

# NEWS ARTICLES ON KEY ISSUES – FEBRUARY 8, 2024

## U.S. BORDER PATROL 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
<b>Southwest Border Total Apprehensions</b>		<b>851,508</b>

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
<b>Southwest Border Total Apprehensions</b>		<b>400,651</b>

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
<b>Southwest Border Total Apprehensions</b>		<b>1,659,206</b>

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
<b>Southwest Border Total Apprehensions</b>		<b>159,113</b>	<b>167,015</b>	<b>170,602</b>	<b>147,877</b>	<b>159,063</b>	<b>211,181</b>	<b>203,504</b>	<b>224,370</b>	<b>192,399</b>	<b>181,834</b>	<b>181,774</b>	<b>207,597</b>	<b>2,206,436</b>

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	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	Total
Southwest Border	Unaccompanied Alien Child	11,654	12,780	11,829	9,034	10,418	11,852	11,062	9,442	6,732	10,035	13,527	13,154	131,519
	Family Units	46,745	49,827	60,843	25,829	25,643	33,269	46,555	45,026	31,271	60,165	93,111	103,027	621,311
	Single Adult	146,735	145,073	149,346	94,650	94,460	118,551	126,304	116,914	61,535	62,442	74,416	102,582	1,293,008
<b>Southwest Border Total Apprehensions</b>		<b>205,134</b>	<b>207,680</b>	<b>222,018</b>	<b>129,513</b>	<b>130,521</b>	<b>163,672</b>	<b>183,921</b>	<b>171,382</b>	<b>99,538</b>	<b>132,642</b>	<b>181,054</b>	<b>218,763</b>	<b>2,045,838</b>

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

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Encounters FY2024					
USBP	Demographic	OCT	NOV	DEC	Total
Southwest Border	Unaccompanied Alien Child	10,706	11,945	12,467	35,118
	Family Units	84,404	82,689	101,725	268,818
	Single Adult	93,668	96,478	135,593	325,739
<b>Southwest Border Total Apprehensions</b>		<b>188,778</b>	<b>191,112</b>	<b>249,785</b>	<b>629,675</b>

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

## LATEST NEWS

### **Texas Celebrates One Year Of Texas Border Czar's Leadership**

*By the Office of the Texas Governor, Press Release, February 2, 2024*

- ❖ As of February 2, Texas has bused:
  - Over 12,500 migrants to Washington, D.C. since April 2022
  - Over 37,600 migrants to New York City since August 2022
  - Over 31,300 migrants to Chicago since August 2022
  - Over 3,400 migrants to Philadelphia since November 2022
  - Over 16,100 migrants to Denver since May 18
  - Over 1,500 migrants to Los Angeles since June 14
- ❖ Press Release Source: <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/texas-celebrates-one-year-of-texas-border-czars-leadership>

### **Texas taxpayers have so far paid \$124 million for Abbott's migrant bus trips**

*By Sanford Nowlin, San Antonio Current, February 5, 2024*

- ❖ Texas has spent more than \$124 million in taxpayer money sending buses full of migrants to Democrat-led cities, Austin TV station KXAN reports, citing state records. Under a polarizing program Gov. Greg Abbott launched nearly two years ago, Texas has dispatched more than 100,000 migrants in its border communities to cities such as Washington D.C., New York City and Philadelphia, documents obtained by KXAN. The Republican governor started the bus trips as part of Operation Lone Star, his \$10 billion immigration crackdown that's so far shown little sign of deterring border crossings. As of Jan. 10, Texas has sent 2,245 buses containing an average of 45 migrants each from the border, according to KXAN's number crunching. So far, Texas taxpayers have shouldered 99.6% of the busing operation's total cost, according to KXAN. That money is coming from funds already appropriated by the state legislature for Operation Lone Star. The governor set up an online donation page to help pay for the busing program, but as of Dec. 31, it's only generated a little more than \$460,000, according to the state's Operation Lone Star information portal. Most of the state payments made under Abbott's busing program have been made to Wynne Transportation LLC, while a few others have gone to Transportation Management Services Inc., KXAN reports.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.sacurrent.com/news/texas-taxpayers-have-so-far-paid-124-million-for-abbotts-migrant-bus-trips-33736212>

### **Pritzker joins Democratic governors asking Biden, Congress for migrant aid and to fix 'outdated' immigration system**

*By Tina Sfondeles, Chicago Sun-Times, January 22, 2024*

- ❖ On January 22, Gov. J.B. Pritzker of Illinois, joined the Democratic governors of eight other states in asking President Joe Biden and Congress to "quickly negotiate" a border security agreement that includes funding for states and cities that are receiving thousands of migrants. The letter is signed by Hochul, Pritzker, Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs, California Gov. Gavin Newsom, Colorado Gov. Jared Polis, Maryland Gov. Wes Moore, Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey, New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy and New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham. Since August 2022, Illinois has provided or committed more than \$638 million to address the migrant crisis, including \$115 million in direct funding to the city. The additional \$160 million went toward supporting the city's migrant crisis but was not given directly to the city. About 35,000 migrants have arrived in the city since August 2022. About 14,300 are in 28 city shelters.
- ❖ Source: <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2024/1/22/24047534/pritzker-democratic-governors-letter-biden-congress-migrant-aid-crisis-border-chicago>

### **Biden promises to 'shut down' the border if given the authority in a bipartisan bill**

*By Megan Lebowitz, NBC News, January 26, 2024*

- ❖ President Joe Biden on Friday, January 26, vowed to halt crossings at the border when it's "overwhelmed" if Congress passes bipartisan immigration legislation giving him that authority. In a strongly worded statement, Biden threw his support behind an emerging immigration deal in the Senate, one that former President Donald Trump is seeking to torpedo since it could hand a legislative victory to his likely opponent in November. Congressional Republicans, particularly in the House, have said they will only accept aid money for Ukraine if it is coupled with tougher immigration policies. The Biden administration made a supplemental request last year tying border funding to aid for Ukraine and Israel. Senate negotiators have recently ramped up talks to strike a deal on those issues, even as Trump has encouraged Republicans to reject a bipartisan border deal.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/biden-promises-shut-border-authority-bipartisan-bill-rca135980>

## **Biden and senators on verge of striking immigration deal aimed at clamping down on illegal border crossings**

By Camilo Montoya-Galvez, Margaret Brennan, Richard Escobedo, CBS News, January 28, 2024

- ❖ A bipartisan group of lawmakers in Congress is on the verge of striking a deal with the Biden administration that would enact sweeping new border controls, including the authority to pause asylum processing during spikes in migrant crossings, three people familiar with the talks told CBS News. The agreement is expected to give the executive branch a new legal authority to effectively suspend asylum in between official ports of entry when migrant crossings surpass certain thresholds. That would affect remote areas in Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas where migrants regularly cross into the U.S. illegally to surrender themselves to overtaxed federal immigration officials who often release them because they don't have the resources to screen everyone for asylum. The power, which Mr. Biden referred to as an authority to "shut down the border" on Friday, would be mandated after average daily migrant crossings hit 5,000 over seven days, or 8,500 in a single day. It could also be activated on a discretionary basis after average daily crossings surpass 4,000 in a week. There would also be a limit on the number of days each year the president could invoke the authority. When the authority is invoked, migrants who cross into the U.S. illegally would not be allowed to ask for asylum, and would face swift deportation to Mexico or their home country. Exceptions would be made for those who pass screenings for other, more difficult-to-obtain forms of humanitarian refuge, including protection under the United Nations Convention Against Torture. Current U.S. law allows most migrants on American soil to request asylum, even if they enter the country unlawfully.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/immigration-deal-biden-senate-us-mexico-border-bill/>

## **Abbott vows expansion of Texas border at event in Eagle Pass**

By Jasper Scherer and Benjamin Wermund, Houston Chronicle, February 4, 2024

- ❖ Gov. Greg Abbott gathered with 13 fellow Republican governors Sunday, February 4, in a public park that's become the center of an unprecedented standoff between the state and federal governments and vowed to push his border security operation even further. Abbott said the joint news conference at Shelby Park — a key stretch of the border the state seized last month, blocking the Border Patrol from apprehending and processing migrants — was intended to send a message to President Joe Biden. "We're not going to contain ourselves just to this park," Abbott said, flanked by GOP governors with rifle-toting state soldiers and military vehicles behind them. He did not provide more details on what that would entail. Critics say Abbott's ongoing standoff with the federal government, and continued rhetoric about an "invasion," is creating a potentially dangerous situation in the small border community and beyond. On Saturday, February 4, a convoy of truckers vowing to "take our border back" arrived in the area with plans to rally in a tiny border community about 20 miles north of Eagle Pass. The organizers urged participants to remain peaceful and stay away from Eagle Pass, but state Rep. Eddie Morales Jr., a Democrat who represents the area, wrote on social media that some had been denied access to the Quemado ranch where the caravan was meeting and were in Eagle Pass "moving around town and raising red flags." **Abbott said that over the past three days, Shelby Park had logged an average of only three crossings a day.**
- ❖ Source: <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/politics/texas/article/abbott-border-eagle-pass-governors-18645215.php>

## **Fifteen Governors Pledge Support, Resources for Texas' Border Efforts at Eagle Pass Visit**

By Matt Stringer, The Texan, February 5, 2024

- ❖ Officials with the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Texas National Guard oversaw Gov. Greg Abbott's visit to the recently state-seized Shelby Park in Eagle Pass, a city that has been ground zero for human smuggling and trafficking as well as narcotics smuggling in recent years. The border visit comes after 25 Republican governors signed a letter defending Abbott and the state's "constitutional right to self-defense" and slammed the Biden administration for taking legal action to restrain Texas' border security efforts. Now, 14 of the governors who signed the letter joined Abbott to see the situation firsthand, including:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders</li> <li>○ Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp</li> <li>○ Idaho Gov. Brad Little</li> <li>○ Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb</li> <li>○ Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds</li> <li>○ Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry</li> <li>○ Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Missouri Gov. Mike Parson</li> <li>○ Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte</li> <li>○ Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen</li> <li>○ New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu</li> <li>○ South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem</li> <li>○ Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee</li> <li>○ Utah Gov. Spencer Cox</li> </ul>
--	--
- ❖ Source: [https://thetexan.news/issues/immigration-border-issues/15-governors-pledge-support-resources-for-texas-border-efforts-at-eagle-pass-visit/article\\_3176575e-c3c6-11ee-bf07-972496b516ad.html](https://thetexan.news/issues/immigration-border-issues/15-governors-pledge-support-resources-for-texas-border-efforts-at-eagle-pass-visit/article_3176575e-c3c6-11ee-bf07-972496b516ad.html)

## Full List of Republican Governors Backing Greg Abbott

By Rachel Dobkin, NewsWeek, January 25, 2024

- ❖ A total of 25 Republican governors backed Texas Governor Greg Abbott's "right to self-defense" in a joint statement issued on Thursday, January 25. The joint statement by Abbott's fellow Republican governors read: "We stand in solidarity with our fellow Governor, Greg Abbott, and the State of Texas in utilizing every tool and strategy, including razor wire fences, to secure the border. The governors who signed the joint statement include:
  - Governor Kay Ivey, Alabama
  - Governor Mike Dunleavy, Alaska
  - Governor Sarah Sanders, Arkansas
  - Governor Ron DeSantis, Florida
  - Governor Brian Kemp, Georgia
  - Governor Brad Little, Idaho
  - Governor Eric Holcomb, Indiana
  - Governor Kim Reynolds, Iowa
  - Governor Jeff Landry, Louisiana
  - Governor Tate Reeves, Mississippi
  - Governor Mike Parson, Missouri
  - Governor Greg Gianforte, Montana
  - Governor Jim Pillen, Nebraska
  - Governor Joe Lombardo, Nevada
  - Governor Chris Sununu, New Hampshire
  - Governor Doug Burgum, North Dakota
  - Governor Mike DeWine, Ohio
  - Governor Kevin Stitt, Oklahoma
  - Governor Henry McMaster, South Carolina
  - Governor Kristi Noem, South Dakota
  - Governor Bill Lee, Tennessee
  - Governor Spencer Cox, Utah
  - Governor Glenn Youngkin, Virginia
  - Governor Jim Justice, West Virginia
  - Governor Mark Gordon, Wyoming
- ❖ Read the statement here: <https://www.rga.org/republican-governors-ban-together-issue-joint-statement-supporting-texas-constitutional-right-self-defense/>
- ❖ Source: <https://www.newsweek.com/full-list-republican-governors-backing-greg-abbott-1864122>

## BORDER AND MILITARY AID BILL

### What's in the Senate's Bipartisan Border-Security Bill and How It Would 'Shut Down' Illegal Crossings

By Michelle Hackman, Wall Street Journal, February 5, 2024

- ❖ **Setting up a new process at the southern border:** The bill would create a new system under which any migrant seeking asylum—whether they cross the border into the U.S. illegally or enter at a legal crossing point with an appointment—would be put through a rapid asylum-determination process meant to last about 90 days. Most adults would likely be detained for that new process, while most families with children under 18 would be released with a monitoring device, such as an ankle bracelet or a cellphone app. Within that 90-day window, migrants would then undergo a new, toughened initial asylum screening, where they would be asked to show some evidence backing their claims and prove they couldn't safely live somewhere else in their home countries. Migrants who fail that initial screening, miss their appointments or tamper with their monitoring devices could all be swiftly deported. Those who do pass should receive a final decision within another 90 days. Unaccompanied migrant children are exempted from the new process.
- ❖ **Creating a new expulsion authority:** The bill sets up a temporary new authority modeled after Title 42, the Trump pandemic-era policy that allowed the government to turn away migrants without needing to consider their asylum claims. Under that new power, which is authorized for three years, the government can "shut down" the border to asylum seekers if crossings surpass a daily average of 4,000 a day for at least seven days—roughly half the daily crossings seen in recent months. The shutdown becomes mandatory at 5,000 a day. The idea is to ensure the government's detention capacity doesn't get overwhelmed when illegal crossings climb too high. The border then couldn't reopen until crossings fall to under 75% of the trigger point. Even when the border is "shut down," 1,400 appointments a day would remain available to asylum seekers who make appointments and enter at legal ports of entry. Those applicants would still be put through the rapid asylum determination process. The bill also authorizes the president to suspend the border emergency for up to 45 days "if it is in the national interest."
- ❖ **Limiting humanitarian parole at the border:** The bill also restricts the use of an immigration power known as humanitarian parole, a temporary legal status that the government has been using to allow migrants to enter the country legally and work, so it could no longer be used at the southern border. Humanitarian parole can still be granted to people landing at U.S. airports, meaning the bill will allow a program for Americans to sponsor Ukrainian refugees to continue, along with a similar one for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans.
- ❖ **Expanding legal immigration:** The bill would create an additional 50,000 green cards each year for five years, which allow noncitizens to live and work permanently in the U.S. Of those, 32,000 will become available to family members of U.S. citizens, while 18,000 will be allotted to immigrants sponsored by their employers. Nearly all green card categories are currently oversubscribed, and immigrants from countries with high demand must wait years or even decades for their number to come up in line.
- ❖ Source: [https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/senate-border-bill-explained-cd3e8515?st=7efomljwifxf9s&reflink=desktopwebshare\\_permalink](https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/senate-border-bill-explained-cd3e8515?st=7efomljwifxf9s&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink)

### **Senate negotiators release sweeping border and military aid bill**

*By Liz Goodwin and Leigh Ann Caldwell, Washington Post, February 4, 2024*

- ❖ After months of talks, Senate negotiators on Sunday, February 4, released a sweeping bipartisan border security deal that is aimed at discouraging migrants from crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. The \$118 billion national security legislation also includes billions of dollars in funding for Ukraine, Israel, the Indo-Pacific and humanitarian aid, but it has a politically perilous path ahead. The proposal would make it harder for migrants to apply for and qualify for asylum. The bill also encourages quicker resolutions to asylum cases at the border and creates a new removal authority to speedily remove migrants who don't qualify for asylum. The bill includes a trigger mechanism that would allow the border to be effectively shut down to migrants if crossings have been particularly high for several days in a row. (Around 1,400 migrants would still be able to qualify for asylum at ports of entry.) That "border emergency" provision, which expires in three years, would automatically kick in when crossings reached 5,000 per day for several days, but a president could choose to use the tool at a lower number, 4,000 per day.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/02/04/senate-border-bill-israel-ukraine/>

### **Border Deal to Cut Illegal Immigration Quickly Runs Into Trouble**

*By Siobhan Hughes and Michelle Hackman, Wall Street Journal, February 4, 2024*

- ❖ On the spending side, the bill will provide about \$118 billion overall in funds for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan as well as for U.S. border changes and humanitarian aid in war zones. About half—around \$60 billion—is related to Ukraine, with \$14.1 billion for Israel security assistance and about \$20 billion to implement the new border policies. It also includes \$2.4 billion for operations in the Red Sea, where Houthi rebels in Yemen have launched attacks on shipping. The 370-page measure had been expected to face an uphill fight, given the decades of partisan wrangling over the issue and the approach of the fall elections, and Republican leaders in the House blasted the legislation once it was released.
- ❖ Source: [https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/border-deal-to-cut-illegal-immigration-is-released-after-months-of-talks-26a66211?st=nn949d8sydbmi0u&reflink=desktopwebshare\\_permalink](https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/border-deal-to-cut-illegal-immigration-is-released-after-months-of-talks-26a66211?st=nn949d8sydbmi0u&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink)

### **Senators release a border and Ukraine deal but the House speaker declares it 'dead on arrival'**

*By Stephen Groves, Mary Clare Jalonick and Lisa Mascaro, Associated Press, February 4, 2024*

- ❖ Senators on Sunday, February 4, released a highly anticipated \$118 billion package that pairs border enforcement policy with wartime aid for Ukraine, Israel and other U.S. allies, but it quickly ran into a wall of opposition from top House Republicans, including Speaker Mike Johnson. The proposal could be the best chance for President Joe Biden to resupply Ukraine with wartime aid — a major foreign policy goal that is shared with both the Senate's top Democrat, Sen. Chuck Schumer, and top Republican, Sen. Mitch McConnell. The Senate was expected this week to hold a key test vote on the legislation, but within hours of the text being released Johnson said on social media that it would be "dead on arrival" if it reaches the House.
- ❖ Source: <https://apnews.com/article/congress-border-security-ukraine-15e2e3fac2b29b5b4bbe1eae8eb1c924>

### **A Border Security Bill Worth Passing**

*By the Wall Street Journal, February 5, 2024*

- ❖ Under current law and practice, migrants cross the border, turn themselves in to border patrol agents, and claim asylum. If they pass the deliberately low bar for claiming "credible fear" of persecution, they are given a date for a future asylum hearing and released into the U.S. The wait can take years, and many never show up. This is the policy that has become known as "catch and release." The new bill raises the bar for that initial border screening for credible fear to a "reasonable possibility" of persecution. Toughening the asylum standard was a priority of the Trump Administration, but a statutory change is needed to make it permanent. Migrants will have to show they couldn't have moved elsewhere in their own country to avoid persecution before seeking refuge in the U.S. The bill also includes an expedited review process for asylum with a stay-or-deport decision within 90-180 days. There is money for 50,000 detention beds while migrants are awaiting review. If there are more migrants arriving than can be detained, the overflow will be enrolled in mandatory alternatives-to-detention programs that use tools such as ankle bracelets or reporting curfews. No more catch and release without consequences. The bill also reforms humanitarian parole. Migrants will no longer be able to register using the Biden CBP One App to gain free entry at a border crossing and an immediate work permit. The bill doesn't include a cap on the number of parolees in a year, as some Republicans sought. But the tightened rules for claiming parole should reduce the incentives to come, and parole is vital in some cases such as Ukrainians or Afghan allies. One disappointment is that the bill lets the Administration continue its parole programs for Haitian, Cuban, Nicaraguan and Venezuelan migrants who apply in their home capitals. The bill also includes an emergency provision mandating that the border be closed if the average showing up each day for a week is 5,000. The provision does not mean that migration is unchecked up to 5,000 a day.
- ❖ Source: [https://www.wsj.com/articles/senate-border-security-bill-james-lankford-republicans-immigration-biden-border-patrol-asylum-bc2f9543?st=3lbn1t5qqfmklu&reflink=desktopwebshare\\_permalink](https://www.wsj.com/articles/senate-border-security-bill-james-lankford-republicans-immigration-biden-border-patrol-asylum-bc2f9543?st=3lbn1t5qqfmklu&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink)

## Senate supplemental funding bill is an affront to refugee protection

By *The National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC)*, February 5, 2024

- ❖ A document written by The National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) provides a brief overview of the proposed supplemental spending bill going to vote in the Senate and then outlines each of the immigration-related provisions and the harms they would cause in practice. In short, the bill will:
  - ❖ **Violate the Refugee Convention by closing the border to people seeking safety:** The centerpiece provision of the bill requires the U.S. government to seal the border to people seeking asylum when the numbers of people arriving at the border reach a certain “trigger number.” This would force the United States to close its doors to countless people in need of asylum protection and send them back to harm.
  - ❖ **Exacerbate the humanitarian and operational challenges on the border:** Like the procedurally similar Title 42 policy, expulsions and unpredictable border closures will create chaos and incentivize organized crime on the border. Refusing to process people so they may seek safety in the U.S. will mean they are trapped – unable to return home and vulnerable to kidnappings and violent crime by cartels and other armed groups. Under Title 42, people in this untenable situation were forced to try multiple times to reenter the United States, exacerbating processing delays.
  - ❖ **Make asylum largely inaccessible for those who are permitted to ask for it at ports of entry:** The bill creates a rushed new process for people seeking asylum, starting with a screening interview most will fail under newly heightened standards. People facing rushed deportations under this new process will have no access to immigration judge or federal judge review, effectively guaranteeing wrongful deportations.
  - ❖ **Punish asylum seekers with imprisonment, while enriching private prison companies:** The bill seeks record-breaking funding for immigration detention – higher levels than seen even during the Trump administration. Private prison companies will reap the benefits, while refugees will be punished with incarceration for the mere act of seeking safety.
- ❖ To read the rest of the document, visit: [https://immigrantjustice.org/sites/default/files/content-type/press-release/documents/2024-02/NIJC-Analysis-Border-Provisions-2024%20Supplemental\\_February-5-2024.pdf](https://immigrantjustice.org/sites/default/files/content-type/press-release/documents/2024-02/NIJC-Analysis-Border-Provisions-2024%20Supplemental_February-5-2024.pdf)

## Border Patrol union backs Senate immigration bill despite House GOP opposition

By *Quinn Owen, ABC News*, February 6, 2024

- ❖ The union that represents front-line Border Patrol agents supports the Senate immigration reform bill, saying the new authorities it gives agents to turn migrants away are a key step in the right direction. That’s despite heavy opposition from House Republicans that might scuttle the effort -- at least for the time being. "This is absolutely better than what we currently have," National Border Patrol Council President Brandon Judd told ABC News. When the new expulsion authorities are triggered, agents will work to quickly turn migrants back to Mexico. Judd said he was confident this new authority combined with more detention resources will reduce illegal crossings.
- ❖ Source: <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/border-patrol-union-backs-senate-immigration-bill-despite/story?id=106969976>

## TEXAS BUOYS AND RAZOR WIRE BARRIERS IN THE RIO GRANDE

### Razor wire at the border: Texas must allow feds to remove barriers, Supreme Court rules

By *Benjamin Wermund, Washington Bureau*, January 22, 2024

- ❖ On January 22, the Supreme Court sided with the Biden administration in its ongoing dispute with Texas over razor wire the state has strung along the Rio Grande, clearing the way for Border Patrol to begin cutting through spools of wire the administration says endangers migrants. In a 5-4 ruling, the court struck down a lower court ruling that had barred Border Patrol from cutting or moving state-owned razor wire except to reach migrants in need of emergency medical assistance. Justice Amy Coney Barrett and Chief Justice John Roberts, both conservatives, joined the court’s three liberal members in the decision. The ruling is a blow to Gov. Greg Abbott’s border security crackdown, which has pushed the bounds of immigration enforcement and drawn multiple lawsuits that could test how far states are permitted to go in securing the international boundary. The full razor wire case is still pending before a district court judge. The high court’s decision comes as Texas soldiers have been blocking Border Patrol from a 2.5-mile stretch near Eagle Pass in an unprecedented state takeover that escalated the dispute. It was not immediately clear if the state would allow Border Patrol back into the stretch, which includes a public park, in light of the ruling.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/politics/article/supreme-court-ruling-razor-wire-border-18621834.php>

### **Some Republicans call for Texas to ignore Supreme Court border ruling: ‘Let’s see them enforce it’**

*By Jasper Scherer, Benjamin Wermund, Houston Chronicle, January 23, 2024*

- ❖ After the Supreme Court on Monday cleared the way for federal agents to remove Texas-owned razor wire along the Rio Grande, some conservative lawmakers and commentators suggested a drastic response from the state: defy the court’s ruling. The 5-4 decision allows Border Patrol to cut or move the miles of razor wire deployed under Gov. Greg Abbott’s border crackdown. In doing so, the high court temporarily settled the state’s dispute with the Biden administration, which says the barriers endanger migrants and impede federal immigration enforcement. Several prominent Republicans quickly responded by publicly advising Abbott to ignore the ruling altogether.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/politics/texas/article/gop-border-wire-supreme-court-18623608.php>

### **Texas attorney general refuses to grant federal agents full access to border park: "Your request is hereby denied"**

*By Camilo Montoya-Galvez, CBS News, January 27, 2024*

- ❖ Texas' attorney general on Friday, January 26, forcefully rejected a request from the Biden administration to grant federal immigration officials full access to a park along the southern border that the state National Guard has sealed off with razor wire, fencing and soldiers. For three weeks, the federal government and Texas have clashed over Shelby Park, a city-owned public park in the border town of Eagle Pass that was once a busy area for illegal crossings by migrants. Texas National Guard soldiers deployed by Gov. Greg Abbott took control of Shelby Park earlier in January and have since prevented Border Patrol agents from processing migrants in the area, which once served as a makeshift migrant holding site for the federal agency. The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the Border Patrol, had given Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton until Friday [January 26] to say the state would relent and allow federal agents inside Shelby Park.
- ❖ Read Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton letter here: [https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/images/press/OAG%20Response%20to%20Second%20DHS%20Demand%20Letter%201262024%20\\_2032407913.pdf](https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/images/press/OAG%20Response%20to%20Second%20DHS%20Demand%20Letter%201262024%20_2032407913.pdf)
- ❖ Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/texas-attorney-general-ken-paxton-refuses-federal-agents-access-shelby-park-eagle-pass-border/>

## **IMPACTS OF OPERATION LONE STAR**

### **NYC Mayor Eric Adams, other Democratic mayors ask for federal help coordinating migrant buses from Texas**

*By the Associated Press, December 27, 2023*

- ❖ Chicago has cracked down on so-called “rogue” buses, with lawsuits, fines and tickets. Mayor Eric Adams said New York City would put similar rules in place as Chicago. Denver has similar rules on weekday drop-offs during specified hours. New York City has offered migrants one-way tickets out of town and traveled to Latin America to discourage people from coming to the city.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/eric-adams-democratic-mayors-ask-federal-help-coordinating-migrant-bus-rcna131396>

### **New York Plans to Spend Billions More on Migrant Crisis**

*By Jimmy Vielkind and Erin Ailworth, January 16, 2024*

- ❖ New York state officials would direct another \$2.4 billion to fund the cost of caring for migrants in New York City. The number of people in the city’s care has steadily increased to around 69,000 since border states began sending migrants charter buses in the summer of 2022.
- ❖ Source: [https://www.wsj.com/us-news/new-york-plans-to-spend-billions-more-on-migrant-crisis-f2499439?reflink=desktopwebshare\\_permalink](https://www.wsj.com/us-news/new-york-plans-to-spend-billions-more-on-migrant-crisis-f2499439?reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink)

## **ASYLUM SEEKERS**

### **A new, smaller caravan of about 1,500 migrants sets out walking north from southern Mexico**

*By the Associated Press Mexico, January 25, 2024*

- ❖ A new, smaller caravan of about 1,500 migrants started walking north from southern Mexico on Thursday, January 25, a week after a larger group that set out on Christmas Eve largely dissolved. The migrants, most from Central and South America, said they had grown tired of waiting in Mexico’s southern city of Tapachula, near the Guatemala border. They said processing centers there for asylum or visa requests are overloaded and the process can take months. The migrants carried a sign reading “Migrating is not a crime, it is a crime for a government to use repression against migrants.”
- ❖ Source: <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/tx/austin/news/2024/01/25/a-new--smaller-caravan-of-about-1-500-migrants-sets-out-walking-north-from-southern-mexico>

### **More migrants in Chicago granted work permits despite complex legal process**

By *Sabrina Franza, CBS News, January 26, 2024*

- ❖ The City of Chicago began a partnership on November 9 with the federal government, state government, and The Resurrection Project, a nonprofit organization, to help migrants apply for work permits so they can legally get a job. Migrants can qualify in three ways:
  - The first way is through temporary protective status, for which they'd have to prove they're from a qualifying country like Venezuela and that they arrived before August 1. Thousands of migrants in Chicago arrived after that deadline.
  - The second way to qualify would be through parole, which the person has to apply for and be approved before they enter the country.
  - The third way is to apply for asylum.
- ❖ Of the 2,722 migrants who submitted applications through the city's partnership, about 1,800 have been approved, and 1,011 have their documents in hand, per data from the nonprofit.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/chicago-migrants-work-permits/>

### **Suburban leaders like to say their cities are welcoming and friendly. To whom? Not migrants.**

By *Lee Goodman, Chicago Sun-Times, January 26, 2024*

- ❖ One after another, Chicago suburbs are passing nearly identical ordinances to keep busloads of migrants out. They are following a long tradition of exclusion. It is not a tradition they should be proud of. The ordinances that the suburbs are enacting prohibit charter bus companies from unloading migrants in their towns unless the companies meet certain conditions, such as disclosing who will feed and care for migrants or getting approval from a city several days in advance. The suburbs claim that the ordinances will apply to everyone — not just migrants — but everyone knows that busloads of suburban kids returning from summer camp won't be turned away if they don't have permits. Federal law says that bus companies cannot treat passengers differently depending on where they are from. The migrants who are on the buses are legally in this country to seek asylum. The only difference between them and passengers on other buses is their nationality. But that doesn't matter to many suburban leaders because they know that the bus companies will not obtain the permits. The buses will simply drop the migrants off farther and farther away in towns that don't have anti-migrant laws. Farther and farther away is exactly where the suburbs want the migrants to go.
- ❖ Source: <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2024/1/26/24043058/suburbs-leaders-city-councils-migrant-ordinances-no-bus-dropoffs-lee-goodman>

### **Roaches, rats and rotten food reported at Chicago shelter for asylum seekers**

By *Alma Campos, The Guardian, January 26, 2024*

- ❖ Appalling conditions have been uncovered at a Chicago warehouse turned migrant shelter where more than 2,500 asylum seekers are staying. The center is called Pilsen shelter. Complaints about cockroaches, rats, rotten food, exposed pipes, sewage issues, illnesses spreading and inadequate food and water provision have been made to the city authorities, in emails first reported by WTTW, the PBS member station in Chicago. Serious public safety concerns about the shelter, in the city's South Side, were prompted in December when five-year-old Jean Carlos Martinez, who was staying there with his family, died there, while others were hospitalized. City officials have been able to move people out of police stations and more shelters have opened. More than 14,500 migrants are living in 28 of those shelters.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/jan/26/chicago-asylum-seeker-shelter-rats-expired-food>

### **The New Migrant Shelter Hurdle: Waiting for the City to Call No. 14,861**

By *Andy Newman and Wesley Parnell, New York Times, January 24, 2024*

- ❖ Moises Chacon is number 14,861. Jon Cordero's number is in the 15,000s. Oumar Camara's wristband says he is number 16,700. The men are all migrants who have come up against New York City's 30-day limit for single adults on stays at any one homeless shelter. After 30 days, anyone who wants to stay in the shelter system has to reapply. But there are not enough beds these days, so each person has to take a number at a city office in the East Village in Manhattan, and wait. New York City has a unique "right to shelter" that requires it to provide a bed to every homeless person who asks. In recent weeks, however, for increasing numbers of migrants, the guarantee has become something that exists only on paper. The Legal Aid Society, which monitors the city's compliance with the right-to-shelter mandate, said on Monday that it had been told by the city that on any given night, 800 to 1,000 migrants are left on the waiting list, and that the average wait for a bed is more than eight days. City officials declined to confirm or contradict the numbers cited by Legal Aid.
- ❖ Source: [https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/nyregion/migrants-homeless-shelters-evictions.html?unlocked\\_article\\_code=1.RU0.Nh0x.RYb8qFhn4ouC&smid=url-share](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/nyregion/migrants-homeless-shelters-evictions.html?unlocked_article_code=1.RU0.Nh0x.RYb8qFhn4ouC&smid=url-share)



### **A city of 710,000 struggles to cope with 40,000 migrant arrivals**

*By Julia Ainsley and Didi Martinez, NBC News, January 27, 2024*

- ❖ Nearly 40,000 migrants have arrived in Denver over the past year, making a city with a population of just over 710,000 the top destination per capita for newly arrived migrants crossing the U.S. southern border and traveling north in buses from Texas. The influx is taking a toll on the city's public safety net. Starting Feb. 5, Denver will limit the number of days migrants can stay in shelters and send those who exceed their stay out onto the streets. Denver Health, the city's "safety net" hospital, is asking for more money from both the state and federal government to help cover \$10 million in unpaid medical bills from migrants. Denver Mayor Mike Johnston estimates the city will need \$100 million over 2024 to pay for housing, schooling, health care and other services as a result of the unexpected influx of migrants.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/denver-struggles-cope-40000-migrants-rcna135555>

### **Texas Border Crisis Sees Immigration Court Backlog Hit Over 450,000**

*By Chloe Mayer, NewsWeek, January 29, 2024*

- ❖ As Texas grapples with skyrocketing numbers of migrants at its borders, new figures show the scale of the problem in its immigration courts, which have become bogged down in a huge backlog of cases. The figures, which come from federal data collated by Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (an independent body monitoring the federal government), will make for grim reading in Texas as the state struggles with surging numbers of migrants crossing into the U.S. at its southern border with Mexico. The backlog of cases clogging up the U.S. court system has soared to more than 3 million across the country in the past year, with some 458,630 in Texas alone. The numbers have seen a significant jump since 2012, when just 40,051 immigration cases were pending in the state. It is likely to provide little more than cold comfort for Texans to learn that the backlog is even higher in Florida. The Sunshine State has 481,376 cases outstanding, a huge spike compared to 2012 when just 17,645 cases were pending, according to the data.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.newsweek.com/texas-border-migrants-court-backlog-cases-1864849>

## **DEVELOPING STORIES**

### **Alejandro Mayorkas: House Republicans fail to impeach US homeland security secretary**

*By Mike Wendling, BBC News, February 6, 2024*

- ❖ The Republican-led House of Representatives has failed to impeach Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas over the migrant crisis at the US-Mexico border. Four Republicans broke ranks and joined all Democrats in the chamber to vote 216-214 against the measure. Opponents of US President Joe Biden blame Mr. Mayorkas for a surge in illegal immigration at the US frontier. More than 6.3 million migrants are known to have entered the US illegally since Mr. Biden took office in 2021. About 2.4 million were allowed into the US, where the majority wait for immigration court dates in which they can make a case for asylum. The system is so overwhelmed that this can take years. This week, a bipartisan group of US senators announced a bill that would step up border enforcement efforts as well as provide additional aid for Ukraine and Israel. House Republicans have rejected the bill outright. Immediately after Tuesday's [Feb. 6] impeachment vote, the House considered a separate Republican bill that would have provided \$17.6bn to Israel, but it, too, failed to pass.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-68172247>

### **US-Mexico immigration coordination producing results, official says**

*By Mike Stone, Reuters, January 20, 2024*

- ❖ A high-level U.S. State Department meeting with Mexican officials on Friday, January 19, lauded progress following a crackdown on illegal immigration, a State Department spokesman said on Saturday. A crackdown on migrant smuggling networks, train and bus routes has produced results, Matthew Miller, a State Department spokesman, said in a statement. "Our coordinated efforts with Mexico are demonstrating positive results at our shared border," the statement said. The U.S. also made a commitment to support Guatemala, a source of some migrants. "The United States stands ready to support the people of Guatemala and their new government on a wide range of issues including economic development and hemispheric migration management," the statement said. Republicans in the U.S. Congress have blocked emergency funding for Ukraine in an effort to push new security policies along the U.S.-Mexico border. They blame Biden's policies for an influx of immigrants into the United States.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/us-mexico-immigration-coordination-producing-results-official-says-2024-01-21/>

## **Closing the Texas-Mexico border would ruin Super Bowl parties and the U.S. economy**

*By Chris Tomlinson, San Antonio Express-News, February 2, 2024*

- ❖ If President Joe Biden sealed the border with Mexico, as many Republicans are demanding, their Super Bowl parties would be very sad, as a former president might say. No avocados or tomatoes for guacamole. No tequila or limes for margaritas. Americans would lose more than \$3.45 billion worth of beer if the president closed the crossing at Eagle Pass alone, trade data shows. Autoworkers couldn't afford a party due to furloughs caused by shortages of Mexican-made parts. The border towns would lose up to 40% of workers who cross daily. Restaurants and hotels would close, and rich folks would have to clean their own toilets. Sealing the border is physically impossible, and closing trade would trigger an economic catastrophe. Mexico is the United States' largest trading partner, with exports to Mexico totaling \$362.7 billion and imports reaching \$500.7 billion in 2022, according to the U.S. Trade Representative. Mexico is a significant supplier of fresh fruit and vegetables, many of which come across the Texas border.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/business/columnists/tomlinson/article/border-immigration-texas-trade-mexico-18639821.php>

## **New state law increasing sentences for human smuggling takes effect**

*By Uriel J. García, Texas Tribune, February 6, 2024*

- ❖ A state law that would increase the minimum sentence from two years to 10 years for people convicted of smuggling immigrants or operating a stash house goes into effect Tuesday, February 6. The law was approved by the state Legislature last year during their third special session. Gov. Greg Abbott signed Senate Bill 4 in December. During the signing ceremony in Brownsville, Abbott said Texas needs to defend itself from drug cartels, blaming the Democratic President Joe Biden administration's immigration policies. Abbott has allocated over \$10 billion since 2021 under the banner of Operation Lone Star to deter people from illegally crossing the border into Texas. During the legislative sessions last year, the governor pushed lawmakers to pass a series of immigration-related laws. SB 4 was one of three high-profile immigration-related bills that lawmakers approved last year and the governor signed into law in December. Senate Bill 3 earmarks \$1.54 billion in state money to continue the construction of barriers along the 1,200-mile Texas-Mexico border and allows the state to spend up to \$40 million for state troopers to patrol Colony Ridge, a housing development near Houston that far-right publications claim is a magnet for undocumented immigrants. The money would be added to at least \$1.5 billion in contracts the state has issued since September 2021 to build about 40 miles of border barrier. As of August, Texas had erected 16 miles of steel bollard barriers in Starr, Cameron, Val Verde and Webb counties. A different Senate Bill 4 — this one passed by lawmakers during the fourth special session last year — creates a state crime for illegally crossing the border from Mexico. The law has put Texas on a legal collision course with the federal government, which has sole jurisdiction to enforce immigration laws under federal law, which has been upheld by U.S. Supreme Court decisions. The new state crime is a Class B misdemeanor carrying a punishment of up to six months in jail. Repeat offenders could face a second-degree felony with a punishment of two to 20 years in prison. The law allows a judge to drop the charges if a migrant agrees to return to Mexico. The U.S. Department of Justice, El Paso County and immigrant rights advocacy groups have sued Texas to attempt to stop the law from going into effect. As of now, it is scheduled to go into effect on March 5.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.texastribune.org/2024/02/06/texas-human-smuggling-law-minimum-sentence/>

## **How Texas Gov. Greg Abbott became a leading voice in the national immigration debate**

*By Jeremy Wallace, Houston Chronicle, February 6, 2024*

- ❖ On Sunday, February 4, Republican governors from around the nation huddled around Abbott in Eagle Pass and took turns praising him for becoming the leading voice in the Republican Party on border security issues, and by extension, a key foil to President Joe Biden and his administration. While a lot of Republicans have complained about Biden's policies, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds said she was proud of how Abbott has taken forceful action at the border. She has made four trips to Texas' border with Mexico over the last few years and has seen firsthand the actions he's taken. The praise underscores how more than any other Republican, Abbott has "used the immigration issue to build a national profile," said Alex Conant, a Washington, D.C.-based Republican strategist who has been an adviser to GOP presidential candidates. Days before the Eagle Pass press conference, #StandwithAbbott was trending on social media after Abbott said he wouldn't let a U.S. Supreme Court ruling get in the way of lining the border with more razor wire. And as if to come full circle, Abbott was back on Fox News, but this time with Sean Hannity who told millions of national viewers that Abbott has "done everything humanly possible" to secure the border.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/politics/article/greg-abbott-border-security-governors-18649962.php>

### **Eagle Pass tires of spotlight as Texas immigration fight intensifies**

*By Ted Hesson, Reuters, February 7, 2024*

- ❖ Over the weekend, hundreds of protesters against illegal immigration trekked to a ranch near Eagle Pass to show their support for former President Donald Trump, an immigration hardliner and the Republican Party's leading candidate to challenge Biden. Some protesters drove through the downtown on Sunday, February 4, with pickup trucks decorated with pro-Trump and far-right messages. Biden bested Trump in Maverick County, where Eagle Pass is located, in 2020, despite losing the state to Trump. A short walk from Main Street, the state of Texas has commandeered Shelby Park, a 47-acre expanse alongside the Rio Grande, and built a border barrier with shipping containers and concertina wire to reduce illegal crossings. Texas troops patrol the border, taking on a legally contentious role that historically has been the domain of the federal government.
- ❖ Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/eagle-pass-tires-spotlight-texas-immigration-fight-intensifies-2024-02-07/>

### **Border security and Ukraine aid collapses despite Biden's plea for Congress to 'show some spine'**

*By Stephen Groves, Mary Clare Jalonick and Aamer Madhani, Associated Press, February 6, 2024*

- ❖ A Senate deal on border enforcement measures and Ukraine aid suffered a swift and total collapse Tuesday, February 6, as Republicans withdrew support despite President Joe Biden urging Congress to “show some spine” and stand up to Donald Trump. Just minutes after the Democratic president's remarks at the White House, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell emerged from a GOP luncheon at the Capitol and acknowledged that the deal was dead. Biden had engaged for months with Senate leaders on a carefully negotiated plan to pair policies intended to curb illegal crossings at the U.S.-Mexico border with \$60 billion in wartime aid for Ukraine. The bill was intended to exhibit American strength around the world and would have also sent tens of billions of dollars more for Israel, other U.S. allies in Asia, the U.S. immigration system and humanitarian aid for civilians in Gaza and Ukraine. But after Republicans rejected the compromise, the president and Senate leaders are now stranded with no clear way to advance aid for Ukraine through Congress. They have run into a wall of opposition from conservatives — led by Trump — who reject the border proposal as insufficient and criticize Ukraine funding as wasteful. “After months of good faith negotiations, after months of giving Republicans many of the things they asked for, Leader McConnell and the Republican conference are ready to kill the national security supplemental package even with border provisions they so fervently demand,” Schumer said. Senators are still floundering for a way to get Ukraine funding through the Republican-controlled House. And after the border compromise collapsed Tuesday, some suggested jettisoning that portion from the package and advancing the aid for U.S. allies on their own. House Republicans on Tuesday night failed to pass a separate \$17.6 billion package of military aid for Israel. Hardline conservatives opposed the bill because the funding would not be offset by budget cuts in other areas. Democrats were also mostly opposed because it undermined the push for a comprehensive package that would include Ukraine and other allies in Asia.
- ❖ Source: [https://apnews.com/article/congress-border-security-bill-ukraine-b386eae0c4947497da931870dbcb28a0#:~:text=WASHINGTON%20\(AP\)%20%E2%80%94%20Senate,stand%20up%20to%20Donald%20Trump.](https://apnews.com/article/congress-border-security-bill-ukraine-b386eae0c4947497da931870dbcb28a0#:~:text=WASHINGTON%20(AP)%20%E2%80%94%20Senate,stand%20up%20to%20Donald%20Trump.)