



Texas sheriff speaking at White House calls migrants in his jail ‘drunks’ who will ‘run over your children

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WASHINGTON — A North Texas sheriff on Thursday called immigrants living in the country illegally “drunks” who will “run over your children,” citing repeat offenders in the jail he oversees during a White House media briefing with the director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

“If we have to turn them loose or they get released, they’re coming back to your neighborhood and my neighborhood,” said Tarrant County Sheriff Bill Waybourn, clad in a black cowboy hat and hunkered over the White House podium. “These drunks will run over your children, and they will run over my children.”

Waybourn said he understands that “many of these migrants come across that river down there in Texas looking for a better day, for something better for their family.”

“The problem is, the very people they were fleeing, who preyed upon them, came with them,” he said. “That’s who we’re trying to initially eliminate out of our country.”

Waybourn said 7 percent of the 4,200 inmates in the Tarrant County jail are in the country without documentation. He said 72 percent are “repeat offenders.” Waybourn’s chief of staff, David McClelland, later added in a statement that nearly a quarter of the undocumented inmates in the jail “have charges of DWI and/or DWI repeat offender.” He said Waybourn “was not referring to all legal or illegal immigrants when making his comments about DWI/DWI repeat offenders.”

Waybourn’s comments sparked outrage. State Sen. Beverly Powell, a Democrat who represents the majority of Fort Worth, tweeted that “these are unnecessary and divisive remarks that instill fear and hate.”

A [recent study](#) from the libertarian Cato Institute found that in Texas in 2017, immigrants who entered the country illegally were 47 percent less likely to be convicted of a crime than native-born Americans and legal immigrants were about 65 percent less likely to be convicted of a crime than native-born Americans.

“Tarrant County is a growing diverse community — as elected leaders we should respect and celebrate this diversity,” Powell said. “The sheriff should immediately apologize for his hateful rhetoric.”

At the White House, Waybourn also compared ICE officers to returning Vietnam soldiers, saying critics are “eviscerating honorable people doing noble things, standing on the wall between good and evil for you and me.”

Waybourn was brought to speak by ICE Director Matt Albence, who said the agency’s ability to enforce immigration law has “fallen victim to judicial overreach” after a federal judge in California last month

barred ICE from issuing requests known as “detainers” based solely on database searches considered to be unreliable.

ICE cross-checks jail rosters around the U.S. with federal databases that track people’s nationality and immigration status. When it detects that a person is unauthorized to be in the U.S., ICE will issue a detainer asking the agency to hold the person until he or she can be taken into immigration custody.