

## Gov. Abbott holds immigration roundtable in Conroe while O'Rourke campaigns along border

**Incumbent Greg Abbott was in Conroe Friday holding a roundtable discussion on illegal immigration and crime.**

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CONROE, Texas — In the race for Texas governor, incumbent Greg Abbott was in Conroe Friday holding a roundtable discussion on illegal immigration and crime.

The Montgomery County district attorney and sheriff joined Governor Abbott at the Montgomery County Jail on Friday afternoon.

“If (the border is) porous, that means (immigration) goes both ways,” said Montgomery County District Attorney Brett Ligon.

There were also several families of people killed by someone in the country illegally.

“This is traumatic,” said Marie Vega. “This lives with you for the rest of your life.”

Vega’s son, Javier “Harvey” Vega Junior, was a U.S. Marine and a Border Patrol agent murdered in 2014.

“Harvey had a love for his country,” said Vega. “He had a love for family. He loved doing his job, and he’s not here because of failed immigration policies.”

Vega and others criticized the Biden administration’s policies on border security and immigration.

“Texas is stepping up to do more than what any state has ever done to secure our border,” said Gov. Abbott. “We’re having to do this because the Biden administration is doing less.”

Meanwhile, the likely Democratic challenger for governor, Beto O’Rourke, is spending the weekend campaigning along the border.

“We’re gonna make sure that the next governor of the state of Texas does not see the border as a threat or a problem but instead as an opportunity,” said O’Rourke during a rally Friday afternoon in McAllen.

The CATO Institute, a libertarian think tank, found in 2018 the criminal conviction rate of immigrants illegally in Texas was 45 percent below that of native-born Americans.

“Those results from the Cato Institute are pretty consistent with survey results and sociological and other studies that have been conducted for decades, actually,” said Daniel Morales, an associate professor of law and George A. Butler research professor at the University of Houston.

Morales researches immigration law.

“Trump showed by demonizing immigrants you can galvanize Republican voters and the base,” said Morales.

A UT poll released February 14 shows the border and immigration is the most important issue to 31% of Texas voters, by far the highest for any issue, especially among Republicans.

Both of Abbott’s main challengers for governor in the Republican primary, Don Huffines and Allen West, have taken hardline stances on the issue.

Early voting in Texas runs through Friday, February 25. The Texas primary election is on March 1.