

Newsweek

Republican Congressman says many “Attractive Children” don’t make it across U.S.-Mexico Border

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At a Thursday hearing on immigration and border security, a Republican congressman suggested there was a link between a child's attractiveness and his or her likelihood of making it across the U.S.-Mexico border.

"Believe me, a lot of the attractive children are not making it to the border," Texas Representative John Carter said. The comment apparently received no direct response from his fellow members of Congress.

"The congressman was referring to the fact that it's a sad reality that unaccompanied children are subject to kidnapping, sexual violence, physical abuse, human trafficking and even death at the hands of human smugglers and ruthless cartels during their journey to cross over the southern border," Emily Taylor, Carter's spokesperson, told CNN in a statement.

Taylor went on to explain the "loophole" in U.S. law that she says allows children to cross the border unaccompanied, putting them at risk of being "exploited by the coyotes and cartel."

Carter reportedly made the remark in response to Representative John Culberson's (R-TX) line of questioning about laws granting immigrant families asylum, as well as other legal protections for which immigrants crossing the southern border may be eligible.

Newsweek's calls to Carter's district office Friday were met with a busy signal,

Experts have said that President Donald Trump's hardline anti-immigration rhetoric and policies have the potential to make the human smuggling problem—which claims hundreds of lives each year—much worse.

"The more border enforcement there is, the more people there are who are going to take risks like this—and it will result in more people dying," Alex Nowrasteh, an immigration policy analyst at Cato Institute's Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity told *Mic* in July, after authorities discovered a tractor-trailer near the border attempting to transport between 30 and 40 people into the United States. Ten of them had died.

"I would expect it to continue and possibly increase during the Trump administration," he added.

In March 2017, John Kelly, then-secretary of Homeland Security, reported that Trump's aggressive policies had caused smugglers, known as coyotes, to increase their fees for helping immigrants cross the border. Kelly said that since the 2016 presidential election, the price had gone up from \$3,500 to \$8,000.

Since then, Trump has only bolstered his plans to tighten border security and block immigrants from entering the U.S. Most recently, the president issued calls to militarize the southern border with the help of National Guard troops.

Earlier this week, Texas Governor Greg Abbott sent 150 troops to the border, in addition to the 100 who already served before Trump's orders. The Republican governor said he planned to send 300 more troops a week until the border is "fully staffed up." Arizona Governor Doug Ducey has followed suit, sending 225 troops on Monday and promising another 113.