

SOUTHEAST MISSOURIAN

Is Laken Riley's life worth less than George Floyd's?

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George Floyd's death during a police chokehold on May 25, 2020, ignited nationwide protests to reform police procedures. Referring to Floyd's ordeal, former President Donald Trump said, "It doesn't get any worse than that," and within three weeks Trump signed an executive order establishing an abuse of force database and calling for improved police practices.

Fast-forward to Feb. 22, 2024, when Georgia nursing student Laken Riley was bludgeoned to death allegedly at the hands of an illegal migrant, Jose Ibarra, a member of the notorious Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua. Democrats are accusing Republicans of trying to "score cheap political" points by demanding that migrants be vetted before being allowed in the U.S.

Kelly Girtz, Democratic mayor of Athens, Georgia, where Riley was killed, insists the focus should be on the individual perpetrator, not migrants. That's ridiculous. Was the focus only on Derek Chauvin, the cop with his knee on Floyd's neck?

Riley's murder should ignite demand for rigorous vetting of migrants entering the U.S.

Riley is dead because the Biden administration lets anyone in and lies about it.

Ibarra was first arrested for illegally crossing into the U.S. in September 2022. But Customs and Border Protection kept him less than 24 hours before releasing him to go anywhere in the U.S. he chose. Zero vetting.

Internal Department of Homeland Security documents show Ibarra is a gang member. But former Border Patrol officers explain that the Biden administration wants "migrants out of our hands and out of our custody as fast as humanly possible." No time to check records.

DHS claims that migrants admitted into the U.S. undergo "robust security vetting."

That lie was exposed on Friday when a federal judge ruled on a lawsuit challenging the Biden administration's airplane parole program, which allows 30,000 migrants per month from Nicaragua, Cuba, Haiti and Venezuela to fly into the U.S. The judge's ruling set aside the lawsuit because the plaintiffs lacked standing. Even so, Judge Drew Tipton's ruling is important because he pointed to evidence showing that any migrant who schedules an appointment using the CBP One app, buys a plane ticket and arrives in the U.S. gets in. A staggering 98% are approved. A migrant would have to punch the Customs and Border Protection agent in the nose to have a problem.

Yet White House spokesperson Angelo Fernandez Hernandez doubled down on the standard lie Friday, again claiming migrants must "pass through a rigorous vetting process."

The mainstream media shamelessly repeat that fiction. CNN said on Friday that migrants using the CBP One mobile app "are thoroughly vetted." Laughable.

The lack of vetting, whether at the southern border or in President Joe Biden's new CBP airport parole program, produces tragic consequences.

In January, Tammy Nobles testified before a House panel about the murder of her 20-year-old daughter Kayla Hamilton, who was allegedly raped and strangled to death with an electric cord by an illegal migrant robbing her of \$6.

Nobles explained that all DHS "had to do was make one phone call to El Salvador to know he was an MS-13 gang member on the list."

DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, who didn't attend the House hearing, insisted afterward that American deaths at the hands of illegal migrants "should not be politicized."

No one said that about Floyd's death. Is Hamilton's life also worth less than Floyd's?

The Washington Post, USA Today and other publications cite several studies, from the Cato Institute, Stanford University and elsewhere, purporting to show immigrants have committed crimes at a lower rate than people born in the U.S. These studies assess data from several years, even decades, ago. Some don't distinguish between legal and illegal immigrants. Most important, these studies ignore the new reality. Venezuela and El Salvador are emptying their prisons and sending their gang members to the United States, according to FBI sources. Americans need to be protected from these killers.

The issue facing Biden and his party is not whether to call Ibarra "illegal," "undocumented" or a "newcomer." The brutal truth is he's a Tren de Aragua gang member. And he should have been stopped at the border before he killed Riley.

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