

Townhall

Illegal Immigration: Another of Biden's Manufactured Crises

Laura Hollis

March 17, 2022

While Americans' attention is understandably focused on skyrocketing gas prices and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the crisis at our southern border has dropped out of the headlines. But it is also escalating.

And, like President Joe Biden's disastrous energy decisions, this crisis, too, is concocted. Biden is doing nothing to enforce our immigration laws; those exploiting Biden's nonexistent enforcement know it. Here are some numbers that should shock Americans as much as the prices at the pump do:

In each of the last three full months of former President Donald Trump's administration (October, November and December 2020), the Border Patrol reported between 71,000 and 74,000 "border encounters" with migrants crossing illegally. For fiscal year 2020 (October 2019 through September 2020), there were 458,088 such encounters. *Total.*

In the first full month of Biden's presidency (February 2021), the number of migrants illegally crossing into the United States from Mexico jumped to 101,099. In March, it jumped again to 173,277. By July, more than 213,000 immigrants illegally crossed the southern border of the United States. In fiscal year 2021 -- which included eight months of Biden's deliberate neglect of the border -- 1,734,686 people crossed the U.S.' border with Mexico. If we look at *calendar year* 2021, almost two million people (1,963,253) crossed the border, more than four times the number that crossed during the entire last year of Trump's presidency. That's more people than the population of Dallas, Philadelphia or Phoenix.

And those are just the ones we know of. (The Center for Immigration Studies estimates that another 500,000 illegal immigrants entered without detection in 2021.) This year is already on track to be worse. In January, 154,745 migrants entered illegally -- over 76,000 more than last year. In February, 164,973 -- over 63,000 more than last year. At this rate, by the end of Biden's first term, somewhere between 4 million and 5 million people will have come into this country illegally, more than the population of Los Angeles, the second-biggest city in the United States.

Like virtually every other policy being pushed by Biden and his "progressive" puppet masters, throwing the doors of the country open wide has huge costs for Americans; illegal immigration is estimated to cost us between \$100 and \$150 billion annually.

For starters, households headed by immigrants are significantly more likely to use welfare programs than households headed by native-born Americans. Under the most conservative

calculations, 45% of immigrant households are using at least one welfare program, typically Medicaid and/or food stamps.

These costs are disproportionately borne by high-immigration states like California, where undocumented immigrants make up more than 6% of the state's population and 10% of its labor force. California's legislature has passed laws in recent years extending its Medi-Cal health care coverage to some illegal immigrants, and Gov. Gavin Newsom is looking to expand that coverage to all, a move that opponents say will dramatically raise taxes on already over-taxed Californians.

Welfare programs are not the only costs. According to research conducted by the libertarian (and generally pro immigration) Cato Institute, illegal immigrants are twice as likely to be incarcerated as legal immigrants. Illegal immigrants make up 13% of the federal prison population (and of California's prisons). While native-born Americans are far more likely to commit crimes than either category of immigrant, it is the nature of the crimes and the recidivism rate that infuriates taxpayers. A 2008 Rand Corporation study revealed that 75% of immigrants who were deported for commission of a crime and returned to the U.S. committed another crime within a year. A highly publicized homicide in 2015 drove this point home: 31-year-old Kate Steinle was shot and killed in San Francisco by Juan Lopez-Sanchez, an illegal immigrant with seven felony convictions who had already been deported five times.

Biden has been busing and flying immigrants all over the country, under cover of night and often without the knowledge or approval of state government officials. Federal contractors responsible for some of these flights into the Westchester County, New York, airport were caught on video earlier this year stating that these transports were supposed to be kept "hush-hush" and "as down low as possible." One contractor stated that the government is "betraying the American people." Although the Biden administration claims that they are reuniting children with their families, observers across the country have noticed that a disproportionate number of these illegal migrants are young adult males.

Which raises other issues, including national security and public health. As with the 100,000-plus Afghans brought into the U.S. after Biden's disastrous pullout from Afghanistan, none of the migrants crossing the U.S./Mexico border are vetted. Even during the height of the pandemic, most were unvaccinated against COVID 19, while American citizens were enduring lockdowns and "vaccine passports." Press secretary Jen Psaki defended this, arguing that most illegal migrants will only be here "a short time." That is laughably wrong (not to mention irrelevant from a contagion standpoint), as is the claim that 95% of illegals subject to the "catch and release" policy show up to their court hearings. The government's own data from 2020 shows that half of these immigrants never show up for their court dates. Only 40% of these court orders are removals in any case; removal policy under Biden is now limited to spies, terrorists, gang members and those convicted of aggravated felonies. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told the Senate Judiciary Committee last November that we should not even enforce most of the outstanding deportation orders that have already been entered against 1.2 million illegal immigrants.

Then there are the costs of human trafficking and the illegal drug trade. Almost 92,000 Americans died of opioid overdoses in 2020; most of those deaths were caused by fentanyl, a drug the Border Patrol is seizing in staggering volume at the border.

None of these crises are accidental. All are avoidable. How much more will Americans endure?