

Prepared Opening Statement of Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
Hearing on Oversight of the Dept. of Homeland Security
Tuesday, November 16, 2021

I'm glad we're finally holding a hearing where we can discuss the unprecedented national security and humanitarian crisis the Biden Administration has created at our southern border.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection recently announced that it had 1.7 million encounters with illegal immigrants at the southern border in Fiscal Year 2021. That's the highest number ever recorded. It's higher than the individual populations of at least 11 states.

Of that number, over 1.4 million encounters took place in the last eight months of Fiscal Year 2021 when the Biden Administration was in office and congressional Democrats had a majority in Congress. In mere months of unified control of the federal government, the Biden Administration and congressional Democrats have presided over 1.4 million encounters with illegal immigrants attempting to cross the southern border.

That on its own is an astounding number. It's greater than the individual populations of Wyoming, Alaska, Vermont, North Dakota, South Dakota, Delaware, Montana, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, and Washington, D.C. It's twice as large as the Des Moines, Iowa, metro area. And that doesn't include the hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants who got away.

It does include historically high numbers of unaccompanied children. And, under this administration, children have been detained under the same conditions for which congressional Democrats loudly and repeatedly criticized the previous administration.

Make no mistake. This crisis is a direct result of the irresponsible, reckless, and dangerous immigration policies pursued by the Biden Administration, Secretary Mayorkas, and political leadership at DHS headquarters, ICE, and CBP.

Don't just take my word for it. On March 10th, Reuters reported that the government of Mexico was worried that the Biden Administration's asylum policies were "stoking illegal immigration and creating business for organized crime."

Former Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol, Rodney Scott, sent a letter to congressional leadership on September 11th stating that the "seismic shift in border security and immigration policy that was initiated on January 20, 2021" created the current crisis at our southern border, and that this crisis constitutes a national security threat to our nation.

Scott served as a Border Patrol agent and federal law enforcement agent for over 29 years and served under five different presidential administrations of both parties, including the Biden Administration. He said that what he witnessed under this Administration was "a lack of any meaningful effort to secure our borders." In his professional assessment, "the U.S. Border Patrol is rapidly losing the situational awareness required to know who and what is entering our

Homeland.” He also said that Secretary Mayorkas was “choosing to ignore the sound recommendations of career government leadership despite his own admissions that he agrees with them.”

This sorry state of affairs was entirely preventable. Unfortunately, due to the reckless policies of this Administration and this Department of Homeland Security, it was also entirely predictable.

When you terminate physical barrier construction, severely restrict the ability of ICE to deport illegal immigrants, terminate the Remain in Mexico program, roll back asylum cooperative agreements, gut Title 42, and openly support sanctuary city policies, then you shouldn't be surprised when there's a surge at the southern border.

When you allow the ACLU and open-borders immigration activists rather than career law enforcement professionals to dictate the terms of your immigration and border policies, then you shouldn't be surprised when record-shattering numbers of people start showing up at the border to take advantage of that.

When you run DHS like it's an #AbolishICE fan club, you shouldn't be surprised when you have an illegal immigration crisis on your hands.

The most solemn responsibility of the Department of Homeland Security is to protect the people of the United States. One of the most solemn responsibilities of the President and the Secretary of Homeland Security is to uphold the rule of law in the United States. In choosing to actively ignore the immigration laws passed by Congress and in choosing to pursue policies that encourage unprecedented levels of uncontrolled illegal immigration to the United States, this Administration and this DHS have failed on both counts.

I'm glad we finally have an opportunity today to publicly hold them to account.