

NEWS ARTICLES ON KEY ISSUES – MARCH 15, 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	FEB	Total
Southwest Border	Unaccompanied Alien Child	11,651	12,787	11,831	9,035	10,451	55,755
	Family Units*	46,666	49,685	60,674	25,511	25,249	207,785
	Single Adult	146,544	144,958	149,188	94,367	93,177	628,234
Southwest Border Total Apprehensions		204,861	207,430	221,693	128,913	128,877	891,774

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

LATEST NEWS

Biden Administration Announces New Border Crackdown

By Miriam Jordan, *New York Times*, February 22, 2023

- ❖ On February 21, the Biden administration announced its toughest policy yet to crack down on unlawful entries. The proposed rule, which has been opened for 30 days of public comment before taking effect, would presume that migrants are ineligible for asylum if they entered the country unlawfully, a significant rollback in the country's traditional policy toward those fleeing persecution in other countries. It would allow rapid deportation of anyone who had failed to request protection from another country while en route to the United States or who did not notify border authorities through a mobile app [CBP One] of their plans to seek asylum. Administration officials said the policy would take effect on May 11 with the expected termination that day of Title 42. The new rule would then remain in place for two years. While there are some exceptions, the rule would generally apply to migrants who unlawfully cross the US-Mexico border. It doesn't apply to unaccompanied migrant children.
- ❖ To read the proposed rule, visit: <https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2023-03718.pdf>
- ❖ News Article Sources: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/21/us/biden-asylum-rules.html> ; <https://www.cnn.com/2023/02/21/politics/asylum-policy-biden-administration/index.html> ; <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/news/departments-justice-and-department-homeland-security-release-details-dangerous-new-asylum>

Alone and Exploited, Migrant Children Work Brutal Jobs Across the U.S.

By Hannah Dreier and Photographs by Kirsten Luce, *New York Times*, February 28, 2023

- ❖ Migrant children, who have been coming into the United States without their parents in record numbers, are ending up in some of the most punishing jobs in the country, a *New York Times* investigation found. This shadow work force extends across industries in every state, flouting child labor laws that have been in place for nearly a century. Twelve-year-old roofers in Florida and Tennessee. Underage slaughterhouse workers in Delaware, Mississippi and North Carolina. Children sawing planks of wood on overnight shifts in South Dakota. The number of unaccompanied minors entering the United States climbed to a high of 130,000 last year — three times what it was five years earlier — and this summer is expected to bring another wave.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/25/us/unaccompanied-migrant-child-workers-exploitation.html>

Biden Administration Plans Crackdown on Migrant Child Labor

By Hannah Dreier, *New York Times*, February 27, 2023

- ❖ The Biden administration on Monday, February 27, announced a wide crackdown on the labor exploitation of migrant children around the United States, including more aggressive investigations of companies benefiting from their work. The development came days after *The New York Times* published an investigation into the explosive growth of migrant child labor throughout the United States. Children, who have been crossing the southern border without their parents in record numbers, are ending up in punishing jobs that flout child labor laws, *The Times* found. The White House laid out a host of new initiatives to investigate child labor violations among employers and improve the basic support that migrant children receive when they are released to sponsors in the United States. As part of the new effort, the Department of Labor, which enforces these laws, said it would target not just the factories and suppliers that illegally employ children, but also the larger companies that have child labor in their supply chains. Migrant children often use false identification and find jobs through staffing agencies that do not verify their Social Security numbers. The department will also explore using a “hot goods” legal provision that allows it to stop the interstate transport of goods when child labor has been found in the supply chain. *The Times* found products made with child labor in the American supply chains of major brands and retailers, including Ben & Jerry's, Fruit of the Loom, Ford, General Motors, J. Crew, Walmart, Whole Foods and Target. In Grand Rapids, Mich., children worked late nights at plants operated by Hearthside Food Solutions, which makes and packages food for other companies, including General Mills, Frito-Lay and Quaker Oats. The Department of Labor has begun an investigation into Hearthside, administration officials said. Officials plan to initiate investigations in parts of the country more likely to have child labor violations and ask Congress to increase penalties. Federal investigators have long complained that the maximum fine for violations — about \$15,000 per occurrence — is not enough to deter child labor. The new effort also establishes a joint task force between the Department of Labor and the Department of Health and Human Services, which is responsible for child migrants, to better share information.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/27/us/biden-child-labor.html>

Governor Ron DeSantis Announces Legislation to Counteract Biden's Border Crisis

By the Office of Governor Ron DeSantis, February 23, 2023

- ❖ Governor Ron DeSantis announced an extensive legislative proposal to take action against the increasing threats posed by illegal immigration. By increasing penalties for human smuggling, strengthening statutes for the detention of illegal aliens, requiring universal use of E-Verify, enhancing penalties for document falsification, and prohibiting the issuance by local governments of ID cards to people who are not lawfully in the country, Florida will lead the way in protecting Americans from the deleterious effects of the Left's open borders agenda. "With this legislation, Florida is continuing to crack down on the smuggling of illegal aliens, stopping municipalities from issuing ID cards to people here illegally, and ensuring that employers are hiring American citizens or those here legally," said Governor Ron DeSantis. The legislation also invalidates all out-of-state licenses to unauthorized aliens, requires those registering to vote to affirm they are United States citizens and legal residents of Florida, prevents unauthorized immigrants from being admitted to practice law, and eliminates out-of-state tuition fee waivers for undocumented immigrant students. Additionally, the proposal requires hospitals to collect data on the immigration status of patients and the costs to provide care to illegal aliens and regularly report the data to the Governor and Legislature. As directed by Executive Order 21-223, this data was collected and during the 2021-22 Fiscal Year health care costs for illegal aliens in Florida was nearly \$340 million and taxpayers were on the hook for more than two-thirds of this cost.
- ❖ The increased penalties for human smuggling follow the recommendations of the grand jury impaneled by the Florida Supreme Court at Governor DeSantis' request and will:
 - ❖ Make it a third degree felony, punishable by up to five years in prison, a \$5,000 fine, and five years of probation, to knowingly transport, conceal, or harbor an illegal alien within or into the state;
 - ❖ Make it a second degree felony, punishable by up to 15 years in prison and a fine up to \$10,000, if the illegal alien is younger than 18 years old; and
 - ❖ Specify that a person commits a separate offense for each individual transported, concealed, or harbored and allow transported individuals to be detained by law enforcement as material witnesses.
- ❖ These measures build upon Governor DeSantis' previous actions to keep Floridians safe in the face of an unprecedentedly unsecure federal border policy, which include:
 - ❖ Sending Florida state law enforcement officers and equipment to Texas where they apprehended thousands of illegal aliens and aided in hundreds of criminal arrests for felonies including human trafficking and drug smuggling;
 - ❖ Issuing an executive order that prohibits Florida state agencies from providing support for the resettlement of illegal aliens in Florida and prohibits licensing of facilities that house unaccompanied minors;
 - ❖ Signing legislation that prohibits government contracts with private entities that assist the Biden administration in resettling illegal immigrants into Florida;
 - ❖ Signing legislation that requires all public employers, contractors, and subcontractors attempting to enter into contracts with public employers to use E-Verify to determine employment eligibility;
 - ❖ Suing the Biden administration over its unlawful "catch and release" policy and speaking out when the administration announced plans to end Title 42, ludicrously claiming that pandemic restrictions and "emergency measures" were still required domestically while attempting to do away with the pandemic measures at the border;
 - ❖ Forming a strike force of state and local law enforcement to interdict human smuggling and human trafficking and to seize illegal weapons being transported through the state, resulting thus far in 200 felony charges, nearly 40 human smuggling charges, and 66 drug charges and the seizure of more than half a million dollars of illicit drugs;
 - ❖ Successfully petitioning the Florida Supreme Court to impanel a statewide grand jury to examine international human smuggling networks that bring aliens to the southern border and ultimately to Florida;
 - ❖ Securing \$12 million to facilitate the transport of illegal aliens to Martha's Vineyard and other sanctuary states, bringing the border crisis to the communities that support Biden's open border policies; and
 - ❖ Issuing an executive order to mobilize state law enforcement and National Guard resources to aid in the interdiction of more than 2,000 migrants attempting to land on Florida's shores.
- ❖ Press Release Source: <https://www.flgov.com/2023/02/23/governor-ron-desantis-announces-legislation-to-counteract-bidens-border-crisis/>

CBP One Is Riddled With Flaws That Make the App Inaccessible to Many Asylum Seekers

By Raul Pinto, Immigration Impact, February 28, 2023

- ❖ One of the main issues reported by CBP One users is that the app's expanded photo function disproportionately rejects people with darker skin tones. One of the first steps applicants must take to submit their information is to take a selfie using CBP One. As described in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Privacy Impact Assessment—one of the only government documents with a detailed description of CBP One's functionality—CBP officers at the port of entry will take a new photo of the traveler, which is then searched against photos in a database. Media reports indicate that CBP One has trouble capturing the photos of people with darker skin tones at the first step. Some asylum seekers using CBP One also have been unable to schedule appointments at ports of entry due to the limited availability of appointments. Repeated rejections of photos can lead to applicants' delay in submitting the required information, which contributes to an inability to obtain appointments. This flaw in the system has the effect of shutting some people out of the asylum process altogether. The agency's plan to make access to humanitarian programs for vulnerable populations contingent on people's use of CBP One had flaws from its inception. CBP One relies on people having strong mobile connectivity to download the app. This is a problem for individuals who need to download the app in Mexico in order to apply for Title 42 exemptions and for individuals in Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela who intend to apply for humanitarian parole programs. Users report it is difficult to stay connected to the internet for long enough to enter information for the main travelers and their family members. CBP also assumes that travelers with limited financial resources would be able to obtain a phone that would allow them to download and use the app. Finally, navigating CBP One requires a certain level of tech-savviness that some asylum seekers lack. For example, the app requires users to first create an account with Login.gov, a website that provides access to certain government agencies' function. The app also requires two-step authentication to sign in once an account has been created. Others have reported that CBP One users often get error messages while using the app that prohibits them from successfully entering their information. These errors, coupled with the requirements for users to understand how to access the app, further limit those who can use CBP One. Agency documents released by CBP in response to a FOIA lawsuit revealed that it is expanding CBP One's functions with little transparency. Documents show that CBP One was not created for the processing of asylum seekers, but within months after unveiling the app, CBP added features to it for this purpose. It is unclear whether CBP considered whether the technology used in the app could disproportionately shut out racial minorities or would create the current accessibility issues users face.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://immigrationimpact.com/2023/02/28/cbp-one-app-flaws-asylum-seekers/>

Mexico rethinks asylum initiative after controversial US announcement

By Rosa Flores, CNN, February 24, 2023

- ❖ Mexico is rethinking its approach toward asylum seekers after the Biden administration unveiled a controversial new proposal to limit asylum eligibility in the United States. Mexico's refugee assistance agency, known as COMAR, launched a pilot program in southern Mexico on Monday to explore expediting asylum denials to those it deems likely to travel onward to the US. The aim is to deter those migrants from accessing temporary documents issued by COMAR while their cases are being evaluated, which they might use to travel north – a common phenomenon, according to COMAR's head Andrés Ramírez. But after the Biden administration announced its proposed new asylum rules on Tuesday, COMAR plans to abandon the strategy and use what it learned from the pilot program to come up with a different solution, Ramírez said. The US proposal – which has been panned by human rights advocates and immigration experts – largely bars migrants who have not taken a legal pathway and instead traveled through other countries on their way to the US southern border from applying for asylum in the US. It would take effect in May. Among its proposed new conditions on eligibility for US asylum: being denied protection in a third country through which they traveled. Though the one-week pilot program did not include actually issuing swift denials, it studied behaviors of individuals from nationalities deemed by COMAR most likely to be traveling for economic reasons rather than for international protection – Senegalese and Angolan migrants in particular, according to Ramírez. By Mexican law, asylum seekers are required to stay in the state where they filed for asylum to see the process through. Once registered with COMAR, asylum seekers are provided with deportation protection, access to the public health care system and work eligibility. Ramírez says that his agency recently noticed that many migrants who began the asylum process in the city of Tapachula, in southern Mexico, later abandoned the process. They used a preliminary COMAR document to travel within the country toward its northern border. Mexico has received a surge of asylum applications in recent years, Ramírez says. In January 2023, nearly 13,000 people signed up to seek asylum in Mexico, according to COMAR data. That's more than double the number of asylum registrations from one year ago in January 2022, the data shows. If applications continue at this pace, 2023 could be on track to becoming the refugee agency's busiest year ever. The record for most applications ever was set in 2021, he said, when COMAR received nearly 130,000 asylum applications.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2023/02/24/americas/mexico-asylum-policy-intl-latam/index.html>

BUSING MIGRANTS

Florida bill to set up Unauthorized Alien Transport Program passes first hurdle

By Andrew Powell, *The Center Square*, February 7, 2023

- ❖ Gov. Ron DeSantis' proposal to transport foreign nationals out of Florida to sanctuary cities passed a key hurdle in the state Senate. The Florida Senate Committee on Fiscal Policy approved Senate Bill 6-B by a 14-6 margin that will authorize the state to procure contractors to transport foreign nationals around the United States through a specialized program. The bill will create the Unauthorized Alien Transport Program which will be part of the Division of Emergency Management. DEM will facilitate the transportation of these foreign nationals and will provide an appropriation of \$10 million to run the program. The foreign nationals will be offered the opportunity to move to a sanctuary city or state that has the resources to better facilitate them. DeSantis signed an executive order in January, to direct law enforcement agencies and other state agencies to take necessary action to protect Floridians from the effects of mass illegal migration.
- ❖ News Article Source: https://www.thecentersquare.com/florida/florida-bill-to-set-up-unauthorized-alien-transport-program-passes-first-hurdle/article_09c4106a-a726-11ed-9d62-cbce1ba5631b.html

Abbott: 'We're saving Texas taxpayers money' by busing migrants out of state

By Jamie Burch, *ABC 7 News*, February 22, 2023

- ❖ Governor Greg Abbott said the state is saving Texas taxpayers money by busing migrants out of state, despite state records that show its costing taxpayers more per migrant. According to documents obtained by our sister station, CBS Austin, from the Texas Division of Emergency Management, the state has made 158 transactions "related to busing migrants" between the start of 2021 and January 27, 2023, to Wynne Transportation, a charter bus service, totaling more than \$37.9 million. The Abbott administration has only offered estimates on how many migrants have been transported from Texas to other states, with around 9,100 migrants sent to Washington, D.C.; 5,200 migrants to New York City; 1,500 migrants to Chicago; and 890 migrants to Philadelphia. Given those estimates, the Abbott administration reports around 16,690 migrants have been bused across the country. That averages to a cost of about \$2,272.39 per migrant, a nearly \$900 rise in five months.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://abc7amarillo.com/news/local/governor-greg-abbott-were-saving-texas-taxpayers-money-by-busing-migrants-out-of-state-texas-division-of-emergency-management-tDEM-panhandle-days-state-funding-economic-development>

Chicago groups scramble to find housing for newly arrived immigrants 6 months after busing began

By Elvia Malagón, *Chicago Sun Times*, February 22, 2023

- ❖ As people seeking asylum continue to arrive in Chicago, officials are grappling with how to provide housing. There are more than 3,000 beds at 50 facilities that get support and funding from the city's Department of Family and Support Services, according to its website. Chicago is expected to receive \$20 million from the state for shelter, transportation, basic health, food and first aid for new arrivals, though Mayor Lori Lightfoot asked for \$53.5 million. City officials previously said that the temporary shelter at the shuttered James Wadsworth Elementary School in Woodlawn could house about 250 adult men and women. But even that additional space is only a "drop in the bucket," said Evelyn Figueroa, the director of the Pilsen Food Pantry, who has been helping about a dozen new arrivals in Little Village. Since August, more than 5,140 immigrants have arrived in Chicago, including those sent on chartered buses from Texas and Colorado. In February, there were about 2,100 living in the shelter system, city officials said at a community meeting. The city started to experience a shortage of beds in December, when it would sometimes take days to get someone placed in a shelter, said Ere Rendón, vice president of immigrant justice at the nonprofit Resurrection Project. That meant the asylum seekers had to stay at police stations, warming centers or with someone from the community, she said. The city has created makeshift shelters in various locations, including the Northerly Island visitor center. The state is also planning to turn a building that once housed a Kmart on the Southwest Side into a temporary shelter.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2023/2/22/23581982/chicago-immigration-space-beds-evanston-family-venezuela-immigration-migration-asylum-seekers>

ASYLUM SEEKERS

Biden's Plan to End the Border Crisis Is Already Working

By David J. Bier and Alex Nowrasteh, *Daily Beast*, February 19, 2023

- ❖ Since President Joe Biden took office in January 2021, United States Border Patrol has had about 4.7 million encounters with about three million individual illegal crossers along the Southwest border. [Back in January] Biden announced that immigrants with U.S. sponsors from four major origin countries could apply to come legally to the United States on a status called humanitarian parole. And according to the January immigration figures, Biden's plan is already working. In December 2022, the last full month before humanitarian parole, Border Patrol had 84,176 encounters with migrants from those four countries which accounted for over 36 percent of all encounters that month at the U.S.-Mexico border. In January, the number had already dropped to 11,909—an 86 percent decline. As a result, overall U.S.-Mexico border encounters are down 42 percent. This was similar to the decline in Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion showing up at the Southwest border in Spring 2022 after a similar program was announced. Their numbers dropped from 20,118 in April 2022 to 375 in May, a 98 percent reduction, after the Uniting for Ukraine parole program allowed them to come directly from abroad with a U.S. sponsor. The Ukrainian program was the model for Biden's Latin American humanitarian parole and it's having similarly dramatic effects on improving border security. Using a power that Congress gave presidents in 1952 called humanitarian parole, Biden is allowing 30,000 migrants from Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Haiti to legally come to the U.S. each month. The migrants must have a U.S. sponsor and meet health and security standards. Once here, they receive a two-year residency permit—which could be extended—and they can apply for a work permit. They have almost no access to public benefits. If the numbers admitted under humanitarian parole are anything close to 30,000 people per month and the program lasts for the rest of his administration, this will be the single biggest immigration liberalization since the Immigration Act of 1965. From a border security perspective, the goal of humanitarian parole is to incentivize migrants to apply from their home countries (or neighboring countries), get prior approval to enter, and then fly to the United States instead of paying smugglers to come to the border. The Biden plan also requires anyone caught entering illegally from these countries be sent back to Mexico, but this aspect of the plan is less important because of the new legal option. Still, humanitarian parole isn't perfect.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.thedailybeast.com/bidens-plan-to-end-the-border-crisis-is-already-working>

Biden's new border app panned as 'lottery system' for migrants

By Benjamin Wermund and Elizabeth Trovall, *Houston Chronicle*, February 27, 2023

- ❖ Migrants using the [CBP One] app for the past several weeks have been waking up every morning, competing with thousands of others for appointments that the administration makes available two weeks in advance. The administration would not say how many appointments are available each day, but advocates estimate that in camps in Reynosa and Matamoros, there are as many as 10,000 migrants at any given time competing for likely fewer than 500 appointments in those cities. Because of the demand, the slots fill up in minutes and there is no way to prioritize health needs or safety risks. Pregnant women just weeks from their due dates have the same shot at an appointment as a single adult male. And to get appointments for families, each member has to successfully get a slot, meaning single adults have had a much easier time getting scheduled than parents trying to snag slots for themselves and their children. Many of them are trying to secure slots on outdated phones with bad Wi-Fi connections. Some have struggled to understand what they are being asked. The administration rolled the app out in English and Spanish, leaving many, including the thousands of Haitians who speak mostly Haitian Creole, out of the loop. The app also has struggled to recognize faces, and it requires photos of everyone, including infants and young children. The app is a key piece of the administration's latest plan to curb border crossings, which topped 2 million for the first time last year and have been a stubborn political problem for President Joe Biden. Under the plan, which is intended to replace Title 42 this spring, asylum seekers would be required to use the app to schedule an appointment at a port of entry and if they crossed the border without doing so, or without having already sought asylum in another country, they would face harsher penalties. The administration says the new plan will encourage migrants to use "lawful, safe, and orderly pathways" into the United States and will cut out human smuggling networks that exploit migrants for financial gain. Biden's new plan is an expansion of a scheme the administration has in place for migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela that led to a 40 percent drop in border crossings in January, including a 95 percent decline in encounters with migrants from those countries crossing the border illegally. A CBP official said 200,000 profiles had been created on the app, though the agency could not say how many of them are active users. Of those, 35,000 had scheduled appointments as of Feb 22. The administration has been working to fix technical issues and make improvements as problems arise.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/politics/texas/article/users-pan-biden-s-new-cbp-one-app-asylum-seekers-17796732.php>

U.S. to limit asylum to migrants who pass through a 3rd nation

By Rebecca Santana and Elliot Spagat, Associated Press, February 21, 2023

- ❖ The Biden administration said that it will generally deny asylum to migrants who show up at the U.S. southern border without first seeking protection in a country they passed through, mirroring an attempt by the Trump administration that never took effect because it was blocked in court. The measure, while stopping short of a total ban, imposes severe limitations on asylum for any nationality except Mexicans, who don't have to travel through a third country to reach the U.S. The measure is almost certain to face legal challenges. President Donald Trump pursued a similar ban in 2019 but a federal appeals court prevented it from taking effect. The Biden administration rule has to first go through a 30-day public comment period before it can be formally adopted. If adopted it would remain in place for two years. Administration officials expect the rule will take effect when a pandemic-era rule that denies asylum on grounds of preventing the spread of COVID-19 ends. That rule, known as Title 42 authority, is set to expire May 11 but has been delayed twice by legal challenges from Republican-led states. The Homeland Security and Justice Departments argued that surging numbers of migrants left them little choice. They anticipate illegal crossings to climb to between 11,000 and 13,000 a day if no action is taken after Title 42 ends; that's even higher than the 8,600 daily crossings in mid-December as anticipation spread among migrants and smugglers that Title 42 was about to end. At the last minute the Supreme Court kept it in place. The proposed rule establishes "a rebuttable presumption of asylum ineligibility" for anyone who passes through another country to reach the U.S. border with Mexico without first seeking protection there, according to a notice in the Federal Register. Exceptions will be made for people with an "acute medical emergency," "imminent and extreme threat" of violent crimes such as murder, rape or kidnapping, being a victim of human trafficking or "other extremely compelling circumstances." Children traveling alone will also be exempted, according to the rule. The rule largely calls on prospective migrants to follow legal pathways to apply for asylum such as using the CBP One app, through which prospective migrants can schedule an appointment to apply to appear at a border entry point to apply for asylum. The administration portrayed these efforts as a way to protect migrants from the dangerous journeys as they travel north to the U.S. and allow the U.S. border entry points to manage the migrant flows in a "safe and efficient manner." But critics have said the app has been beset by technical problems and its not clear how many appointments are available every day.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/politics/article/us-to-limit-asylum-to-migrants-who-pass-through-a-17797470.php>

Asylum-seekers entering Canada from U.S. becomes flashpoint

By Anna Mehler Paperny, Reuters, February 22, 2023

- ❖ Thousands of asylum-seekers crossing irregularly into Canada via a dirt path between New York State and the province of Quebec are becoming a political flashpoint once again in Canada as the Quebec government says it can no longer accommodate the rising numbers. The movement of asylum-seekers into Canada from the United States has picked up since Canada lifted COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in late 2021, a trend mirroring global displacement. More than 39,000 refugees entered Canada last year via unofficial crossings, the vast majority via Roxham Road linking Quebec and New York State. The number crossing into Quebec more than doubled last year compared to 2017, when Roxham Road made international headlines. Almost 5,000 more people seeking asylum crossed into Canada between official border crossings last month - the highest January since the Canadian government started breaking down this data in 2017. That 2017 spike was spurred in part by then-U.S. President Donald Trump's crackdown on migrants. Canada is a signatory to the international Refugee Convention under which Canada must adjudicate most refugee claims with limited exceptions. The Convention has limitations to the definition of refugee; Canadian law has exceptions as to who can access refugee protection in Canada. The influx has prompted Quebec Premier Francois Legault to ask Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government to resettle refugee claimants in other provinces and to issue work permits more swiftly as the province's "capacity to take care of the asylum-seekers is now largely exceeded." The federal government says it has transferred more than 5,800 asylum-seekers out of Quebec since June. A spokesperson for Canada's Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship minister said in a statement on Tuesday the government is working with communities outside Quebec on a "pan-Canadian approach" that would include resettling refugee claimants elsewhere. Legault also called on Canada to push the United States to rewrite the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA)- something Canada says it is doing. Under the STCA, anyone trying to cross the Canada-U.S. border in either direction at a formal border crossing will be turned around and told to apply for asylum in the first of the two countries they arrived in, with few exceptions. Canada wants to rewrite this agreement so it can turn back asylum-seekers apprehended anywhere along the border - not just at formal crossings.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/rise-asylum-seekers-entering-canada-us-becomes-flashpoint-again-2023-02-22/>

More migrants are crossing the northern border into the U.S. as Mexicans fly to Canada and then head south

By Didi Martinez and Julia Ainsley, NBC News, February 9, 2023

- ❖ The number of migrants crossing the border from Canada into the U.S. is rising — in one sector by more than 700% — as more Mexicans desperate to get into the U.S. fly to Canada and attempt to cross in frigid temperatures. Apprehensions in the area where the family was found, known as the Swanton Sector, which includes sections of Vermont, New York and New Hampshire, have increased to 1,146 from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, 2022, from just 136 the year prior. Across the northern border, crossings from Canada into the U.S. have increased from 16,000 to 42,000 over the same time period, according to CBP data. Mexicans are by far the leading nationality crossing into the U.S. in the Swanton Sector, followed by Haitians and Guatemalans, according to CBP data. As the Biden administration continues to use Covid restrictions, via the Title 42 policy, to block migrants at the southern border, Mexicans at those crossings are turned away more than any other nationality, making up more than 60% of all expulsions. But for those who can afford the roughly \$350 one-way plane ticket from Mexico to Montreal or Toronto, their prospects of not being sent back under Title 42 are much better. Much like migrants seeking to cross the southern border, organized criminal organizations play a role in smuggling migrants into Canada as well. Border officials say they are worried about subzero temperatures that send migrants into hypothermia, especially those with young children. More families are crossing with their minor children along the northern border. From Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, 2022, 6,709 migrant families with children crossed into the U.S. from Canada, compared to 1,500 during the same time period in 2021. CBP has not yet published data on the number of undocumented migrants who attempted to cross either northern or southern borders in January. On the other side of the Vermont border, in the small Quebec town of Saint-Armand, a farmer told NBC News via Instagram that it is not uncommon for locals to see migrants crossing the border in both directions. He said locals know to leave migrants alone when they're seen crossing into the U.S. from Canada.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/more-migrants-crossing-northern-border-canada-us-freezing-rcna69588>

Chinese migrant encounters at US-Mexico border up over 700%

Robert Sherman and Taylor Delandro, News Nation, February 28, 2023

- ❖ An uptick in Chinese migrants illegally crossing the southern border into the United States is allowing Mexican cartels to rack in even more cash. Officials said cartels charge between \$35,000 and \$40,000 per person to smuggle Chinese nationals, which is why they're seeing more incentives to get them across the border. "There's a product to be moved; product in narcotics or human beings; there's gonna be a buyer," said Victor Manjarrez, a former Border Patrol sector chief. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection said apprehensions of nationals from China are up more than 700% compared to the same period last fiscal year. According to CBP data, agents have encountered nearly 3,000 Chinese nationals since Oct. 1, when the 2023 fiscal year began. A total of 2,176 were encountered in the same period in FY 2022, which would be a more than 700% increase. Officials attributed these to living conditions in the country and geopolitical movements. The number of illegal Chinese migrants encountered by the CBP has been steadily increasing every month since February 2021, according to CBP data. Meanwhile, officials said they've seen 160 countries of origin at the southern border in the last year. When hurricanes hit Haiti, they saw an increase in Haitian migrants, and when the war in Ukraine broke out, a spike in Ukrainians. Now officials are anticipating the next surge in the coming days will be Turkish and Syrian nationals fleeing the earthquakes that have rocked the countries.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/immigration/border-coverage/chinese-migrant-encounters-border-up/>

OPERATION LONE STAR

Operation Lone Star Apprehends Over 350,000 Illegal Immigrants

By the Office of the Texas Governor, February 17, 2023

- ❖ Governor Greg Abbott, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), and the Texas National Guard are continuing to work together to secure the border; stop the smuggling of drugs, weapons, and people into Texas; and prevent, detect, and interdict transnational criminal behavior between ports of entry. Since the launch of Operation Lone Star, the multi-agency effort has led to over 350,000 illegal immigrant apprehensions and more than 24,000 criminal arrests, with more than 22,000 felony charges reported. In the fight against fentanyl, DPS has seized over 362 million lethal doses of fentanyl during this border mission. Texas has also bused more than 9,100 migrants to our nation's capital since April, over 5,200 migrants to New York City since August 5, more than 1,500 migrants to Chicago since August 31, and more than 890 migrants to Philadelphia since November 15.
- ❖ Press Release Source: <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/operation-lone-star-apprehends-over-350000-illegal-immigrants>

BORDER WALL

Texas Legislative Committee to Mull \$4.6 Billion in Border Security Spending

By Hayden Sparks, The Texan, February 20, 2023

- ❖ A group of lawmakers within the Texas House Appropriations Committee will soon hear testimony on Operation Lone Star, Gov. Greg Abbott's border security strategy, after Republicans proposed \$4.6 billion in spending on border measures. Rep. Mary Gonzalez (D-Clint) is the chair of an appropriations subcommittee that handles public safety, criminal justice, and other issues. A member of Gonzalez's staff told The Texan in an email that the bulk of the discussion on Operation Lone Star will likely take place during the subcommittee's hearing, February 27. While the committee is set to meet Tuesday morning, the agencies called to testify this week are only "peripherally" involved in the operation, he explained. The Office of the Attorney General is scheduled to testify before the committee Tuesday on the \$3.3 million settlement that Attorney General Ken Paxton is asking the taxpayers to fund. Speaker Dade Phelen (R-Beaumont) said recently he does not believe it is a "proper use" of tax dollars and the onus would be on Paxton to convince the Legislature to do it. During his State of the State address last week, Abbott made border security an emergency item on the legislative agenda. Consequently, lawmakers may consider it before the March 10 deadline for filing bills. However, border security funding is also part of the 1,000-plus-page spending bill filed by Appropriations Committee Chairman Greg Bonnen (R-Friendswood). At the request of Abbott, the draft includes \$4.6 billion in spending on Operation Lone Star and other border security efforts.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://thetexan.news/texas-legislative-committee-to-mull-4-6-billion-in-border-security-spending/>

Texas paying \$224 million for 9 miles of border wall

By Yami Virgin, ABC7 News, February 2, 2023

- ❖ Four and a half hours from the southwest border, decisions are being made in Austin about a \$224 million contract given to a company 1,600 miles away in North Dakota to build nine miles of the Texas border wall. The Texas Facilities Commission held a meeting January 4 to discuss plans for a 30-foot wall with an 8-foot trench. City of Rio Bravo Commissioner Amanda Aguero says she was shocked when Fox San Antonio contacted her about the state plan to put part of the wall in her district. When Fox San Antonio asked the Texas Facilities Commission what changes were ordered to ensure the company's new structure in Rio Bravo won't fail, the Commission wrote in a statement: "The Texas Facilities Commission dictates the design requirements. They meet the exact engineering requirements utilized by the federal government in its construction of the border wall all along the U.S./Mexico Board and as dictated by the [U.S.] Army Corps of Engineers." That doesn't provide peace of mind for the Mayor of Rio Bravo, who also says he knew nothing about the contract. He also expressed concerns about the condition of the wall in Mission. "Right now, it's sinking," explains Mayor Gilbert Aguilar. "And if it doesn't get fixed, it might fall, right? And you're talking about a three-story wall? That's huge. So it's something that is very alarming, and to give a contract to the same contractor."
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://abc7amarillo.com/224m-from-texas-taxpayers-for-9-miles-of-border-wall>

Column: A Trump-like border wall is about to be built — unless Biden stops it

By Jean Guerrero, Los Angeles Times, February 27, 2023

- ❖ President Biden should call off construction crews gathering at the southernmost edge of California's coastline to erect a border wall that epitomizes Trump's dystopian vision. The planned double-layered, 30-foot-tall steel wall would create another heartbreak at a historic site for binational unity, Friendship Park, inaugurated 52 years ago by First Lady Pat Nixon. Back then, just a few strings of barbed wire separated the U.S. and Mexico. Following the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the border was further militarized with surveillance cameras, sensors and more. A secondary fence topped with barbed wire and parallel to the primary one was built under President Obama. Access to the park came under Border Patrol's control and discretion after 2007. Border Patrol stopped all activities during the pandemic and has kept the park closed, claiming that deteriorating barriers needed replacing. Although they could be replaced with similar structures, Customs and Border Protection approved a plan to erect new barriers at nearly double their 18-foot height. U.S. Customs and Border Protection paused the wall project last August to take public comment. But it resumed work this month, saying it had made a concession: keeping the height of one layer at 18 feet for a 60-foot stretch. The rest of the 0.6-mile project will be 30 feet tall, as will the whole secondary fence. The agency said it will restore public access to the park for "designated periods" after construction finishes in six months.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2023-02-27/border-wall-united-states-mexico-biden-trump-immigration>

Chalk one up for the butterfly: Here's how a rare plant paused border wall construction

By Shepard Price, San Antonio Express-News, February 28, 2023

- ❖ Prostrate milkweed is now an endangered species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced. Never heard of it? Can't blame you. Prostrate milkweed, *asclepias prostrata*, is a rare plant that only grows along the Texas and Mexico border. It gets its name from the fact that it grows so low to the ground (a prostrate growth habit). The weed is important for the migratory monarch butterfly, whose caterpillars consist entirely on a diet of milkweed species, of which prostrate milkweed is the rarest. Only 24 populations of prostrate milkweed still exist in a range of 200 miles, including in Starr and Zapata counties in Deep South Texas. In its final ruling, U.S. Fish and Wildlife designated approximately 661 acres of Starr and Zapata counties as critical habitat for prostrate milkweed, including parts of the U.S.-Mexico border. The ruling adds prostrate milkweed to the list of Endangered and Threatened Plants and extends the 1973 act's protections to the species and the designated habitat. The area became subject to public scrutiny after then-President Donald Trump began bulldozing parts of the National Butterfly Center in 2017, damaging habitat critical for monarch butterflies and other species. The International Union for Conservation of Nature listed the monarch butterfly as endangered last year, citing declining milkweed populations, a distinction U.S. Fish and Wildlife has yet to make. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has disagreed publicly with the listing of prostrate milkweed as an endangered species, as the species has become subject to public debate. During open commenting as part of the process of naming the species to the endangered list, Paxton's office submitted two comments, along with two comments from Texas Parks and Wildlife — both related to private land ownership. According to U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the first comment from the attorney general said that listing prostrate milkweed as an endangered species and the listing of parts of the Texas border as critical habitat would have a "significant impact" on national security, as protections for the plant would prevent Texas's efforts to "address the border crisis and national security," including construction efforts of a border wall. Paxton's office further commented that two environmental impact analyses conducted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection concluded that construction activity, including building roads or a border wall, would have "minimal or no significant impact on vegetation, including the prostrate milkweed." U.S. Fish and Wildlife found that "the best available scientific and commercial data" indicate that prostrate milkweed is in danger of extinction and therefore the service is required to list the species as endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. As the plant only grows along the border, those populations must be included in protected critical habitat areas.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/texas/article/prostrate-milkweed-rare-plant-border-17810475.php>

DEVELOPING STORIES

In a divided Congress where '5 equals 100', three Texans offer hope for immigration reform

By Benjamin Wermund, Washington Bureau, February 19, 2023

- ❖ "In this Congress, five equals 100," said U.S. Rep. Tony Gonzales, a San Antonio Republican who has a history of voting with Democrats on bipartisan bills. Last year, he crossed party lines to help pass the first new gun law in 30 years and to legalize same-sex marriage. Gonzales and Democratic U.S. Reps. Vicente Gonzalez of McAllen and Henry Cuellar of Laredo — the top Democrat on the panel overseeing Homeland Security funding — are poised to have a big say in any immigration legislation that emerges in Congress, even as experts and some key lawmakers say passing such a bill is a serious long shot. U.S. Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, the Arizona independent who has led efforts in the Senate to craft a bipartisan framework on immigration reform, specifically named the three Texans as key to her effort in an event this month with the Washington Post. "Tony Gonzalez represents the largest stretch of the border in our county," she said, before also mentioning Cuellar and Gonzalez. "There's a group of folks who are already working on this in the House, and we're working with them to try and figure out how to get this across the finish line, into the president's desk this year." All three members are optimistic that some type of immigration legislation can pass this Congress, even if there is a slim window to do so before the 2024 presidential election eats away at political will to work across the aisle. Among the possible areas of agreement: a pathway to citizenship for so-called Dreamers who were brought to the country as children, visa reforms for workers and border security funding. Experts say it's unlikely that Congress will pass any major legislation — let alone immigration reforms that have eluded lawmakers for decades. Gonzalez is also pushing an idea to create a so-called "safe zone" in Guatemala or southern Mexico where migrants would be required to await decisions on their asylum claims. He said the idea would cut out the cartels, which currently control who gets across the border from Mexico. Cuellar is more skeptical about what might actually get done.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/politics/texas/article/texas-border-reps-immigration-reform-17786581.php>

Biden's immigration moves could put huge population in limbo

By Stef W. Kight, Axios, March 2, 2023

❖ President Biden's patchwork immigration policies are allowing hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, Afghans, Venezuelans and others to stay in the U.S. — but could leave them in legal jeopardy in the near future. Biden has made unprecedented use of a discretionary immigration tool called parole to respond to migration crises. The protection comes for many with an ominous two-year expiration date. The looming uncertainty faced by these people isn't all that different from DACA recipients— undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children whose protection under former President Obama's program is now in question. More than 700,000 migrants and asylum seekers have been permitted entry into the U.S. over the past two years at the discretion of Homeland Security officials through various forms of parole, according to Axios' analysis of government data. The short-term fix allows people to enter the country, but parolees have to opt-in to a complicated legal process if they intend to stay legally. If they don't apply within their first year, they could lose their shot at asylum altogether. Even if they do apply, just 14% of asylum decisions were approvals last fiscal year — though the rate varies drastically by nationality. Overlapping global crises and Congress's decades-long failure to pass reforms to a broken, backlogged immigration system would have hampered any administration's ability to respond. But multiple experts describe Biden's extensive reliance on parole as "unprecedented" and as an inadequate long-term solution. "Parole is an important mechanism, but it has to be viewed as a temporary measure. And that puts the pressure back on, first, Congress," Greg Chen, Senior Director of Government Relations for the American Immigration Lawyers Association, told Axios. Parole leaves immigrants vulnerable to future administrations with the power to end protections as well as set priorities for ICE arrests. More than half a million migrants and asylum seekers who illegally crossed the U.S.-Mexico border have been released into U.S. communities by Border Patrol agents without legal charges or a court date under Biden, according to internal government data obtained by Axios. The vast majority were released under a parole program started in 2021, and includes placing some migrants in tracking programs. This was driven by overwhelmed resources in the face of record border crossings and newer, harder-to-deport demographics. People released in this way are not able to acquire legal work authorization or claim asylum in immigration court. The move to release migrants without a court date has driven outrage from conservatives opposed to "catch-and-release" border practices, while immigration attorneys raised concerns about confusion for their clients. More than 200,000 Afghans, Ukrainians, Venezuelans, Nicaraguans, Cubans and Haitians have arrived through more formal humanitarian parole processes. These processes include work authorization and the possibility for support from U.S. sponsors. Just 5,000 of roughly 77,000 Afghans paroled into the U.S. following the Taliban's takeover of Kabul in summer 2021 have secured permanent status, according to CBS News. More than 113,000 Ukrainians have arrived through the humanitarian parole. Many hope to return home, but their options are unclear if the war drags on. 36,500 Venezuelans, Nicaraguans, Cubans and Haitians have arrived through humanitarian parole processes, which also impose harsher rejection of those nationalities if they attempt to cross the border illegally. Another 24,000 have been approved and authorized to travel to the U.S., according to DHS data as of mid-February provided to Axios.

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.axios.com/2023/03/02/biden-parole-border-immigrants-daca-legal>

The U.S. Is Choosing Child Labor Over More Immigration

By Eric Levitz, New York Magazine, February 28, 2023

❖ This historic labor shortage is propping up inflation as desperate employers raise wages to attract scarce workers, then boost prices to compensate for higher costs. Or at least this is what the U.S.'s top economic policy-makers believe. Meanwhile in Central America, gainful employment is hard to come by. Before the pandemic, 30 million people in the region were living in poverty, according to the Georgetown Journal of International Affairs. In much of Central America, material deprivation is even more profound today — the area's growth rate fell by 10.3 percent in 2020. Amid rising economic desperation, the number of Central Americans interested in migrating internationally skyrocketed from 8 percent in 2019 to 43 percent in 2021, according to a report from the World Food Programme, Migration Policy Institute, and Civic Data Design Lab. So in one part of the western hemisphere, there are too many well-paying jobs and too few workers. In another, there are too many workers and few good jobs. As a result, people in Central America are eager to seek work internationally. Over the weekend, the New York Times published an investigation into the U.S.'s vast shadow workforce of child-migrant laborers. The paper uncovered stories of teenage roofers in Florida, delivery workers in New York City, and hotel maids in Virginia. Throughout every state in the union, across a wide variety of industries, minors from Central America are performing some of the most brutal jobs in the economy — in defiance of child labor laws. In some cases, these children were lured into the U.S. by de facto child-labor brokers who promised them comfortable homes and good schools — only to shunt the minors into 12-hour shifts, demanding that they pay back the cost of their passage.

❖ News Article Source: <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2023/02/labor-shortages-child-labor-migrants.html>

Immigration Judges Are Moving Fast, but Case Backlog Keeps Growing

By Alicia A. Caldwell, Wall Street Journal, March 1, 2023

- ❖ Federal immigration judges are finishing cases at a faster rate than ever before, but a yearslong backlog of pending cases continues to grow. The number of pending cases has topped 2 million, according to government data compiled by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University, known as TRAC. At the center of the process are about 600 immigration-court judges who must decide issues including whether to grant asylum requests and whether to deport other immigrants caught living in the U.S. without permission. The immigration-court backlog first eclipsed 1 million cases during the Trump administration in 2019. It has grown by roughly 1 million since then, leaving it at about 2.1 million. Between Oct. 1, the start of the government's budget year, and the end of January, judges finished 172,180 cases, according to TRAC, which says the judges are on a path to decide about 500,000 by the end of the budget year. During the last budget year, the judges closed out about 312,000 cases. About a third of cases ended with a deportation order while about a third were dismissed before trial, the Justice Department says. Dismissals can occur when immigration officials don't file the proper paperwork for a case to proceed. More than 36,000 migrants won asylum or other permission to stay in the U.S. in the last budget year. Migrants whose asylum bids are rejected are generally ordered to leave the country. At the same time, as many as 1 million cases could be added to the court docket by the end of the budget year, TRAC estimates, based on new filings so far this year and continued high numbers of migrants arriving at the southern border. Border Patrol agents made a record 2.2 million arrests along the border with Mexico last year and about half of those people were allowed to stay in the U.S. to pursue asylum or other protections. Since October, 329,380 new cases have been filed as a record number of migrants continues to cross the border illegally. In January, The Wall Street Journal reported that that illegal crossings at the southern border that month had dropped to roughly half the December levels following the introduction of additional enforcement measures. The average asylum case takes about 4.2 years to complete, according to asylum case data collected by TRAC. The administration's attempt to hire new judges follows an effort first accelerated during the Trump administration. The Justice Department, which oversees immigration courts, last year hired 104 new judges, according to TRAC. Since October, 66 new judges have started.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/immigration-judges-are-moving-fast-but-case-backlog-keeps-growing-c8cc6922>

In reversal, Biden weighs detaining migrant families

By Colleen Long and Elliot Spagat, Associated Press, March 7, 2023

- ❖ The Biden administration is considering detaining migrant families who cross into the U.S. illegally as it prepares to end COVID-19 restrictions at the U.S.-Mexico border, according to U.S. officials familiar with the plans. That would be a major reversal after officials in late 2021 stopped holding families in detention facilities. Homeland Security officials are working through how to manage an expected increase of migrants at the border once the COVID-19 restrictions that have been in place since 2020 are lifted in May. Detention is one of several ideas under discussion and nothing has been finalized, the officials said. If families were detained, they would be held for short periods of time, perhaps just a few days, and their cases expedited through immigration court, one official said. The officials were unauthorized to speak publicly about internal deliberations and spoke on condition of anonymity. Under current policy, families who arrive at the U.S.-Mexico border are released into the U.S. and told to appear in immigration court at a later date. During the height of the pandemic, few families were held in custody, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials are now using those facilities to hold single adults who cross the border illegally. Illegal border crossings plummeted after Biden announced Jan. 5 that Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans would be returned to Mexico if they crossed illegally. At the same time, the administration announced that up to 30,000 people from those four countries could come monthly if they applied online, arrived at an airport and had a financial sponsor. The Border Patrol stopped migrants 128,410 times on the Mexican border in January, down 42% from December, which was the highest month on record. February numbers have not been publicly released, but one of the officials told the AP migrants were stopped about 130,000 times. The administration has the capacity to house roughly 3,000 people in two family detention centers in Texas. Both the Obama and Trump administrations detained families in those facilities until their immigration cases played out, though a court order prevents the government from holding children beyond 20 days. A third detention center in Pennsylvania was shut down a few months ago. Administration officials are ending the national emergency on May 11 that was brought on by the pandemic. Because the border restrictions known as Title 42 are tied to the national emergency, the administration is also planning to end them on May 11. The two Texas detention centers are in Karnes City and in Dilley. Families would likely be held again in Dilley, which was used to detain families during the Obama and Trump administrations. The New York Times first reported that officials were considering detaining families again.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/article/immigration-migrant-families-detention-border-biden-0909546c3984ae439b376d02c40ac7ff>

More than 100 Children Illegally Employed in Hazardous Jobs, Federal Investigation Finds; Food Sanitation Contractor Pays \$1.5m in Penalties

By The U.S. Department Of Labor, February 17, 2023

- ❖ One of the nation's largest food safety sanitation services providers has paid \$1.5 million in civil money penalties after the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division found the company employed at least 102 children – from 13 to 17 years of age – in hazardous occupations and had them working overnight shifts at 13 meat processing facilities in eight states. The employer's payment of civil money penalties is the result of the division's investigation of Packers Sanitation Services Inc. LTD, based in Kieler, Wisconsin. Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, the department assessed PSSI \$15,138 for each minor-aged employee who was employed in violation of the law. The division's investigation included the following locations:

Name of processor	City	State	Affected minors	Penalties Assessed
George's Inc.	Batesville	AR	4	\$60,552
Tyson Food Inc.	Green Forest	AR	6	\$90,828
JBS Foods	Greeley	CO	4	\$60,552
Maple Leaf Farms Inc.	Milford	IN	2	\$30,276
Cargill Inc.	Dodge City	KS	26	\$393,588
Turkey Valley Farms	Marshall	MN	2	\$30,276
Buckhead Meat of Minnesota	St. Cloud	MN	1	\$15,138
JBS Foods	Worthington	MN	22	\$333,036
Gibbon Packing Co.	Gibbon	NE	1	\$15,138
JBS Foods	Grand Island	NE	27	\$408,726
Greater Omaha Packing Co. Inc	Omaha	NE	5	\$75,690
Tyson Food Inc.	Goodlettsville	TN	1	\$15,138
Cargill Inc.	Fiona	TX	1	\$15,138
Total penalties paid by PSSI				\$1,544,076

- ❖ Press Release Source: <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/whd/whd20230217-1#:~:text=KIELER%2C%20W%20E%20%80%93%20One%20of%20the,occupations%20and%20had%20them%20working>

Public comments to the proposed increases in US visa fees show staunch opposition and concerns

By Ananya Bhattacharya, Quartz, March 3, 2023

- ❖ On Jan. 4, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) released a proposed rule that would raise the filing fees required to process visa applications of various kinds, and especially employment-based applications. The deadline for public commentary was initially set for Mar. 6, but it has been extended for another week until Mar. 13. According to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), that was due to a "technical issue" preventing comments from being posted for almost 24 hours around Feb. 14.
- ❖ **For employment-based visas**
 - ❖ \$10 to \$215: H-1B lottery registration fee, the burden of which typically falls on the employer
 - ❖ \$460 to \$1,385: L-1 intracompany transfer filing fee
 - ❖ \$460 to \$1,055: Filing fee for the O extraordinary ability visa often used by artists
 - ❖ \$460 to \$1,015: Filing fee for P visa for athletes/artists/entertainers will become "untenable for developing to mid-level artists," according to Janet Rich, president of Manage This Media
 - ❖ \$700 to \$715: form I-140 immigration visa petition
 - ❖ \$3,675 to \$11,160: form I-526 & I-526E (Immigration Petition by Alien Entrepreneur/Regional Center Investor) fees
 - ❖ \$1,225 to \$2,820: I-485 Adjustment of Status (green card application) filed with the I-765 Employment Authorization Document and I-131 Advance Parole (travel authorization) filing fee
- ❖ **For other immigration documents**
 - ❖ \$535 to \$820: Green card for a family member I-130 filing fee
 - ❖ \$535 to \$720: Fiancé I-129 application filing fee
 - ❖ \$595 to \$1,195: Petition to remove conditions from green card status I-751 filing fee
 - ❖ \$410 to \$650: Stand-alone Employment Authorization Document I-765 filing fee
 - ❖ \$640 to \$760: Application for naturalization N-400 for paper and online filings
- ❖ The price increase is due to a lack of funding from the federal government, the agency's budget depends on its receipt of filing fees from immigration applications. In fact, around 97% of USCIS funding comes directly from application fees provided by immigrants applying for visas, green cards, and citizenship.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://qz.com/us-visa-fee-increase-uscis-public-comment-criticism-1850183222>

Deadly Matamoros kidnapping has sparked fear among Black migrants, aid workers say

By Dianne Solis, Dallas Morning News, March 10, 2023

- ❖ The kidnapping of four Black Americans — and the killing of two of them — in the northern Mexico border city of Matamoros has sparked fear among Black migrants and raised concerns among aid workers who say Black asylum-seekers have long been targeted by drug cartels. For years, Felicia Rangel-Samponaro, co-founder of the Sidewalk School aid group, has provided food, books and shelter for asylum-seekers in Matamoros and Reynosa. The racism in Mexico against Black immigrants and Black U.S. citizens, including herself, has been pervasive, she said. She and other aid workers say Black migrants have been targeted by drug cartels with rape, extortion, kidnapping and violence. So much so that, as news spread of the kidnapping of Americans, many Haitian migrants cleared out of a Matamoros camp last weekend and left for Reynosa. While it's not clear that the four Americans were targeted because of their race, a former U.S. law enforcement official with knowledge of the investigation confirmed to The Dallas Morning News that both U.S. and Mexican officials are examining the possibility that the assailants mistook the Americans for Haitian smugglers. A relative of one of the victims said Monday that the four had traveled together from the Carolinas so one of them could get a tummy tuck from a doctor in Matamoros. Mexican authorities said it was likely that the Americans were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Whatever factors led to the kidnapping and killing of the Americans, the violence has heightened public awareness of the mistreatment of Black immigrants in Mexico. Human Rights First, a nonprofit advocacy group, reported last year that "Black asylum-seekers from Cameroon, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica and other countries continue to be targets of sometimes deadly violence and discrimination while stranded in or transiting through Mexico."
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/2023/03/10/deadly-matamoros-kidnapping-has-sparked-fear-among-black-migrants-aid-workers-say/>

Hundreds of frustrated Venezuelan migrants block bridge linking El Paso and Juárez

By Corrie Boudreaux, El Paso Matters, March 12, 2023

- ❖ Frustrated by the failures of a U.S. government immigration app [CBP One app] and a difficult existence on the streets of Juárez, hundreds of mostly Venezuelan migrants walked to the top of the Paso del Norte Bridge on Sunday, March 12, to learn if a rumor about the border being temporarily opened was true. Hundreds of migrants rushed through the toll booths on the Juárez side of the bridge and reached the top. U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers implemented "port-hardening efforts," including physical barriers at 1:30 p.m. to block migrants from entering the United States, spokesperson Roger Maier said. The bridge, the northbound crossing linking the downtowns of El Paso and Juárez, began reopening at about 6 p.m. after migrants left. The protest also caused disruptions at the Stanton Street Bridge and the Bridge of the Americas, Maier said. Vaneska, 23, has been in Juárez for three months with her partner, Kelvin, and their two children who are 5 and 2. She said they are seeking permission to enter the United States but have not been able to schedule an appointment through the government's CBP One mobile application despite trying every day. CBP One is the tool that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security introduced this year. Migrants from Venezuela, Haiti and Nicaragua are required to use the app in order to take part in a humanitarian parole program. Migrants have reported numerous challenges in trying to use the app. When a false report began spreading on social media on Sunday, March 12, Vaneska and other frustrated migrants headed to the bridge. "On Facebook, we saw an image that said they were going to open (the bridge) today because it was Migrants' Day, something like that," Vaneska said. "We just want an answer, so we came to see if it was true." Customs and Border Protection closed the Paso del Norte Bridge to vehicular traffic and to pedestrian traffic from both directions. Dozens of agents carrying riot shields waited behind barricades and barbed wire. Personnel from the Texas Department of Public Safety also took up positions alongside CBP officers. Some CBP officers wore gas masks.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.texastribune.org/2023/03/12/el-paso-bridge-migrants/>

House unveils bill giving state authority to “repel” and return migrants crossing from Mexico

By Uriel J. García, *Texas Tribune*, March 10, 2023

- ❖ Texas House Speaker Dade Phelan threw his support behind a striking border security bill that would create a state unit of officers empowered to “repel” and arrest migrants crossing the border outside a port of entry and return migrants to Mexico if they were seen trying to illegally cross the border. House Bill 20, the priority legislation filed by state Rep. Matt Schaefer, R-Tyler, would certainly test the boundaries of the state’s ability to enforce immigration law, which courts have historically ruled falls under federal purview. And in a signal that the upper chamber is also willing to test the bounds of the state’s immigration enforcement authority, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who oversees the Senate, announced he was backing Senate legislation that would make it a state crime for people who cross into Texas illegally. The Senate bill, proposed by Sen. Brian Birdwell, R-Granbury, would jail a person for a year or two years if the person tried to enter the country a second time. The proposal would also punish the person to life in prison if they had been previously convicted of a felony. Currently, under federal law, a person arrested for entering the country without permission could be charged with a misdemeanor. If Border Patrol agents arrest them a second time, the person could be charged with a felony and be banned from entering the country for a certain amount of years. Schaefer’s House bill creates a “Border Protection Unit” whose officers can “arrest, detain, and deter individuals crossing the border illegally including with the use of non-deadly force.” The bill says the officers of the unit must be U.S. citizens or permanent legal residents, or have law enforcement experience. The bill also proposes to give officers in this unit immunity “from criminal and civil liability for any actions taken that are authorized” by the proposed law. The bill also says the unit chief could employ civilians who have not been convicted of a felony “to participate in unit operations and functions, but such persons may not have arresting authority unless trained and specifically authorized by the governor.” Schaefer’s legislation would also make trespassing on private property in Texas by migrants entering from Mexico a felony. Schaefer’s legislation also states that if the federal government ever declared another national public health emergency over COVID-19, or has in place any COVID-19 vaccination requirements for any U.S. citizens including government and health care workers, then the state would be allowed to remove migrants “as rapidly as possible.”
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.texastribune.org/2023/03/10/border-security-texas-house-bill/>

With federal policy uncertain, migrant center will remain open amid decrease in asylum seekers

By Andrea Drusch, *San Antonio Report*, March 9, 2023

- ❖ Amid a series of abrupt, federal immigration policy changes in the past six months, the City of San Antonio says the number of migrants passing through the city has plummeted. Yet nine months after the city opened a Migrant Resource Center (MRC) to address an influx of migrants, the city is making plans to keep the facility open through at least May, and potentially longer. The move comes as local officials say they’re still unclear about how the pending end of Title 42, a public health rule that’s been used to quickly expel migrants entering the country to seek asylum, will affect the number of migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. Title 42 is expected to end May 11, when the Biden Administration says it will end the federal COVID-19 public health emergency. A record high of 37,000 migrants who had been legally admitted to the U.S. seeking asylum came through San Antonio in December 2022, according to city staff. After a series of federal policy changes aimed at asylum seekers from certain countries, however, those numbers decreased to roughly 5,500 migrants coming through the city in February. In October the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) moved to reduce the number of Venezuelans who could enter the country to seek asylum. Venezuelans and Cubans have made up a large percentage of migrants passing through San Antonio and utilizing the MRC. In January DHS expanded that change to include Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans. The administration is also reportedly considering reinstating a policy used by previous administrations to detain migrants who enter the country illegally with their children. City staff members said they expect their efforts assisting migrants will be fully paid for by Federal Emergency Management Agency grants. As of this week the city is still owed roughly \$9.2 million for services provided during the last half of 2022. City Council voted unanimously in support of allowing the city seek another \$6.5 million in federal grants to fund its migrant services through the end of 2023. Reimbursements are typically requested quarterly, and the city has received roughly \$1.5 million to cover the first half of 2022, according to the city. It expects to receive roughly \$5.8 million in April to cover expenses from the third quarter of 2022, Deputy City Manager María Villagómez said. San Antonio received \$2 million in advance to pay for migrant services for the first three months of 2023, and staff plans to request an addition \$630,000 to cover the full amount they anticipate they’ll need.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://sanantonioreport.org/san-antonio-migrant-resource-center-funding/>

Plunge in border crossings could blunt GOP attack on Biden

By Elliot Spagat, Associated Press, March 6, 2023

- ❖ The decrease in border crossings followed Biden's announcement in early January that Mexico would take back Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans under a pandemic-era rule that denies migrants the right to seek asylum as part of an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19. At the same time, the U.S. agreed to admit up to 30,000 a month of those four nationalities on humanitarian parole if they apply online, enter at an airport and find a financial sponsor. The administration has also proposed generally denying asylum to anyone who travels through another country on their way to the U.S. without seeking protection there — effectively all non-Mexicans who appear at the U.S. southern border. Agents detained migrants more than 2.5 million times at the southern border in 2022, including more than 250,000 in December, the highest on record. According to a U.S. official who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, Border Patrol agents stopped migrants about 130,000 times in February, similar to January.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/article/asylum-immigration-poll-biden-border-dbf4af09d4beb81f4f1d450d4d66f29>

Rush of more than 1,000 migrants who stormed the El Paso bridge was triggered by a false Facebook post spread by cartels claiming the border was open because it was the 'Day of Migrants'

By James Reynolds, DailyMail.com, March 15, 2023

- ❖ Mexican drug cartels have been accused of deliberately spreading misinformation online to prompt the chaos at the El Paso border bridge on Sunday, March 12. Texas Department of Public Safety spokesperson Lieutenant Chris Olivarez said on 'The Faulkner Focus' on Tuesday, March 14, that drug cartels were trying to flood the border to distract authorities from their smuggling operations. He said: 'Border Patrol is overwhelmed, they're tied up in processing. So they want to expose more vulnerable gaps along the border, so they can bring across criminals, fugitives or drugs, whatever the case may be.' The rush of 1,000 migrants via Mexico over the weekend was prompted by a Facebook post that said some would be allowed to cross the Paso del Norte international bridge without an appointment. Posts circulated on WhatsApp, Facebook and TikTok assured migrants that those with children would be allowed to cross for "Migrants Day". A popular post reportedly circulating on WhatsApp and ending up on a "CBP ONE" group that shares information on border-crossing applications read [in Spanish]: 'Two days ago I went through the Paso de Norte gate and the CBP agent told me that because many people were applying, starting tomorrow – Sunday, March 12 - they would let people come through without an appointment.'
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11862353/Rush-migrants-stormed-El-Paso-border-triggered-cartel-misinformation-Facebook.html?ITO=aplenews-us>

Border authorities in El Paso fend off large groups of migrants after unruly standoff

By Michelle Acevedo and Dennis Romero, NBC News, March 12, 2023

- ❖ Officials said an El Paso, Texas, bridge where federal agents clashed with large groups of migrants trying to breach the border was safe and flowing freely Sunday night [March 12]. Large groups of angry migrants who tried to cross into the U.S. on the Paso del Norte bridge were met by traffic barriers, concertina wire and agents in riot gear, video of the confrontations showed. The afternoon clashes prompted officials to close northbound lanes of the bridge, U.S. Customs and Border Protection spokesperson Roger Maier said in a statement. "Port hardening measures" on the bridge began about 1:30 p.m., he said. "A large group of individuals formed on the Mexican side of the border and approached the international boundary posing a potential threat to make a mass entry," Maier said. Similar attempts to breach the border also took place at two other land ports in the region, the Bridge of the Americas and the Stanton crossing, prompting authorities to erect temporary barriers at those locations Sunday afternoon, too, CBP said.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/border-authorities-el-paso-fend-large-groups-migrants-unruly-standoff-rcna74604>

House Democrats call to improve border appointment app

By Suzanne Monyak, RollCall, March 14, 2023

- ❖ Nearly three dozen House Democrats raised concerns Monday, March 13, about the Biden administration's use of a smartphone application for migrants to request an appointment to seek asylum, the latest in mounting criticism from the president's own party over his border policies. The group of 35 Democrats, led by Reps. Jesús "Chuy" García of Illinois and Raul M. Grijalva of Arizona, called on Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas to "take immediate steps to resolve the serious equity and accessibility issues migrants are facing" when using the CBP One app, in a letter sent Monday and obtained by CQ Roll Call. The app, developed in 2020 for other uses by travelers, was recently expanded to allow migrants to schedule appointments at the U.S.-Mexico border to request the opportunity to seek asylum. But CBP One has since come under fire by immigrant advocates and nonprofits at the border for technological glitches and accessibility limits, which they say makes it harder for migrants who speak only indigenous languages or who do not have access to smartphones or reliable internet service to access protection. The Democrats said in their letter that their offices "have received numerous reports of unusability, inaccessibility, and inequity that have already resulted in grave harm to asylum seekers," and they asked Mayorkas to "increase accessibility and usability of this app." "While technology can be helpful to facilitate processing, it should never be used to create a tiered system that treats groups differently according to economic status, gender identity, age, language, nationality, or race," the Democrats wrote. They suggested the department make the app more accessible for migrants who speak other languages besides the three offered — English, Spanish and Haitian Creole — and for migrants with disabilities, including those who are blind. They also asked the department to ease the photo verification requirement of the app, after advocates reported problems for migrants with darker complexions and babies and toddlers. The lawmakers further asked Mayorkas to "reverse course" on plans to implement a policy proposal that would limit asylum eligibility for migrants who arrive at the border and request protection, unless they had secured an appointment through the CBP One app or attempted to seek asylum in another country first, among other exceptions. That proposed asylum rule was publicly released last month. "The administration should withdraw this rule and pursue rational policies that ensure pathways to asylum for all migrants arriving at the southern border," the lawmakers wrote. According to DHS, demand for appointments has continued to outstrip supply, but the department has made recent improvements to the app, including one that aims to make it easier for family units to secure an appointment as a group. As of the end of January, more than 20,000 people have scheduled appointments through the CBP One app, according to the department.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://rollcall.com/2023/03/14/house-democrats-call-to-improve-border-appointment-app/>