, according to three administration officials and preliminary data. Illegal crossings by migrants from the four countries were down more than 95 percent, preliminary figures obtained by The Washington Post show. Overall, the number of migrants stopped along the Mexico border last month fell to about 150,000, down from the record-high 251,487 tallied in December, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection data and officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss enforcement figures not yet finalized.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/02/01/us-border-crossings/>

Illegal border crossings surge to highest of Biden's term

By the Associated Press, *January 20, 2023*

- ❖ A surge in Cuban and Nicaraguan arrivals at the U.S. border with Mexico in December led to the highest number of illegal border crossings recorded during any month of Joe Biden's presidency, authorities said Friday, January 20. The extraordinary influx came shortly before Biden introduced measures on Jan. 5 to deter Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans. U.S. authorities stopped migrants 251,487 times along the Mexican border in December, up 7% from 234,896 times in November and up 40% from 179,253 times in December 2021, Customs and Border Protection said. Cubans were stopped nearly 43,000 times in December, up 23% from November and more than quintuple the same period a year earlier. Nicaraguans were stopped more than 35,000 times, up 3% from November and more than double from December 2021.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/article/biden-united-states-government-mexico-el-paso-8d307f4d5617e6bf071b10d8e28151d7>

Garcia: Chip Roy and Tony Gonzales at odds over Roy's anti-asylum bill

By Gilbert Garcia, *San Antonio Express-News*, January 21, 2023

- ❖ In order to secure enough votes to become U.S. House speaker, California Congressman Kevin McCarthy made a series of concessions in his party. Some of those concessions were spelled out in a rules package approved by the House on Jan. 9. Other concessions came in the form of verbal promises from McCarthy to GOP skeptics such as U.S. Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas, whose district includes part of San Antonio. One of McCarthy's promises was to fast-track a border-security bill for a floor vote early this year. That Roy-authored bill is on its way. And it's a draconian nightmare. The Border Safety and Security Act of 2023 (aka HR 29) would require the Department of Homeland Security to "suspend the entry of any non-U.S. nationals" who do not have "valid entry documents during any period when DHS cannot detain such an individual or return the individual to a foreign country contiguous to the United States." The bill also empowers states to sue DHS to enforce this requirement. Given the fact that it's physically impossible for the United States to place every asylum seeker in detention, the practical effect of Roy's bill would be the elimination of the legal right to arrive at a U.S. port of entry and apply for asylum. Roy's bill is meant to be a permanent policy and it makes no room for humanitarian exceptions or individualized screenings. It's not designed to reform the asylum process, but destroy it. More than 250 human rights organization (including Human Rights Watch, Oxfam America and Dominican Sisters of Peace) signed on to a Jan. 12 letter urging members of Congress to oppose Roy's bill.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/Garcia-Chip-Roy-and-Tony-Gonzales-at-odds-over-17731986.php>

New program allows groups, individuals to sponsor refugees for resettlement

By Rafael Bernal, *The Hill*, January 19, 2023

- ❖ The Biden administration launched a new pilot program to allow ordinary Americans to sponsor refugees to resettle in the United States. The State Department program, called Welcome Corps, will enlist 10,000 Americans initially, who will be able to sponsor up to 5,000 refugees from around the world. "For over four decades, our system has relied primarily on resettlement agencies [for refugee resettlement]," said Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a video introducing the initiative. "Under this new initiative, people in communities, faith based organizations, colleges and universities, veterans' associations, and other groups will be able to play that role – taking the lead in helping refugees do things like find a place to live, enroll kids in school [and] obtain basic goods like furniture and winter clothes," he said. The United States broadly manages new humanitarian immigration through the refugee and asylum programs.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/3819672-new-program-allows-groups-to-sponsor-individual-refugees-for-resettlement/>

Nearly 1,000 Migrant Children Separated From Parents at Border Haven't Been Reunited, Data Shows

By Talal Ansari, *Wall Street Journal*, February 2, 2023

- ❖ Nearly 1,000 children separated from their parents at the U.S. border under the Trump administration's zero-tolerance policy on illegal immigration haven't been reunited, federal data shows, despite a multiyear effort to do so. The federal program has reunited 600 migrant children with their parents, according to numbers released by the Department of Homeland Security, the second anniversary of the establishment of the Family Reunification Task Force by President Biden soon after he assumed office. Of the 998 children who remain separated from their families, 148 are in the process of being reunited, DHS said. The task force has also worked with nongovernmental organizations to inform 183 families of the opportunity to reunify. Under the family-separation policy that former President Donald Trump implemented and later revoked in 2018, parents and children crossing the border illegally were put on separate immigration tracks as though they weren't related, a shift from past policy that kept family cases together. Children are given greater legal protections under immigration law, so while the adults' asylum cases could be dismissed quickly, allowing them to be deported, children mostly remained in the U.S. in child welfare shelters or with relatives. Children continued to be separated after the end of the policy and a court order for reunifications, according to officials at the Department of Health and Human Services' inspector general, typically because of concerns over a traveling parent's criminal history raised by DHS. DHS said the task force used U.S. government records and worked with NGOs to identify 3,924 children who were separated during the Trump administration. As of Thursday, February 2, 2,926 separated children have been reunified, including those who were reunited before the task force was formed, according to DHS data.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/nearly-1-000-migrant-children-separated-from-parents-at-border-havent-been-reunited-data-shows-11675380695>

Nearly 600,000 migrants who crossed the border since March 2021 were released in the U.S. with no immigration court dates

By Julia Ainsley, *NBC News*, February 3, 2023

- ❖ Nearly 600,000 migrants who crossed the U.S. border since March 2021 have been released into the U.S. without being charged or given a date to appear in court, according to data obtained by NBC News, and thousands have even been dropped from the program that was supposed to track them. The lack of charging documents has left migrants across the country in legal limbo without a court date to determine whether they can legally stay in the U.S., their lawyers said. Many live in the shadows, unable to work and unaware that they are passing their one-year eligibility deadline to apply for asylum. In late March 2021, as the numbers of undocumented migrants arriving at the southern border began to surge, CBP began releasing migrants with what is known as a "Notice to Report," telling them to report to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement office, rather than a "Notice to Appear," which instructs migrants when to appear in court to determine whether they will be deported or given protections to remain legally in the U.S. But that process proved problematic, as reports emerged that many migrants were not showing up at ICE offices to receive court dates. So ICE began a new program in July 2021, according to a Government Accountability Office report, known as Parole Plus Alternatives to Detention or Parole Plus ATD. The program allowed migrants to be released without charging documents while their whereabouts were tracked with ankle monitors, by checking in on an app or telephonically. Between late March 2021 and late January 2023, more than 800,000 migrants were released on Notices to Report or Parole Plus ATD. About 214,000 of them were eventually issued charging documents with court dates, according to data obtained by NBC News, meaning that roughly 588,000 did not know when or where to report for their asylum hearings. Since then, the practice has expanded to include the entire border. The Department of Homeland Security had maintained that migrants released without charging documents would soon be given court dates at ICE offices in the interior of the country.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/nearly-600000-migrants-crossed-border-released-inside-us-rcna68687>

ICE Air Executive Summary – January 2023

By Thomas Cartwright, *Witness at the Border*, February 5, 2023

- ❖ 19,493 total ICE air flights operated in 2020-Jan 2023. Since inauguration: 14,387 total flights.
- ❖ 3,557 removal flights operated in 2020-Jan 2023. Since inauguration: 2,490 removal flights.
- ❖ 544 total ice air flights operated in January, down 185 (25%) from the prior month. January was 145 (21%) below the prior 6-month average of 689.
- ❖ Total ICE air flights of 544 were down 67 (11%) from January 2022.
- ❖ Report Source: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e221cacff87ba2d2833cf54/t/63e03389c92c8062cb71d316/1675637642557/ICE+Air+Jan+v1THCPDF1.pdf>

Migrants from many countries are arriving at the US-Mexico border. Here's why

By Daniel Gonzalez, USA TODAY, February 1, 2023

- ❖ Encounters of migrants along the U.S.-Mexico border exceeded 2.3 million last year, an all-time high. Two decades ago, when Border Patrol apprehensions also hit records, the vast majority of migrants who crossed the southern border illegally were adult males from Mexico seeking jobs in the U.S. But the migrants arriving at the border today include not just men from Mexico, but also men, women and children, often entire families, from more than a dozen countries in the Western Hemisphere, notably Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, and more recently, Cuba, Venezuela, Haiti, Nicaragua, Ecuador and Colombia. Migrants also have been showing up at the southern border increasingly from countries on other continents, among them Russia, China, and India. Instead of trying to evade the Border Patrol as in the past, many of the migrants arriving today turn themselves over to border agents as soon as they cross and request asylum on the grounds they are fleeing violence and persecution. **What are the drivers prompting people to migrate?** The reasons vary by country, Eric Olson, policy director at the Seattle International Foundation said. In general, there are several overall trends pushing people to leave, Olson said. A rise in autocratic governments in several Latin American countries is one big factor, Olson said. A case in point is Nicaragua, where mounting repression under leftist President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, has sparked an exodus of migration to the U.S., Olson said. "In a lot of those countries, you see widespread government failure. Cuba (is crumbling). Haiti is crumbling. Venezuela has been crumbling for some time. Increasingly, Nicaragua, as well, they've lost credibility as a country where there is basic respect for human rights," Olson said. An erosion of fragile democracies that has resulted from the rise in autocratic governments is another factor, Olson said. Growing corruption that stems from a decline in democracy is a third factor. On top of that, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequities in many parts of Latin America, and environmental disasters related to climate change are pushing people to migrate. "The bottom line is that people are increasingly feeling helpless and pessimistic about their futures for a variety of reasons – government failure, insecurity, no economic possibilities or limited economic possibilities – and so that drives people to look for alternatives," Olson said. "What's most available to people is connections to family that are already living in the United States, and those networks of family migration have been building up for four decades." Recent migration to the U.S. is grouped into three waves, said Ariel Ruiz, a policy analyst at the Migration Policy Institute. The first wave from the 1980s through 2007, the start of the Great Recession, was made up mostly of migrants from Mexico, he said. The second wave starting in 2014 was made up of a influx of unaccompanied minors and then families fleeing poverty, gang violence and high homicide rates in the Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras in Central America. Ninety-four percent of the migrants expelled under Title 42 have come from Mexico and Northern Triangle countries, CBP data shows. The third wave starting in 2019 has been made up of migrants fleeing poverty, violence and increasingly political repression in other countries in the Western Hemisphere.
- ❖ **The article contains brief profiles of the countries where a majority of migrants arriving at the southern border have come from over the past three years. (Fiscal years 2020-2023. October, 2019 through December, 2022).** The list includes the total number of migrant encounters by U.S. border authorities for each country; the total number of migrants expelled under Title 42 for each country, and the total number placed in deportation proceedings under Title 8 of U.S. immigration laws for each country. Migrants processed under Title 8 can include asylum seekers released in the U.S. pending the outcome of their cases in immigration courts, migrants held in detention centers awaiting possible deportation, and migrants who were later deported. It's important to note that encounters by border authorities do not reflect the number of individual people who crossed the border illegally but the number of times a migrant from that country was encountered. That is because repeat crossers who cross illegally again after being expelled under Title 42 or other reasons are counted multiple times.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://sports.yahoo.com/migrants-many-countries-arriving-us-100501348.html>

Berks County's immigrant detention center is finally closed. The work isn't over | Opinion

By Flor González, Capital-Star Guest Contributor, January 31, 2023

- ❖ As of January 31, 2023, Berks Detention Center will finally close its doors for good. Every woman who has been detained has now been released.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.penncapital-star.com/commentary/berks-countys-immigrant-detention-center-is-finally-closed-the-work-isnt-over-opinion/>

Governor Abbott Announces New Texas Border Czar

By the Office of the Texas Governor, January 30, 2023

- ❖ Governor Greg Abbott announced the new position of Texas Border Czar to oversee border security at a press conference on a Texas border wall construction site in San Benito. Mike Banks has been hired as Special Advisor on Border Matters to the Governor and will serve as the State of Texas' first-ever Border Czar. "For nearly two years, the State of Texas has taken unprecedented, historic action under Operation Lone Star in response to the Biden Administration's refusal to secure the border," said Governor Abbott. "To continue doing what no other state in the history of our country has done to secure the border, I hired Mike Banks as the State of Texas' first-ever Border Czar. As an award-winning Border Patrol Agent, with decades of federal law enforcement and border security experience, Mike is the perfect choice to oversee Texas' fight against the surge of illegal immigration, lethal drugs, and deadly weapons flowing into our state and nation. I have no doubt that Mike's strong record of leadership and wealth of experience will provide Texans—and Americans—the level of border security expertise they deserve from a proper Border Czar." Border Czar Banks will report directly to Governor Abbott and ensure border security strategies are fully executed in Texas in the absence of meaningful federal action. He will collaborate daily with TMD, DPS, and other state agencies, local officials, and Texas landowners to carry out Operation Lone Star's mission of deterring and repelling migrants from illegally crossing into Texas from Mexico. Border Czar Banks will also advise the Governor on border security situations and strategies, including the planning of operations ahead of migrant surges, like that of El Paso in December 2022. To best serve Texans and Americans, Border Czar Banks will be based out of Weslaco and travel along the border, and state, as necessary. Mike Banks of Mission is a former U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) Weslaco Station Patrol Agent in Charge. Banks has over three decades of federal law enforcement leadership experience, with 23 years in border security operations and administration along the United States-Mexico border. He previously served as Acting Deputy Chief of Law Enforcement Operational Programs at the USBP headquarters in Washington, D.C., USBP McAllen Station Patrol Agent in Charge, USBP Rio Grande Valley Sector Executive Officer and Acting Division Chief, and other various USBP leadership positions in Texas, Arizona, and California.
- ❖ Press Release Source: <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-announces-new-texas-border-czar>

BUSING MIGRANTS

Texas spent nearly \$9 million busing migrants over the holidays, according to records obtained by Insider

By Charles R. Davis, Business Insider, January 19, 2023

- ❖ According to public records obtained by Insider, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's migrant bus program cost the Texas Division of Emergency Management \$8.97 million over the November and December holidays. Since it began in April of last year, the program has now cost taxpayers roughly \$29 million. Since April 2022, Texas has paid to relocate more than 16,690 migrants, according to the governor's office.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.businessinsider.com/texas-spent-nearly-9-million-busing-migrants-over-holidays-2023-1>

Busing migrants was a partisan lightning rod. Here's why Democrats have embraced it

By Laura Benshoff, NPR, February 6, 2023

- ❖ Government agencies and nonprofits in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Chicago and New York have welcomed tens of thousands of immigrants bussed from the border. In many cases, they provide food, shelter, legal services and help with transportation. In Philadelphia and D.C., between 5-10% of the arrivals remained in shelters or subsidized housing as of mid-January. Chicago officials did not provide enough data to make the comparison. In New York, where there is a "right-to-shelter" law, more than 26,000 asylum-seekers are staying in city-run shelters as of Jan. 8, according to a city spokesperson. Cities and states led by Democrats started busing immigrants last year – with some tweaks. In El Paso, the Democratic administration bused more than 13,000 people as of the fall, outstripping buses from the state of Texas in some cases. However, the city stopped its own busing program in October, and the only government-backed bus program there now is run by the state of Texas, according to a city spokesperson. Then in December, thousands of people started showing up in Denver on their own. The city set up emergency shelters as temperatures dipped outside. But, it also bought individual bus tickets for 1,900 people, helping them get to 35 states, according to data provided by local officials. Colorado's Democratic governor, Jared Polis, announced in early January that the state would also charter buses from Denver to other cities. But just a few days later, he halted that program, after the mayors of Chicago and New York asked him to stop. In Arizona, another revamped busing program is in the works. Murphy Hebert, communications director for the Arizona Governor's Office, says the new administration has an obligation to use the \$15 million appropriated by the legislature to transport immigrants away from border areas.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.npr.org/2023/02/06/1154412106/busing-migrants-asylum-border-republicans-democrats>

ASYLUM SEEKERS

Migrant shot and injured by National Guard soldier patrolling border

By Davis Winkie, *Military Times*, and James Barragán, *The Texas Tribune*, January 19, 2023

- ❖ A Texas National Guard soldier patrolling the Texas-Mexico border shot a migrant Sunday morning [January 15] just west of McAllen, according to an internal Texas Military Department document obtained by *Military Times* and *The Texas Tribune*. It's the first known incident since the mission began in which a soldier has shot and injured a migrant. The document does not indicate that the migrant had a firearm or any other weapons during the incident. The injury is not life-threatening. The soldier who fired, Spc. Angel Gallegos, is an infantryman assigned to the border as part of Gov. Greg Abbott's Operation Lone Star, a multibillion-dollar mission intended to curb the number of migrants entering Texas. Around 5,500 members of the Texas National Guard remain posted along the Rio Grande manning observation posts, building fences and in some cases apprehending migrants for the mission, which began in March 2021. The migrant was shot in his left shoulder. He was taken to McAllen Medical Center for evaluation and treatment, according to the document. Ericka Miller, a spokesperson for the Department of Public Safety said the Texas Rangers are investigating the shooting. It's not clear if the Gallegos intended to fire his weapon. Two troops assigned to the border mission have died in accidental shootings — known as “negligent discharges” in military parlance — since it expanded in the fall of 2021. But if investigators rule the soldier intentionally fired, the shooting would be the third known incident since the mission began in which a Texas Guard member has intentionally opened fire on duty. In January 2022, a soldier shot at a Chrysler 300, recently seen smuggling migrants, that he believed was accelerating toward a fellow Guardsman. Nobody was harmed in that incident. More recently, a soldier died by suicide with his duty weapon while on patrol in Eagle Pass in October. The shooting took place around 4:20 a.m. Sunday, after two Guardsmen joined Border Patrol agents and a trained dog who tracked a group of migrants to an abandoned house. The soldiers entered the building where three of the four migrants surrendered, the report said. According to the document, the fourth migrant tried to flee through a window and resisted when one of the soldiers tried to apprehend him. The migrant wrestled the service member to the ground, striking him with his fists and elbows, the document said. During the struggle, the Guard member drew his M17 pistol and shot the migrant in the left shoulder at close range as the migrant was falling on top of the soldier. The soldier fired once, the document said.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.texastribune.org/2023/01/19/national-guard-migrant-shot-border/>

Online system to seek asylum in US is quickly overwhelmed

By Elliot Spagat, *Associated Press*, January 28, 2023

- ❖ Hours before sunrise, migrants at one of Mexico's largest shelters wake up and go online, hoping to secure an appointment to try to seek asylum in the U.S. The daily ritual resembles a race for concert tickets when online sales begin for a major act, as about 100 people glide their thumbs over phone screens. New appointments are available each day at 6 a.m., but migrants find themselves stymied by error messages from the U.S. government's CBPOne mobile app that's been overloaded since the Biden administration introduced it Jan. 12. Many can't log in; others are able to enter their information and select a date, only to have the screen freeze at final confirmation. Some get a message saying they must be near a U.S. crossing, despite being in Mexico's largest border city. At Embajadores de Jesus in Tijuana, only two of more than 1,000 migrants got appointments in the first two weeks, says director Gustavo Banda. CBPOne replaced an opaque patchwork of exemptions to a public health order known as Title 42 under which the U.S. government has denied migrants' rights to claim asylum since March 2020. People who have come from other countries find themselves in Mexico waiting for an exemption or policy change — unless they try to cross illegally into the U.S. If it succeeds, CBPOne could be used by asylum-seekers even if Title 42 is lifted as a safe, orderly alternative to illegal entry, which reached the highest level ever recorded in the U.S. in December. It could also discourage large camps on Mexico's side of the border, where migrants cling to unrealistic hopes. But a range of complaints have surfaced: Applications are available in English and Spanish only, languages many of the migrants don't speak. Some migrants, particularly with darker skin, say the app is rejecting required photos, blocking or delaying applications. CBP says it is aware of some technical issues, especially when new appointments are made available, but that users' phones may also contribute. It says a live photo is required for each login as a security measure. A requirement that migrants apply in northern and central Mexico doesn't always work. CBP notes the app won't work right if the locator function is switched off. It's also trying to determine if signals are bouncing off U.S. phone towers. But not only is the app failing to recognize that some people are at the border, applicants outside the region have been able to circumvent the location requirement by using virtual private networks. The agency said it has found a fix for that and is updating the system.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/article/technology-united-states-government-caribbean-mexico-mobile-apps-49b38b18869ed3b2260fb6d774153456>

New York City to open a fifth relief center amid the continued influx of asylum seekers, mayor says

By Gloria Pazmino and Emma Tucker, CNN, January 21, 2023

- ❖ New York City is set to open a relief center in a terminal for cruise ships, which will provide temporary respite to the continued influx of asylum-seekers entering the city, officials said. The new site will be located at the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal, one of three terminals for cruise ships in the New York City metropolitan area, Mayor Eric Adams announced. It will serve approximately 1,000 asylum-seekers, specifically single adult men who will be moved from another humanitarian relief center, in addition to newly arriving single men, the mayor said. The cruise terminal site will be the fifth Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Center to open in the city to manage the arrival of immigrants who have been bused in over recent months from other parts of the country, according to the mayor's announcement. The city has also opened 77 hotels as emergency shelters, according to New York City Emergency Management Commissioner Zach Iscol. The center is expected to be in operation until the spring, when the terminal reopens to the public for cruise season, officials said, and it will also offer on-site medical care, food, laundry, reconnections, and a place to stay. The cruise terminal structure will be "similar" to the tent structures the city opened on Randall's Island back in October, the spokesperson said.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2023/01/21/us/new-york-city-immigrants-relief-center/index.html>

Grandmothers, grandchildren separated at border, despite U.S. move to reunite migrant families

By Rick Jervis, USA TODAY, January 23, 2023

- ❖ Nonparents – grandparents, aunts, older siblings – are routinely separated from children at the border, despite federal efforts to keep families together, according to immigrant advocates. The families are separated under a U.S. law designed to shield asylum-seeking minors from child traffickers and other threats. But the policy often ends up breaking up families and traumatizing children, said Jennifer Podkul, of Kids in Need of Defense, an advocacy group. The Biden administration has said it has prioritized keeping families together at the border and has taken steps to reunite many of the estimated 3,900 families separated under "Zero Tolerance," the border policy that separated children from their parents under former President Donald Trump. It created a multi-agency task force to track down and reunite families. But much of that effort is aimed at reuniting parents with their children and does not address the grandmothers and aunts who routinely arrive at the border with younger relatives, said Casey Revkin, executive director of Each Step Home, a nonprofit that helps detained migrant children and their families at the Texas-Mexico border. Under U.S. law, children at the border must be separated from an adult unless that adult is a parent or legal guardian. The children are then transferred to the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, often in a group housing facility, rekindling images of children warehoused in border facilities under the Trump administration. Federal officials track the number of children separated at the border from parents, but no such numbers exist for nonparental separations, according to a spokesman at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Last year, the Biden administration launched an initiative known as the Trusted Adult Relative program that places federal social workers on the border to more quickly vet and reunite separated nonparental families. Though it's a good first step, advocates said, that pilot program is in place only in Texas' Rio Grande Valley and is limited in scope.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2023/01/23/us-immigration-migrant-children-grandparents-separated/11088510002/>

U.S. arrests of Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan and Venezuelan migrants plummet

By Ted Hesson, Reuters, January 25, 2023

- ❖ The number of migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela caught crossing the U.S.-Mexico border dropped off dramatically from December to January following new rules that expel them back to Mexico. U.S. authorities encountered a daily average of just 115 migrants from those countries over a week-long period ending on Jan. 24, down from an average 3,367 in the week to Dec. 11, a 97% drop. The department attributed the decrease to the expansion of a public health order known as Title 42, which was first implemented by Republican former President Donald Trump to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as expanded legal pathways to enter the United States. On Jan. 5, the administration of Democratic President Joe Biden announced that migrants from Cuba, Haiti and Nicaragua would be expelled to Mexico without the chance to seek U.S. asylum under Title 42. Mexico had previously accepted mostly Mexicans, some Central Americans and, more recently, Venezuelans. Biden's administration has coupled the expulsions with new legal pathways for migrants who enter by air and who have U.S. sponsors. Under the new program, up to 30,000 migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela may enter the United States per month with a two-year temporary humanitarian "parole." About 1,700 people from Cuba, Haiti and Nicaragua have arrived in the United States through the program in recent weeks, with thousands more approved for travel, a senior administration official said during a call with reporters. Venezuelans have been eligible for such entry since October. A coalition of 20 U.S. states filed a lawsuit seeking to halt Biden's humanitarian entry program, saying it violates federal immigration law.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-arrests-cuban-haitian-nicaraguan-venezuelan-migrants-plummet-under-new-2023-01-25/>

Florida, other states sue feds over parole program for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans

By Syra Ortiz-Blanes, Miami Herald, January 28, 2023

- ❖ Florida sued the Department of Homeland Security and its leadership over a humanitarian parole program the Biden administration hopes will reduce irregular migration from Cuba, Haiti, Venezuela and Nicaragua, arguing that it is a violation of federal immigration law and an overreach of executive power. “The Plaintiff States ... face substantial, irreparable harms from the Department’s abuse of its parole authority, which allow potentially hundreds of thousands of additional aliens to enter each of their already overwhelmed territories,” says the lawsuit, which was filed by the governments of 20 states. At the heart of a lawsuit is a new parole process set up for Venezuelans, Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans that allows nationals from these countries to apply for humanitarian parole for as long as two years. The migrants can be approved to live and work in the United States as long as they pass medical and background checks, have a financial sponsor in the country, and pay for their airfare. The legal challenge to the parole program comes as South Florida and the Florida Keys experience a significant surge in migrant landings, especially Cubans. The states involved in the lawsuit, filed in federal court in Texas, argue that Homeland Security, which oversees U.S. immigration agencies, effectively circumvented Congress and created a de facto visa program without legislative approval. They also claim that the program runs beyond the limited circumstances in which Homeland Security is allowed to employ humanitarian parole under federal law. The states suing are Texas, Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming. The lawsuit argues that in Florida’s case, the state will be harmed because it costs the state millions of dollars and “significant state resources” such as public education, healthcare, domestic violence victim services, and correctional facilities. “The presence of these illegal aliens in Florida ... violates the State’s quasi-sovereign interest in its territory and the welfare of its citizens,” the lawsuit states.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/immigration/article271598967.html>

Texas sues to unravel Biden's plan allowing 30,000 asylum-seekers into U.S. monthly

By Benjamin Wermund, Washington Bureau, January 24, 2023

- ❖ Texas is asking the courts to block President Joe Biden's new border plan, under which 30,000 asylum seekers a month will be allowed into the U.S., claiming Biden is going around Congress to create what is effectively a new visa program. Biden announced the parole program earlier this month as a way to handle the arrival of an unprecedented number of migrants seeking asylum as they flee oppressive governments, poverty and crime in Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua and Haiti. It is aimed at curbing illegal border crossings by allowing migrants from those nations to work and live in the U.S. for two years, provided they apply for entry via a phone app from their home countries. The administration has said as many as 30,000 migrants from those countries who cross the border illegally will be turned back to Mexico each month under a new agreement, as well. In the lawsuit filed on behalf of Texas and 19 other red states, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton argues that Biden has overstepped his authority and "effectively created a new visa program — without the formalities of legislation from Congress." Texas has also sought to stop the administration from ending a COVID-era public health order that has been used to automatically expel migrants millions of times. The Supreme Court stopped Biden from lifting the order, known as Title 42, while it weighs a related lawsuit. The border plan is an expansion of a program that the White House says led to a 90 percent drop in the number of Venezuelan nationals trying to cross the border, from roughly 1,100 a day to about 100 a day, since it was enacted in October.
- ❖ News Article Source: https://www.expressnews.com/politics/texas/article/plan-is-an-expansion-of-a-program-that-led-to-a-90-17739192.php?sid=5b0234e724c17c5e3d919320&ss=A&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=headlines&utm_campaign=SAEN_210Report

Beyond the Border

By Nicholas Fandos, New York Times, January 30, 2023

- ❖ New York City has prided itself for centuries on being a haven for immigrants. Even today, nearly two in five city residents were born in other countries. However, the pace of the current wave of arrivals has little precedent. Since last spring, at least 42,000 migrants who say they are seeking asylum have arrived in the city in need of shelter and basic services. The escalating emergency has prompted Mayor Eric Adams, to declare that New York is nearing “its breaking point.” He made the migrant situation a focus of his annual State of the City address last week. The origins of the current migrant influx to New York can be traced to last summer, when Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas began paying for buses northward for foreigners who had sought asylum at the border. New York City has seen far more migrants arrive than other big Northern cities. In one recent week, more than 3,000 asylum seekers arrived in New York City alone. By comparison, Chicago has absorbed more than 5,000 asylum seekers total since August, according to The Chicago Sun-Times.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/30/briefing/new-york-migrants.html>

Migrant protest at New York hotel highlights growing issue

By Kayla Epstein, BBC News, January 31, 2023

- ❖ Before he arrived at a city-run shelter in Manhattan, Wilson, a 23-year-old Venezuelan asylum seeker, crossed through multiple Central American countries, over the US-Mexico border, up the eastern seaboard and, finally, to New York City. Now, he will likely have to move again. Wilson and dozens of other migrants have been sheltering at the Watson Hotel in New York, but officials have told them they must leave by 31 January. "The Watson Hotel humanitarian relief centre will transition to serve arriving families with children seeking asylum," the city announced earlier this month. More than 28,000 asylum seekers are currently in the city's care, and Mayor Eric Adams said New York was at breaking point. The decision has led to an ongoing stand-off, with men refusing to board buses to an alternative shelter and police demanding they take down tents they had set up outside. More than 41,000 asylum seekers have arrived in the city since last spring, according to the mayor's office, with the number growing each week. To accommodate the men who have been asked to leave the Watson Hotel, New York officials have set up a 1,000-bed emergency facility at the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal which they say will safely house whoever needs shelter. The city said the facility would also have medical services and laundry equipment. But the men at the Watson Hotel, and immigration advocates who support them, have reported poor conditions which they say includes cots laid end-to-end and little privacy. And they say the terminal is located too far from public transportation or the limited job options that can give them a foothold in one of the world's most expensive cities.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-64475732>

77 Democrats urge Biden to scrap new asylum limits, highlighting divide on border policy

By Camilo Montoya-Galvez, CBS News, January 26, 2023

- ❖ Nearly 80 Democratic lawmakers in Congress implored President Biden to scrap plans to limit asylum access and eligibility along the southern border, highlighting intra-party divides over how the U.S. should manage a historic migration crisis. Earlier this month, the Biden administration unveiled its most comprehensive plan yet to deter illegal border crossings. It announced that migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela would face expulsion to Mexico under a Trump-era public health order known as Title 42 if they enter the U.S. unlawfully. It also extended legal migration opportunities to migrants with U.S. sponsors and vulnerable asylum-seekers. The measures have led to a sharp drop in unlawful entries along the southern border. On Wednesday, the administration credited the strategy with a 97% drop in the number of migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela entering U.S. border custody per day. But the 77 Democrats in the House and Senate who penned the letter to Mr. Biden said the measures undermined U.S. asylum law, which allows migrants on U.S. soil to request humanitarian protection and to secure it if they prove they are fleeing persecution on certain grounds. "We believe that your administration can and must continue to expand legal pathways for migrants and refugees into the United States — without further dismantling the right to seek asylum at our border," the lawmakers wrote. "This right is a pillar of the post-war international order to which the United States has committed itself." The Democratic lawmakers praised the program the Biden administration set up to allow American citizens and others with legal status in the U.S. to sponsor the arrival of Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans. But they said the deterrence component of Mr. Biden's strategy relied on Trump administration policies. Specifically, the lawmakers denounced the administration's decision to expand Title 42, as migrants from Cuba, Haiti and Nicaragua were previously not subject to the policy. They also urged the administration to reverse course on a proposal that would disqualify migrants from asylum if they fail to seek refuge in third countries en route to the U.S., a rule the Trump administration also sought to enact. The letter to Mr. Biden was not signed by Democratic leaders in the Senate and House, who have been generally supportive of the administration's border strategy.

- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/immigration-biden-democrats-asylum-limits-border-policy/?ftag=CNM-00-10aac3a>



Migrants, who were caught trying to come into the United States, are led by a US Customs and Border Protection agent, second from left, at the McAllen-Hidalgo International Bridge while being deported to Reynosa, Mexico, on Thursday, March 18, 2021, in Hidalgo, Texas.

Credit: Julio Cortez/AP

OPERATION LONE STAR

Gov. Greg Abbott's unprecedented border crackdown, explained

By Neena Satija and Jasper Scherer, *San Antonio Express-News*, January 27, 2023

- ❖ As the Biden administration grapples with a historic surge in illegal border crossings, Texas Republicans have pumped billions of state dollars into their own border security blitz, deploying thousands of state authorities to apprehend and jail migrants along parts of the Rio Grande. The effort is costing Texas \$4.4 billion over the first two years, far more than the state has ever spent on border security in a budget cycle. And with this year's legislative session underway, GOP state lawmakers are eyeing a record of more than \$4.6 billion in border security spending to keep things running for the next two years. The centerpiece of Texas' border security efforts — and the most expensive component — is Gov. Greg Abbott's wide-ranging and controversial initiative known as Operation Lone Star.
- ❖ What is Operation Lone Star? It's the latest in a string of attempts by Texas Republicans to more aggressively respond to illegal immigration. The operation began in spring 2021, when Abbott sent thousands of state Department of Public Safety troopers to the border, followed by thousands more members of the Texas National Guard. The initiative has echoes of former Gov. Rick Perry's "Operation Strong Safety" in 2014. This was also described as a surge of Texas National Guardsmen and state troopers to the border, at a cost of more than \$10 million a month. But because federal immigration agents are the only ones with the authority to deport people, many state troopers at that time found themselves with little to do beyond conducting traffic stops. Abbott recently claimed that the initiative has led to "over 340,000 illegal immigrant apprehensions and more than 23,000 criminal arrests, with more than 21,000 felony charges reported." But more comprehensive data indicating where these arrests occurred, the outcomes of the resulting criminal cases and how much they're actually related to Operation Lone Star have been difficult to come by. Abbott has also bused thousands of migrants to Democratic-led states, which has garnered national attention. So far, Texas officials have sent more than 11,000 border crossers to cities such as Chicago and New York. Abbott claims the program provides "much-needed relief to border communities." Critics say it's a political stunt that misleads the migrants and puts an unfair burden on the cities receiving them. Abbott announced that he's creating a new position in state government to lead Texas' border control efforts. He said the new border czar will be Mike Banks, a former Border Patrol agent who will be based in Weslaco and report directly to the governor.
- ❖ Why is Operation Lone Star controversial? Abbott and his supporters say it's filling gaps in what they consider overly lax enforcement of federal immigration laws. Border crossings have continued to increase in Texas since the operation began, though at a slower rate than in neighboring border states. But the effort has come at a large cost, forcing Texas officials to redirect hundreds of millions of dollars from the prison system and other areas to keep it going. The border arrests have also overwhelmed everyone responsible for carrying them out. State troopers have often been taking months to file the necessary arrest paperwork, as well as hand over evidence such as body camera footage, according to court documents and testimony in legislative hearings. Prison officials are struggling to process releases and transfers on time. And local judges and prosecutors who were used to dealing with a handful of criminal cases each year are now buckling under the weight of thousands. As a result, hundreds of Operation Lone Star defendants have languished behind bars for months without the chance to go before a judge, which is a violation of state law. In some cases, judges have ordered the mass releases of defendants because prosecutors were unable to process their cases quickly enough. In others, prosecutors abandoned the operation; for instance, Val Verde County, whose top elected misdemeanor prosecutor is a Democrat, has dismissed most criminal trespass cases and stopped taking new ones. Kinney County's Republican prosecutor is pressing on, though an attorney representing him in appellate court openly called the entire operation "a waste of time and money."
- ❖ How much money has been spent, and what has it been spent on? Since the operation launched nearly two years ago, Texas has spent \$4.4 billion on border security, up from just \$800 million in its previous two-year budget cycle, which ended in August 2021. That includes \$1.8 billion approved by the Legislature to build a barrier along parts of the border and to deploy guardsmen and troopers to the region. As of July, 1.6 miles of wall had been built, with 45 total miles planned at a cost of nearly \$1 billion. State officials have mapped out 805 miles "where some kind of barrier may be necessary," according to Abbott's office. A smaller chunk of the spending — some tens of millions of dollars — has gone toward supporting the court system and detention facilities that are processing and holding migrants. Abbott's busing program, meanwhile, has cost more than \$12.7 million, or about \$1,700 per passenger. But the largest expense, by far, has come from the deployment of troopers and guardsmen, forcing Republican leaders to transfer hundreds of millions of dollars from a handful of other agency budgets, including the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, which runs the state prison system.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/politics/texas/article/abbott-lone-star-explainer-17741993.php>

DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA)

States ask judge to shut down DACA program for immigrant "Dreamers"

By Camilo Montoya-Galvez, CBS News, January 31, 2023

- ❖ Nine states asked a federal judge in Texas to shut down the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program in its entirety over two years, a move that would prevent nearly 600,000 immigrants known as "Dreamers" from renewing their deportation protections and work permits. The request from the coalition of states led by Texas represents the most pressing legal threat facing the Obama-era DACA program, which has continued to this day, although in a limited way, despite the years-old lawsuit challenging its legality and former President Donald Trump's attempts to dismantle it. For over a decade, DACA has allowed hundreds of thousands of immigrants lacking legal status who were brought to the U.S. as children to work and live in the country without fear of deportation. But the program does not provide them permanent residency, a status only Congress can grant. As of September 2022, 589,660 young adults were enrolled in DACA, federal statistics show. At the center of the state officials' request are rules the Biden administration issued to place DACA on firmer legal grounds by transforming the program into a federal regulation. In October, those regulations replaced the Obama administration memo that first created DACA in 2012. At the request of the same group of states, U.S. District Court Andrew Hanen declared the 2012 DACA memo unlawful in the summer of 2021. Hanen's ruling, which was upheld by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals last year, has blocked the government from approving first-time DACA applications. But it also has allowed current DACA recipients to continue renewing their enrollment in the program. However, the states challenging DACA's legality asked Hanen to find that the regulations issued last year are also unlawful and to block the government from approving renewal applications two years after a decision is made. It's unclear, however, whether Hanen will agree to block DACA renewals in the future, since he has previously expressed concern about disrupting the lives of immigrants enrolled in the program. Hanen's ruling is expected to be issued after April 6, the deadline for parties in the case to submit filings. The states that joined Texas' bid to terminate DACA were Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, South Carolina, West Virginia, Kansas and Mississippi. They have argued that DACA is an illegal overreach of executive power, and that only Congress has the authority to grant unauthorized immigrants federal benefits.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/immigration-daca-lawsuit-republican-states-federal-judge-dreamers/?ftag=CNM-00-10aac3a>



Immigration rights activists take part in a rally in front of the US Supreme Court.

Credit: Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty Images

DEVELOPING STORIES

Analysis: Militia groups' focus on migrants

By Elizabeth Trovall, San Antonio Express-News, January 23, 2023

- ❖ Border militia groups are using Facebook to encourage vigilantes to protect the border and to spread conspiracy theories, according to an analysis by a left-leaning watchdog that reviewed anti-migrant posts on the platform dating back to 2020. The tech monitor's research identified one Texas group, the Texas Border Patriots, that it said violated Facebook's policies. The group, which was created in 2021 and has 2,700 members, includes posted comments calling for a "massive show of force on our borders." A second Texas group, Patriots for America, no longer appears to be active on Facebook, though its founder — using an alternate spelling of his name — continues to post content about migrant children at the border being trafficked for sex, using QAnon hashtags. The Tech Transparency Project — an initiative of the nonprofit Campaign for Accountability — published the findings this month, and they argue that some active border militia groups and user profiles violate the rules of Facebook's parent company, Meta. According to its policies, the social media juggernaut does not permit pages, communities, events, profiles or entities on the site if they "are — or claim to be — maintained by, or on behalf of, militarized social movements," including militia groups.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/immigration/article/texas-border-militia-facebook-groups-anti-migrant-17728027.php>

One Way For F-1 Foreign Students To Get Green Cards

By Andy J. Semotiuk, *Forbes*, January 30, 2023

- ❖ How do foreign students come to the United States and get green cards? The road is not an easy one. But it can be done. A popular way of doing it, probably the most frequently used path, can visually be portrayed by the following formula: F-1 student visa -> Optional Practical Training (OPT) through a post-graduate employment authorization -> H1B work visa -> Labor certification and I-140 employer sponsorship to get a green card. Let's explain this formula. A student would start out by applying to various U.S. colleges or universities to enroll in a course of studies leading to a bachelor's degree in any field. On acceptance, the college's international student advisor's office will provide the student with an I-20 form acknowledging acceptance for studies at the institution and outlining what the cost of studies will be estimated to be. In most instances, this form would enable the student to apply for an F-1 student visa at a U.S. Consulate abroad. The only exception is Canadians who can apply at the border with the I-20 form to get an F-1 student visa there. As part of the application, the student must pay a so-called Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVIS) fee to be registered in the U.S. system as an international student. This fee can be paid online before the student visa application is begun with the U.S. Consulate. The international student advisor at the college or university that accepts the student will be able to assist in taking all these steps without any cost to the student. Indeed, it is wise to work closely with such an advisor throughout the process discussed here because they are paid by the college or university to help foreign students get their visas and are very knowledgeable about the whole process. Assuming the student files an application and proves they have ready access to the amount of money needed to start studying as indicated on the I-20 form, an F-1 student visa will be issued and the student will be allowed to enter the United States to study. In the case of a vocational or technical institution an M-1 visa might be involved but the process is the same. During the next four years if the student is doing a bachelor's degree, or a year or two if a master's degree is involved, the student will have time to come up with an immigration plan as to the next few steps on the journey following graduation. When the student is approaching the conclusion of their studies, with the help of the international student advisor the student should apply for an Optional Practical Training (OPT) post-graduate employment authorization. The student is expected to be employed in his or her field of study during OPT, and the student is required to submit employer information to SEVIS. The maximum period of unemployment is 90 days. During this one-year period, the student should try to earn an employer's support to get an H1-B work visa on the expiry of his or her OPT status. For students with studies in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM), an additional 24 months of extended OPT work can be obtained. Either way, following the conclusion of OPT status, normally the next step in the process is to apply for an H1-B visa. The ideal is to apply for a so-called cap-exempt H1-B visa. Universities and related nonprofit entities, nonprofit research organizations, and government research organizations are exempt from the cap on the number of work visas available to foreign students each year. These employers are able to submit an H-1B application to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) at any time during the year without concern for the fiscal year limit. Otherwise, obtaining an H1-B visa involves entering a lottery to determine if you will qualify to get the visa. That is because far more applicants want H1-B visas than there are slots available for them. Indeed, there are only 65,000 slots available each year to individuals with a bachelor's degree and only 20,000 further slots available for those with master's degrees. However, way more than that apply each year for the slots being offered by the USCIS. Failure to win the lottery will result in having to return home and wait for the next year to try again, or finding a successful different option such as for example, an E, I, J, L, O, P, R, or TN visa, or marrying a U.S. citizen spouse who can file a spousal sponsorship. Finding an employer who will hire you and apply for an H1-B work visa with the student is not easy. Indeed, at the moment there are thousands of H1-B work visa holders who have recently been laid off by IT giants like Microsoft, Amazon and Google, for example. However, this reflects the ebb and flow of the markets. They say it is darkest before the dawn. Judging by U.S. history it would be a mistake to count America out. Sometimes it is wise to swim against the tide and this may be just such a time if a student is just starting out. Obtaining an H1-B work visa makes it possible for the employee to stay in the U.S. for up to six years. In some instances, the length of stay can be extended even further, for example with those who can find an employer that would be willing to apply for a so-called Program Electronic Review Management (PERM) Labor Certification for the employer. In this instance, the employer must show a pattern of recruitment over the last six months that resulted in failure in locating a local U.S. worker ready, willing, and able to take up the job that the employer proposes to offer to the foreign worker. In short, once again the process is F-1 student visa -> Optional Practical Training (OPT) through a post-graduate employment authorization -> H1B work visa -> Labor certification and I-140 employer sponsorship to get a green card.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andyjsemotiuk/2023/01/30/one-way-for-f-1-foreign-students-to-get-green-cards/?sh=19ccab713832>

Texas Bill: Many Immigrants, H-1B Visa Holders Can't Buy Property

By Stuart Anderson, *Forbes*, February 1, 2023

- ❖ A bill in the Texas state legislature would prohibit many immigrants and H-1B visa holders from China and three other countries from owning property in the state. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott supports the bill. The prospect of individuals being unable to buy a home or invest in a business based on their country of origin raises legal issues and could damage the state's reputation. On January 15, 2023, Governor Abbott endorsed the bill, which is sponsored by State Senator Lois Kolkhorst. In a tweet, Abbott said, "A bill is filed in Texas legislature to ban citizens, governments & entities of China, Iran, North Korea & Russia from purchasing land in Texas. I will sign it. This follows a law I signed banning those countries from threatening our infrastructure." The bill may be part of a "primary" battle between Texas Gov. Abbott and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, which has included both men sending migrants from the border to cities with Democratic mayors. "While Kolkhorst's bill targets only the four countries and is related to real estate, DeSantis took action against seven countries and issued far broader prohibitions," according to the conservative publication Center Square. "Last September, DeSantis issued an executive order prohibiting government entities from procuring technology products and services from companies owned by, controlled by or domiciled in seven foreign countries of concern: China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Russia and Venezuela." Under the Texas bill, "Purchase of or acquisition of title to real property by certain foreign individuals or entities [would be] prohibited." The bill would bar such purchases or acquisitions by "a governmental entity of China, Iran, North Korea or Russia; a company or other entity that is headquartered in China, Iran, North Korea or Russia...[or] an individual who is a citizen of China, Iran, North Korea or Russia." The bill also prevents such acquisitions by companies directly or indirectly controlled by any of the four governments, or companies owned by or the majority of stock ownership or other ownership interest held by a company headquartered in one of the four countries or an individual who is a citizen of China, Iran, North Korea or Russia. The bill raises many questions. Noah Klug of the Klug Law Firm PLLC in New York responded to questions about the legal ramifications of the legislation. "The bill, at least as it currently stands, is quite vague," said Klug. "It simply states, 'an individual who is a citizen of China, Iran, North Korea, or Russia' 'may not purchase or otherwise acquire title to real property in this state.' I would take that to mean that anyone living here with Chinese, Iranian, North Korean or Russian citizenship would be banned from acquiring real property in Texas if this bill is passed." Klug said the ban would include F-1 students, H-1B visa holders and lawful permanent residents (green card holders)—anyone from the four countries who is not a U.S. citizen. Klug notes that State Senator Lois Kolkhorst, the bill's sponsor, said in a statement that the bill "will make crystal clear that the prohibitions do not apply to United States citizens and lawful permanent residents." (Emphasis added). However, the bill, as written, does not make that apparent. Governor Abbott stated at a news conference that the legislation "doesn't affect at all people who are citizens or intend to be citizens of the United States." It's unclear what he means by "intend to be citizens." Immigration law is specialized, and it's common for policymakers to possess a less than firm grasp of immigration law, note analysts. For companies, the way the bill is written, "regardless of U.S. immigration status (even if they are lawful permanent residents), if the majority owners are citizens of these countries, then the company would be barred from acquiring real property," said Klug. He said the bill does not explicitly address dual citizens, but he doesn't think they would be subject to the property ownership ban. "While the bill is certainly bold, and the constitutionality is being fiercely questioned by opponents, I do not believe that Texas would even attempt to ban dual U.S. citizens from acquiring property, a clear violation of the Fifth Amendment," said Klug. He noted the legislation does not appear to be retroactive. In other words, it would not require divestment by current property owners who fall under the bill's restrictions.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2023/02/01/texas-bill-many-immigrants-h-1b-visa-holders-cant-own-property/?sh=6483d98129e3>



A group of Brazilian migrants make their way around a gap in the U.S.-Mexico border in Yuma, Ariz., seeking asylum in the United States after crossing over from Mexico, June 8, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Eugene Garcia, File

Opinion: U.S. government quietly hikes illegal immigration projections by 175%. What does that mean for workers?

By Brett Arends, *MarketWatch*, January 27, 2023

- ❖ Bad news for entry-level workers and the wages of the working poor, but good news for corporate profits, inflation and Social Security: The federal government has just drastically hiked the number of immigrants it expects to enter the country illegally over the next 10 years. Net immigration of “foreign-born people without legal status” into the U.S. is projected to average 220,000 a year over the next decade, the Congressional Budget Office has just revealed. That’s a remarkable 175% hike from the average of just 80,000 a year the CBO had forecast a mere 6 months ago. The figure is unannounced in any press release, but appears instead in the third sentence of the fourth paragraph of the fifth page of the CBO’s latest report on America’s “Demographic Outlook: 2023 to 2053.” The CBO press office confirmed the rise in an email to MarketWatch. “This is correct,” a spokesperson wrote. They added: “In CBO’s assessment, the easing of pandemic-related travel restrictions and improved visa-processing capabilities boosted net immigration by 600,000 people in 2022 relative to last year’s projected amount, largely because of increased net immigration of foreign-born people without legal status.” (Emphasis added.) The Congressional Budget Office is the independent department that conducts research, analysis and long-term forecasts on behalf of both branches of Congress. How this number has jumped by nearly 200% as a result of changes in federal law, and federal government processing capabilities, remains unclear.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/u-s-government-quietly-hikes-illegal-immigration-projections-by-175-what-does-that-mean-for-workers-11674836446>

Over 75,000 Job Openings in Iowa Alone. Millions of Refugees Seeking Work. Make the Connection.

By Kristie De Peña, Robert Leonard and David Oman, *New York Times*, February 2, 2023

Ms. De Peña is the director of immigration policy at the Niskanen Center. Mr. Leonard is the news director for two radio stations in Knoxville, Iowa.

Mr. Oman was the chief of staff for the Iowa governors Robert D. Ray and Terry Branstad.

- ❖ Employers are struggling particularly with shortages in key midskill industries like health care, information and technology and tourism and hospitality. So not only should states lead in improving welcoming efforts for refugees, but Democratic and Republican governors should also have the opportunity to weigh in on the specific immigration needs of small businesses, manufacturers and families. States can innovate in three ways. The first — and probably the toughest — is at the federal level, through Congress. Recent bipartisan efforts in Washington, D.C., to address immigration and border issues fell through, but lawmakers made significant progress and suggest that reform is possible. There is precedent for innovative congressional immigration policy that involves states. For example, in 2017, Senator Ron Johnson, Republican of Wisconsin, introduced legislation that would allow states to devise guest worker programs for their expanding work forces. The bill was modeled after Canada’s successful Provincial Nominee Program. In the Johnson proposal, states would require approval from the Department of Homeland Security and from a state legislature. Workers could even change jobs but would be required to remain in the state where they are sponsored unless that state had a reciprocity agreement with other states. The second option for innovation is through action by the president and his administration in the executive branch. The United States and other countries could establish a so-called global skill partnership, a bilateral migration agreement that would allow U.S. employers to train workers to obtain valuable skills; that training could be done either in the United States or abroad, and then workers could come to the U.S. states that need them. Creating a pathway for individuals to live and work in Iowa and other states would ease the burden on America’s asylum system. Moreover, it would allow employers to train people in a way that’s tailored to the specific requirements of their businesses. In this sort of partnership, immigrants would receive job training and could choose to come to the states that welcomed them, or they could remain at home, stabilizing those economies and taking pressure off our borders. Governors, as well as business and educational leaders, could call for more vulnerable immigrant populations to be trained to fill specific local labor needs. The third option is within the states themselves. Some states are taking control of immigration through licensing reform. According to a 2021 Nursing Education study, four counties in Washington State were among the top 15 in the nation with the highest primary care worker shortages. (Nationwide, the shortage is expected to reach up to 124,000 doctors by 2034.) The state passed legislation offering a limited license for international medical graduates to gain clinical experience. (This doesn’t interact with federal law, since it only affects refugees who are already in the state.) By revising these guidelines, Washington has licensed about 10 foreign medical providers. Together, those physicians have treated an estimated 20,000 state residents.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/02/opinion/immigration-states.html>

Harris Announces Funding to Address Root Causes of Migration Crisis

By Michael D. Shear, *New York Times*, February 6, 2023

- ❖ Vice President Kamala Harris on Monday, February 6, announced almost \$1 billion in new pledges by private companies to support communities in Central America, part of the Biden administration's effort to keep migrants from fleeing toward the U.S. border. Ten companies, including Nestle, Target and Columbia Sportswear, said they would collectively spend \$950 million on projects in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador to support farmers, create textile jobs and invest in telecommunications and other industries. The idea, according to the vice president's aides, is to address what she calls the root causes of migration: poverty, corruption, climate change and political instability that drives people to leave their homes in search of a better life.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/06/us/politics/harris-migration-central-america.html>

Mexico opposes restart of U.S. 'Remain in Mexico' immigration policy

By Kylie Madry, *Reuters*, February 6, 2023

- ❖ The Mexican government said on Monday, February 6, it is opposed to a possible restart of the U.S. immigration policy known as "Remain in Mexico" which required asylum seekers to wait for U.S. hearings in Mexico. President Joe Biden has sought to end the program, which had been introduced by the Trump administration and is currently suspended. But U.S. states such as Texas and Missouri filed a lawsuit to keep the program active and in December a U.S. judge paused Biden's attempt, saying the Department of Homeland Security had failed to adequately explain why the policy was ineffective and should be scrapped. Mexico's foreign ministry did not state its reasons for its opposition. If the Mexican government remains firm in its opposition, U.S. officials would likely have to consider whether asylum seekers can stay in the United States while their claims are evaluated or make other arrangements to remove them from the country. Some 74,000 migrants went through Mexico under the program when former President Donald Trump was in power. Under Biden, that number is just 7,500.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/mexico-rejects-possible-remain-mexico-revamp-plan-2023-02-07/>

Biden administration tells Supreme Court Title 42 will end when Covid-19 public health emergency expires

By Priscilla Alvarez and Ariane de Vogue, *CNN*, February 7, 2023

- ❖ The Biden administration told the Supreme Court Tuesday, February 7, that its intent to let the coronavirus public health emergency expire in May will moot the ongoing case over a Trump-era border restriction. "Absent other relevant developments, the end of the public health emergency will (among other consequences) terminate the Title 42 orders and moot this case. The government has also recently announced its intent to adopt new Title 8 policies to address the situation at the border once the Title 42 orders end," Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar wrote in a filing submitted to the high court.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2023/02/07/politics/title-42-biden-administration-public-health-emergency-expire/index.html>

Border patrol agents plead for resources as Biden touts recent drop in illegal crossings

By Benjamin Wermund, *Washington Bureau*, February 7, 2023

- ❖ The top border patrol agent in the Rio Grande Valley told a panel of lawmakers on Tuesday, February 7, that Congress needs to act on immigration reform, or else the historic number of migrants crossing the southern border will become the norm. "It's time," said Gloria Chavez, the chief patrol agent in the Rio Grande Valley sector that has been the site of the bulk of the crossings, which topped 2 million for the first time last year. The hearing comes as the Biden administration has touted a 97-percent drop in illegal crossings in recent weeks under a new plan to allow asylum-seekers from certain countries to live and work in the U.S. for two years. The plan allows up to 30,000 migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela to enter the U.S. each month, provided they apply for entry via a phone app from their home countries. The administration has said as many as 30,000 migrants from those countries who cross the border illegally will be turned back to Mexico each month under a new agreement, as well. Texas and other GOP-led states are suing to stop it. The administration has not released border crossing data since December, but the White House released a memo before the hearing that said January 2023 saw one of the lowest levels of monthly Border Patrol apprehensions since February 2021, when there were 101,099. The Washington Post reported the number of migrants stopped along the Mexico border last month fell to about 150,000, down from the record-high 251,487 tallied in December. The border patrol chiefs said cartels with essentially unlimited resources are exploiting the situation daily for human smuggling and drug trafficking. Chavez testified that cartels use a fleet of drones to track where American law enforcement is stationed so they can avoid them. The cartels have 17 times the number of drones that border patrol has, Chavez said, and officials in the Rio Grande Valley tracked more than 10,000 times they crossed into the U.S. last year.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/politics/texas/article/border-patrol-pleads-help-biden-touts-drop-17769008.php>

House GOP grapples with disagreement over border and immigration legislation

By Emily Brooks and Rafael Bernal, *The Hill*, February 13, 2023

- ❖ As House Republicans took hold of the majority this year, they had planned to quickly pass a border bill that would allow the Homeland Security Secretary to turn away migrants at the border. But the bill hit a major snag: opposition from GOP moderates. House Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) in December included the Border Safety and Security Act in a slate of 12 bills and resolutions that Republicans planned to pass in the first two weeks of the congressional session, by sending them straight to the House floor rather than through a regular process while committees were still being organized. The border bill would allow the Homeland Security secretary to turn away migrants in order to achieve “operational control” at the border. Republicans have repeatedly accused Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas of not meeting the legal standard of “operational control” at the border by not preventing unlawful entries and contraband. The Border Safety and Security Act calls back to the 2006 Secure Fence Act, which defines operational control as “the prevention of all unlawful entries into the United States, including entries by terrorists, other unlawful aliens, instruments of terrorism, narcotics, and other contraband.” “This language — ‘the prevention of all unlawful entries into the United States, including terrorists, other unlawful aliens, instruments of terror, narcotics, and other contraband’ — I think it’s very forgiving to use the word aspirational, I mean, it’s unrealistic,” said Doris Meissner, a former Immigration and Naturalization Service commissioner under former President Clinton, who now heads the U.S. Immigration Policy Program at the Migration Policy Institute. The definition has been on the books since it was signed into law by former President George W. Bush but has never been used as a real-world metric for border security. The bill’s limitations on asylum are ranking some Republicans, most likely enough Republicans to doom the proposal. Rep. Tony Gonzales (R-Texas), who represents a district on the U.S.-Mexico border, has warned that the bill could prevent legal asylum claims. “One thing that is certain, H.R. 29, the Border Safety and Security Act, is not securing the border, and that is dead on arrival,” Gonzales told “What America’s Thinking.” “That bill is not going to go anywhere for a wide variety of reasons. And I will do everything in my power to prevent anti-immigrant legislation from getting over the finish line,” added Gonzales, a co-chairman of the 18-member strong Congressional Hispanic Conference, a Republican caucus. With the Border Safety and Security Act stalled, House leadership is working with House Judiciary and Homeland Security committees on a larger border package that it hopes to release later this year. The border bill is one of five stalled bills and resolutions from the initial list of 12 that House Republicans hoped to pass in the first few weeks, demonstrating how discord in the House GOP conference challenges a slim majority.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://thehill.com/homenews/house/3853224-house-gop-grapples-with-disagreement-over-border-and-immigration-legislation/>

State plans to turn shuttered Southwest Side Kmart store into a shelter for migrants

By Emmanuel Camarillo, *Chicago Sun Times*, February 12, 2023

- ❖ State officials are planning to turn a building that once housed a Kmart on the Southwest Side into a shelter for newly arrived immigrants. But after being briefed about the state’s plans for the site at 7050 S. Pulaski Road, Ald. Silvana Tabares, whose 23rd Ward includes the property, said she wants the local community to have a say in the process before it proceeds. “I have major concerns for the safety of the local community and the people who will be housed at this location,” Tabares said in a statement, adding that she’s urged state lawmakers to engage local residents. “We need a plan that ensures the safety of the community and its residents,” Tabares said. State Rep. Angie Guerrero-Cuellar, who represents the 13th Ward, also expressed concerns about the safety of the planned facility. “I have serious questions and concerns about the safety and humanity of the proposed Kmart facility and its amenities,” Guerrero-Cuellar said. “I have asked state agencies to pause this project until they can ensure this facility is constructed into adequate housing for young migrant families. State Sen. Mike Porfirio, who represents the 13th Ward, also said he’s working with the state to ensure that the community is kept abreast of the plan. The property is 96,268 square feet, according to a past presentation about the development. It was among a group of Kmart stores across the country that closed in 2016, according to media reports at the time. Recently, a similar plan to turn a shuttered South Side elementary school into a shelter was met with controversy. The opening of that shelter was delayed for weeks after Ald. Jeanette Taylor (20th) and residents in her ward pushed it back to allow for community input. And when it finally opened last week, some residents stood in front of buses transporting the asylum seekers to the former James Wadsworth Elementary School, 6420 S. University Ave. More than a dozen Chicago police officers stood by as the immigrants were dropped off. For months, the city has received more than 5,140 immigrants sent from the southern U.S. border on chartered buses from Texas to northern cities, including Chicago. In December, there were 1,531 new arrivals living at city shelters. In total, 3,936 have sought shelter provided by the city, Cook County and the state, according to city officials.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2023/2/12/23593285/kmart-shelter-migrants-elementary-school-venezuela-woodlawn-elementary>