

# THE IMPACT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ON SOCIAL SERVICES

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HEARING  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION INTEGRITY,  
SECURITY, AND ENFORCEMENT  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
SECOND SESSION

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2024

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Not provided at time of publication

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## THE IMPACT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ON SOCIAL SERVICES

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Thursday, January 11, 2024

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION INTEGRITY, SECURITY,  
AND ENFORCEMENT

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
*Washington, DC*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:06 a.m., in Room 2141, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Tom McClintock [Chair of the Subcommittee] presiding.

*Members present:* Representatives McClintock, Jordan, Biggs, Tiffany, Roy, Spartz, Nehls, Moore, Hunt, Jayapal, Nadler, Correa, Escobar, Jackson Lee, and Ross.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. The Subcommittee will come to order. Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time.

We welcome everyone to today's hearing on the impact of illegal immigration on social services. We'll begin with opening statements, starting with myself.

The very day he took office, Joe Biden issued Executive Orders that opened our borders to the world and began the largest illegal mass migration in recorded history. Since that day, his Administration has deliberately released into the country over 3.3 million illegal aliens, a population the size of the State of Iowa.

While the Border Patrol was overwhelmed changing diapers and taking names, an additional 1.7 million known gotaways, have also flooded in. An additional illegal population the size of West Virginia.

Ever since that day, I've asked the Democrats a series of very simple questions. How does it improve access to healthcare for Americans when we pack our emergency rooms and maternity wards with illegals demanding free healthcare?

How does it strengthen our social safety net to allow in five million impoverished people requiring care? How does it make our communities safer by making it all but impossible to deport criminal illegal aliens?

How does it help working families by flooding the labor market with cheap illegal labor? How does it improve our schools by packing classrooms with non-English speaking students?

I am still waiting for an answer to these questions from the Democrats. The reality is starting to become obvious to the American people.

Coincidentally, after we'd announced this hearing on the impact of this crisis on social services, Mayor Eric Adams kicked four thousand New York children out of their high school to house two thousand illegal migrants. He has yet to explain why he didn't offer them a plane ticket home instead.

Indeed, one estimate from New York City is that the cost of simply educating, let alone housing, and feeding these recent arrivals, will cost the city schools one billion dollars next year.

That is effectively a one billion dollar cut in their school budgets. A one billion dollar cut to the funds available to educate legal residents.

We have already heard of American Veterans kicked out of nursing homes to make way for illegal aliens. Law enforcement is overwhelmed by dealing with the accompanying crimes.

American mothers are forced to drive three hours to deliver their babies, because every maternity bed in their local hospital is taken up by a law breaker who has no legal right to be here. We'll hear of more outrages today.

Under the Biden Administration, schools are becoming illegal alien shelters, airports are becoming illegal alien shelters, parks are becoming illegal alien shelters, police stations are becoming illegal alien shelters, nursing homes are becoming illegal alien shelters, hotels are becoming illegal alien shelters, and homeless shelters are becoming illegal alien shelters.

All of this is paid for by struggling American families who work hard, pay their taxes, and obey our laws. When they question this, they're called racist xenophobes by my Democratic colleagues.

Now, this crisis is not because of incompetence. This is the deliberate policy of this Administration. It's not going to be solved by new laws that the Senate won't pass, and the President won't sign or enforce.

It won't be solved by spending more money to encourage and support still more illegal aliens flooding our country. It won't be solved by swapping one leftist official for another.

The harsh truth is that this catastrophe was set in motion when the American people elected this Administration. It's going to continue until the American people replace it with one that will defend our citizens, secure our borders, and restore the rule of law.

This unprecedented illegal migration is exactly what the Democrats promised to do. It's exactly what they have done. It's exactly what they have defended for the last three years in this Congress. If you voted for them. This is exactly what you voted for. If that surprises you, you weren't paying any attention.

The good news is the American people are starting to pay attention as communities confront the dangers and deprivations that this Administration and its supporters in Congress have unleashed on them. We will quantify some of that in today's testimony and then pray it's not too late to save our country.

I am now pleased to recognize the Ranking Member for an opening statement.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you, Mr. Chair. As we hurdle toward a government shutdown, with House Republicans unable to fulfill their most basic responsibility of agreeing to a funding plan that keeps the government going, last night we shut down the floor because they couldn't even pass their own rules.

Yet, here we are. Having another hearing to discuss migrants who have crossed the border. I am sure that once again, we will hear the same false talking points blaming everything on Secretary Mayorkas and President Biden.

The fact is that this country needs fundamental reforms, positive reforms to an outdated immigration system that desperately needs to be modernized, that would allow for multiple legal pathways for immigrants who are already contributing to our country and those who seek to come to this country to contribute.

There is so much fearmongering going on that it is difficult to know exactly where to start. Let me say this, first, the Biden Administration is enforcing immigration laws.

In fact, the Administration has been so heavy handed in recent months that I have serious concerns about how they are conducting border enforcement. This is especially true when it comes to the Administration's regulations that limit access to asylum and the use of expedited processing procedures for families.

Today there are nearly 38 thousand people in Immigration and Customs Enforcement Detention. By the way, this is what the Trump Administration averaged in Fiscal Year 2018.

If you listen to my colleagues on the other side, you would think that there are zero people in detention. The Biden Administration has also significantly increased removals in a way that, I worry, violates migrants' due process rights and their ability to lawfully seek asylum.

Since the end of Title 42 last year, the Biden Administration has removed or returned to Mexico over 400 thousand individuals, including over 65 thousand individual members of family units, including children.

This total is nearly equivalent to the number of people removed in all Fiscal Year 2019 under Donald Trump. So, the idea that the Administration is not enforcing the law is ridiculous.

Second, I think this is a really important point, this hearing is supposed to distract the American people from the fact that my Republican colleagues have absolutely no accomplishments to run on.

Once again, they are trying to scapegoat immigrants by making claims about undocumented immigrants' use of social services. However, under our laws, they are not eligible for the vast majority of Federal benefits.

Beyond that, it is absurd to say that immigrants are a drain on the economy. Study after study have proven that the U.S. economy is driven by immigrants, both documented and undocumented.

Undocumented immigrants pay an estimated seven billion dollars in sales and excise taxes, 3.6 billion dollars in property taxes, and 1.1 billion dollars in personal income taxes every year.

In 2019 alone, Mexican undocumented households contributed nearly nine billion dollars in Federal, State, and local taxes. That same year, undocumented Mexican workers contributed 14.5 billion dollars to social security and Medicare through the taxes taken out

of their paychecks. Which means that they contributed billions of dollars to entitlement programs that American citizens have the access to, but those undocumented immigrants have no ability to benefit from.

Immigrants don't hurt the economy. Let me say that again to the American people who may be watching this fiasco. Immigrants do not hurt the economy.

What hurts us are antiquated laws that require the detention of lawful asylum seekers and inefficient and arbitrary waiting periods for work authorization. Laws that lack sufficient lawful pathways for those seeking refuge or better opportunities here.

Thanks to President Biden, unemployment is at the lowest level in 50 years. While employers are growing, they cannot find the workers they need, despite attempts to hire American workers. The system keeps out so many immigrants who could help fill these crucial economic needs.

As we have been saying for months, we need to expand lawful pathways for those seeking protection, to ease the burden at the border. As crises reverberate around the globe, and more people need refuge, the law remains frozen in time.

We have not had significant updates to the overall immigration system in roughly 30 years. Sadly in this Congress, led by a party that continues to be inflicted by—continues to be paralyzed by self-inflicted wounds, needed immigration reform appears to be out of reach.

Now, the Administration's Supplemental Border Funding Request, which has a lot for both parties to like, has turned into a partisan political football where we are refusing aid to Ukraine against Russian invasion, because Republicans want to shut down immigration.

Ignoring this request imperils the Safe Mobility Offices in the hemisphere, where migrants can be assessed for eligibility for refugee status or other lawful pathways. These Centers encourage migrants to forego taking the dangerous journey to the border, relieving pressure at the border.

These Centers need additional funding to be successful. People want to come here lawfully. When the Biden Administration provided parole for Cubans, Nicaraguans, and Haitians, border crossings between ports of entry from those countries dropped by 99 percent.

Alternatively, when the Trump Administration cutoff refugees from the Congo, we started seeing Congolese refugees at the Southern border, when we had never seen them there before.

We also desperately need the additional funds requested for the Shelter and Services Program to reimburse States, localities, and NGO's working to welcome migrants. These are vital funds that would aid many of the States that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle say are overburdened.

Unfortunately, Republicans in the House remain obsessed with pushing H.R. 2, their cruel, extreme, and unworkable legislation which would only create more chaos at the border. The Senate has made it clear that this bill is a non-starter.

I worry that some of my colleagues are pushing that legislation, because they actually have no interest in actually solving the prob-

lem. It is politically beneficial to them to have immigrants out there as a tool to create political division.

Just last week, when a Member of this Subcommittee gave the game away, when he said quote, “I’m not willing to do too damn much right now to help a Democrat and to help Joe Biden’s approval rating.” We have been trying an enforcement only strategy for 30 years.

The results are plain for everyone to see. We can only solve the complex issue of immigration by addressing it holistically and in a bipartisan way that deals with our economic, our humanitarian, and our security needs. Not an end run around Congress for bad policy in a supplemental funding bill.

I look forward to hearing from all our witnesses and the perspectives they bring on this issue. I yield back.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. I now recognize the Ranking Member of the Full Committee, Mr. Nadler, for his opening statement.

Mr. NADLER. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is a brand-new year. Unfortunately, my Republican colleagues are still running the same tired old playbook.

There are real problems facing our Nation. The right to bodily autonomy is under attack across the country. From extreme life-threatening abortion restrictions to bans on healthcare for trans youth.

We’re not even two weeks into the new year, and we’ve already seen the first horrific school shooting of 2024. We are little more than a week away from large parts of our government shutting down.

The immigration system is simply not working, because Congress has failed to reform it for over 30 years. What are House Republicans doing to respond to these problems? Mostly fighting among themselves.

Their inability to govern led them to pass just 27 bills that were signed into law last year, marking the least productive session since the Great Depression. This year is shaping up to be no better.

An historic dysfunction has prompted multiple Republican Members of this Subcommittee to complain that they have nothing to campaign on. Instead of laying out a legislative agenda to address the needs of the American people, this Committee spent its time yesterday focused on a subpoena of the President’s son, chasing conspiracy theories in an impeachment inquiry that has not turned up a shred of evidence of wrongdoing by the President.

At the same time, the House Committee on Homeland Security held its first official hearing on the impeachment of Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas. Another inquiry completely devoid of fact with articles of impeachment reportedly imminent in that Committee.

I do not know whether the Chair of this Committee deliberately waived our jurisdiction on impeachment to another Committee, or if Republican leadership simply took it away from him in an effort to appease the most extreme members of the MAGA Conference.

The decision sets a terrible precedent. Either way, the decision is a sad commentary on the priorities of the Republican majority.

They seem not to care what they break or how they diminish the House Judiciary Committee, while they ignore the real challenges

facing the American people. They continue to focus solely on fruitless investigations, because they have no plan for meaningful reform to the immigration system or any idea how to address any of the other problems facing our Nation.

Instead of working with Democrats toward reasonable, workable, bipartisan changes to the immigration system, Republicans will return to their tired playbook and use this Subcommittee to demonize immigrants.

We'll hear in an argument largely devoid of facts and wrong in the law that immigrants are a drain on public benefits rather than the lifeblood of this country. As President Reagan said, quote,

Thanks to each one of the new arrivals to this land of opportunity, we're a Nation forever young, forever bursting with energy and new ideas, and always on the cutting edge, always leading the world to the next frontier.

By in large, undocumented immigrants are not eligible for Federal benefits. In fact, undocumented immigrants pay into benefits they will never be eligible to receive themselves.

Because of this, immigrants both documented and undocumented, pay billions more into public benefits programs than they will ever get back. They are subsidizing the public.

While Federal benefits are not available to undocumented immigrants, some States, like my home State of New York, and the Chair's home State of California, choose to offer the same State benefits to everyone in their State regardless of immigration status. That is their choice. Congress has no say in how States choose to utilize their tax dollars.

To the extent that localities like New York City face challenges in caring for immigrants arriving from the Southern border, many of these challenges stem in large part from the desire of Texas Governor Abbott to sow chaos by refusing to coordinate with local officials and by choosing instead to use migrants as pawns in his political games.

I am proud of New York City's history of welcoming new immigrants. We can and we will continue to do so. In fact, I was pleased to see Mayor Adams announce just yesterday, he is reversing all anticipated budget cuts for the NYPD, the FDNY, and likely the Library School, and other social services programs as well, which he had originally said, "were needed due to the arrival of migrants in New York."

Congress should help, however, by providing additional resources. By passing bipartisan legislation to help ease the transition for many migrants by ensuring that they could access work authorization more quickly and by taking up other bipartisan reforms to the immigration system.

Time and time again, House Republicans have stood in the way of progress, of innovation, and of compromise. Instead, they insist they will only consider Draconian policies that essentially destroy the asylum and refugee programs, policies that stand no chance of passage in the Senate, which shows that they are not interested in real solutions.

Real solutions require compromise, and MAGA Republicans aren't interested in compromise. Real solutions rarely get you hits on *Fox News* or *Newsmax*. They won't get your Donald Trump's endorsement.

Enforcement alone cannot fix the immigration system. We know this, because that approach has largely failed for three decades. People didn't stop coming when President Trump or Stephen Miller imposed the cruelest immigration policies imaginable.

They didn't stop coming when Governor Abbott lined the Rio Grande with deadly buoys covered in razor wire. They have not stopped coming even with record levels of removals and repatriations and funding to immigration enforcement.

We need to expand legal pathways, mitigate push factors, stamp down on corruption, and implement smart border security measures. We have to come together to find solutions that actually work and break free from the partisan entrenchments that have kept us stuck in the past.

We will need more Border Control Agents, more Asylum Agents, and more Immigration Judges so that asylum cases can be adjudicated in weeks, not in years.

We need immigrants in this country. Forget the fact that the farm—that our vegetables would rot in the ground if it weren't, if they weren't being picked by many immigrants, many illegal immigrants.

The fact is that the birth rate in this country is way below the replacement level. Which means, our population is going to start shrinking. The ratio of people on Social Security and Medicare, is going to increase relative to the number of people supporting them. This is a problem faced by every major country in the world.

Few countries, however, have the means to solve this problem through immigration. People want to immigrate to the United States. They do not want to immigrate to China or Russia.

We are very lucky in that respect, and we should promote it and regulate it properly, rather than denounce it ignorantly. Sadly, based on the track record of the 118 Congress so far, I don't think that will be happening anytime soon.

I thank the witnesses for appearing before us today. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Well, the gentleman has no time to yield back. As content as I am in allowing the Democrats to make our case for us, I do want to warn them, we'll be enforcing the five-minute limit on opening statements in the future.

Mr. NADLER. Point of order. There are no limits on opening statements in this Committee, Mr. Chair.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. There is a five-minute limit in the House Rules, Mr. Chair.

Without objection, all opening statements will be included in the record. I'll now introduce today's witnesses.

We have with us today, Chief Manuel Mello, III. He's the Chief of the Fire Department in Eagle Pass, Texas. A position he's served in for nearly a decade.

Chief Mello started with the Fire Department in 1992. He has 35 years of experience serving his community. In May 2023, the Texas House of Representatives passed a Resolution honoring Chief Mello for his decades of service to Eagle Pass.

Our second witness is Mr. Greg Chen. He's the Senior Director of Government Relations for the American Immigration Lawyers

Association. Mr. Chen graduated from Harvard College and received his law degree from NYU Law School.

Our third witness is Steve Camarota. He's the Director of Research for the Center for Immigration Studies and has written extensively on the economic, fiscal, and demographic impact of immigration.

Dr. Camarota holds a Master's Degree in Political Science from the University of Pennsylvania. He earned a Doctorate in Public Policy Analysis from the University of Virginia.

Finally, we have with us Ms. Danyela Souza Egorov. Ms. Souza Egorov is the Vice President of the Community Education Council for New York City School District 2, in Manhattan.

She holds a Master's in Public Policy Analysis from the University of Virginia. Pardon me, a degree in Public Policy from Harvard Kennedy School.

Ms. Egorov is also currently the Project Director for A Parent Powered, New York. A legal immigrant from Brazil, Ms. Souza Egorov lives in New York City with her family.

We welcome our witnesses. We thank you for appearing today. We'll begin by swearing you in. Would you please rise and raise your right hand?

Do you swear or affirm under penalty of perjury that the testimony you are about to give is true and correct to the best of your knowledge, information, and beliefs, so help you God?

[Chorus of I do.]

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Great. Thank you very much. Let the record reflect that the witnesses have answered in the affirmative. You may be seated.

Please know your written testimony will be entered into the record in its entirety. Accordingly, we'd ask that you summarize your testimony in five minutes.

We'll begin with Chief Mello.

#### **STATEMENT OF CHIEF MANUEL MELLO, III**

Chief MELLO. Chair McClinton, Ranking Member Jayapal, and distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on the impact of illegal immigration on social services, especially the fire department, our fire department.

The Eagle Pass Fire Department, the Maverick County—Maverick County is located approximately 140 miles Southwest of San Antonio, Texas. Eagle Pass is the county seat and borders the city of Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico, just across the Rio Grande River.

Both cities share approximately 120 miles of precious river. We have a population of approximately 70 thousand, which includes the city and the county. A fluctuating population of approximately 5,000–10,000 additional visitors to the community at any given time.

The Fire Department is a small department with three stations located strategically within the city limits. Each station has six members, six firefighters on a daily basis trained in EMS, paramedics or basic EMS, or EMTs.

Total personnel for the Fire Department are 52 on shift fire-fighters and ten support staff. Twelve of the personnel are cross-trained in swift water rescue and are divided into three team members per shift.

Eagle Pass Fire Department is the main 911 EMS provider in the community. We respond to 7,500 EMS calls on a yearly basis. All our emergency ambulance transports go straight to the only hospital, which is Fort Duncan Medical Center, which has 18 emergency room beds.

Aside from EMS, the Eagle Pass Fire also responds to grass fires, house and commercial building fires, and all motor vehicle accidents on two major highways and several Farm to Market roads within our county. The nearest fire department, in case of a mutual aid, is one hour away, if available.

In 2021, when the migrant influx started to increase, we were below staffing due to different reasons such as personnel retiring, or personnel leaving due to the demands of the job, while others left to seek better employment and benefits. Since then, we started a more aggressive employment strategy because of the demand.

In 2023, EMS transports increased to over nine thousand calls for assistance. Approximately 10 percent were migrant related. Our drownings pre-2020 were approximately 8–12 per year. As of December 2023, we had recorded 43 migrant body recoveries for this year, for that year.

These body recoveries include men, women, and children ranging from two months to 15 years old. As a witness to many incidents, I am here to tell you, we are being overwhelmed with EMS calls and body recoveries.

In my 33 years of service, I have not experienced this many calls. There are days it seems that the ambulance wails never stop.

Going to the river or areas along the river's edge where the crossings are frequent, has become a norm for us, with little or no help from anyone, not even the Federal Government.

I have attached a summary of incident so you can have an idea of what my men and women go through. There is a summary of two Nicaraguan children that drowned in the Rio Grande River by Eagle Pass Monday, August 22, 2022.

The first call came in approximately at 12:59 p.m. An EMS unit and a swift water rescue team responded to the incident located underneath one of the Eagle Pass/Piedras Negras International Bridges by the Rio Grande River.

On arrival, Border Patrol were performing CPR on a three-month old infant. This patient was transported to Fort Duncan Medical Center with a faint pulse. This infant was later transported to University Hospital in San Antonio in critical condition, where he later died.

As the first patient, the three-month-old, was being treated at Fort Duncan Medical Center, the second 911 call came in at 13:37 for a three-year old. An additional ambulance and crew responded with the swift water rescue team to the same area where the first patient had been located.

On arrival, the EMS crews were advised by Border Patrol that the infant child, or the child was related to the infant and had

crossed the river at the same time with family members. He was a three-month-old baby brother.

EMS crews were directed to a pickup truck where the body of the child had been placed prior to EMS arrival. All efforts to revive had ceased due to the length of time the patient had been underwater.

The child had last been seen at approximately 12:45. Based on the presentation and time of the patient underwater, it was determined the child had expired.

This is just one of many incidents. For example, the mother and the daughter that were walking on the side of a major highway, both struck and killed by a vehicle during a rainstorm.

The countless children dehydrated or with hypothermia and in shock that are transported to the hospitals. Young ladies going into labor as soon as they cross the river. Other incidents, including the rail car accidents where amputations are common.

[The prepared statement of Chief Mello follows:]

## CITY OF EAGLE PASS FIRE DEPARTMENT

Manuel Mello III, Fire Chief  
Rodolfo Cardona, Asst. Fire Chief



489 S. Monroe St Ste. B  
Eagle Pass Texas, 78852  
830.757.4231 Fax 830.757.9152

## United States House Committee on the Judiciary

**Introduction**

Testimony of Mr. Manuel Mello, III, Fire Chief for the City of Eagle Pass, Texas before the United States House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary in reference to a scheduled hearing on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. in room 2141 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

Chairman Jim Jordan, Chair Tom McClintock, Ranking Member Pramila Jayapal and Distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on the impact of Illegal immigration on Social Services and especially our Fire Department.

**Eagle Pass Fire Department**

Maverick County is located approximately 140 miles southwest of San Antonio, Texas. Eagle Pass is its county seat and borders the city of Piedras Negras, Coahuila Mexico just across the Rio Grande River. Both cities share approximately 120 miles of this precious river. We have a population of approximately 70,000 which includes the city and county and a fluctuating population of approximately 5,000-10,000 additional visitors to the community at any given time. The Fire Department is a small department with 3 stations located strategically within the city limits. Each station daily has 6 firefighters trained in EMS (paramedics and basic EMT). Total personnel for the department are 52 on shift and 10 as support staff. 12 of the personnel are cross trained in swift water rescue and are divided into 3 team members per shift. The Eagle Pass Fire Department is the main 911 EMS provider in the community, we

respond to over 7,500 EMS calls on a yearly basis. all of our emergency ambulance transfers go to the only hospital, Fort Duncan Medical Center, which has 18 emergency room beds. Aside from EMS the Eagle Pass Fire Department also responds to grass fires, house and commercial building fires and all motor vehicle accidents on 2 major highways and several farm to market roads within our county. The nearest Fire Department in case of mutual aide is one hour away if available.

In 2020 when the migrant influx started to increase, we were below staffing due to different reasons such as personnel retiring or personnel leaving due to the demand of the job and others left to seek better employment and benefits. Since then, we started a more aggressive employment strategy because of the demand.

In 2023 EMS transport increased to over 9,000 calls for assistance, approximately 10% were migrant related. Our drownings pre- 2020 were approximately 8-12 per year; as of December 2023, we had recorded 43 migrant body recoveries for the year. These body recoveries included men, women and children ranging from 2 months to 15 years old.

As a witness to many incidents, I am here to tell you we are being overwhelmed with EMS calls and body recoveries. In my 32 years of service, I had not experienced this many calls. There are days it seems that the ambulance wails never stop. Going to the river or areas along the river's edge where crossings are frequent has become a norm for us with little or no help from anyone, not even the federal government.

I have attached a summary of an incident so you can have an idea of what my men and women are going through.

**This is a summary of 2 Nicaraguan children that drowned in the Rio Grande River by Eagle Pass on Monday August 22, 2022.**

**The first 911 call came in approximately at 12:59 pm. An EMS unit and a swift water rescue crew responded to the incident located underneath one of the Eagle Pass/Piedras Negras International bridges by the Rio Grande River.**

**Upon arrival Border Patrol was performing CPR on a 3-month-old male infant. This patient was transported to Fort Duncan Medical Center with a faint pulse. This infant was later transported to University Hospital in San Antonio in critical condition. As the first patient (the 3-month-old) was being treated at Fort Duncan Medical Center, the second 911 call came in at 13:37 for a 3-year-old. An additional ambulance and crew responded with the swift water rescue team to the same area where the first patient had been located.**

**On arrival the EMS crew were advised by Border Patrol that the child was related to the infant and had crossed the river at the same time with family members. EMS crews were directed to a pickup truck where the body of the child had been placed. Prior to EMS arrival, all efforts to revive had ceased due to the length of time the patient had been under water. The child had last been seen at approximately 12:45. Based on the presentation and time of patient under water it was determined child had expired.**

**Information prior to the incident as to how many were in the group was not available at the time this summary was done.**

This just one of many incidents, like the mother and daughter that were walking on the side of a major highway both struck and killed by a vehicle during a rainstorm, the countless children dehydrated or with hypothermia and in shock, young ladies going into labor as soon as they cross the river. Other incidents include the rail car accidents and the smugglers traveling at high rate of speed with migrants and either crashing onto oncoming traffic or rolling over and killing the passengers.

**The Impacts**

- Because of the influx of migrants, we added a fifth ambulance to our fleet and dedicated a full crew just for migrant related incidents. During peak days when there are large numbers of migrants crossing, we must use the ambulances that are dedicated to the city and county. On occasion, all ambulances will be out in different areas of the community, and we must resort to a tier response either on a fire truck or a pickup truck if we have personnel available.
- From 6/20/2023 to payroll ending 12/19/2023 we paid over \$350k to man the fifth ambulance. Our regular overtime was \$73K.
- The wear and tear of the vehicles has increased due to the poor condition of the roads along the river.
- The Emergency Room capacity is frequently crowded with patients, mostly migrants that have been transported either by ambulance or by Border Patrol from the processing facilities, NGOs, or the field. There are times when we have a patient in the ambulances having to wait 20-30 minutes because there are no beds available.
- Maverick County is a high poverty community, and most residents don't have insurance and resort to the emergency room. There are times they must wait over 2 hours to see a doctor because the emergency room is full of undocumented migrants.
- When there is a large surge of undocumented migrants crossing the river, CBP closes one of two bridges and in addition closes lanes to the other bridge so the agents can assist Border Patrol in the processing of undocumented migrants. The City of Eagle Pass depends on the international bridges for our local economy and for sustaining the city of Eagle Pass. In November the City lost approximately half a million in revenues, that means that if this continues, we will have to place a freeze on hiring personnel, purchasing equipment, and completing pending projects for our citizens.
- Lastly and the most important, my personnel and their mental health, I have always said, "we are a young Fire Department, excluding me, I have personnel that range in ages from 20-45 years old, most have small children and can relate with the undocumented children dying on our riverbanks. The mental impact will take a long

time to heal if we do not get help for them soon which will come at a cost to the city, a cost that was not expected or budgeted.

**Summary**

In summary, I come to you from a place most recently identified as “the epicenter of the border crisis”, hopefully, with these facts presented today both sides will work together to reform the Immigration laws and help bring some normalcy back to our small community, so we don’t have to see or hear of another migrant death along the border.

I thank you for the opportunity to address this Sub-Committee on such an important issue. I know in my heart that each one of you will do your best to bring a change to this situation.

Lastly, I would like to invite you to visit our community and if you would like, I can give you a personal tour along the river and around our city.

Again, thank you very much for the opportunity to share my statement. I will be happy to answer any questions the Sub-Committee may have.

Respectfully Submitted

Manuel Mello, III  
Fire Chief  
City of Eagle Pass

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. I'm afraid your time has expired. We'll get back to the points you want to make during the question and answer session.

Next, I'm pleased to recognize Mr. Chen, the Democratic invited witness, for five minutes.

#### STATEMENT OF GREGORY CHEN

Mr. CHEN. Chair McClinton, Ranking Member Jayapal, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am Greg Chen, the Senior Director of Government Relations for the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

The good news is that immigrants have helped make America stronger and more prosperous. Every day they contribute to its future. To ensure the Nation's prosperity, Congress must overhaul the immigration system to meet the country's needs.

First, the Federal Government should address unprecedented refugee flows worldwide that have pushed more people to the U.S. borders. The Federal Government must ensure the orderly, efficient, and fair processing of migrants.

Congress should adequately fund Federal agencies to screen cases more quickly, to guarantee protection for people who are eligible for legal relief, and to remove those who are not eligible in a safe and humane manner. Essential to a fair and efficient process is ensuring that everybody in the process has legal representation.

Nationwide, city officials and local service providers are welcoming arriving immigrants. Some cities are experiencing real challenges and need more Federal support. Congress should approve what Mayors of both political parties are asking for, and that is an increase for FEMA's Shelter and Services Program, SSP, that funds short term services.

To help cities, governments must also coordinate and share information better. Unannounced buses filled with people are political stunts that make it harder for cities to welcome arrivals.

Another critical step is getting work permits for migrants who are eligible to work, as soon as possible so they can achieve self-sufficiency. To speed up the work permit process, last fall government officials set up emergency clinics with volunteer AILA members and other NGOs. The Federal Government should take more steps like this to get more people working.

Importantly, effective migration management will not be achieved by focusing only on the border. Congress must also address systemic delays at all immigration agencies, particularly USCIS, the Immigration Courts and Consulates abroad.

The months and years long delays in nearly every immigration category exacerbate bottlenecks. In border processing, the delays even compel people with approved visas for immigrant categories to come to the border.

Some people think the United States should turn away immigrants at the border and restrict immigration. That would be a mistake.

The overwhelming evidence shows that immigrants provide enormous benefits to the United States. They are a huge engine of economic growth and contribute billions of dollars in Federal, State, and local taxes annually.

They consume far less per capita in public benefits than U.S. citizens. Ultimately, it is the ineffective immigration system, not immigrants that hold back the Nation's growth.

Congress' inability to update immigrant visa numbers are hurting families and businesses. American families now suffer prolonged waits, months, even decades for family visas.

American businesses across industry sectors are experiencing historic labor shortages. They need people to fill positions that cannot be filled by U.S. workers.

In 2022, Jerome Powell, the Chair of the Federal Reserve said labor shortages are partly caused by quote, "a plunge in net immigration."

In Florida, a lack of workers has forced farmers to cut back production. The Republican Governors of Utah and Indiana are asking Congress to create legal pathways for more workers to come for their State.

Congress can no longer put aside what it has been pushing aside for over three decades. It must pass laws that establish adequate legal pathways to meet the country's needs.

Congress should also do what the great majority of Americans want, and that is to provide permanent legal status for Dreamers and other people who are undocumented. They are contributing every day to this country, and they'll continue to make the Nation prosper.

Everyone agrees, America needs a better functioning immigration system. We need a system that recognizes immigration is vital to our national interest, that secures the Nation's continuing prosperity, and that ensures a fair and orderly border processing system.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Chen follows:]

**Statement of Gregory Chen  
Senior Director of Government Relations  
American Immigration Lawyers Association**

**Submitted to the U.S. House of Representatives  
Immigration Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary  
Hearing on The Impact of Illegal Immigration on Social Services  
January 11, 2024**

Chairman McClinton, Ranking Member Jaypal and members of the Committee, it is my honor to testify before the committee.

I am Greg Chen, the Senior Director of Government Relations for the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). For the past three decades, I have advocated to improve U.S. immigration and refugee law, including five years that I spent representing children seeking humanitarian protection. AILA is the national bar association of over 16,000 immigration law attorneys and professors. Every day, AILA members help people and businesses navigate the U.S. immigration system.

**Executive Summary**

America urgently needs solutions to modernize its immigration system, both to address the dramatic shifts in global refugee flows and to ensure the nation's continued prosperity and economic growth.

In response to the rise in worldwide migration, the federal government must take immediate action to ensure the orderly, efficient and fair processing of newly arriving migrants. Congress should adequately fund federal immigration agencies to screen cases more quickly, to guarantee protection for those eligible for legal relief, and to remove those who are not eligible in a safe and humane manner. Essential to a fairer and more efficient process is ensuring legal representation to people facing removal.

Nationwide city officials and local NGOs are responding to the temporary needs of arriving immigrants. The lack of federal support is a major reason why localities are experiencing difficulties planning for and welcoming migrants. Congress should approve the request from city mayors<sup>1</sup> of both political parties to significantly increase funding for the Shelter and Services Program (SSP) that directly funds short term local support. Governments must also coordinate better and share information about the movements of migrants. Unannounced busses filled with people are unproductive political stunts that compound the challenge of welcoming large numbers of arrivals.

A critical step is to get migrants eligible to work into jobs as soon as possible so they can achieve self-sufficiency. To speed up the process, this fall federal and city officials set up work permit clinics with AILA and other volunteer organizations. The federal government should take more steps like this to streamline the work permit process.

Effective migration management will not be achieved by focusing only on the border. Congress and the federal government must also address systemic delays at all immigration agencies,

particularly U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the immigration courts, and consulates abroad. The months- and years-long case delays in nearly every immigration category exacerbate bottlenecks in border processing.<sup>2</sup> The delays even compel people with approved visas to go to the border.<sup>3</sup>

The increased arrivals at the U.S. southern border, and the dysfunction of an immigration system that has not been reformed by Congress for more than 30 years, have fueled arguments that the United States should turn away immigrants at the border.

While newly arriving migrants may need short term services, the overwhelming evidence shows that immigrants provide enormous benefits to the United States.<sup>4</sup> They are a huge engine of economic growth and contribute billions of dollars in federal, state and local taxes annually.<sup>5</sup> They use fewer public benefits than they contribute.<sup>6</sup>

Ultimately, it is the outdated and ineffective immigration system – not immigrants – that holds back the nation’s growth. Congress’s inability to pass laws that update immigration visa numbers are hurting families and businesses. American families now suffer prolonged separation as they wait months, even decades, for family visas to become available. American businesses across industry sectors are experiencing historic shortages of workers.<sup>7</sup> They need people to fill positions that cannot be filled by U.S. workers. In 2022, Jerome Powell, Chairman of the Federal Reserve attributed labor shortages in part to a “plunge in net immigration.”<sup>8</sup> Labor shortages are hurting economic growth. Republican Governors Holcomb of Indiana and Cox of Utah are urging Congress to bring more foreign workers to meet their states’ needs.<sup>9</sup> In Florida, a lack of workers has compelled farmers to reduce production.<sup>10</sup> Their labor challenges were made worse by a new law that makes it harder for immigrants to work in the state.<sup>11</sup>

Congress can no longer put aside what it has avoided for over three decades: it must pass laws that establish adequate legal pathways to meet the country’s needs. Congress should also do what the overwhelming majority of Americans believe is the right thing: provide permanent legal status for Dreamers and others who are undocumented.<sup>12</sup> They have contributed to this nation for years and will continue to strengthen the nation.

Everyone agrees America needs a better functioning immigration system. A forward-thinking system that recognizes immigration’s importance to our national interest will ensure the nation’s continuing prosperity and simultaneously ensure fair and orderly management of the border.

**1. Apply an “all-of-government” approach to effectively manage migration.**

To ensure effective border management, Congress should begin by adequately funding all federal agencies that work on immigration so they can modernize processing, increase capacity and improve coordination. The processing of someone at a port of entry (POE) involves several agencies. Customs and Border Protection staff screen people passing through POEs; USCIS officers interview asylum seekers; and the immigration courts review and decide cases. There must be adequate resources for these agencies to ensure a fair, orderly and rapid process.

Severe gaps in agency capacity were evident during a recent AILA delegation trip to the Arizona border region. At the Nogales POE, the lack of capacity resulted in people sleeping outside the entry point turnstiles for weeks in 100-degree heat before being screened. Congress should fund

hundreds more officers and staff at ports to process people and vehicles. More capacity at ports of entry will reduce the number of people who enter between ports of entry.

Another major gap that contributes to delays at the border is the lack of adequate asylum officers to screen migrants seeking humanitarian protection. USCIS shifted resources to meet the high demand, but it needs additional funding. AILA recommends Congress fund the White House supplemental request for 1,600 more asylum officers.

Similarly, the chronic underfunding of immigration courts has contributed to a case backlog now exceeding three million cases.<sup>13</sup> The backlog keeps asylum seekers waiting an average of four years for a final hearing in immigration courts.<sup>14</sup>

Effective border management cannot be achieved until Congress adequately funds all immigration agencies including those not operating at the border. USCIS, the Department of Labor, and the State Department each play an integral role in protecting our national security, identifying where foreign workers can fill critical gaps in our economy, and verifying eligibility for immigration status. Lack of funding for these agencies causes severe case delays of months and even years in every part of the immigration system: family, employment, and humanitarian cases. The case delays hurt American businesses, families, and overall prosperity.<sup>15</sup>

The dysfunctional immigration system causes bottlenecks in processing at the border. It also leads directly to irregular migration coming across the border. In November, AILA released a report, [Barriers to Immigrant Visas Driving Migrants to the Southern Border](#), with examples of people who had approved family or business visa petitions but had to wait years for a consular appointment. In desperation, these people resorted to crossing without permission at the southern border even though they were eligible for an immigrant visa.

In addition to personnel and capacity, Congress should direct more funding to combat Fentanyl and other narcotics trafficking, weapons trafficking, and human smuggling operations that present grave national security risks and jeopardize border communities. Fentanyl smuggling is overwhelmingly committed by U.S. citizens, not migrants.<sup>16</sup>

To improve border processing, federal agencies also need to operate more efficiently. For example: it takes several weeks, if not longer, for migrants' legal documents to be transmitted from CBP to the immigration courts. The delay is caused by the lack of integrated systems for the agencies to share data and provide legally required service of papers electronically. Congress can address this by investing in technology to improve the tracking of a person's immigration case from beginning to end. If these operational problems go unsolved, no proposal for shortening the time to process cases will be successful. The federal government can manage immigration to the country fairly and efficiently so long as agencies are properly coordinated, integrated and adequately resourced.

## **2. Provide legal representation to make the process faster and fairer.**

Legal representation increases the efficiency of overall processing of immigrants through the immigration courts.<sup>17</sup> Migrants typically have little or no understanding of complex immigration laws, or of their rights and responsibilities. This puts more work on officers and immigration judges to explain the process. These time-consuming steps are more effectively handled if people are represented by counsel.<sup>18</sup> Legal counsel also improves compliance with the law. Represented people appear at court at extremely high rates: 96 percent of the time.<sup>19</sup>

Unless the system ensures legal representation, it cannot ensure a fair process. Immigrants with counsel who have never been detained are 3.5 times more likely to be successful in their cases; and people who have counsel and are detained are 10.5 times more likely than their unrepresented counterparts to succeed.<sup>20</sup> Without legal counsel, more people who are eligible for asylum will be denied relief and wrongly sent back into harm's way.

AILA urges Congress to pass legislation that guarantees counsel paid-for by the government for people who cannot afford counsel.

**3. Support local governments and communities receiving migrants.**

The federal government should provide greater support to cities that are assisting new arrivals. It is essential that Congress continue to fund the Shelter and Services Program (SSP) currently administered by CBP and FEMA. SSP provides receiving communities with resources to support new arrivals, including shelter, food, transportation, and emergency medical care. Across the country cities are counting on the federal government to provide SSP. The White House has requested additional funds for the SSP program and Congress should fund it.

In addition, the federal government should share more information with local governments and NGO service providers. For example, CBP could more accurately inform local shelters about the number of asylum seekers that will be dropped off so the shelter can prepare.

Governments officials at all levels —federal, state and local — must share information with each other about where migrants are moving or being transported. When localities are surprised by unannounced arrivals of immigrants on busses or airplanes, it is far more difficult for them to coordinate short-term shelter and assistance.

**4. Improve access to work permits.**

An essential yet under-emphasized issue is that newly arriving migrants whose cases are awaiting a decision need to be given the opportunity to achieve economic independence. Once they can work, people will find jobs and be more able to afford housing, thus decreasing the impact on local shelters and city governments as well as their need for social services.

The federal government should improve the efficiency of work permit processing. Under U.S. law people who have applied for asylum or who have parole or other forms of legal immigration status are eligible for work permits. But the unnecessary statutory waiting period and delays in processing work permits is preventing people from becoming self-sufficient.<sup>21</sup>

That's why the government officials set up emergency volunteer legal clinics to ensure people understand the law and apply for work permits and other legal benefits if they are eligible. Hundreds of AILA members in New York, Boston and other cities volunteered legal services to help people apply for work permits and get on their own feet more quickly. In October, New York Governor Kathy Hochul announced a new program to identify work opportunities for migrants who have work permits with an initial launch of 18,000 jobs.<sup>22</sup>

To improve the work permit process, AILA endorses the Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act sponsored by Congressman Pingree which would reduce the processing and wait times for work permits.

**5. Immigrants have an overall positive impact on the economy.**

Economic research has shown that immigrants of all types—low skilled, high skilled, undocumented, humanitarian, family-based, and employment-based—contribute substantially to the United States economy and help power its financial growth.<sup>23</sup>

People who are undocumented, refugees, and recipients of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) pay approximately \$61.2 billion in federal, state and local taxes annually.<sup>24</sup> These contributions helped sustain vulnerable federal entitlement programs like Social Security and Medicare as well as vital state and local government public services, such as public education and police protection.<sup>25</sup> Estimates by the Social Security Administration demonstrate that higher levels of immigration will help keep the Social Security system solvent.<sup>26</sup>

Asylum seekers contribute significantly to economic growth and tax revenue. A 10 percent reduction in asylum seekers would likely result in a \$8.9 billion loss to the U.S. economy and over \$1.5 billion in lost tax revenue over the subsequent five years.<sup>27</sup>

Immigrants also play a lead role in driving entrepreneurship and innovation in economic sectors critical to 21<sup>st</sup> century economic growth. In 2022, the American Immigration Council reported that nearly half of all Fortune 500 companies in the nation were founded by an immigrant or their children.<sup>28</sup>

While contributing billions of tax dollars to support activities at all levels of government, the overwhelming majority of immigrants are statutorily barred from receiving most public benefits.<sup>29</sup> Programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), non-emergency Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are unavailable to undocumented immigrants and those in the United States in temporary status.<sup>30</sup> Even for individuals entering as immigrants, U.S. law for over 25 years has barred most immigrants from federal means-tested public benefits for a five-year period after obtaining immigrant status.<sup>31</sup>

**6. Congress must pass immigration reforms to increase legal pathways and meet the national interest.**

Many systemic immigration challenges stem from Congress's failure to pass legislation creating the necessary legal pathways that match the needs of the American economy and society.

There are nearly 1.8 million individuals in the employment-based immigrant visa backlog.<sup>32</sup> Another 8.3 million relatives of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents are stuck in the family-based backlog.<sup>33</sup> These backlogs are evidence that the immigration system is not meeting the needs of American businesses and families. The country is experiencing severe labor shortages that foreign workers could fill. Last year, the national unemployment rate hit a historic low of 3.4 percent.<sup>34</sup>

A more functional immigration system will also improve border management. For example, southern border arrivals could be decreased if refugee admissions and other legal pathways were increased. This would allow individuals fleeing persecution to be processed without having to make a dangerous journey to the border – tragically, many Afghans fleeing the Taliban have had no other path for seeking protection in the U.S.<sup>35</sup>

The Biden administration has demonstrated success reducing border arrivals by expanding the use of Congressionally authorized parole power.<sup>36</sup> In the 14 months after the creation of Uniting for Ukraine, which allowed Ukrainians to apply for parole into the United States, arrivals of Ukrainians at the southern border fell 99.9 percent.<sup>37</sup> The administration and Congress should expand the uses of parole to help manage migration flows and reduce pressure at the U.S. southern border.

Congress should streamline legal processes to lawful permanent residence for individuals who have been paroled into the United States, including Afghans, Ukrainians, and Venezuelans. Removing their cases from the asylum process would reduce the asylum backlog that takes resources from asylum officers who could process other cases, including those at the border.

### Conclusion

Managing the flow of people into the United States – for family, economic and humanitarian purposes – is an interconnected system that must be solved together. It requires an efficient and orderly system that guarantees fairness and also requires compliance with the law. At the same time the system must be able to match and even anticipate the future social and economic needs of businesses and states that want and need immigrants. By harnessing immigration as a valuable resource, the United States can advance its growth and prosperity.

<sup>1</sup> Katherine Fung, *Republican Mayors Tell Congress to Give Biden What He Wants*, Newsweek (Nov. 7, 2023), <https://www.newsweek.com/republican-mayors-letter-congress-biden-immigration-funding-1841640>.

<sup>2</sup> See TRAC Immigration, *Immigration Court Backlog Tops 3 Million; Each Judge Assigned 4,500 Cases*, (Dec. 18, 2023), <https://trac.syr.edu/reports/734/>; USCIS, *Historical National Median Processing Time (in Months) for All USCIS Offices for Select Forms By FY: FY 2019 to 2024 (up to October 31, 2023)*, <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/historic-pt>; Department of State, *National Visa Center (NVC) Immigrant Visa Backlog Report* (Dec. 2023), <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visas-backlog.html>; David J. Bier, *Processing Backlogs in the U.S. Immigration System: Describing the Scale of the Problem*, CATO Inst. (Oct. 6, 2022), <https://www.cato.org/briefing-paper/processing-backlogs-us-immigration-system-describing-scale-problem>.

<sup>3</sup> AILA, *Policy Brief: Barriers to Immigrant Visas Driving Migrants to the Southern Border*, (Nov. 6, 2023), <https://www.ila.org/library/policy-brief-barriers-to-immigrant-visas-driving-migrants-to-the-southern-border>.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g., Fwd.us, *Immigration Facts: The Positive Economic Impact Of Immigration*, (July 21, 2020), <https://www.fwd.us/news/immigration-facts-the-positive-economic-impact-of-immigration/>; Kellogg Insight, *Immigrants to the U.S. Create More Jobs than They Take*, Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University (Oct. 5, 2020), <https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/immigrants-to-the-u-s-create-more-jobs-than-they-take>; Greg Rosalsky, *New nation, new ideas: A study finds immigrants out-innovate native-born Americans*, NPR.org (Jan. 10, 2023), <https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2023/01/10/1147391639/new-nation-new-ideas-a-study-finds-immigrants-out-innovate-native-born-americans#:~:text=The%20economists%20find%20that%2C%20between.all%20patents%20during%20this%20period>.

<sup>5</sup> American Immigration Council, *Immigrants in United States of America* (2021), <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/national/>.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g., Mark J. Ommerborn et. al., *Assessment of Immigrants' Premium and Tax Payments for Health Care and the Costs of Their Care*, JAMA Netw Open (Nov. 1, 2022), [10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.41166](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.41166); Leighton Ku and Brian Bruen, *Poor Immigrants Use Public Benefits at a Lower Rate than Poor Native-Born Citizens*, CATO Inst. (Mar. 4, 2013), <https://www.cato.org/publications/economic-development-bulletin/poor-immigrants-use-public-benefits-lower-rate-poor>.

<sup>7</sup> Stephanie Ferguson and Makinizi Hoover, *Understanding America's Labor Shortage: The Most Impacted Industries*, U.S. Chamber of Commerce (Dec. 19, 2023), <https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/understanding>.

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americas-labor-shortage-the-most-impacted-industries (stating “[e]ven if every unemployed worker were to fill an open job within their respective industry, there would still be millions of unfilled job positions, highlighting the widespread labor shortage.”).

<sup>8</sup> Vanessa Yurkevich, *America needs immigrants to solve its labor shortage*, CNN (Dec. 22, 2022), <https://www.cnn.com/2022/12/22/economy/immigration-jobs/index.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Eric Holcomb and Spencer Cox, *To solve our national immigration crisis, let states sponsor immigrants*, Washington Post (Feb. 21, 2023), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/02/21/eric-holcomb-spencer-cox-states-immigration/>.

<sup>10</sup> Syra Ortiz Blanes, *DeSantis immigration law may worsen labor shortages in Florida as planting season begins*, Tampa Bay Times (Sep 10, 2023), <https://www.tampabay.com/news/florida-politics/2023/09/10/desantis-immigration-law-may-worsen-labor-shortages-florida-planting-season-begins/>.

<sup>11</sup> See Christian Paz, *Ron DeSantis’s immigration law is already leading to worker shortages*, Vox.com (May 17, 2023), <https://www.vox.com/2023/5/17/23725952/ron-desantis-immigration-law-florida>; Vanessa Romo, *Why Florida’s new immigration law is troubling businesses and workers alike*, NPR.org (May 30, 2023), <https://www.npr.org/2023/05/30/1177657218/florida-anti-immigration-law-1718-desantis>.

<sup>12</sup> Presidents Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, *Voters Agree on Urgent Need for Legislative Solutions for Dreamers: Recent Polling Shows a Strong Majority of Americans Across the Political Spectrum Support Action*, (Nov. 10, 2022), <https://www.presidentsalliance.org/press/voters-agreed-on-urgent-need-for-legislative-solutions-for-dreamers-recent-polling-shows-a-strong-majority-of-americans-across-the-political-spectrum-support-action/>.

<sup>13</sup> TRAC Immigration, *Immigration Court Backlog Tops 3 Million; Each Judge Assigned 4,500 Cases*.

<sup>14</sup> Alicia A. Caldwell, *Clogged Courts Worsen U.S. Immigration Crisis*, Wall Street Journal (Sept. 1, 2023), <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/immigration-courts-years-long-backlog-illegal-immigration-c732d381>.

<sup>15</sup> See Andrew Kreighbaum, *Green Card Backlog Costs Economy Trillions in Gains, Report Says*, Bloomberg Law (Nov. 8, 2023), <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/green-card-backlog-costs-economy-trillions-in-gains-report-says>.

<sup>16</sup> E.g., David Bier, *Fentanyl Is Smuggled for U.S. Citizens By U.S. Citizens, Not Asylum Seekers*, CATO Inst. (Sep 14, 2022), <https://www.cato.org/blog/fentanyl-smuggled-us-citizens-us-citizens-not-asylum-seekers>.

<sup>17</sup> See Karen Berberich and Nina Siu, *Why Does Representation Matter? The Impact of Legal Representation in Immigration Court*, Vera Institute of Justice (Nov. 2018), <https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/why-does-representation-matter.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Ingrid v. Eagly and Steve Shafer, *A National Study of Access to Counsel in Immigration Court*, 164 U. of Pa. L. Rev. 1, 59 (2015), [https://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/penn\\_law\\_review/vol164/iss1/2](https://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/penn_law_review/vol164/iss1/2).

<sup>19</sup> Ingrid Eagly and Steven Shafer, *Measuring In Absentia Removal in Immigration Court*, American Immigration Council (Jan. 28, 2021), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/measuring-absentia-removal-immigration-court>.

<sup>20</sup> Ingrid Eagly and Steven Shafer, *Access to Counsel in Immigration Court*, American Immigration Council (Sep 2016), [https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/access\\_to\\_counsel\\_in\\_immigration\\_court.pdf](https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/access_to_counsel_in_immigration_court.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> See Chris Van Buskirk, *AG Andrea Campbell calls on feds to speed up work authorizations for migrants*, Boston Herald (Aug. 16, 2023), <https://www.bostonherald.com/2023/08/16/ag-andrea-campbell-calls-on-feds-to-speed-up-work-authorizations-for-migrants/>.

<sup>22</sup> Gov. Kathy Hochul, *Governor Hochul Announces 18,000 Jobs Available to Asylum Seekers and Migrants as Part of Statewide Initiative to Move Individuals Out of Shelter and Into Independent Living*, New York State (Oct. 2, 2023), <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-18000-jobs-available-asylum-seekers-and-migrants-part-statewide>.

<sup>23</sup> See e.g., Francine D. Blau and Christopher Mackie, Eds., *The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration*, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2017), <https://doi.org/10.17226/23550>; American Immigration Council, *Immigrants in United States of America*; Fwd.us, *Immigration Facts: The Positive Economic Impact Of Immigration*.

<sup>24</sup> American Immigration Council, *Immigrants in United States of America*. Undocumented immigrants paid \$31.1B in state, local, and federal taxes, refugees paid \$27.9B, and individuals with temporary protected status paid \$2.2B.

<sup>25</sup> See Alex Fernández Campbell, *Trump says undocumented immigrants are an economic burden. They pay billions in taxes*, Vox.com (Oct. 25, 2018), <https://www.vox.com/2018/4/13/17229018/undocumented-immigrants-pay-taxes>.

<sup>26</sup> *Id.*

<sup>27</sup> Michael A. Clemens, *The Economic and Fiscal Effects on the United States from Reduced Numbers of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*, Center for Global Development, Working Paper (March 2022), <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/economic-and-fiscal-effects-united-states-reduced-numbers-refugees-and-asylum-seekers>, 2.

<sup>28</sup> American Immigration Council, *Press Release: New American Fortune 500 Report Reveals Impact of Immigrant Entrepreneurship* (June 9, 2022), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/news/new-american-fortune-500-report-reveals-impact-immigrant-entrepreneurship>.

<sup>29</sup> See Tanya Broder, Gabrielle Lessard, and Avideh Moussavian, *Overview of Immigrant Eligibility for Federal Programs*, National Immigration Law Center (June 2022), <https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/overview-immeligfedprograms-2022-10.pdf>; Congressional Research Service, *Noncitizen Eligibility for Federal Public Assistance: Policy Overview* (Dec. 12, 2016), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL33809>.

<sup>30</sup> Tanya Broder, Gabrielle Lessard, and Avideh Moussavian, *Overview of Immigrant Eligibility for Federal Programs*, 1.

<sup>31</sup> *Id.*, 2.

<sup>32</sup> David J. Bier, *1.8 Million in Employment-Based Green Card Backlog*, CATO Inst., (Aug. 29, 2023), <https://www.cato.org/blog/18-million-employment-based-green-card-backlog>.

<sup>33</sup> David J. Bier, *8.3 Million Relatives of U.S. Citizens & Legal Residents Awaited Green Cards in 2022*, CATO Inst., (May 17, 2023), <https://www.cato.org/blog/83-million-relatives-us-citizens-legal-residents-await-green-cards>.

<sup>34</sup> Andrew Kreighbaum, *Labor Crunch Fuels Pursuit of Expanded Immigrant Work Options*, Bloomberg Law (Dec. 29, 2023), <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/labor-crunch-fuels-pursuit-of-expanded-immigrant-work-options>.

<sup>35</sup> See U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, *Policy Brief: Afghans Arriving via the Southern Border* (April 11, 2023), <https://refugees.org/policy-brief-afghans-arriving-via-the-southern-border/>.

<sup>36</sup> See AILA, *Policy Brief: Why Limiting or Removing Parole Is Disastrous for Border Management* (Dec. 19, 2023), <https://www.aila.org/library/policy-brief-why-limiting-or-removing-parole-is-disastrous-for-border-management>.

<sup>37</sup> David J. Bier, *Parole Sponsorship is a Revolution in Immigration Policy*, CATO Institute (Sept. 18, 2023), <https://www.cato.org/briefing-paper/parole-sponsorship-revolution-immigration-policy#parole-sponsorships-effects-border-migration>.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Thank you. Our next witness is Dr. Camarota.

**STATEMENT OF STEVEN A. CAMAROTA**

Mr. CAMAROTA. Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify on the impact of illegal immigration on public services.

Allowing widespread illegal immigration raises profound concerns across a host of issues, from public safety and national security to the impact on American workers, and the rule of law. While these impacts are all important, I'm only going to focus on the fiscal impact and the impact on public services today.

Now, one of the main reasons we're here, is that the current surge of illegal immigration appears to be unprecedented. I've estimated that the illegal population since President Biden took office has grown by nearly three million.

That's not the number of new illegal immigrants, that's the number—that's the net increase, which is always offset by legalizations, out-migrations, and natural mortality. The number of new additions is much higher.

Now, why do illegal immigrants pay less in taxes than they use in services and create a fiscal drain? The reason is pretty simple. It's because such a large share has modest levels of education, resulting in relatively low average incomes and tax payments, coupled with significant use of many public benefits.

Prior research indicates that 69 percent of adults who are illegal immigrants have no education beyond high school, compared to about 35 percent of the U.S. born population. The fiscal drain illegal immigrants create is not because they are freeloaders who all came to get welfare. That would be a mistake to think that way.

Nevertheless, the National Academy of Science's estimate of immigrants' fiscal impact by education level, using that we estimate that the lifetime fiscal drain, all taxes paid, all services used for illegal immigrants, given their education roll call is about 68 thousand dollars.

Some of the largest costs are things you might guess: Welfare programs, public education, and treatment for the uninsured. Based on the survey of incoming program participation, we estimate that 59 percent of households headed by illegal immigrants use one of the major welfare programs, compared to 39 percent for U.S. born households.

Use of these programs' likely totals, by illegal immigrants, is about 42 billion dollars a year. Now, some might wonder, how is that possible? Aren't illegal immigrants banned from all these programs?

First, illegal immigrant families can receive welfare on behalf of their U.S. born children. More than half of illegal immigrant families have U.S. born children.

Also, illegal immigrants under the age of 18, are allowed to receive a number of programs directly, like free school meals and WIC. Illegal immigrants can also receive Medicaid directly under some circumstances. Many States go further in providing more access to Medicaid.

Some States also provide food stamps to illegal immigrants. Also, I'll add, several million illegal immigrants have work authorization

and valid social security numbers, allowing them to receive the earned income tax credit.

The high rate of welfare use by illegal immigrants is not explained by an unwillingness to work. That's critically important. We estimate 94 percent of all illegal immigrant households have at least one worker, compared to only 73 percent of U.S. born households.

It is critically important to remember that welfare uses and work go together. In fact, the majority of illegal immigrants and U.S. born households using the welfare system have a worker. The Nation's welfare system is designed specifically to help low-wage workers with children.

Now, in addition to welfare, we estimate about 68 billion dollars in costs for educating illegal immigrants and their children, and about seven billion in costs for treating the uninsured.

Now, my estimate is actually higher than the one cited by Congresswoman Jayapal. I estimate that just to the Federal Government, illegal immigrants pay about 26 billion dollars a year in income tax, but also Social Security and Medicaid. It's just nowhere near enough even to cover their use of the welfare programs.

Finally, illegal immigration does make the U.S. economy larger. I've estimated at least, and this is a minimum estimate, three hundred billion dollars larger because they're here.

This is not a measure of their contribution. Nor, is it a measure of a benefit to the U.S. born. Almost all the increase in economic activity goes to the illegal immigrants themselves in the form of wages, as it should, since they're the ones doing the work.

Now, if we do not enforce our laws and instead allow illegal immigration to continue unabated, the strain on public services will continue to grow. Resulting in either higher taxes or cuts in services for American citizens, many of whom are often quite poor.

Many cities across America are dealing with this reality right now even as we speak. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Camarota follows:]

## The Cost of Illegal Immigration to Taxpayers

Prepared Testimony of Steven A. Camarota  
 Director of Research  
 Center for Immigration Studies

For

Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement Subcommittee of the House  
 Judiciary Committee  
 Hearing entitled “The Impact of Illegal Immigration on Social Services,”

Thursday, January 11, 2024

### Summary

*Illegal immigrants are a net fiscal drain, meaning they receive more in government services than they pay in taxes. This result is not due to laziness or fraud. Illegal immigrants actually have high rates of work, and they do pay some taxes, including income and payroll taxes. The fundamental reason that illegal immigrants are a net drain is that they have a low average education level, which results in low average earnings and tax payments. It also means a large share qualify for welfare programs, often receiving benefits on behalf of their U.S.-born children. Like their less-educated and low-income U.S.-born counterparts, the tax payments of illegal immigrants do not come close to covering the cost they create.*

### Key Points

- The current surge of illegal immigration is unprecedented. Some 2.7 million inadmissible aliens have been released into the country by the administration since January 2021. There have also been 1.5 million “got-aways” — individuals observed entering illegally but not stopped. Visa overstays also seem to have hit a record in FY 2022.
- We preliminarily estimate that the illegal immigrant population grew to 12.8 million by October of 2023, up 2.6 million since January 2021, when the president took office. This is the net increase in the illegal population based on monthly Census Bureau data, not the number of new arrivals.
- Illegal immigrants have a negative fiscal impact -- taxes paid minus benefits received -- primarily because a large share have modest levels of education, resulting in relatively

low average incomes and tax payments, along with significant use of means-tested programs and other government services.

- Prior research indicates that 69 percent of adult illegal immigrants have no education beyond high school, compared to 35 percent of the U.S.-born.
- Using the National Academies' estimate of immigrants' net fiscal impact by education level, we estimate that the lifetime fiscal drain (taxes paid minus costs) for each illegal immigrant is about \$68,000, although this estimate comes with some caveats.
- Illegal immigrants make extensive use of welfare. Based on government data, we estimate that 59 percent of households headed by illegal immigrants use one or more major welfare programs, compared to 39 percent of households headed by the U.S.-born.
- Based on their use rate of major welfare programs, we estimate that illegal immigrants receive \$42 billion in benefits, or about 4 percent of the total cost of the cash, Medicaid, food and housing programs examined in our study. However, this is only a rough approximation due to limitations in the data.
- Illegal immigrants can receive welfare on behalf of U.S.-born children. Also, illegal immigrant children can receive school lunch/breakfast and WIC directly. A number of states provide Medicaid to some illegal immigrants, and a few provide SNAP. Several million illegal immigrants also have work authorization (e.g. DACA, TPS and some asylum applicants), allowing receipt of the EITC.
- The high welfare use of illegal immigrant households is not explained by an unwillingness to work. In fact, 94 percent of illegal immigrant households have at least one worker, compared to only 73 percent of U.S.-born households. But the nation's welfare system is designed to help low-wage workers with children, which describes a very large share of illegal immigrant households.
- In addition to consuming welfare, illegal immigration makes significant use of public education. Based on average costs per student, the estimated 4 million children of illegal immigrants in public schools created \$68.1 billion in costs in 2019. The vast majority of these children are U.S.-born.
- Use of emergency medical services is another area in which illegal immigrants create significant fiscal costs. Prior research indicates that there are 5.8 million uninsured illegal immigrants in the country in 2019, accounting for a little over one-fifth of the total population without health insurance. The costs of providing care to them likely totals some \$7 billion annually.
- Illegal immigrants do pay some taxes. We estimate that illegal immigrants in 2019 paid roughly \$5.9 billion in federal income tax, \$16.2 billion in Social Security tax and \$3.8 billion in Medicaid taxes. However, as the net fiscal drain of \$68,000 per person cited

above indicates, these taxes are not nearly enough to cover the cost of the services they receive.

- Illegal immigrants do add perhaps \$321 billion to the nation's GDP, but this is not a measure of their tax contributions or the benefits they create for the U.S.-born. Almost all the increase in economic activity goes to the illegal immigrants themselves in the form of wages.

## Introduction

Congress set limits on legal immigration and has allocated funds to enforce those limits for good reason. Allowing widespread illegal immigration raises profound concerns about a host of issues, from public safety and national security to the impact on American workers and the rule of law. While these impacts are all important, my testimony focuses only on the impact of illegal immigration on public coffers. The ongoing border crisis and the dramatic increase in the illegal immigrant population in the last three years will come at a significant cost to taxpayers. By consuming scarce public resources also will make it more difficult to assist low-income legal immigrants and U.S.-born Americans.

In my testimony, I will address five major issues that relate to illegal immigration's impact on taxpayers. First, I will discuss what the ongoing border crisis means for the growth in the size of the illegal immigrant population. Second, I will touch on the enormous strain this influx is creating in many American cities. Third, I will report the estimated education level of illegal immigrants and then use this information to estimate the lifetime net fiscal impact — all taxes paid minus all benefits received — of the average illegal immigrant. Fourth, I will then report some of the costs illegal immigration creates for key public services. Fifth, I will estimate the tax contributions of illegal immigrants from federal income, Social Security, and Medicaid taxes, which are by far the most important taxes that they pay. Finally, I will warn against conflating GDP growth with fiscal impact.

## The Current Surge

**Border Encounters and Aliens Released.** From January 2021 to November 2023 there were nearly 8 million “encounters” at all U.S. borders.<sup>1</sup> There has never been this many encounters over such a short period of time, which in the past were referred to as “apprehensions,” though there are some differences between the two terms. Court records and other information on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) websites indicate that about 2.7 million inadmissible aliens have been released into the country since the start of the Biden administration.<sup>2</sup> The decision to release these aliens represents new additions to the illegal immigrant population. Many of those released have pending asylum applications or are parolees, but they are still illegal immigrants because they have not been formally admitted to the U.S. and are subject to deportation under the Immigration and Nationality Act.

**Got-Aways.** In addition to those released into the interior of the country, there are so-called “got-aways, which according to DHS are “the number of subjects who, after making an unlawful entry, are not turned back or apprehended”. Prior to Covid-19, the number averaged about 128,000, and was roughly 137,000 in 2020. In 2021, the number more than doubled to 391,000.<sup>3</sup> DHS has not published any newer numbers. However, Fox News has reported that there were 599,000 got-aways in FY 2022.<sup>4</sup> Further, at a May press conference, Secretary Mayorkas seemed to confirm a reporter’s question that there had already been more than 530,000 got-aways in FY 2023 at that time.<sup>5</sup> All told, there have been roughly 1.5 million got-aways since the president took office.<sup>6</sup> On an annual basis, the number of got-aways in FY 2022 and 2023 is 4.5 times the average in the Trump administration’s first three years before Covid-19, when immigration temporarily plummeted.

**Visa Overstays.** A significant number of new illegal immigrants, and perhaps a majority before the current border surge, were admitted legally on a temporary visa or under the visa waiver program and then did not leave the country when the time limit expired. DHS for FY 2022 showed 850,000 foreign visitors overstayed in that year. The total overstay rate for 2022 was 3.67 percent, which is more than double the rate of recent years. Of course, not all of these individuals stay long term, and there is always some number of people who leave the country but whose departure was not properly recorded.<sup>7</sup> Still, the current level of overstays is much higher than in 2021 and in the years before Covid-19.<sup>8</sup>

**What the Monthly Census Data Shows.** The largest Census Bureau survey that captures the foreign-born population is the American Community Survey (ACS), which is released annually and reflects the population in July of each year. The most recent ACS available is for 2022, so it is a year and a half out of date. This means it only partly captures the current surge in illegal immigration. However, the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS), which the Census Bureau collects for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, is released shortly after it is collected each month. It therefore provides the most up-to-date data available, though it is smaller than the ACS.

**Estimating the Illegal Population in 2023.** In a recent report for the Center for Immigration Studies my colleague Karen Zeigler analyzed the CPS and found that there were 49.5 million immigrants (legal and illegal together) in the country in October of 2023, up from 45 million in January of 2021. This increase is unprecedented.<sup>9</sup> In September, I testified before the House Education and Workforce Committee that we preliminarily estimated that the illegal population grew from 10.2 million in January 2021 to 12.6 million by May 2023. These figures are based on the monthly CPS, but are adjusted for those missed by the survey. Unfortunately, not all of the administrative data on legal immigration is available to properly estimate illegal immigration through October 2023. But given the ongoing border crisis we have no reason to believe that things have changed significantly since May. If that is correct, then about 2.5 million of the 4.5 million increase in the foreign-born in the CPS from January 2021 to October 2023 is due to illegal immigration, before adjusting for undercount. Adjusted for undercount, the illegal population has likely grown to 12.8 million in October of this year, up from 2.6 million from 10.2 million in January 2021 when the president took office.

Critically, all of these numbers represent a *net* increase. The number of new arrivals is larger but is always offset by outmigration (including deportations), natural mortality, and in the specific case of illegal immigrants, legalizations (e.g., successful asylum applicants and marriage to an American). It should also be noted that our January 2021 estimate of 10.2 million represented a low point after Covid. In 2019, we estimate the illegal population was 11.5 million. So relative to the number before Covid, the current total and growth is large but not dramatically so. Finally, it must be emphasized that our new estimates are all still only preliminary.<sup>10</sup>

## The Fiscal Impact of Illegal Immigration

Unfortunately, there has not been enough time to estimate all the fiscal effects of the recent influx. But based on statements and publicly available information we know that many jurisdictions in the U.S. are struggling with the cost of providing services to new illegal immigrants.

**Cost for New York City.** At a town hall meeting in September last year, Mayor Eric Adams stated that the huge influx of illegal immigrants “will destroy New York City” due to the costs the city is incurring to provide for them.<sup>11</sup> The city expects to spend \$12 billion over the next three years on housing, food, health care and other services for recently arrived illegal immigrants.<sup>12</sup> In order to come up with the money to cover these new costs, the city plans to cut the budget by 5 percent across a range of services, including sanitation, public education, and the police department.<sup>13</sup> Obviously, the fiscal drain from illegal immigration must ultimately result in either fewer services or higher taxes for American citizens.

**Cost Outside of New York.** The estimated cost of accommodating recently arrived illegal immigrants in Chicago in 2023 alone will be \$361 million.<sup>14</sup> By the end of FY 2023, the District of Columbia expected to have spent \$36.4 million on various services for illegal immigrants.<sup>15</sup> Denver mayor Mike Johnston recently told city councilmembers that the city will likely spend \$180 million on the illegal influx in the coming year – more than triple what it spends on the homeless.<sup>16</sup> A report from the state of Massachusetts in December of last year shows that the state expects to spend \$2 billion in the next two years fundings its emergency shelter system, with illegal immigrants accounting for half of those needing services.<sup>17</sup> Other localities such as El Paso, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia are all struggling to provide services to newly-arrived illegal immigrants.

**The Education Level of Illegal Immigrants.** Educational attainment is a key factor when considering illegal immigrants’ effect on public coffers because it determines what type of jobs they typically do and their resulting income. Income matters enormously because it affects both tax payments and eligibility for means-test government programs. Averaging estimates from the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) and the Center for Migration Studies (CMS) indicates that 43 percent of illegal immigrants have less than a high school diploma, 25 percent have only a high school education, 13 percent have some college, and 18 percent have at least a

bachelor's.<sup>18</sup> Based on the citizenship of individuals encountered at the border and Census Bureau data from 2023, the new illegal immigrants now settling in the U.S. as a result of the current border crisis also likely have similarly modest levels of education, though we cannot say this for certain.<sup>19</sup>

**The Challenge of Estimating Fiscal Effects.** Calculating the current fiscal impact of immigration requires numerous decisions about how to allocate various costs. Even more challenging are long-term fiscal estimates, which require making assumptions about the state of the economy and government finances well into the future. The results of any analysis will obviously vary depending on the assumptions.

**The National Academies' 2017 Fiscal Study.** A 2017 study by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine projected the lifetime fiscal impact (taxes paid minus services used) of immigrants by education. These estimates are expressed as a net present value (NPV).<sup>20</sup> The Academies' 2017 study does not report separate estimates for illegal and legal immigrants. Rather, it simply estimates tax payments and expenditures on immigrants based mainly on the CPS Annual Social and Economic Supplement, which includes both legal and illegal immigrants. The study's fiscal projections include eight different scenarios, based on different assumptions about things like future spending and tax rates. The 2017 study does not identify which scenario is most likely.

**Net Fiscal Impact of Illegal Immigrants.** We can use the Academies' estimates to get a reasonable idea of the likely fiscal impact of illegal immigrants. In a 2017 analysis, I averaged the results of the Academies' eight fiscal scenarios to get one estimate for each educational category. I follow the same approach in the table below.<sup>21</sup> Using these fiscal estimates and taking a weighted average of the education level of illegal immigrants reported by MPI and CMS, and adjusting the National Academies' figures for inflation and legality, produces a lifetime NPV of the average illegal immigrant of negative \$68,390 in 2023 dollars.<sup>22</sup>

The above estimate comes with caveats. First, the Academies' estimates are for all immigrants; though we do include an adjustment to take this issue into account.<sup>23</sup> Further, the long-term fiscal situation for the country has deteriorated significantly since 2012, the base year the

Academies used for its estimate.<sup>24</sup> This means the fiscal impact of those with lower levels of education, as well as the average taxpayer has become even more negative.

**Welfare Programs.** We can understand better why illegal immigrants create significant fiscal costs by looking at the welfare system. In a study published in December of 2023 my colleague Karen Zeigler and I examined welfare use using the 2022

Lifetime Fiscal Impact of an Illegal Immigrant By Educational Attainment					
	Lifetime fiscal balance of illegal immigrants only <sup>a</sup>	Educational attainment of Immigrants <sup>b</sup>	Fiscal impact of illegal immigrants by education (unadjusted)	Adjustment factor for being illegal (reduces services used & tax payments) <sup>c</sup>	Fiscal impact of illegal immigrants
Less than HS	-\$173,375	43.3%	-\$75,041	0.676	-\$50,743
HS only	-\$69,750	25.4%	-\$17,697	0.799	-\$14,135
Some College	\$41,000	13.2%	\$5,405	0.893	\$4,825
Bachelor's	\$183,000	16.3%	\$29,862	0.220	\$6,582
>Bachelor's	\$423,875	1.8%	\$7,697	0.220	\$1,697
Unadjusted Costs of Illegal Immigrants					
In 2012 Dollars					
In 2023 Dollars					
In 2012 Dollars					
In 2023 Dollars					

<sup>a</sup>Based on *The Economic and Fiscal Impact of Immigration*, National Academies Press 2017, Table 8-12.

<sup>b</sup>Averaged educational attainment from the Center for Migration Studies and the Migration Policy Institute.

<sup>c</sup>Based on *The Cost of a Border Wall vs. the Cost of Illegal Immigration* 2017, Center for Immigration Studies.

Figures are for illegal immigrants arriving at all ages. Costs for their U.S.-born children are not included.

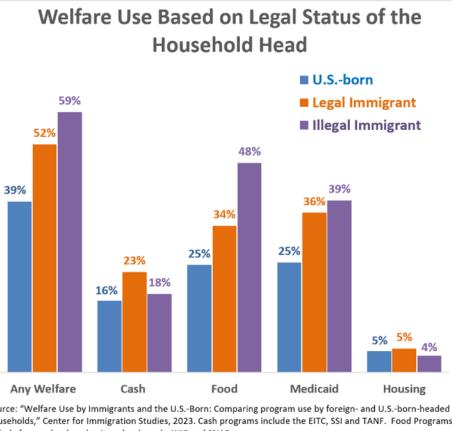
Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). The programs included in our analysis are: Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); Supplement Security Income (SSI); Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF); free and reduced-price school lunch and breakfast (school meals); Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also called food stamps; Medicaid; subsidized and public housing.

Use of these programs is an important indicator of fiscal impact because not only are the programs themselves costly, those receiving them generally pay little to no federal or state income tax. To identify illegal immigrants in the SIPP, we use the self-reported characteristics of

immigrants to assign weighted probabilities to the foreign born that create a representative population of illegal immigrants.<sup>25</sup>

#### Welfare use by Illegal Immigrants.

We estimate that 59.4 percent of illegal immigrant households use one or more welfare programs. Compared to the U.S.-born, illegal-headed households use every program at statistically higher rates, except for SSI, TANF and housing. Illegal immigrants have especially high use of cash (mainly the EITC), food programs and Medicaid.



Source: "Welfare Use by Immigrants and the U.S.-Born: Comparing program use by foreign- and U.S.-born-headed households," Center for Immigration Studies, 2023. Cash programs include the EITC, SSI and TANF. Food Programs include free and reduced-price school meals, WIC and SNAP.

**How Can Illegal Immigrant Welfare Use Be So High?** The high use of welfare by illegal-immigrant-headed households is due to several factors. First, and most important, more than half of all illegal immigrant households have at least one U.S.-born child on behalf of whom they can receive benefits.<sup>26</sup> Second, many states offer Medicaid directly to illegal immigrants.<sup>27</sup> Third, six states also offer SNAP benefits to illegal immigrants under limited circumstances.<sup>28</sup> Fourth, illegal immigrant children have the same eligibility as citizens for free and subsidized school lunch/breakfast and WIC under federal law.<sup>29</sup> Fifth, several million illegal immigrants have work authorization that provides a Social Security Number and EITC eligibility along with it. This includes those with DACA, TPS, as well as many applicants for asylum, and those granted suspension of deportation, and withholding of removal.<sup>30</sup> All of these factors, coupled with the large share of illegal immigrants with modest levels of education, and their resulting low income, means many qualify for welfare.<sup>31</sup> Finally, there is a large welfare bureaucracy whose job it is to help those eligible for programs navigate the system.

For all of the reasons listed above, the ban on illegal immigrants directly using most welfare programs has only modest effects, and tweaking those restrictions is unlikely to make much difference. If we wish to reduce the cost associated with illegal immigrants' use of means-tested programs, we need to enforce the law and reduce the number of illegal immigrants in the country. If they are allowed to remain, the welfare costs will remain too.

**A Rough Estimate of Welfare Cost.** The SIPP is much better at measuring the share of the population accessing programs rather than the dollar value of what they receive, and for some programs it does not even report the value of benefits. However, we can estimate the costs created by illegal immigrant households for the eight programs we examined in the welfare study discussed above. Federal expenditures on these programs total \$817 billion.<sup>32</sup> States spent an additional \$226 billion on Medicaid.<sup>33</sup> Looking at the share of recipients in illegal immigrant households indicates that they account for 4 percent of the cost of the programs listed above. This means illegal immigrants received about \$42 billion from these programs in 2021. This is only a rough estimate because we do not have detailed costs for every program by household.<sup>34</sup> Equally important, the SIPP has a significant undercount of illegal immigrants so the number of illegal immigrant households using welfare is under reported in the survey. This undercount is larger than the undercount in other Census Bureau surveys such as the CPS and ACS.

**Public Education.** Public schooling is one of the areas in which illegal immigration has its largest impact. Based on the 2014 ACS, Pew Research estimated that there are 725,000 illegal immigrants enrolled in public schools and an additional 3.2 million U.S.-born children of illegal immigrants in school.<sup>35</sup> Using the 2019 ACS we attempt to update their estimate and find that there were again about 4 million children of illegal immigrants in the nation's schools. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that in the 2019-20 school year the average expenditure per student was \$17,013.<sup>36</sup> Applying the above estimates would mean that illegal immigration cost schools \$68.1 billion a year – before the current surge. Put another way, each additional 100,000 students added to schools by the border crisis will cost \$1.7 billion each year. This estimate is conservative because it does not include the above-average costs for remedial learning and language services that many children of illegal immigrants require. It also does not take into account that a large share of illegal immigrants reside in states that spend significantly above the national average on education.

**The Cost of the Uninsured.** Another area where illegal immigrants create significant costs is the nation's health care system, particularly its emergency rooms. As already discussed, illegal immigrant households make extensive use of Medicaid, typically due to their U.S.-born children. In addition to Medicaid, about one-fifth of all those without health insurance in the U.S., before the current border crisis, were illegal immigrants. MPI estimated that 53 percent of illegal immigrants in 2019 lacked health insurance – 5.83 million.<sup>37</sup> This equals 22 percent of the total uninsured, though the Census Bureau estimate of the uninsured is not adjusted for undercount in the way that MPI's estimate of illegal is adjusted.<sup>38</sup> Public expenditures (federal, state and local) on the uninsured total \$33.6 billion annually.<sup>39</sup> If illegal immigrants account for about one-fifth of government expenditures on the uninsured, it would equal nearly \$7.5 billion a year. However, we know from the Health Expenditure Survey that immigrants in general tend to consume somewhat less health care than the U.S.-born, primarily because they are relatively young. So, expenditures on the uninsured illegal immigrants by taxpayers likely total less than \$7 billion each year. On the other hand, this estimate does not include the U.S.-born minor children of illegal immigrants, a significant percentage of whom are also uninsured.

## Illegal Tax Payments and the Size of the Economy

**Tax Payments by Illegal Immigrants.** Like the misconception that illegal immigrants do not use welfare, the notion that they do not pay taxes is also mistaken. First, everyone pays some sales tax and user fees. Even renters pay some property taxes indirectly through their rent. More importantly, as already mentioned, a large share of illegals have valid Social Security numbers and work authorization.<sup>40</sup> Others have stolen or otherwise acquired documents they provide to employers. We have previously estimated that more than half (55 percent) of illegal immigrant earnings are subject to taxation.<sup>41</sup> We use this assumption to estimate their likely federal tax contributions from income and payroll taxes. Based on illegal immigrants in the CPS ASEC, we estimate that in 2019 before Covid, illegal immigrants paid \$5.9 billion in federal income tax. We also estimate they paid \$16.2 billion in Social Security tax and \$3.8 billion in Medicaid taxes, which includes employer contributions to these programs.<sup>42</sup> The total contribution by illegal immigrants to federal coffers from these three taxes was \$25.9 billion in 2019.<sup>43</sup> While these numbers are certainly large, they represent less than 1 percent of taxes collected from these sources.<sup>44</sup>

**A Net Positive for Social Security and Medicaid.** Almost all illegal immigrants are barred from receiving Social Security and Medicare, so the taxes they pay represent a clear net benefit to both these programs. However, the positive effect on these programs would become negative if they were legalized and allowed to receive benefits.<sup>45</sup> This is because both programs have progressive benefit structures that give lower-earning and shorter-career workers a greater return on their contributions. Of course, the impact on these entitlements is only part of a larger fiscal impact, so it makes little sense to look at them in isolation. As discussed earlier in my testimony, when all taxes and all costs are considered, illegal immigrants are a net fiscal drain.

**Is a Larger Economy a Benefit?** There is no question that illegal immigration makes the U.S. economy hundreds of billions of dollars larger than it would otherwise be. More workers in the country means more economic activity. Based on the labor incomes of illegal immigrants and making a reasonable assumption about labor's share of GDP, I estimate that illegal immigrants made the U.S. economy \$321 billion dollars larger in 2019.<sup>46</sup> While this is equal to only 1.5 percent of the nation's \$21.43 trillion GDP at that time, the dollar value is still enormous.<sup>47</sup>

However, the standard of living in a country is determined by per capita (i.e., per person) GDP, not the overall size of the economy. If all that mattered were the aggregate size of the economy, then a country like India would be considered vastly richer than a country like Sweden because India's economy is larger. Some may think of the increase in the size of the economy that illegal immigrants create as a "contribution" that somehow offsets the fiscal costs of illegal immigrants. In reality, almost all of the increase in economic activity goes to the illegal immigrants themselves in the form of wages and benefits, as it should since they are the ones doing the work. Adding to the aggregate size of the economy is not a measure of their tax payments, nor is it a measure of the benefit to the rest of the U.S. populations.

### Conclusion

Illegal immigrants are a significant net fiscal drain -- paying less in taxes than they use in public services. The primary reason they create more in costs than they pay in taxes is their relative low levels of education. Based on prior research, 69 percent of adult illegal immigrants have no education beyond high school, compared to 35 percent of the U.S.-born. As a result, they tend to earn modest wages and make modest tax contributions even when income and payroll taxes are taken out of their pay. This fact, coupled with the relatively heavy demands they make on public coffers -- especially for education, health care, and means-tested programs -- is the reason they are a net fiscal drain.

We estimate that 59 percent of illegal immigrant households use one or more major welfare programs, costing roughly \$42 billion a year. At the local level, the largest single cost is for public education. We estimate the cost of educating the children of illegal immigrants, most of whom are U.S.-born, totals \$69 billion per year. While illegal immigrants often receive other services for their U.S.-born children, even when we estimate the net fiscal impact of just the illegal immigrants themselves, excluding their U.S.-born children, we still find they create a lifetime net fiscal drain of \$68,000 on average (taxes paid minus benefits received).

Even though illegal immigrants are *net* fiscal drains, they do pay a significant amount in taxes. We estimate illegal immigrants pay \$25.9 billion a year to the federal government. Unfortunately, their tax contributions do not cover their consumption of public services.

The net fiscal drain is not the result of illegal immigrants being unwilling to work. In fact, we find that illegal immigrant households are significantly more likely to have at least one worker than households headed by the U.S.-born, and there is little evidence that immigrants come specifically to get welfare.

Legal immigrants and U.S.-born Americans who have relatively few years of school are also a net fiscal drain on average because they too tend to earn modest wages, make modest tax contributions, and use social services extensively. None of this should be seen as a moral failing on the part of low-income people. Nonetheless, it is the reason why communities across the country worry so much about losing their middle-class tax base, as it is primarily middle- and upper-income people who keep public coffers full.

The fiscal situation today is very different from the situation more than 100 years ago during the last great wave of immigrants, when federal, state and local government was a much smaller share of GDP. Also, at that time industrial jobs for the less educated were plentiful and paid, by the standards of the day, relatively high wages. But none this is the case today. We need an immigration policy that reflects current realities, and we need to rigorously enforce it. Otherwise,

the fiscal costs will be significant, as many communities across the country are currently finding out.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/nationwide-encounters>

<sup>2</sup>Former immigration judge and Resident Fellow in Law and Policy at the Center for Immigration Studies Andrew Arthur has estimated this number based on information released by DHS to comply with a disclosure order in *Texas v. Biden* (Northern District of Texas, Amarillo Division, Case No. 2:21-cv-00067-Z) as well as limited information at the CBP “Custody and Transfer Statistics” web page, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/custody-and-transfer-statistics> and ICE’s “Detention Management” webpage, <https://www.ice.dhs.gov/detain/detention-management>. For a detailed discussion on the number of inadmissible aliens released into the U.S. based on the available information see, “It’s No Secret — Biden’s Hiding Bad Border Numbers,” Andrew Arthur, Center for Immigration Studies blog, September 1, 2023, <https://cis.org/Arthur/Its-No-Secret-Bidens-Hiding-Bad-Border-Numbers>

<sup>3</sup>See Table 2b in Department of Homeland Security Border Security Metrics Report: 2022. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, July 3, 2023), [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/2023\\_0703\\_plcy\\_fiscal\\_year\\_2022\\_border\\_security\\_metrics\\_report\\_2021\\_data.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/2023_0703_plcy_fiscal_year_2022_border_security_metrics_report_2021_data.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>“Border officials count 599,000 ‘got-away’ migrants in Fiscal Year 2022,” Fox News October 2, 2022, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/border-officials-count-599000-gotaway-migrants-fiscal-year-2022-source>.

<sup>5</sup>Press Briefing by Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre and Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, May 11, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2023/05/11/press-briefing-by-press-secretary-karine-jean-pierre-and-secretary-of-homeland-security-alejandro-mayorkas/>

<sup>6</sup>FY 2021 included September, October, and November of 2020, before the president took office. If the pace at the end of calendar year 2020 was similar to what it was in FY 2020, then perhaps 34,000 got-aways should be subtracted from the 1.5 million. However, apprehension figures for June through September of this year suggest that got-aways almost certainly total more than 34,000, so an estimate of 1.5 million is almost certainly too low.

<sup>7</sup>FY 2022 Entry/Exit Overstay Report, June 2022, Department of Homeland Security, [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/23\\_0707\\_FY22\\_FY23\\_CBP\\_Integrated\\_Entry\\_Exit\\_Overstay\\_Report.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/23_0707_FY22_FY23_CBP_Integrated_Entry_Exit_Overstay_Report.pdf).

<sup>8</sup>For additional discussion about the FY2022 report see, DHS Reports Record Number of Overstays in 2022, Jessica M. Vaughan, Center for Immigration Studies, June 23, 2023, <https://cis.org/Vaughan/DHS-Reports-Record-Number-Overstays-2022>.

<sup>9</sup>Since the monthly CPS first asked about citizenship on a regular basis in 1994, there has never been this much growth in such a short time, except if the lows reached during Covid-19 in the middle of 2020 are compared to the late winter and spring this year. However, the collection of Census Bureau surveys was disrupted by the pandemic, so the foreign-born in 2020 may not be entirely accurate in 2020. Though there was almost certainly a real fall-off in the overall size of the foreign-born in early 2020 to the middle of that year. But except for this very unusual time period, the foreign-born has not grown this much this fast since the survey began identifying immigrants back in 1994.

<sup>10</sup>The largest uncertainties surrounding these numbers are: First, we do not have all the data available to estimate legal immigration through May of 2023. Second, we do not know how out-migration (emigration) may have changed among the existing legal immigrant population or illegal immigrant population in a post-Covid world, so we use prior patterns. Third, there does not exist a detailed recent literature on the undercount of immigrants generally and illegal immigrants in particular in the monthly CPS. It is unclear how many illegal immigrants are currently being missed by the survey. In our most recent estimate, we had assumed only a 2.3 percent undercount for illegal immigrants. If the undercount is larger, then the illegal immigrant population would be correspondingly larger. Our hope is to revise and continually improve this estimate as more information becomes available over time.

<sup>11</sup>“In Escalation, Adams Says Migrant Crisis ‘Will Destroy New York City,’” Emma Fitzsimmons, *New York Times* September 7, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/07/nyregion/adams-migrants-destroy-nyc.html>.

<sup>12</sup>“Mayor Adams Says Migrant Influx Will Cost New York City \$12 Billion,” Jeffrey Mays, *New York Times* August 8, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/09/nyregion/adams-nyc-migrants-cost.html>.

<sup>13</sup>“Mayor Eric Adams announces sweeping budget cuts that would drop number of police officers to lowest since 1990s,” Marcia Kramer and Natalie Duddridge, CBS News, November 16, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/newYork/news/new-york-city-mayor-eric-adams-set-to-announce-sweeping-budget-cuts-in-response-to-asylum-seeker-crisis/>.

<sup>14</sup>“Budget Hearings Kick Off with Intense Scrutiny on Costs to Care for Migrants in Chicago,” Heather Cherone, WWTW News, October 16, 2023, <https://news.wwtw.com/2023/10/16/budget-hearings-kick-intense-scrutiny-costs-care-migrants-chicago>.

<sup>15</sup>“As migrants continue to arrive in D.C. concerns remain about capacity,” Michael Brice-Saddler, *Washington Post*, September 4, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/09/03/dc-migrants-buses-hotels-update/>

<sup>16</sup>“Denver mayor says migrant crisis could cost city \$180 million in 2024,” Marc Sallinger, *News9*, Jan 2, <https://www.9news.com/article/news/local/next/next-with-kyle-clark/denver-mayor-says-migrant-crisis-could-cost-city-180-million-2024/73-7921e159-19cb-4378-9ee7-9910921738e>.

<sup>17</sup>Executive Office For Administration & Finance Commonwealth Of Massachusetts Memorandum, December 18, 2023, <https://htv-prod-media.s3.amazonaws.com/files/12-18-2023-ea-report-packet-final-6581e68fb672b.pdf>

<sup>18</sup>The Center for Migration Studies estimates that in 2019, 67 percent had no education beyond high school, 14.5 percent have some college, and 18.5 percent have a bachelor’s or more. Center for Migration Studies website, <http://data.cmsny.org/>. The Migration Policy Institute’s estimate based on pooled data from 2015 to 2019 shows that 70 percent have no education beyond high school, 12 percent have some college, and 18 percent have at least a college education. Migration Policy Institute website, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/US>.

<sup>19</sup>To estimate the education of those encountered at the border, I use the detailed population shares by country reported at Customs and Border Protection website for border encounters in FY 2021, FY 2022, and through September of FY 2023. I combine this with the educational attainment from those same countries of new immigrants (arrived in 2020 through 2023) using a pooled sample of the monthly CPS from January to July 2023. This shows that, for adults encountered at the border, 64 percent had no education beyond high school, 12 percent have some college, and 24 percent have at least a bachelor’s. Of course, this approach can provide only limited insight into the possible educational attainment of new illegal immigrants, primarily because we do not have specific data on the subset of those encountered who were released or got-aways or new visa overstayers. (Note: This estimate is only for those identified by country in the CBP data. No country was reported by CBP for about 6 percent of encounters. Cubans are also excluded because those paroled into the U.S. can receive permanent residency within one year due to a special provision in the law and therefore do not add to the illegal immigrant population.) Custom and Border Protection web site <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/nationwide-encounters>.

<sup>20</sup>NPV represents the fiscal balance (taxes paid minus costs) if we had to spend the money today. Costs or benefits in the future are discounted or reduced based on how long from now they occur.

<sup>21</sup>The 2017 NAS estimates by education level can be found in Table 8-12 in Chapter 8 of the report, [https://nap.nationalacademies.org/cart/download.cgi?record\\_id=23550&file=359-494](https://nap.nationalacademies.org/cart/download.cgi?record_id=23550&file=359-494). Averaging the eight scenarios by education (all ages) produces the following results: negative \$173,375 for an immigrant with less than a high school education, negative \$69,750 for an immigrant with only a high school education, positive \$41,000 for an immigrant with some college, positive \$183,000 for an immigrant with only a bachelor’s.

<sup>22</sup>The combined net fiscal effects by education level in the Academies’ study are shown in the first column of the table. We use our 2017 analysis and we adjust downward the net fiscal cost of less-educated illegal immigrants on the assumption that they use less in public services than their legal counterparts, but we adjust downward the positive fiscal impact of more educated illegal immigrants based on the assumption that better educated illegal immigrants pay less in taxes than their legal immigrant counterparts because their legal status prevents them from having earnings that reflect their skills. The Cost of a Border Wall vs. the Cost of Illegal Immigration, Center for Immigration Studies February, 2017, <https://cis.org/Report/Cost-Border-Wall-vs-Cost-Illegal-Immigration>

The NAS has fiscal estimates for immigrants with a graduate degree, but neither CMS nor MPI have any estimate for illegal immigrants with this education level. Both organizations are only estimating that 18 percent have a bachelor’s or more. To address this issue we assume that 10 percent of illegal immigrants with a bachelor’s degree have a graduate degree and then apply the NAS study’s fiscal impacts estimates by education level.

<sup>23</sup>An additional caveat about using the NAS fiscal estimate is that they employ the concept of “net present value” (NPV). While commonly used in economics, this approach has the effect of reducing the size of the net fiscal drain

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that less-educated immigrants create because the costs or benefits in future years are much less relative to more immediate costs. If the NPV concept is not used, the actual net lifetime fiscal drain illegal immigrants create would be much larger than we report here.

<sup>24</sup>The 2015 Congressional Budget Office's long-term fiscal projection indicated that public debt held by the public would equal 104 percent of GDP in 2040. See *The 2015 Long-Term Budget Outlook*, Congressional Budget Office, June 2015, <https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/114th-congress-2015-2016/reports/50250-longtermbudgetoutlook-4.pdf>. In contrast the 2023 long term outlook showed it would be roughly 140 percent of GDP. See *The 2023 Long-Term Budget Outlook*, Congressional Budget Office, June 2023, <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2023-06/59014-LTBO.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup>Based on our estimates of illegal immigrants in the monthly CPS, which we have already discussed, we believe the total weighted illegal population in mid-2022 in the monthly CPS is 11.8 million. The SIPP and CPS use similar weighting schemes, but the surveys cover different population universes. We assume that the ratio of illegals in the two surveys is the same as the ratio (.75) of non-citizen post-1980 Hispanics, a population which significantly overlaps with illegal immigrants. We therefore assume 8.85 million illegal immigrants are in the 2022 SIPP. To determine which SIPP respondents are most likely to be illegal aliens, we first exclude immigrant respondents who are almost certainly not illegal aliens — for example, spouses of native-born citizens; veterans; adults who receive direct welfare payments; people who have government jobs; Cubans (because of special rules for that country); immigrants who arrived before 1981; immigrants in certain occupations that require screening and background checks; and likely student visa holders.

The remaining candidates are weighted to replicate known characteristics of the illegal population by age, gender, continent of origin, certain states of residence, and length of residence in the U.S. as published by the Center for Migration Studies. The resulting illegal population is designed to match CMS on the known characteristics listed above, as well as on education. The total size of the population, however, is controlled to our 8.85 million estimate of illegal immigrants in the 2022 SIPP. For more a detailed discussion of how we estimate illegal immigrants in the data, see "Welfare Use by Immigrants and the U.S.-Born: Comparing program use by foreign- and U.S.-born-headed households," Steven A. Camarota and Karen Zeigler on December, 2023 Center for Immigration Studies, <https://cis.org/Report/Welfare-Use-Immigrants-and-USBorn>.

<sup>26</sup>This eligibility extends to even housing. The [HUD's handbook](#) covering regulations states if at least one member of a family is eligible (e.g., a U.S.-born child), then the family can live in federally subsidized housing, though they may receive pro-rated assistance. New York City has a [similar rule](#) for its own housing programs.

<sup>27</sup> See "State-Funded Health Coverage for Immigrants as of July 2023," Kaiser Family Foundation data web site <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/fact-sheet/state-funded-health-coverage-for-immigrants-as-of-july-2023/>

<sup>28</sup>According to the National Immigration Law Center, six states provide SNAP benefits to illegal immigrants even if they do not have U.S.-born children, typically only if they meet certain hardship requirements in addition to having low incomes. [https://www.nilc.org/issues/economic-support/state\\_food/](https://www.nilc.org/issues/economic-support/state_food/)

<sup>29</sup>Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department Of Agriculture web site, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/non-citizen-communities#-text=The%20Food%20is%20free%20for%20make%20you%20a%20public%20charge>

<sup>30</sup>Based on administrative data, we estimated in 2021 that there were roughly [2 million illegal immigrants](#) with work authorization and valid Social Security numbers (SSNs) [which allows](#) receipt of the EITC. Since 2021, the administration has further [expanded work authorizations](#) to illegal immigrants with the recent influx of asylum applicants. Prior research by the Social Security Administration had also estimated some [700,000 illegal immigrants](#) using stolen SSNs. It unclear if such individuals would be detected and prevented from receiving the EITC by the IRS. Our methodology for selecting illegal immigrants assumes that only those with citizen children may receive the EITC. Any immigrant receiving the EITC without their being a U.S.-born children is assumed to be a legal immigrant.

<sup>31</sup>The Center for Migration Studies estimates that in 2019, 67 percent had no education beyond high school, 14.5 percent have some college, and 18.5 percent have a bachelor's or more. Center for Migration Studies web site, <http://data.cmsny.org/>. The Migration Policy Institute's estimate based on pooled data from 2015 to 2019 shows that 70 percent have no education beyond high school, 12 percent have some college, and 18 percent have at least a college education. Migration Policy Institute website, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/Unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/US>.

<sup>32</sup>"Federal Spending on Benefits and Services for People with Low Income: FY2008-FY2020," Congressional Research Service, December 2021. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46986>.

<sup>33</sup>“Medicaid Financing: The Basics,” Elizabeth Williams et. al. Kaiser Family Foundation April 2023. <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/medicaid-financing-the-basics/>

<sup>34</sup>The biggest question mark concerning cost is for Medicaid, which is by far the largest program by expenditure. Immigrants are younger and somewhat healthier than U.S.-born people on Medicaid. Moreover, for illegal immigrant households it is often the case that only the U.S. children are eligible for the program. On the other hand, a large share of Medicaid for illegal immigrants is due to pregnant women, and the average costs of pregnancy and delivery is quite high. An analysis of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey found that immigrant families enrolled in Medicaid cost 90 percent what U.S.-born households enrolled in Medicaid cost. Of course, whether this is true for illegal immigrants specifically is unclear. “The Cost of Immigrant Medicaid Coverage Under Current Policy,” Jason Richwine, October, 2019 Center for Immigration Studies, <https://cis.org/Report/Cost-Immigrant-Medicaid-Coverage-Under-Current-Policy>.

<sup>35</sup>“Children of unauthorized immigrants represent rising share of K-12 students,” Jeffrey S. Passel and D’vera Cohn, Pew Research, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2016/11/17/children-of-Unauthorized-immigrants-represent-rising-share-of-k-12-students/>

<sup>36</sup>National Center for Education Statistics, “Fast Facts,” <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=66#:~:text=Total%20expenditures%20for%20public%20elementary,constant%202021%20%28%20%20322%20dollars%29,&text=This%20amounts%20to%20an%20average,fall%20of%20that%20school%20year.>

<sup>37</sup>“Profile of the Unauthorized Population: . U.S.” Migration Policy Institute web site, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/Unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/US>.

<sup>38</sup>“Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2019” U.S. Census Bureau September 2020. <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2020/demo/p60-271.html>.

<sup>39</sup>“Sources of Payment for Uncompensated Care for the Uninsured,” Teresa A. Coughlin, Haley Samuel-Jakubos, and Rachel Garfield, Kaiser Family Foundation, April, 2021. <https://www.kff.org/uninsured/issue-brief/sources-of-payment-for-uncompensated-care-for-the-uninsured/>

<sup>40</sup>Based on administrative data, I estimated in 2021 that there were roughly 2 million illegal immigrants with work authorization and valid Social Security numbers (SSNs). See “Estimating the Number of Illegal Immigrants Who Might Get Covid Relief Payments” Steven Camarota, March 2022, Center for Immigration Studies, <https://cis.org/Report/Estimating-Number-Illegal-Immigrants-Who-Might-Get-Covid-Relief-Payments>.

Since 2021, the administration has further expanded work authorizations to illegal immigrants with the recent influx of asylum applicants and others illegal immigrants. See “Are Illegal Migrants Being Issued Work Authorization?” Andrew Arthur, Center for Immigration Studies, June 2022, <https://cis.org/Arthur/Are-Illegal-Migrants-Being-Issued-Work-Authorization>. Prior analysis by the Social Security Administration also estimated some 700,000 illegal immigrants use stolen SSNs, while still others are made-up numbers or are visa overstayers who had prior work authorization. “Effects of Unauthorized Immigration On The Actuarial Status Of The Social Security Trust Funds,” Stephen Goss et. al. Actuarial Note # 151, Social Security Administration Office of the Chief Actuary, April 2013. [https://www.ssa.gov/oact/NOTES/pdf\\_notes/note151.pdf](https://www.ssa.gov/oact/NOTES/pdf_notes/note151.pdf)

<sup>41</sup>“The High Cost of Cheap Labor: Illegal Immigration and the Federal Budget,” Steven A. Camarota, Center for Immigration Studies, August, 2004. <https://cis.org/Report/High-Cost-Cheap-Labor>

<sup>42</sup>Once we identify illegal immigrants in the survey, estimating their tax contribution is relatively straightforward. We sum their federal income tax liability (calculated by the Census Bureau for survey respondents and included in the public use file) and assume that they pay 55 percent of this amount. For Social Security and Medicaid, we sum all their earnings and then take the appropriate tax rates of 12.4 percent and 2.9 percent respectively, and again assume they pay 55 percent of their tax liability for these taxes.

<sup>43</sup>The Social Security Administration estimates that illegal immigrants paid \$13 billion in taxes in 2013, so the above estimate of \$17.9 billion is not surprising six years later. See endnote 40.

<sup>44</sup>Like our estimate of the total welfare costs, our estimate of the tax payments is only for those included in the data. Some illegal immigrants are not captured in the CPS ASEC, so their actual tax contributions should be larger. Moreover, our tax estimate is dependent on the assumption that 55 percent of illegal immigrants, work “on the books.” If that is too high or too low, then our estimate will be correspondingly off.

<sup>45</sup>“Amnesty Would Impose Large Costs on Social Security and Medicare,” Jason Richwine, Center for Immigration Studies, April 5, 2021, Download a PDF of this Backgrounder. <https://cis.org/Report/Amnesty-Would-Impose-Large-Costs-Social-Security-and-Medicare>.

<sup>46</sup>Our analysis of the 2020 Annual Social and Economic Supplement indicates that illegal immigrants account for 2.5 percent of all earnings. If we make the reasonable assumption the economy is 60 percent labor and 40 percent capital, it would mean that illegal immigrants account for 1.5% of the nation’s \$21.43 trillion economy in 2019.

<sup>47</sup>It is important to understand this estimate is highly simplified. It does not consider any negative impact on the wages and employment of less-educated American workers, nor does it allow for the possibility of complementary between illegal immigrant labor and the rest of the workforce. It is simply derived from our estimate of the labor incomes of illegal immigrants in the 2020 CPS Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Thank you. Finally, we have with us Ms. Souza Egorov, welcome.

**STATEMENT OF DANYELA SOUZA EGOROV**

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. Thank you. My name is Danyela Souza Egorov. I'm an immigrant from Brazil.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. You have to fix—talk.

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. Thank you. My name is Danyela Souza Egorov. I'm an immigrant from Brazil. My husband is an immigrant from Ukraine. My husband's relatives are war refugees here in the U.S. under the United Free Ukraine Program.

New York City is our home. I believe legal immigration has made New York one of the best cities in the world. The current crisis of open borders and no policy to prioritize who should be allowed to enter the country, is threatening New York City.

This week, four thousand students at James Madison High School in Brooklyn, were kicked out of their school in the middle of the day to turn that school building into a migrant shelter overnight. This made headlines across the Nation, but it is what New Yorkers have been dealing with since this crisis started.

Our city has received over 160 thousand migrants in the past year. This has had a devastating impact on the city's finance and social services.

In 2023 alone, New York City spent over five billion dollars to provide housing and other services for new migrants. Our Mayor, Eric Adams, estimates that this will cost 12 billion dollars over the next three years.

I'm a public-school parent and serve as Vice President of the Community Education Council for School District 2, Manhattan. Every day, I hear from my community concerns about the impact of this crisis in our schools.

Here are some concrete examples. Last October, Mayor Adams canceled the classes of 215 Community New York School Safety Agents, which are desperately needed in our schools. He said that parents would have to volunteer to keep our schools safe.

Many schools have little notice about when they will receive new influx of students. They don't have time to hire ESL teachers and staff to serve them adequately.

To balance the budget, New York City will no longer offer preschool for every three-year-old who needs that in our city.

District 75, which serves the students with severe disabilities, and is the most vulnerable population in our schools, will have to cut one million dollars per school and reduce staff. This will impact after school programs, create an even bigger shortage of paraprofessionals, which might put our schools out of compliance with student special education plans, which are legally binding.

Parents in my community cannot understand why the new students were exempt from the vaccines required by the New York State, which our students have to take, even though there has already been an outbreak of varicella at the school in our district.

The facts unfortunately, are not limited to the schools. The elderly were kicked out of their housing to make space for migrant shelters, including a 95-year-old Korean War veteran.

The budget cuts to finance this crisis will impact every city agency. Our libraries are not opening on Sundays anymore. The Fire Department of New York has reduced its head count by more than 50 people.

The New York State Comptroller, Thomas DiNapoli, warned that New York City is quote, “teetering on a fiscal cliff,” because of this migrant crisis.

Since 1990, no more than 45 thousand people were granted asylum in the U.S. per year. Last year there were two and a half million border crossings on our Southern border.

According to the Migration Policy Institute, there are more than 1.3 million asylum applications pending. It takes on average, four years to complete the process.

New Yorkers want to know, what is the plan to end this crisis? What is the plan?

If migrants are receiving letters with an appointment in immigration court to process their asylum in 10 years, in 2030–2033, will New York taxpayers pay for hotel rooms and shelters over the next decade? Will we have to incur five billion dollars in expenses every year? How many more services do low-income New York citizens have to lose to finance this policy?

In New York City, nearly 40 percent of New Yorkers are foreign born. Sixty percent live in a household where at least one family was born abroad, like my family. We know exactly why people want to live in such a prosperous free city and country.

New Yorkers today feel abandoned by our Mayor, by our Governor, by our City Comptroller, and by the City Council. None of them are focused on the interests of New Yorkers and of taxpayers.

That is why I’m here asking Congress to look at the situation before New York City is completely bankrupt, before more low-income New Yorkers lose even more services, and our greatest American city cannot come back. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Souza Egorov follows:]

Committee on the Judiciary  
Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement  
"The Impact of Illegal Immigration on Social Services"

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
2138 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

January 8, 2024

Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member Nadler, and members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I was born in Brazil and immigrated to the US in 2003. My husband is originally from Ukraine and has been living in this country since 1998. We are both incredibly grateful for all the opportunities that we had to study, work, and raise a family in America. I am here today to share my experience as an immigrant and a New Yorker who is deeply concerned about the impact of our open borders in the city that I now call home.

In February 2022 my husband's hometown, Kharkiv, was invaded by the Russian army. His grandparents, both 85 years old, spent weeks hiding in their apartment as Russian planes dropped bombs on their neighborhood. On March 5th, one bomb landed in the courtyard of their building, killing 8 people, and blew out the windows of their apartment in the middle of winter. They then tried fleeing to the countryside, where a Russian tank fired on the car they drove in. In April, after several weeks of surviving within range of Russian artillery barrage, they accepted that they had to leave their country and managed to get on a train to the border with Poland, 600 miles away, and walk over the border to relative safety. They had to leave all their possessions behind. After that ordeal, they spent 3 months patiently waiting to obtain a United Nations refugee travel document, and a US entry permit under the United For Ukraine program. The US government vetted both them and us in the process, and we had to commit to providing them with financial support. We are glad they are now safe with us in New York, at least until the end of their two-year maximum stay under the United For Ukraine program.

The vast majority of the [161,000 migrants that have arrived in NYC](#) since last spring are not like my husband's grandparents. They have not been forced to leave their cities and homes due to a war. They didn't go through a lengthy process of vetting and confirmation that they qualified for asylum. The vast majority of people arriving in NYC are economic migrants who will most likely not qualify for asylum status [based on what the US Department of Homeland Security is publishing on their website](#). At the same time, [there are more than 35 million refugees under the UNHCR mandate - the vast majority of women and children and 52% from Syria, Ukraine and Afghanistan. They are vetted by the United Nations and are waiting to be accepted by a country](#). The United States has consistently missed the target for refugee intake — [a target that is just 125,000](#).

It is hard for me to understand why our country is allowing and even encouraging economic migrants to enter the US without any vetting process while failing to accept actual war refugees who are in a similar situation like my husband's Ukrainian grandparents were.

I live in NYC and the impact of the open border crisis has been felt by every New Yorker. Our mayor, Eric Adams, has worsened this crisis by offering incentives to attract economic migrants, such as housing for every migrant who arrives. This policy is having a devastating impact on our city finances, social services, and public schools. I am a public school parent and have worked on education policy for over a decade. I am particularly concerned about the impact of this crisis on NYC public schools and our children's learning.

[Mayor Eric Adams has estimated the cost of the migrant crisis for NYC taxpayers to be \\$12 billion over three fiscal years.](#) In 2023 NYC has spent \$5.2B on illegal migrants and the city has cut services for NYC citizens and taxpayers in order to address the substantial budget deficits facing our city.

Last November, the [New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli warned that NYC is "teetering on a fiscal cliff"](#) because of the migrant crisis and increasing spending.

Last December, the New York City Comptroller testified about the cuts to NYC agencies and warned that the plan ["does not take into account whether mission-critical services are adequately staffed."](#)

These numbers are alarming, but don't fully describe the turmoil inside our public schools. School principals have little notice about when they will receive an influx of new migrant students - the schools don't have time to hire teachers and staff to serve the new students adequately.

I serve as Vice-President of the Community Education Council for NYC School District 2 in Manhattan. In my district, children who speak Spanish have been asked to act as translators for the new students. Last month at our meeting, a mother said that the school buses are now overcrowded and constantly late because of the new influx of students. Her 2nd grader son has been on time to school only a few days this school year. We can't understand why the new students were exempt from the vaccines required by the NY state, even though there has already been [an outbreak of varicella at a school in our district](#) in early 2023. Moreover, the [NYC Health Commissioner Ashwin Vasan sent a letter to health professionals](#) this year outlining the stark reality of what it means to have those arrive en masse from countries with different health protocols.

Last October [Mayor Adams canceled the classes of 250 incoming NYC school safety agents](#), which are desperately needed in our schools - he said that [parents would have to volunteer to keep our schools safe](#). The city has also announced that it is backing away from its commitment to offer universal preschool for 3-years-old.

District 75, which serves students with severe disabilities, will have to cut \$1M per school, and reduce staff. [The cuts would gut extracurricular programming, thin out supply budgets, and exacerbate an already severe paraprofessional shortage, potentially pushing schools even further out of compliance with students' legally binding special education plans. staffers from four District 75 schools said".](#)

But the biggest impact is on our public schools and our children's learning. Here is what New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli recently stated about the impact on NYC public schools:

*"The city estimates that approximately 30,000 children of migrants and asylum seekers are enrolled in city schools during the 2023-24 school year, including 12,000 since June 30, 2023. DOE spent \$22 million on initiatives related to these students in FY 2023 despite not having budgeted for such costs. There are no budgeted costs for spending on these students in FY 2024 either. Fair Student Funding allocations alone for these students are likely to exceed \$125 million in FY 2024; however, additional per-pupil state aid would likely defray a portion of such costs."*

The effects are not limited to the schools.

The elderly were kicked out of their housing to make space for migrant shelters, [including a 95-year-old Korean war veteran.](#) The budget cuts to finance the migrant crisis [will impact every city agency and we are already seeing reduced staff and services at critical agencies such as at Fire Departments and libraries.](#) City libraries are taking a 3% cut and stop opening on Sundays. The FDNY reduced its headcount by 54 people.

The impact on New Yorkers is nothing compared to the devastating consequences this policy has on migrants themselves. As you know, the women and children making this harrowing journey are subjected to unimaginable horrors. Not one child should be allowed to take on this dangerous and life-threatening journey through the world's deadliest land route for migrants. However, the current policies of the US government are encouraging kids and mothers to take this journey.

The [DHS itself published a harrowing emergency report](#) in 2019 recounting the violence, sexual exploitation, trafficking, and abuse of children making this journey. Because adults accompanied with a child have priority on the border for processing. The report shows us pictures of adults and kids who have drowned in the river. It tells in detail how smugglers are renting kids for adults to cross the border, and then sending the kids back in a process called "recycling kids". We have all seen the videos on social media of kids being medicated in order to cross the border easier. And there are plenty of examples of the horrors that wait kids and women at the border:

- Female migrants often suffer rape, assaults, and gun violence on the path northward towards the United States [\(Cleaveland & Kirsch, 2020\).](#)

- "UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), said in an October 2021 news release. "Week after week, more children are dying, losing their parents, or getting separated from their relatives while on this perilous journey." UNICEF estimates that half of the children who crossed in 2022 were under five years old, and at least one thousand were unaccompanied or separated." [\(Council for Foreign Relations\)](#)
- "The physical risks along irregular migration routes are innumerable, especially for children. As well as the dangerous terrain they traverse – from jungles and rivers to railway lines and highways - children may also encounter violence, exploitation, and abuse." [UNICEF](#)

This situation has made thousands of kids easy prey for child and sex trafficking. And the US government has done nothing to discourage these horrible dynamics in our border with the policies being implemented.

I grew up in Latin America and know how America represents the dream of prosperity and a better life to so many people. When the Mayor of NYC then promises to anyone an expensive and luxurious hotel room for free, of course you will listen to the smugglers and take this journey. It's cruel how our government is encouraging this instead of doing everything to prevent women and children from crossing the border and instead encouraging them to do it the right and legal way.

- Female migrants often suffer rape, assaults, and gun violence on the path northward towards the United States [\(Cleaveland & Kirsch, 2020\)](#).
- UNICEF said in an October 2021 news release "Week after week, more children are dying, losing their parents, or getting separated from their relatives while on this perilous journey." UNICEF estimates that half of the children who crossed in 2022 were under five years old, and at least one thousand were unaccompanied or separated." [\(Council for Foreign Relations\)](#)
- "The physical risks along irregular migration routes are innumerable, especially for children. As well as the dangerous terrain they traverse – from jungles and rivers to railway lines and highways - children may also encounter violence, exploitation, and abuse." [UNICEF](#)

Like every New Yorker, I have asked myself multiple times what drives this situation. Why are our country and city encouraging economic migrants who can walk miles to make it here to come to NYC while refusing to accept genuine refugees?

There are lots of people and organizations making money out of this crisis with the city having no-bid contracts, and our City Comptroller has refused to investigate these contracts. Only last month the Comptroller Brad Lander took away the mayor's power to make emergency contracts without prior approvals.

Here are a few examples of the what NYC taxpayers are financing:

- [The Roosevelt Hotel is being used as an intake center and it has a \\$220M contract with NYC for the next three years.](#)
- [The emergency contract of \\$432M with DocGo](#) is now being investigated by the State because of their lack of experience in providing shelter and support services.
- New York City's public hospital system in late October approved up to [\\$324.7 million in contracts for private security services](#) at the city's "humanitarian relief centers" for migrants

Since 1990 there has never been more than 45,000 people granted asylum in the US. Last year it was 36,000 and yet there were 2.8 million border crossings in 2022 and, according to the Migration Policy Institute, there are more than 1.3 million asylum applications pending as of May 2023 taking on average 4 years to complete. New Yorkers want to know what the plan is for the 161,000 migrants that arrived in our city. How many more services for NY citizens will be cut to finance this absurd policy? If migrants are receiving letters with an appointment to process their asylum claim in 10 years, will NY taxpayers pay for hotel rooms and shelters for the next 10 years?

Nearly [40% of New Yorkers are foreign-born, and 60% live in a household where at least one family member was born abroad.](#) Legal immigration has made New York one of the best cities in the world. The current crisis of open borders and no policy to prioritize who should be allowed to enter to our country is threatening NYC. New Yorkers need support from the federal government to deal with this situation. We can barely manage the 161,000 people who arrived in our city in the past year, and it is not sustainable to continue receiving hundreds of new migrants daily. New Yorkers feel abandoned by our Mayor, by our Governor, and by our City Comptroller. That is why I am here asking Congress to look at this situation before NYC is completely bankrupt and our greatest American city can't come back.

Sincerely,  
Danyela Souza Egorov

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Thank you again for your testimony. We will now proceed to five-minute questions from the Members of the Subcommittee.

Because of some scheduling issues, we'll begin with Mr. Roy.

Mr. ROY. Thank you, Chair, very much. I appreciate all the witnesses for coming in here today. Mr. Mello, it's great to have you in from the great State of Texas. Appreciate you coming up.

I'm going to start with you. Because I know firsthand, from my friends and folks that I've gotten to know very well in Eagle Pass and along the Rio Grande, I know what you're dealing with. We talk regularly.

I'm sorry about it. I'm deeply apologetic that the Federal Government has completely abandoned its duty to do its job at the border and let the people of Eagle Pass and the people of Texas stranded holding the bag, having to deal with obviously the impact on your communities.

So, I would just like to hear from you. I know you didn't get a chance to finish your statement. Can you tell me—I've got information here that suggests that with respect to the EMS calls that your agency receives a day that are migrant related, I've got information that says the Eagle Pass Fire Department receives an average 45 calls a day, 30 of them, or 65 percent, being placed by migrants.

Does that sound right to you?

Mr. MELLO. That is a—can you repeat the numbers, please?

Mr. ROY. Forty-five calls a day, 30 of them, or 65 percent being placed by migrants.

Mr. MELLO. That's correct.

Mr. ROY. That's right. That puts a particular strain on your job, correct? On your facilities and resources, right?

Mr. MELLO. Of course, on a regular basis we would make 22–30 calls. So, that would be on a regular basis where there's no migrants involved.

Mr. ROY. It can't be cheap to constantly respond to these calls, right? So, the average cost for a call for services is about seven hundred dollars, right?

What it totals out to each day would be about 21 thousand dollars a day to respond to migrants in need of EMS. Does that sound right?

Mr. MELLO. The 21 thousand dollars is a little overrated, sir. We're looking at more like between 15–18 thousand.

Mr. ROY. OK. So, 15, we want to get the facts right. That's still a lot of money, right? Fifteen to 18 thousand dollars a day to respond to migrants in need of EMS?

Mr. MELLO. Yes, sir.

Mr. Roy. OK. That jump has no doubt put a strain on your employees. Is it fair to say that Eagle Pass residents have to wait longer for EMS and fire service than usual when you're overwhelmed as a result of the border crisis, the number of migrants that have to call into your services?

Mr. MELLO. Yes, sir.

Mr. ROY. Some reports put the cost of this surge for the city of Eagle Pass at 2.2 million dollars since mid-September. Does that sound right to you?

Mr. MELLO. That sounds—that sounds a little over.

Mr. ROY. OK.

Mr. MELLO. I would put it at probably half of that amount.

Mr. ROY. OK.

Mr. MELLO. Because it fluctuates.

Mr. ROY. OK. So, a million dollars through, since mid-September on the costs that affect Eagle Pass. That's a million dollars directly as a consequence of that surge is being absorbed by the folks at Eagle Pass.

Mr. MELLO. Yes, sir.

Mr. ROY. Since September. So, of course, with all of this, has the Federal Government reimbursed your agency for any of these costs meaningfully?

Mr. MELLO. No, sir.

Mr. ROY. OK. Not at all. Well, thank you for that. I'm sorry that we're not doing a better job to make sure that you all can do your job without getting overwhelmed.

Mr. CAMAROTA, let me just ask a couple of quick questions. As of October 2023, the foreign-born population in the United States is 49½ million people. Is that correct?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes.

Mr. ROY. About 15 percent of the United States population. Is that correct?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes.

Mr. ROY. Is that not at roughly the highest levels we've ever had? It's been there once or twice before, but now we're eclipsing it?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes. The top was 1890 at 14.8 percent. America has never been here before. Of course, we're headed into uncharted territory in terms of the foreign born share of the U.S. population.

Mr. ROY. Right. This population is growing, the foreign-born population by 4½ million under President Biden. So, in other words, that 49½ million is skyrocketing and blowing off that number. Correct?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Right. If this were to continue, again, we would set new records every month.

Mr. ROY. Does that not have an effect on education with respect to foreign-born individuals who do not speak English and the demands on schools?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Right. Since the United States spends about 17,000 dollars a year, a little more than that, but per student, the cost of educating children of immigrant families is one of the biggest challenges.

On illegal immigrants, we know that they're just not being able to pay enough, anywhere near enough in taxes to cover that cost. Creating real strains.

Mr. ROY. It's a significant upward tick on the use of welfare programs?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes. Illegal immigrants do make extensive use of welfare programs. Which reflects their educational attainment.

In other words, less educated native-born people use about the same. It's just that the immigrants are so much less educated on average that overall, they have much higher use rates.

Mr. ROY. So, you would agree that the illegal immigration problem at the border is having a massive strain on public resources across the country, in particular, in Texas in border communities and counties?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes. As I said in my testimony, just for illegal immigrants, about 68 billion in public education. That's for the whole illegal population.

About 42 billion in welfare costs. Again, that's for the whole population, not just the newcomers.

Mr. ROY. Thank you, sir.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes the Ranking Member, Ms. Jayapal for five minutes.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Despite the title of this hearing and the claims by the majority, immigrants are a huge engine of economic growth for the American economy.

Study after study shows that immigrants are less likely to use benefits that they are eligible for. Actually contribute tens of billions of dollars more into public benefit programs than they ever receive.

A lack of lawful pathways and an inability to obtain work authorization quickly when they do come through the Southern border, are the actual issues that need to be resolved.

So, Mr. Chen, we see a lot of misinformation circulating online, and repeated in the halls of Congress, and even in this Committee, about the types of benefits that are available to undocumented immigrants, including those seeking asylum.

So, can you please succinctly and clearly confirm whether undocumented immigrants can access Federal benefits like Medicare and Medicaid or healthcare through the ACA?

Mr. CHEN. Thank you for the question, Congresswoman. The simple answer is, they are not eligible. Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for all those Federal benefits that you just cited.

Ms. JAYAPAL. What about Social Security? Do undocumented immigrants pay into benefit programs like Social Security?

Do they benefit from Social Security?

Mr. CHEN. They do pay in billions of dollars, undocumented immigrants, into the Social Security system, and through taxes annually. They are not eligible to receive those benefits.

Ms. JAYAPAL. As you know, there have been a lot of discussions over the last two months in the U.S. Senate about permanently changing immigration laws, including raising the screening standard for asylum seekers, limiting the Administration's ability to use parole, expanding interior enforcement and the use of expedited removal, and a new Title 42 like expulsion authority.

Many of those proposed changes would make the border much more chaotic. Can you discuss the importance of processing migrants at the border more efficiently and fairly?

How that would positively impact American communities and cities?

Mr. CHEN. So, the kinds of solutions that are now being proposed either to provide power to shut down the border or to shut down legal pathways that have been used, like parole, those are not going to be effective, because people will still come to the U.S. border and what we will see is, humanitarian crises.

We'll see a chaos at the Southern border, where people are going to be waiting. They'll be preyed on by cartels and gangs. That will create less safe communities on both sides of the border.

That is not efficient or fair or orderly processing. What we do need, is those kinds of steps. It begins with funding immigration agencies operating at the border to be able to process people more quickly, more efficiently, and in an orderly way.

Also to assure that people who are eligible for relief, like asylum, have a fair shot at it. By doing that, making the system more effective as you were describing, or asking, cities and communities in the United States will have a better system for people arriving.

They'll have more awareness of when people are arriving. That's the coordination need for the Federal Government to help play that role.

Importantly, we'll see gains. We'll see gains for the country in the long term because immigrants do contribute economically far more than they use in let's say public benefits. That is going to strengthen our Nation.

That's an incredible opportunity that we should be able to harness through real reforms to the system.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Real reforms that expand the lawful pathways for people who are seeking protection, something I've been saying for over 30 years. Congress hasn't updated our legal immigration system to keep up with the demands and the needs of the country.

So, the Biden Administration, like every administration before, Republican and Democratic, has used parole, this idea of parole. Can you discuss the importance of this parole authority that, as I said, has been used by every President over the last 70 years?

Mr. CHEN. Yes. So, parole was created in the 1950's, dating back to President Eisenhower. It was used to protect people fleeing from Hungary, from Cuba during the cold war.

In the past 70 years, it's been used many times to designate special populations for protection. Most recently, President Biden has used it to protect Ukrainians, Afghans, and, also, Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, and Venezuelans.

The important piece of parole to recognize, is that it alleviates pressure at the border. People coming in through parole under the Uniting for Ukraine Program, during its first 14 months when people were eligible to apply for parole under that program, we saw a decrease of almost everybody from Ukraine coming at the Southern border, 99.9 percent during those 14 months.

Similarly, they're not as significant results for the C, H, and V countries. The fact is a safer, orderly, legal pathway to allow people to come, alleviates pressure at the border and will improve border processing. That's why this is so vital.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you, Mr. Chen. Ms. Souza Egorov, thank you so much for your moving testimony. I assume you spoke highly of the Uniting for Ukraine Program.

I assume you support that program?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. I support and I can tell you that the process to vet my family—

Ms. JAYAPAL. Yes. Thank you. Thank you, that's—thank you.

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. Is going to be very expensive and it has not happened yet. The Southern border—

Ms. JAYAPAL. I just wanted to know if you wanted to continue that program, because Republicans have actually refused to continue that program.

In H.R. 2 it would eliminate the Uniting for Ukraine Program. I have an amendment to keep that in and Republicans voted against it.

Thank you very much. Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Thank you. Next is Mr. Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to all the witnesses. The interesting thing about parole is this, over the last 25 years, before the Biden Administration, parole was administered on average, 15 times a year.

The statute is very clear, it's meant to be a particularized, individualized program. That is exactly what Secretary Mayorkas confessed and admitted was the purpose of parole when he testified.

Yet, in the last 18 months, over a million people have received parole, parole status. You want to know what draws people to the border?

It is catch and release programs like parole. Where they're given documentation to go work for a couple of years and then you lose track of them.

Because right now, right now as our witnesses testified, the actual court dates for your asylum claim are nine, ten, and 12 years off. That's what's happening in Eagle Pass right now. They're moving that far past.

It's good to see Chief Mello here. I had an opportunity to meet with you last week. Thank you for taking time with us.

I just want to clarify, your Fire Department has five ambulances. Is that right?

Mr. MELLO. Yes, sir.

Mr. BIGGS. Of those five ambulances, how big is your service area and the population for your Fire Department?

Mr. MELLO. It's 12 hundred square miles and we cover 120 miles of river front.

Mr. BIGGS. The population?

Mr. MELLO. Population 70 thousand. It fluctuates from 70 thousand to 60, 65 thousand.

Mr. BIGGS. Of your five—

Mr. MELLO. Ten thousand more, 80 thousand.

Mr. BIGGS. Of your five ambulances, you dedicate one almost every day to solely to dealing with illegal migrants. Is that right?

Mr. MELLO. Yes, sir.

Mr. BIGGS. Occasionally you have to go beyond one and two, or maybe more.

Mr. MELLO. Of course. Yes, sir.

Mr. BIGGS. That imposes constraints on how you service legal residents of your service area?

Mr. MELLO. Sometimes our residents are left without an ambulance service.

Mr. BIGGS. So, I also met with the head of the Fort Duncan Hospital, Regional Hospital, last week as well. What he was confiding in us was that the local residents, many are wondering why those who are here in the country illegally are getting treated ahead of them.

His response is, well, it's acuity. Of course, it's acuity. Because those people are illegally in the country, they are displacing the local residents regardless of acuity. Right?

Is that fair to say?

Mr. MELLO. We have times where there's been a two-hour wait for our patients inside the ambulance, just to try to get one patient inside, a local resident inside the hospital.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes. So, I appreciate what's going on in New York. That sounds terrific. I want to put context to it as well. You guys are dealing with it in New York.

A community of 70 thousand in Eagle Pass is dealing with it, and you saw a massive surge of illegal migration over the last 4–5 weeks, right?

Mr. MELLO. Yes, sir.

Mr. BIGGS. I also went down to Lukeville. Lukeville has a population of 35. In Lukeville, over the last three weeks, more than 30 thousand illegal migrants entered.

There are no services in Lukeville, Ajo. Ajo which is kind of where the CBP is centered there, they have no services.

It's overwhelming. I stood there and watched gaps in the fence created by cartel coyotes who are coming and cutting the fence. The day I was there they'd already repaired six different locations.

We drove miles. There's no CBP even able to patrol. Why is that? They were all at the processing center where I visited and saw individuals from Guinea, Burkina Faso, Senegal, India, and Pakistan.

I am stunned. I am stunned when I hear people say, well, there is no—effectively we need to change the immigration system.

You know what, Mr. Camarota, EMTALA. Who gets EMTALA? Who can get EMTALA?

Do you have to be a citizen? Does anybody ask you if you are a citizen before you get EMTALA benefits when you go to the hospital?

Mr. CAMAROTA. No. Obviously if it's emergency care, anyone immediately gets benefits.

Mr. BIGGS. It's not just emergency care anymore. The ED is now used as a general and primary physician. You go in because you have the flu. You don't go to your doctor, because these individuals don't have doctors.

I'd be very curious to know what your study would reveal, excuse me. I'm sure it would reveal with regard to the use of EMTALA benefits, because trust me, in Eagle Pass, they are using EMTALA benefits to go in there and overwhelm that hospital.

I yield back.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Nadler.

Mr. NADLER. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chen, since the Spring of 2022, Governor Abbott of Texas has bussed over 90,000 asylum seekers to cities across the United States, sending approximately one-third of them to New York City. He has done this without any coordination with the receiving cities.

You touched on this in your opening statement. In fact, it was yesterday that a *CBS* article highlighted how Texas sabotaged efforts by nonprofits to create a more orderly system. I would like to submit that article for the record.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Without objection.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chen, how does this lack of coordination make it harder for nonprofits and cities to help welcome and integrate migrants into their communities?

Mr. CHEN. Thank you for the question. I think the main issue here is the surprise factor. When unannounced buses are coming at different times, sometimes late at night, and the welcoming cities or service providers are not aware when they are going to come, it is just going to make it more difficult for a shelter to make sure there is adequate bed space.

For other service providers providing perhaps emergency medical care or other needs, it is going to be much more challenging for them, and that is why there needs to be better coordination and support from the Federal Government like the Shelter and Services Program that provides assistance to fund local provision of services.

Mr. NADLER. Thank you. Over a million people are in the asylum backlog. The average adjudication wait time for the asylum application is now over four years. Mr. Biggs pointed out that it takes years to process asylum claims. The Biden Administration's supplemental funding request included a request for funding to hire more immigration judges and asylum officers.

How would hiring additional adjudicators help tackle the backlog, speed up processing, and improve conditions at the border?

Mr. CHEN. It would help in a very direct way. AILA supports the request in the Biden supplemental funding request for 1,600 more asylum officers to be hired. Having more asylum officers will speed up the process for screening cases of people who are asking for asylum. That is simply going to make it more expeditious and also fairer for the system overall.

What it will do is that kind of a benefit will inure to the overall system, because what we see now is that USCIS doesn't have enough case officers to handle other kinds of cases, such as employment-based benefits, family based benefits. So, we see delays across the board unless you fund USCIS to have enough asylum officers and other case officers.

Mr. NADLER. So, this would greatly reduce what Republicans refer to as "catch and release"?

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. It would help avoid the need for people that are coming not to be able to be screened quickly enough and to wait for their cases for a long period of time.

Mr. NADLER. Thank you. Mr. Chen, for much of our history, our country welcomed immigrants with open arms and in very large numbers. In fact, when Ellis Island was operational, in one year alone it processed over a million people. If we compare that level of intake to today's population of New York City, it will mean that Ellis Island admitted the equivalent of 17,770 people a day, and 6½ million people in a year. Such high numbers of arrivals didn't negatively impact the city economically. For much of the 20th century, countless industries were fueled by the influx of immigrants.

Were those who arrived through Ellis Island able to work as soon as they got to the United States? What has changed between then and now?

Mr. CHEN. That is the lynchpin issue that you just touched on there, sir. The fact is that immigrants arriving at Ellis Island were

able to work immediately. Asylum seekers now, and many immigrants who are coming, are not eligible to work initially, and they need to apply for work permits for those who are. That delay makes it harder for those recent arrivals to become self-sufficient quickly.

Immigrants can contribute tremendously to the country. If they are able to sustain themselves, they will get out of shelters more quickly and be able to support themselves and their families.

What we have seen statistically is estimates that if asylum seekers, the numbers were to decrease by 10 percent, you would see about a \$9 billion loss in overall economic benefit to the country over about a five-year period. That is further indication of how much asylum seekers and immigrants coming will contribute if they are allowed to work.

Mr. NADLER. Now, how long do asylum seekers have to wait before they may apply for employment authorization? How does this waiting period hurt employers and asylum seekers in the United States? Wouldn't you think that asylum seekers should be given work authorization immediately on arrival?

Mr. CHEN. So, asylum seekers typically have to wait 180 days, six months, before they are allowed to work coming into the country. That period means that asylum seekers aren't able to become self-sufficient as quickly as they otherwise might be. The important step here is to be able to have asylum seekers apply more quickly.

Actually, Congresswoman Chellie Pingree has the Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act that has supports that would enable that. It would also make sure that the period during which they could work would match the time during which they are waiting for their asylum application to be granted, rather than having to apply to renew those work permits on a regular basis.

The fact is if it takes four years for somebody to get their asylum case looked at and granted, you don't want them having to renew regularly that work permit application, because it is actually taking about 16 months right now to renew work permits. So, those are all ways to speed up the system, make it work more efficiently, and make sure that people that are here are able to work and contribute.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. NADLER. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Chair Jordan.

Chair JORDAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Souza Egorov, thank you. Well, thank you all for being here.

Ms. Egorov, I want to talk more about the children and what is happening to kids in the New York schools. In your testimony, you said at your last meeting you had a mother talk about how school buses are overcrowded, that her son has only been on time to school I think a couple times in the entire school year, which is unbelievable.

You said migrant students are exempt from vaccines. You have had some outbreak of something here. Safety agents training to protect kids at school has been curtailed. Students with disabilities, their schools have been cut \$1 million per school. This is after the kids have just gone through the whole COVID experience and everything else.

Now, we have seen in the news the last couple of days what has happened with the one school where the kids—go home and learn from home. We are going to put migrants in the schools. So, this to me seem to be the issue that I think is really hitting a nerve with the American people, like this is happening to our kids.

How many migrant students are in the New York public school's system this school year, new migrant students are in the system?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. I don't have that specific number. What I can tell is that in my district I believe the last number was around 5,000. My district is two-thirds of Manhattan. In my district, we have a lot of hotel rooms that are being used as shelters and where families are prioritized. So, we have a disproportionate number of families as in the shelters, because of course they are—

Chair JORDAN. The comptroller—in your testimony, you gave a quote from the comptroller, and he says, "12,000 migrant students in the New York City public schools since June 30th." Is that an accurate number, in your judgment?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. I believe so, yes.

Chair JORDAN. Twelve thousand new students brought into the schools in just the last seven months. That seems to be—

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. Yes.

Chair JORDAN. Do you have children in the New York public schools?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. I do have.

Chair JORDAN. Have you seen an impact with your kids in the type of education they are getting?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. What I have seen is an impact in the entire district. So, from the buses that are running late, in particular, just principals are very concerned because they never know when they are going to get new students.

I am the founding board chair of a charter school in Brooklyn that was specifically designed for students who don't speak English. I know how much it takes—

Chair JORDAN. Yep.

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. —to teach children who don't speak English at home, like my kids, to learn English. It is very specifically designed work. You need qualified teachers. Even if we have the resources, there are just not enough ESL qualified teachers in New York City to be hired.

The other thing that I think is very important is the safety issue, because this is the no. 1 thing that I hear from parents in my community. They want more school safety agents in their buildings. There is a lack of school safety agents.

The fact that Mayor Adams had to cancel this class, which I can't tell you how desperately needed it is, we have had after COVID a dramatic increase in bullying and violence in our schools. I am the Chair of the School Safety Committee, so I hear the most extreme cases in my district of kids who are getting a safety transfer, where they want to go to another school because they don't feel safe.

The no. 1 thing that we want is more school safety agents, and this has been cut. He said that now parents will have to volunteer, which we are not qualified to be school safety agents. We don't have the training, and many parents don't have the capacity.

Chair JORDAN. Should the Federal Government stop the practice of releasing illegal migrants into the country? Should we say no to illegal—no more illegal migrants allowed in the country? Should we do that?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. I think we should follow Federal law.

Chair JORDAN. Yes.

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. I think we should follow Federal law.

Chair JORDAN. OK.

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. What I can tell you is that my family, we have been through many, many process of getting a visa, have been a student visa, a work visa. My family just became refugee, and the vetting process is extensive. My husband's 85-year-old grandparents who lost everything they had when Russia invaded Ukraine had to wait many months. We had to provide extensive documentation to be able to get the visa.

So, I think legal immigrants like myself look at this process and ask why there is this double standard, why we are not asking any kind of documentation. There is not any kind of vetting process.

Chair JORDAN. Yes. You did it the right way, and you are feeling it personally. You did it the right way, and yet your kids, who need the services in the school, are being denied that because of folks who aren't doing it in the legal and appropriate way.

How long have you been on the Community Education Council?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. It is my third year. I am on my second term.

Chair JORDAN. You are the vice president of that group?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. Yes. I have been elected by the school parents in District 2.

Chair JORDAN. Well, I am sure they appreciate, as we do, your hard work on behalf of kids, and particularly at this troublesome time. Thank you very much.

I yield back.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Correa.

Mr. CORREA. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Before I start, I would like to submit for the record two articles, one entitled, "Shut Out of DACA and Traditional Jobs: Young Immigrants Start Businesses to get ahead"; second, "What Rising Immigration Really Means for California's Economy."

I can submit those for the record, sir?

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Without objection.

Mr. CORREA. First, I want to thank all our witnesses here today for being here to give us your perspective. Immigration is the issue of America. We are all immigrants here today. I look around. None of you here are natural American Indians. All our ancestors came to this country. God knows two or three generations ago what the newspapers would have said. I think if we look into those newspapers, the rhetoric was probably the same.

Mr. Camarota, you started talking a little bit about the cost-benefit. I would like to see more research into that, because California today, we are the fourth largest economy in the world, and we are a net donor of revenue to the Federal Government. That stopped temporarily during COVID.

We have probably the most manufacturing in the United States, and I can tell you who works at those jobs. OK? A lot of our farm

industry, ag [agriculture], relies on undocumented workers. You are not going to deport them.

This country, as a national defense policy, we need to be independent and strong in two areas: (1) Energy production, no more OPEC oil embargoes and (2) food production. Heaven forbid if we have to import our food one of these days. That second one, food; that is agriculture.

In 2019, I got a phone call from a lobbyist on the poultry industry. In 2019, there was an immigration raid in Mississippi, picked up 680 undocumented workers at a poultry plant. You know what that did to that county? Brought it to a standstill. This lobbyist for the poultry industry wanted my help to keep those workers going. So, we do need to look at both sides of the issue and really deal with the facts.

Now, Ms. Souza, I heard some of your comments. I am probably the only Member in Congress that was in Tijuana, Mexico, inspecting, touring the Ukrainian refugee camps. I saw those refugees being processed. You know how long it would take them to get processed? About two or three days. You know where those camps are at now? They are closed. You know why they are closed? Because now a Ukrainian asylum seeker can apply directly from Europe to come to the U.S.

One of my colleagues the other day was saying we can use Ukrainians as opposed to the others, but the reason he was saying that—and I don't think he understood what he was talking about—was Ukrainians can get a work permit right away. These other folks can't.

So, we have to really look and drill down into the facts to figure out what a good immigration policy needs to be for the United States. It is not zero. It is not all. It is a good position for this country.

Talk about farm workers. Let's talk about Silicon Valley in California. We still do some ass kicking over there, high tech, research and development, and biotech. We are the world's leaders. You know what those workers—you know where they are from, a lot of them? Indian Americans and Asian Americans. Silicon Valley, if you talk to that industry, they can't get enough workers from there. We need immigrants. What we need is an adjustment to our immigration policy.

When it comes to asylum seekers, Mr. Camarota, you talked about the U.S. being in unprecedented territory. Twenty percent of our population now foreign born. Unprecedented. Used to be like 19. Now, it is 20 percent. A hundred years ago it was 19.

Mr. CAMAROTA. The peak is 14.8 in 1890.

Mr. CORREA. The numbers I saw was—well, OK, we will buy your numbers. Are some of those immigrants participating in our Nation's military?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Are you talking about the whole foreign born? There should be no illegal immigrants in the military.

Mr. CORREA. They can't be.

Mr. CAMAROTA. But, legal immigrants are.

Mr. CORREA. A lot of

Green cardholders are part of our military.

Mr. CAMAROTA. Absolutely.

Mr. CORREA. A lot of undocumented immigrants want to join the military and they can't. So, the fact that you have such a high number doesn't mean it is bad for the U.S. I bet you if those undocumented could, they would join the military, and they would be true Americans.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am out of time, and I yield.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Thank you, Mr. Tiffany.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you. Mr. Chen, so let's talk about coordination with local municipalities, right? You believe in that, that there should be coordination that goes on when resettling refugees or asylum seekers, anything like that, correct, with a local community?

Mr. CHEN. Coordination generally will improve their processing, yes, for both refugees and asylum seekers.

Mr. TIFFANY. Isn't it a requirement in Federal law that you have to consult and coordinate with States and local municipalities from the Federal level? Isn't that correct?

Mr. CHEN. I am not sure about that.

Mr. TIFFANY. So, you don't know that part of the law? Is that it?

Mr. CHEN. I just don't know that specific question.

Mr. TIFFANY. Yes. OK. Because it is required to do that, and it is currently not going on by organizations like World Relief and others in my home State of Wisconsin, where they are not coordinating, they are not working with local municipalities, and very unfortunate.

Mr. CHEN. If I may comment, sir, my understanding is many of the Federal refugee organizations that work with the Federal Government are typically in very close coordination with all the State agencies that support that. It is a State, local, and Federal partnership with local providers, like World Relief that you mentioned. I would be very surprised if there wasn't that kind of coordination, so that is an area that perhaps we will work on.

Mr. TIFFANY. You are about to be surprised, because maybe they are talking to the State, but the Federal and State is not talking to local municipalities. In fact, they excluded Chippewa County from those discussions in bringing refugees to Western Wisconsin.

You said remove those who are not eligible in a safe and humane manner. That is part of your—just a small segment of some of your testimony. Remove those who are not eligible in a safe and humane manner. Can you give me an example of somebody you believe should be removed?

Mr. CHEN. So, we have a very thorough immigration law process that begins with asylum seekers. For example, if they are going to seek relief—

Mr. TIFFANY. Give me a specific example of somebody that you think should be removed.

Mr. CHEN. If there is a full—

Mr. TIFFANY. I am going to move on to the next question. Should everyone get an attorney? That is what I heard in your testimony. Anyone that comes to our border, they should get an attorney. Is that right?

Mr. CHEN. So, legal representation has been shown to greatly improve both the fairness of the system and the efficiency. If you have a lawyer—

Mr. TIFFANY. So, the American taxpayer should pay for the lawyers also. Not only should they pay for the hospitals, not only should they pay for the schools, not only should they pay the SNAP benefits, but they should also pay for the lawyers to allow them, as people from outside the United States, to be able to come into America.

Mr. CHEN. It makes the system work much more efficiently if a judge doesn't have to explain to an individual that is appearing in front of the judge what the legal process is. It will make the entire process—

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you.

Mr. CHEN. —more efficient, and that is what we are about here is making sure the system is more efficient, fair, and orderly. That will help improve the processing at the border.

Mr. TIFFANY. Is it ever fair at—

Mr. CHEN. That is what we are all about.

Mr. TIFFANY. Is it ever fair at this point?

Ms. Egorov, you were cutoff by the Ranking Member when you were going to complete your answer on the vetting of Ukrainians. Is there anything you wanted to add in regard to that, to give context to what you were about to say?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. So, my husband's grandparents were 85 years old, and they lived in Kharkov, Ukraine. They only left their house when it became unlivable for them. So, they only left their house and tried to come to America when there was a bomb dropped in the courtyard. It killed eight of their neighbors, and it blew out the windows of their apartment in the middle of the Ukrainian winter. So, they were literally freezing to death.

They would have never been able to cross the border. So, I really think that the process of accepting refugees should accept the most vulnerable refugees who are vast majority women and children.

Mr. TIFFANY. So, there should be some context in regard to this vetting.

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. Yes. They made their way to the border with Poland, and they waited there for a very long time. Our grandmother did not have a passport because she had never left Ukraine in her life, and so she had to provide documentation to prove that she was from Ukraine. Then we had to provide documentation that we would support them here.

So, there was a long process. I think it was about three or four months at least.

Mr. TIFFANY. I really want to get to another question for you here. You cited public health concerns. Are there many parents that you are working with that are really concerned about public health issues? We are hearing about diseases that are coming from outside of America to places like New York City. Are you hearing those concerns?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. There was one specific outbreak of varicella in my district last year. So, the city health commissioner sent a letter to all health officials in New York City saying that the vaccination rates in the countries that are sending immigrants here is much lower than in the U.S. So, there is this concern.

I think biggest problem is the double standard. My community were just blocked from entering school buildings for two years if

you didn't have the COVID vaccine. Students couldn't play sports, even outside, if they didn't have the COVID vaccine. Like parents who couldn't take the COVID vaccine for health reasons, not even ideological, health reasons, couldn't see their children's graduation.

Then now, suddenly, anybody who arrives can get in without any vaccine, with vaccines that we have decades of data. I think that is a problem of trust now in terms of the double standard. We just went through so many rules.

I am sorry.

Mr. TIFFANY. No, no. Thank you very much.

I yield back. The double standard, Mr. Chair.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Thank you for a unanimous consent request.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Ms. Jayapal.

Ms. JAYAPAL. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the following reports showing the economic benefits of immigration: A report by Giovanni Perry, "The Economic Benefits of Immigration"; a report by the *National Bureau of Economic Research*, "The Economic Contribution of Unauthorized Workers and Industry Analysis"; a report by the *Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy*, "Undocumented Immigrants' State and Local Contributions"; three reports by *New American Economy*, "Examining the Economic Contributions of Undocumented Immigrants by Country of Origin," "Keeping Medicare Solvent: How Immigrants Subsidize Medicare's Trust Fund for All U.S. Seniors," and a third one, "Immigrants Contribute More in Insurance Premiums than they Receive in Benefits"; a report by the *George W. Bush Institute*, "Benefits of Immigration Outweigh the Costs"; a report by the *Bipartisan Policy Center*, "Immigrants and Public Benefits: What Does the Research Say?"; a report by *Forward U.S.*, "The Positive Economic Impact of Immigration"; a report by the *University of Pennsylvania, Wharton Business School*, "The Effects of Immigration on the U.S. Economy"; and a report by the *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, "Immigrants Contribute Greatly to the U.S. Economy Despite the Trump Administration's Public Charge Rule Rationale."

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Just for clarification, are those reports on immigrants, not illegal immigrants?

Ms. JAYAPAL. These are reports on immigrants and the economic benefits of immigration—

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Do they—

Ms. JAYAPAL. —which include documented and undocumented immigrants.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Right. Which is what the Democrats love to do is to—

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Chair, are we having a colloquy? Because I am happy to engage in it.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. No. I just want to—

Ms. JAYAPAL. I just—

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. No.

Ms. JAYAPAL. I had a unanimous consent request.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. I just want to clarify in—

Ms. JAYAPAL. I want to clarify that undocumented—

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. I appreciate that.

Ms. JAYAPAL. —immigrants and documented immigrants contribute to the U.S. economy.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. I want to—

Ms. JAYAPAL. Any indications that they do not is excluding the contributions of undocumented immigrants as well as documented immigrants.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. I just wanted to be clear that you are confusing the two. Thank you. Is there is there any objection?

Ms. JAYAPAL. I am not confusing the two.

Mr. Chair, I am including both, because both contribute.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Well, we will get to that in a moment. Is there any objection? Seeing none, the unanimous consent request is approved.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Ms. Escobar.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it is really important for all of us to take a step back and recognize what is really happening here. This is another example of the Republican majority's efforts to continue to demonize immigrants. That is what this hearing is about.

The hearings that we have been having on this Subcommittee haven't been focused on leading us to a solution or finding bipartisan compromise. Unfortunately, the hearings that this Subcommittee has been having have focused on trying to paint the picture for the American people that immigrants should be feared, immigrants should be hated, immigrants are bad, when we know that the contrary is true.

I think it is really important for us to acknowledge some truths if we are going to find a solution, because we absolutely do need a solution to this very significant domestic challenge.

Immigrants make our country better. One of our—Ms. Egorov, you are an example of immigrants improving our country, adding to this country. Our Ranking Member is another perfect example of that. The examples are all around us. They help our economy. They are part of the fabric of our Nation and of our communities, and they represent a net positive to who we are as Americans.

Another truth is that the status quo is absolutely unacceptable, and it should be unacceptable to all of us, whether we are Republicans or whether we are Democrats. I represent El Paso, Texas. My border community has seen some of the highest encounters with asylum seekers, with refugees, with people fleeing their homeland trying to get to safety and security in ours.

I am a third generation El Pasoan. I am the only Member of this Subcommittee and this Committee who was born and raised on the border, raised her children on the border, am so proud to be a border resident. I will tell you my community has seen some significant challenges as a result of the really significant number of people who are fleeing their homeland.

I think it is important for us to recognize it is not just a U.S. issue. We are seeing more people leaving their country across the globe than probably ever before. Certainly, in the Western hemisphere this is historic, at least in my recollection and for my generation.

The response to such a significant challenge shouldn't be to demonize immigrants, but it also shouldn't be to refuse to com-

promise. We have to compromise and come together if we are going to find the solution.

We should recognize the opportunity in this moment. We have eight million unfilled jobs in the country—Eight million. We are not achieving all we could achieve as a country without immigrants, and we can't do it.

Now, my Republican colleagues will point to H.R. 2, their border bill, as the solution. Guess what? Their border bill is a fantasy, and any of them who have taken the time to read it would recognize it. Any reporter who has taken the time to read it would recognize it.

The fundamental component of H.R. 2, the Republican solution, is that Mexico will accept all migrants that we expel from our country. That has never happened. It will never happen. So, while they continue to say, "Oh, we have got our solution, H.R. 2," it is a farce. It is a fig leaf to hide the fact that they bring no real solutions to the table on their own.

I would like to share with all my colleagues on this dais that there is a solution. It is called the Dignity Act. It is the first bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill that addresses the border and beyond. It lives up to our values without the egregious cruelty championed by many on the other side of the aisle.

It provides legal protections for immigrants that are here, and it addresses the biggest challenge we have at the border, which is unfair to migrants. The current—the status quo is unfair to migrants, unfair to Federal law enforcement, unfair to border communities, unfair to receiving communities.

It is time that Congress does its job and engages in bipartisan compromise and finds a real fix, and I would encourage everyone to look at the Dignity Act.

Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Ms. Spartz.

Ms. SPARTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not sure, but I might be actually the only Member of Congress who actually emigrated as an adult, not with parents as a baby, as a child, and brought by the family, but actually as an adult at the age of 21 made the decision to legally emigrate to the United States from Ukraine.

So, I understand the contribution of what immigrants have done to this country. We are a country of immigrants, but country of legal immigration and laws.

What I want to talk to you a little bit, you mentioned about your husband's parents coming from Ukraine. Do you believe it is happening right now, since we have illegal immigration overwhelming our system, somebody with legitimate concerns?

I hear from a lot, including Ukrainians, that come in through the program that they encounter a lot of challenges with that, because there is no capacity for legal immigration, and a lot of times it is becoming perverse. If you come here legally—as you mentioned, my husband had to sign off on a lot of papers that I am not going to be burdening society. I never took any benefits. I came for opportunities and hard work, not for welfare.

Now, we are creating a system where a lot of people come illegal, and get benefits much better than if you come here legally. You really kind of disincentivize going through the legal system.

So, do you believe, Ms. Egorov, that what is happening right now, it actually hurts legitimate asylum seekers, legitimate people avoiding persecution and have refugees, or try to come here to contribute to society? What are your thoughts on that?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. I think absolutely. The problem is that the vast majority of refugees that have been vetted by the United Nations are women and children from just three countries, right? Ukraine, Syria, and Afghanistan. This is not the same population that we are seeing coming through the Southern border.

So, we are not accepting the most vulnerable refugees. Based on public data that I found in New York City, 80 percent of the new migrants in New York City are single adults. If 50 percent of the refugees are women and children, there is a disconnect. We are not—the most vulnerable cannot even make the cross in the Southern border, because it is very dangerous. So, the most vulnerable will never be able to cross the border.

Ms. SPARTZ. There is the challenge, and I actually just went to the border, and it was mostly adult males who were going there.

Mr. Chen, you talk about processing at the border. Would you agree that we should have immediately determined, regardless how we believe in asylum standard, determination right at the border, and denying entry the people that are illegitimately applying for asylum? Do you support adjudication and denying entry immediately at the border?

Mr. CHEN. Thank you for the question. I don't think that would be practically possible, to make a determination for asylum so quickly. Asylum is a very—

Ms. SPARTZ. So, why do you want all these judges, then? If they cannot adjudicate immediately, why do they want them just to provide more papers and wait more years? Why do you even—if you cannot do that, what is the point of your wanting to have more judges, if you cannot have immediate adjudication?

Mr. CHEN. So, there aren't judges typically sitting at the border region to be able to—

Ms. SPARTZ. You say we need to have more. So, what would they be doing there, just giving more papers? What would they be doing if they were not adjudicating and immediately deciding if entry would be allowed? What are they for then?

Mr. CHEN. So, I think we completely agree here about the importance of having an efficient and orderly process that quickly can screen people like asylum seekers for eligibility. The question is just, how do you do that operationally to make it effective?

Ms. SPARTZ. You would not disagree that we should have immediately adjudication and making decision at the border, regardless how we feel about the standard, because HR-2 increases standard, and it is actually a reasonable standard. More likely than not, it is still 50/50 standard, so it is pretty still high standard, considering how many people are abusing the system, and legitimate asylum seekers actually get—that truly can be prosecuted and killed by their government have a hard time now because there is no prioritization.

So, you think that should be happening at the border and we should deny entry?

Mr. CHEN. So, what I don't think would work is—I think you used the word "immediately" a couple of times. It takes time for an asylum seeker to understand and explain his or her case to an asylum officer.

Ms. SPARTZ. It is OK maybe in real time, but they would not be allowed entry into the United States, right? So, they can stay in the detention facilities, but ultimately, they would not be given notice to appear and go in the country. Is that correct? You agree with that?

Mr. CHEN. I am not—that is the process right now is that somebody who is seeking—

Ms. SPARTZ. No, now they are leaving, because they don't have ability, we are so overwhelmed. You said like cartels, if we have it, would actually be preying on people, but aren't they preying on people right now? I mean, have you been at the border and seen what is happening?

The situation now, you believe they are not preyed on by cartels? It is huge. Women and children, and we have people pretty much being abused.

Mr. CHEN. I have been to the border, and people who are seeking asylum, people who are here waiting at the border, I was just at the Nogales port this fall, people are waiting for weeks, sleeping at those turnstiles, to be able to gain entry because there aren't enough capacity by—

Ms. SPARTZ. Because cartels are abusing the system.

Mr. CHEN. —to be able to do that.

Ms. SPARTZ. I yield back. My time has expired. Using them as pawns. I yield back.

Mr. CHEN. If I could just expand my answer?

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. At the request of the minority, Ms. Ross is next.

Ms. ROSS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and to the Ranking Member. I request unanimous consent to submit for the record the *New York Times* article, "GOP Governors Vow to Close Doors to Syrian Refugees."

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Without objection.

Ms. ROSS. Thank you very much. I want to pick up a little bit on the conversation that my colleague, Representative Escobar, had about how we need to do both deal with the border and deal with legal immigration.

I represent North Carolina's 2nd Congressional District in the research triangle. I want you to know I rarely hear about the border from my constituents, but I know because of my role in Congress and on this Subcommittee how important it is to deal with the border.

I do want you to know that I hear from employers in my district every day about the need to fix our broken immigration system and allow more people to come here and work, either while they are waiting for their immigration status to be taken care of, or under a legal immigration process which has a decades-long backlog.

I heard this from our Chamber of Commerce. I heard this from the Farm Bureau. The no. 1 issue for the Farm Bureau and agriculture is the no. 1 industry in North Carolina. I hear this from the hotel and lodging association, and I hear this from the medical

community. I want to bring up, because we are talking about social services, some facts about our workers in the healthcare industry.

According to a 2021 report from the Center for American Progress, approximately 365,000 undocumented immigrants worked in healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to providing needed care, they cleaned hospital rooms, served meals, managed front desks, and more. These are not the highly skilled immigrants that the tech industry is looking for.

Rather than draining our social services, these individuals played, and continue to play, essential roles in our healthcare services. They did so at a time when healthcare and other social service sectors are struggling with worker shortages. Of course, this is in addition to the taxes they pay into the system for the most part they cannot access, particularly through Social Security.

Imagine the tremendous impact these workers could have on our social services if our country expanded opportunities for these individuals to obtain legal status and harness their full potential and talents. Right now, we have low unemployment and massive demand for workers that U.S. citizens alone cannot meet, yet we put up roadblocks in front of immigrants to work here.

Our legal immigration system has not been updated for over 30 years. That means our legal immigration levels are still where they were when we—few people could even use the internet.

I would like to address a couple questions to Mr. Chen at my last minute. Are our current temporary worker programs adequate to meet this demand?

Mr. CHEN. Thank you for the question. I would say our temporary worker permit programs—sorry, employment authorization programs for workers and for permanent are not adequate, and we have demand far exceeding the need for H-1B, H-2A, agriculture programs, across the board.

Ms. ROSS. Can you discuss how the creation of additional legal pathways can impact the numbers we are seeing at the border?

Mr. CHEN. So, expanding legal pathways would do tremendously, in terms of improving both the pressures at the border to alleviate, that as the parole program has done, but also to address the kinds of important employment and business issues that you have just been describing that are impacting the country.

The fact is that both Republican and Democratic leaders across the country, and businesses—the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—are asking for more legal pathways to enable people to come here. We have had a lot of talk about people not coming or coming in the right way. The problem is we don't have adequate right ways for people to come exactly to meet the kinds of needs you are talking about here, Congresswoman, to meet the needs of the country, both for families and businesses, that would make America stronger.

Ms. ROSS. Thank you very much, and I yield back.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Nehls.

Mr. NEHLS. Mr. Chair, thank you.

The Ranking Member of the Full Committee, Mr. Nadler, who was here earlier, in his testimony he stated that Governor Abbott has sent—from Texas has sent 80,000 of these illegal immigrants to New York on buses. I personally think that is a beautiful thing. I think it should be 180,000. As a matter of fact, I am willing to

help pay for some of the buses to send more and more to these welcoming cities, these sanctuary cities.

Mayor Adams now says he is overwhelmed. He is overwhelmed. Other cities, Chicago, we are overwhelmed. Heck, we sent not even 100 or so to Martha's Vineyard, we have got to call the police. We have got a crisis.

Texas, the counties in Texas, those municipalities along the Southern border, have been overwhelmed for the past three years, and you heard nothing from the Democrats. Nothing. It is all OK. It is not my problem. I am out here on the cushy East coast. So, they start bussing them up there. It was a beautiful thing.

Now, the American people are paying attention. They are paying attention to the Biden border crisis. The Democrats didn't care. They didn't care about the border crisis for the last three years of this Administration, and now they care. Really, folks? Really? Do you think the Democrats truly care?

I find the timing of it interesting. We are 10 months away from a general election. Joe's approval rating is in the toilet. It is 33 percent. You can get online and look at all these residents of all these large cities, New York, Chicago, they are a little grumpy. They are a little grumpy. They are saying, "Mayor, what the hell is happening to our city here?" They are paying attention. They are expressing their outrage, and now the Democrats want to secure the Southern border.

My advice is really plain and simple. My advice to the Democrats: Call Joe. Call Joe. Use the Executive Orders today to secure our Southern border, because if you don't, Joe, the American people will act and Donald Trump will fix it again.

Joe Biden does not need Congress. He doesn't need Congress to do anything to address this crisis. Trump didn't have the support from Congress to address the border. He did it through 21 Executive Orders and 25 Presidential Memoranda. His policies kept the American people safe.

Now, the dishonest media out there, they are everywhere, the greatest threat to our country, the dishonest media. They won't hold the Biden Administration accountable. They will deflect. They will say it is Congress—it is Congress that hasn't done anything to secure the Southern border.

Congress, as a whole, has done nothing to address the Southern border. Joe Biden did it all by himself through Executive Order. He took all of Trump's policies and just reversed them all when it was the safest country in decades. We had more border security under Donald Trump than we had in decades.

So, no, folks, let's be honest with each other. Nothing is going to get done. The Democrats don't want to have anything to do with H.R. 2. They have already said it. Joe doesn't want to fix the crisis at our Southern border, because it is all by design. Joe puts America last. He puts the American people last.

I have about another minute and a half. Mr. Camarota, are you familiar with the public charge rule, my friend?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes.

Mr. NEHLS. Explain it. Explain that for the sixth grader, yes.

Mr. CAMAROTA. Well, very briefly, it is the idea that we try to evaluate new legal immigrants, so that they are not going to end

up on public benefits. If it looks like you are, it is possible in that process they will deny you a green card, which is permanent residency.

Mr. NEHLS. Trump is just looking out for America, like he always has. He defined “public charge” as an immigrant who receives one or more designated public benefits for more than 12 months within a 36-month period, rightfully included SNAP benefits, housing vouchers, Medicaid as benefits that would disqualify an immigrant from receiving a green card. To me, it is a no brainer. If you need two of these, you should be considered a public charge.

Is it true in September 2022 that the Biden Administration published a new public charge inadmissibility regulations that reversed Trump’s public charge regulations?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes. They disbanded an expansive idea and just made it a couple of programs.

Mr. NEHLS. Do you think it incentivizes more people to come to the United States? Hey, I am from Guatemala. I am going to come. I am going to get my food, housing, healthcare, everything. I am going to come, and I am going to come now. I have been invited by this President.

Mr. CAMAROTA. It could. We estimate that 52 percent of legal immigrant households access one or more welfare programs. So, those rates are high.

Mr. NEHLS. We are \$34 trillion in debt.

I yield back.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much. The last time I recall studying civics or walking through these halls I reflect on the fact that we are the United States of America. What happens to one State or one community can happen to another. So, I am not proud of the idea of migrants, babies, families who are fleeing true persecution, to be distributed across the Nation without regard for their humanity. I am a problem solver, which is what this Committee should be doing.

So, I want to pose my question to Chief Mello to be able to say, first, I am years-long Member of the Congressional Fire Caucus. I am a great champion of firefighters. I served on the Homeland Security Committee, served, and fought mightily for the benefits for firefighters and their families after 9/11. We finally got some relief.

I know that during the American Rescue Plan during COVID funding came to local communities; did it not?

Mr. MELLO. Yes, ma’am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Those were Federal dollars.

Mr. MELLO. Yes, ma’am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Were those dollars welcomed?

Mr. MELLO. Yes, ma’am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Some of them I hope got to you firefighters and EMS who never stopped during that crisis. Did some of them come your way, sir, or in your community?

Mr. MELLO. Some of that money came into my community, yes, ma’am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you so very much. So, I am committed to getting you dollars. We have had a plan that the President has put forward of \$13.6 billion. That is your money, part of it, Federal

dollars that would come directly to Eagle Pass and the Chief, who I could tell the emotion in your voice as you had to deal with a little three-month-old that didn't make it. Is that what you said, a three-month-old didn't make it?

Mr. MELLO. The three-month-old and the three-year-old, they were both brothers. They didn't make it.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. They didn't make it.

Mr. MELLO. No, ma'am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I can imagine your men and women dealing with that.

So, let me just share with you and let you know quickly that \$13.6 billion, which has been held up by Republicans, would be Border Patrol agents, cutting edge inspection machines, 1,000 law enforcement personnel, investigative capacity, 1,600 additional asylum officers, 375 new immigration judges, additional grants to local governments and nonprofits. Sir, that is you directly.

Critical border management activities, expansion of lawful pathways, not for everyone, but I do think you see some individuals—and you are not an immigration chief, but you might answer this—that may have a reason for asylum. Just in your own course, have you seen those kinds of people?

Mr. MELLO. In my personal opinion, I have seen, yes, I have seen some families that would benefit the United States, but I have seen several that are individuals that would not benefit the U.S.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. We need to make sure that those individuals do not come here to do harm. I understand that, and that is what this would do. Support for eligible arrivals, funding to conduct robust child labor investigations, and reimbursement to the Department of Defense for its support. On here is 1,000 law enforcement investigators, so that we don't have the bad guys here.

None of this has been moved, because my friends on the other side fail to realize that we are the United States of America. As you are Chief in Eagle Pass, there are Fire Chiefs in New York, there are Fire Chiefs in other cities who want to do the right thing.

So, I just have a short period of time. If we could get this 13.6 billion passed and get that money coming to you that you could use effectively, how helpful would that be to you?

Mr. MELLO. That would be very helpful. Very, very helpful.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Do you need that money now?

Mr. MELLO. Yes, I do.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chen, would you please—you heard me list some of the elements, you know what those dollars would be going for. Explain how this money would be very effective in easing that border crisis and reflecting that we are the United States of America, and that the migration and immigration, migrants and immigrants, collectively, have been contributors to the Nation's economy, but to the Nation's goodness.

Can you tell me how some of these elements I have read about would be effective in the work of helping ease this crisis?

Mr. CHEN. Thank you for the question, Congresswoman. I will start with the program that I think you referenced a moment ago, the Shelter and Services Program run by FEMA. I was actually talking with the Chief here just before the hearing started about

how the money—it is about 360 million that has already been given out in Fiscal Year 2023 to cities and localities across the country.

More is needed. That funding should come to ensure that temporary services, temporary assistance, transportation, emergency medical screenings, those kinds of needs are met. That would help greatly small towns like Eagle Pass or cities in the interior in welcoming immigrants that are coming into the country.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Thank you. The gentlelady's time has expired. Mr. Moore.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you for the witnesses being here today.

Our social services programs have been negatively affected by the rise of migrants. Taxpayers have footed the bill for illegal immigrants by shelling out over \$150 billion of their hard-earned money. I saw firsthand at the border hospitals are overflowed, American citizens have traveled hours—or for hours to get their medical needs met, because the local hospitals could not take them.

Whether it be your doctors' appointments, your kids' teachers being stretched thin, you can bet that they have been negatively impacted by illegal immigration.

One of the things I find interesting—and as we were traveling in Yuma, Arizona, is the hospitals, the young people, the young ladies would come right across the border and have a baby. Then, by Federal law the hospitals had to provide the car seats before they could send them on their way. So, we are not doing anything to secure the U.S. Southern border.

Chief, I know you would like to have the additional money, but wouldn't you rather us do some things to kind of slow the flow from other countries? I mean, we had 106 different Nations come through Yuma, Arizona, according to Sheriff Dannels. Wouldn't you rather us do something besides send money? It is like setting a house on fire and then funding the fire department. I don't quite understand the benefit of extra money while we are setting a place on fire.

So, Chief, would you rather us just secure the border and stop this flow of immigrants from all over the globe? There was 302,000 last month that came here. Wouldn't that be better than just sending a little money?

Mr. MELLO. Yes, sir.

Mr. MOORE. I think not only just for you, sir, but the people that are dying—150 a day that are dying of fentanyl poisoning, I think it would be better for those families as well, or the displaced American citizens that were now taken out of school systems. There are a lot of things we can do instead of just funding the failure of this Department of Homeland Security and this Executive Branch that we have got that have created this issue.

Sheriff Dannels said in here in testimony in 2018, or he said he had been there 40 years on the border, never had he seen it as good as it was in 2018, and never as bad as it is right now, and that was before last month.

So, there are a lot of things—it is always government, we want to throw more money at the problem. We created the problem, we set the building on fire, and then we funded the fire department. That is kind of the way I see this.

So, anyway, is it Ms. Egorov? Is that how you say it? With the new strain or influx of illegal immigrants, can you explain kind of what this is doing to your schools? I mean, we have had these—I understand there are 57 different dialects in Spanish that are just South of the U.S. Southern border down through South America. Are we seeing where we just really cannot communicate with these kids? Can you talk about the strain that it is putting on your school system?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. I think the biggest problem is there is already a shortage of ESL teachers, so teachers who can teach children who don't speak English. Even if we had more financial resources, there is just so many teachers who are qualified to teach these children.

Also, as I mentioned, I think the paraprofessionals shortages already existed as well. So, the children who are coming, who are crossing the border, are going through some horrible experiences. They are arriving with very severe needs. Our schools are not necessarily designed to deal with such impacts on their mental health and physical health.

Mr. MOORE. Ms. Egorov, when you say, "severe needs," can you elaborate a little bit? Is it—because I understand we have over 86,000 unaccompanied minors that we have lost. The Federal Government has brought here, and we have shipped them all over this United States, and we are hearing about these kids working now in these sweatshops, or whatever you want to call them, but also, we are not even background checking. We had one sponsor that got 20 children, and we didn't do a background check. So, we don't know where we sent these 20 children to this one individual.

So, could you talk about—I don't have a whole lot of time, but just when you say some pretty extreme situations or—can you elaborate a little bit on what we are looking at?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. I can give you anecdotal data about my district. I believe just last month there was a 10-year-old in a shelter who committed suicide. We don't know what that boy went through crossing the border, right?

I think that the Federal Government has provided this data. In my testimony, I refer to the 2019 report that specifically says how children are being raped, are being child trafficked, there is sexual violence, and sexual trafficking. Literally there are—if you look on the internet, there are pictures of children who have been medicated, who are not even conscious being used to cross the border.

There are many cases—that report of the Homeland Security as well—of children who are being used. They literally come, help an adult get into the U.S., and they are sent back to help another cross the—

Mr. MOORE. Yes. They are just—they are like on a treadmill. They come over. They—

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. Yes.

Mr. MOORE. —identify as the student or the child of this individual adult. Then, they grab the child, once the adult is here, send them back across the border.

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. Yes.

Mr. MOORE. They are basically just—they are just on a little treadmill.

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. It is child trafficking, and we have known that for many years, because there is a report from the Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. MOORE. Sure. My time is up. Thank you.  
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Hunt.

Mr. HUNT. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Today we are here to talk about the drain of illegal immigration and Biden's open border policies and how they are affecting the American taxpayer.

Recently, airline safety has also become an issue of paramount concern. People are concerned of whether or not doors are going to fly off planes and panels, but I am going to tell you about the issue that starts with safety long before anybody in this room would actually board a plane.

Biden's open border policies are overburdening the TSA and making it more difficult for the TSA agents to do their jobs effectively. The TSA was created after 9/11 to oversee security and all modes of transportation, including aviation safety.

As an American, you know we have to go through security screening and board a plane just like everybody else. What you also may know is that the TSA has an entirely different standard for illegal immigrants. That is right. There is a different set of rules for you, the American public, and illegal immigrants.

You have all seen the TSA check line, of course. Well, I have news for you. Biden's DHS has created another line, and here is the picture to prove it. This is a line in the Tucson airport specially made for noncitizens. As you can see, the sign says, "Non-U.S. Citizens Without Passports Enter Here."

Without passports, that is the tip of the iceberg. These illegal immigrants may go unvetted with no verifiable photo ID at all, and I guess Biden and Mayorkas want us all to trust that these people are going to say who they are based on just their honesty and their word alone.

You know what a valid form of ID is for an illegal alien according to TSA today? An arrest warrant. I am not making that up. You can get on a plane with an arrest warrant. If an arrest warrant can get an illegal alien on a domestic flight, then why can't it get them a one-way ticket to jail where they belong?

This is not only an assault on American citizens, but a great threat to our national security.

I am a Member of Congress. I have TSA pre-check and Clear. When I get screened by TSA, I have to prove that I am who I say I am with an official government ID. For the record, my name is Wesley P. Hunt, as in Parish Hunt. If my airline ticket says Wesley J. Hunt, this United States Congressman ain't getting on the plane.

The TSA is tasked with airline security, but they are letting illegal immigrants on our planes with unverifiable identities.

We also know that in the last two years, over 200 people on the terrorist watch list have been caught at the border that we know of. For the record, I am a post-9/11 veteran. I deployed to Iraq. I am a West Point grad. I fought for this country to keep those people out of our country to keep it safer, and now we are failing the American public.

I am a Texan, born and raised in Houston, Texas. Greg Abbott, the Governor of Texas, has taken steps to stop the flow of illegal immigration. By the way, that is not his job. That is the Federal Government's job. Governor Abbott put buoys in the Rio Grande, set up fences and barbed wire, just to name a few protocols. How did Biden reward Governor Abbott for his efforts? He sued the State of Texas. The Federal Government sued the State for doing the job the Federal Government should be doing by keeping you safe.

This illegal invasion is the destruction of Federal immigration law and the elimination of any sort of protocol at our Southern border that is not the result of negligence, malfeasance, or incompetence. This is in fact the goal. Biden is allowing this—he is not only allowing this catastrophe; he is facilitating it.

The goal of the Biden Administration is to flood this country with tens of millions of illegal immigrants, fly them to a town near you, and if you question it, they will call you a racist. They are sad.

The root cause of immigration begins and ends at 1600 Pennsylvania. If you want another 9/11 in this country, keep the border wide open. I suggest that we don't.

I yield back the rest of my time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Thank you.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chair?

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. For what purpose does the gentlelady rise?

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I ask for submission—for the ability to submit into the record the following items and ask unanimous consent. "White House Calls on Congress to Advance Critical National Security Priorities," which provides for us the detailing of the Federal immigration funding that is required to help the Chief from Eagle Pass. I ask unanimous consent.

I ask unanimous consent to add to the record the following statements of the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence, Center for Law and Social Policy, Church World Service, National Immigration Forum, National Immigration Law Center, United U.S., United We Dream, Women's Refugee Commission, and the work of the National Association of Christian Churches, Pastor Ortega. They are the ones that stand ready to open centers, feeding, housing, clothing of those innocent and noncriminal individuals who have come here because they are fleeing persecution.

I ask unanimous consent that all these documents be able to be submitted into the record.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Without objection.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Ms. Souza Egorov, you have heard the Democrats for the last two hours do what they have been doing for years. They love to conflate legal immigrants, like your family, who have obeyed all our laws, who have waited patiently in line, who have done everything our country has asked of them, with illegal immigrants, whose very first act in this country is to break our laws.

The legal immigrants I know find this infuriating. They find it patronizing. They find it insulting. What are your thoughts?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. My husband and I are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to live in America and to raise our family.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. How do you feel when you hear your family's law-abiding behavior compared with that of illegal immigrants?

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. What I want is to make sure that my kids have the same opportunities that we had here, to work and to study. We need to have some kind of process to prioritize who is coming to our country. I think it should be—

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Observe—

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. —and contribute—legal process, yes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Yes. Observe the rule of law as your family did.

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. Yes. Absolutely.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Thank you.

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. With some vetting process—

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. I have got to move on.

Ms. SOUZA EGOROV. There is no vetting now.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Dr. Camarota, your studies entirely are on illegal immigrants, and what you have done is to take the—with extensive studies, the cost of the services demanded by those illegal immigrants compared to the taxes that they pay. Am I correct on this?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes. We have an estimate for that, yes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. That estimate is \$68,000 net cost to U.S. taxpayers per illegal immigrant. Is that correct?

Mr. CAMAROTA. That is the lifetime net fiscal drain, yes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Right. Now, we have had five million illegal immigrants enter this country and be released into it, 3.3 million deliberately released, another 1.7 million gotaways. That is five million total.

Now, according to my figures, that is a staggering \$340 billion a year of net costs to the American people.

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes. Just to be clear, that is a lifetime cost.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Right, right.

Mr. CAMAROTA. That would assume that the educational attainment—that is the key thing. Legal immigrants are much more educated than illegal immigrants.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Of course.

Mr. CAMAROTA. That is what drives the cost estimate, not illegality or anything like that.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Exactly.

Mr. CAMAROTA. It is the same reason, just to give you an example, why cities and states worry so much about losing their middle-class tax base.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Well, let's just finish the math here. Gallup, two years ago, estimated from their surveys there are 42 million people living in poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean who intend to come here now that they can. That comes to more than \$2.8 trillion of costs to U.S. taxpayers, and that is just for immigration from Latin America and from the Caribbean. These are staggering numbers, and I thank you for your studies on this.

Chief Mello, when we went to Eagle Pass last week, we were told that 1,700 migrants had perished just on American soil during this Administration, since it took office. No one knows how many have perished South of the border. What have you encountered? What can you describe that it means to perish in the Texas desert?

Mr. MELLO. Can you repeat that question, sir?

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. What have you encountered in terms of people perishing of—migrants perishing on American soil?

Mr. MELLO. I have encountered several out in the field. What we call the field is out in the ranches, out in the ranches in the summertime. All along the year we saw 43 drownings in the Rio Grande. That is not counting on the Mexican side, just Eagle Pass picking up migrants.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Do you think that many of these people would have made this dangerous trek if they knew they would be turned back at the border?

Mr. MELLO. When we have picked them up, they regret making that trek.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. They made it because they knew they would be admitted into the country; did they not?

Mr. MELLO. Yes, sir.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. The Democrat's witness says we simply need more money to process people into the country faster, allow them to stay, and provide even more free services to support them. Will this reduce illegal immigration or increase it?

Mr. MELLO. I think it will increase it.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Can you describe the situation that you have had with illegal immigration at the end of the Trump Administration compared with the situation you face today?

Mr. MELLO. The increase—the cost to the city, the cost of not being a normal community, we are being overwhelmed. We are being overwhelmed. One thing I can say is it needs to stop.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. All right. Thank you very much.

Thank you all of you for your testimony. I believe that our Members have exhausted their questions, so, again, thank you for making the trip here today. Thank you for your expert testimony. This will conclude today's hearing.

Without objection, all Members will have five legislative days to submit additional written questions for the witnesses or additional materials for the record.

Without objection, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:15 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

All materials submitted for the record by Members of the Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement can be found at the following links: <https://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=116727>.

