

**THE BIDEN-HARRIS BORDER CRISIS:
VICTIM PERSPECTIVES**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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THE BIDEN–HARRIS BORDER CRISIS: VICTIM PERSPECTIVES

Tuesday, September 10, 2024

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Washington, DC

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:14 a.m., in Room 2141, Rayburn House Office Building, the Hon. Jim Jordan [Chair of the Committee] presiding.

Members present: Representatives Jordan, Issa, Biggs, McClintock, Tiffany, Massie, Roy, Bishop, Spartz, Fitzgerald, Bentz, Cline, Armstrong, Van Drew, Nehls, Kiley, Hageman, Hunt, Fry, Rulli, Nadler, Swalwell, Correa, Dean, Escobar, Ross, Ivey, and Balint.

Chair JORDAN. The Committee will come to order. Without objection the Chair is authorized to call for a recess at any time. We welcome everyone to today’s hearing on victims’ perspectives on the Biden–Harris border crisis.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas to lead us all in the Pledge of Allegiance. So, please rise.

ALL. I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Chair JORDAN. The Chair will now recognize himself for an opening statement. On day one, the Biden–Harris Administration made three changes that led to the unprecedented situation we have seen in our country. On day one, they decided no more building the wall, no more Remain in Mexico while we evaluate your asylum claim, and once you get here, you will not be detained. You will be released into the country. As a result of that, ten million migrants have come into the country, 99 on the terrorist watch list. We have lost track; they have lost track of hundreds of thousands of young people who came into the country. Because of all those decisions made again, deliberately, intentionally, in a premeditated way, on day one of this administration all kinds of terrible things have happened, all kinds of terrible things. Jocelyn Nungaray, Noah Rodriguez, Kayla Hamilton, Weston Fundner, Rachel Morin, Lakin Riley, Maria Gonzalez, Sam Fagan, and Gabriel Fagan, each one of these individuals were someone’s child. Each one had a promising life, a promising life ahead of them. Each one had people in their lives who loved and cared for them, each one. Each one is a victim of the Biden–Harris open border policies.

Jocelyn and Maria, not yet even teenagers, were brutally assaulted and murdered by illegal aliens who were released into the country by this administration. Kayla and Lakin, young women pursuing their dreams were brutally assaulted and murdered by illegal aliens who this administration released into this country. Rachel Morin, a mom of five young children, was brutally assaulted and murdered by an illegal alien welcomed into this country by Kamala Harris and Joe Biden. Noah Rodriguez, Sam Fagan, Gabriel Fagan, and Weston Fundner, teenagers and young men with bright futures were poisoned by fentanyl that this administration refused to stop from falling across our Southern border. You may have heard these names and stories and those of countless other victims of criminal illegal aliens, but not from Kamala Harris. Last week, a teenager in Manassas, Virginia was allegedly kidnaped by an illegal alien, reportedly released into the country, again, by Joe Biden and Kamala Harris' Administration.

In January, two New York City police officers were assaulted by a group of illegal aliens who entered the country thanks to this administration's open border policy. In May 2023, a teenage girl in Alabama was viciously assaulted in a restaurant bathroom by an illegal alien with a violent arrest record in his home country. He was able to enter the country as a quote, "got-away" because of this administration's policies that ensure border patrol agents are too busy processing illegal aliens to actually patrol the border and do their job.

Last February, a Nassau County New York man was the victim of a brutal antisemitic attack by the hands of an illegal alien that this administration released into the country.

I can keep listing these stories. This is what happens when you have an administration that doesn't care about border security that prioritizes aliens over Americans and legal immigrants and that refuses to enforce immigration law in the interior of the country. I am sure that we will hear a lot of excuses from my Democrat colleagues today. We will hear how the illegal border crossings have decreased. Of course, we all know that the Kamala Harris and Joe Biden are flying illegal aliens right now into the U.S. interior. We will hear that tired and flawed argument that natives commit more crimes than immigrants. Even if that was true, would it matter to Rachel's family, Kayla's mom, or Jocelyn's mom, or Weston's family? The truth is that in every crime I have discussed, everyone committed by an illegal alien was preventable if only we had an administration that did their job. Unfortunately, we don't. We have a Democrat Presidential Candidate who for years advocated for open borders. She was appointed the border czar, yet presided over the largest mass, illegal immigration in U.S. history. She has called for ICE to be abolished. She has laughed off questions about border security. She has promoted amnesty. She has said that "an undocumented immigrant is not a criminal."

Thanks to Kamala Harris and Joe Biden, we are on track to get to 12 million illegal aliens in the United States in the four-year administration—12 million. I always tell folks, that is the equivalent of the entire population of our State, the State of Ohio, seventh largest State in the union. That is not even counting the 1.9 million known got-aways who evaded Border Patrol or the unknown num-

ber of got-aways who have not even been detected. American communities are left to suffer the consequences. We are going to hear from people who suffered it in a direct way today.

With that, I would yield to the Ranking Member for his opening statement.

Mr. NADLER. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, before I start, I would like to take a moment and express my sincerest condolences to all our witnesses who have lost loved ones and to all their families. I cannot imagine how difficult this has been for you, and I appreciate your being here to share their stories. May their memories be a blessing.

Unfortunately, instead of working in a bipartisan fashion to find meaningful solutions to our broken immigration system, we are sitting in yet one more partisan hearing designed to divide us and to score political points before an election. In fact, one of our Republican colleagues said the quiet part loud last week when he said in this season “these are messaging hearings that we have been doing.”

We have only eight weeks until election day and our Republican colleagues are trying to do everything, they can blame Vice President Harris for what they now call the Biden–Harris border crisis. They label her the border czar and the leader of the administration’s border policy even though they know that is not and never was the case. Let’s be clear. Vice President Harris was never in charge of immigration police with the Biden Administration and was certainly not the border czar. That position does not exist, so of course, she could not have been appointed to it. Our Republican colleagues know this, of course, but have never let the facts get in the way of their messaging.

The truth is that President Biden directed Vice President Harris to address the root causes of migration from Mexico and the Northern Triangle. In that role, she generated over \$5 billion in public and private investments and created opportunities in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. That investment has paid major dividends. Between Fiscal Years 2021 and 2023, Border Patrol apprehensions from migrants from those countries dropped by nearly 50 percent. That is because immigration is impacted by factors beyond one country’s policies. People do not leave their lives and homes beyond on a whim. The people crossing our border immigrate because life has become unsustainable in their home countries, because of factors like persecution, or economic, food, or political insecurity. By investing in other countries, we help ensure that people can build a better life for themselves without having to seek security elsewhere. These investments have contributed to the lowest levels of unauthorized crossings in four years. You would not know any of that from seeing my colleagues do their press hits on *NewsMax* or from what we have heard today.

In today’s hearing, we are going to hear from family members who have lost a loved one from fentanyl poisoning or as a result of a crime committed by someone who entered the country over the last four years. There is a verse in the Torah that hangs in my office, “tzedek, tzedek, tirdof,” “justice, justice shalt thou pursue.” The families here today want justice for their loved ones. They want to ensure that no other family has to suffer the pain of what

they have gone through. These are noble goals. The heinous crimes these families have suffered should be universally condemned. The perpetrators should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of our laws and then they should be removed from the country. This is not a story that began four years ago. Tragically, the same story could be told of any President, former President Trump's Administration released undocumented immigrants who went on to commit crimes.

Now, do I blame President Trump for those crimes? Of course not. He has his own crimes to worry about. As I have said to all Congress, no President has ever had the resources to detain every individual that crosses the border without authorization. Our immigration system is broken, and it will take a substantial bipartisan effort to fix it. We need more judges and asylum officers so migrants can have their asylum cases heard in a matter of weeks, not years, so we can stop so-called catch and release.

We need to expand lawful pathways to migration, as the Biden-Harris Administration has been trying to do, so people can come to the United States after they are vetted in an orderly and safe manner. We need to look at immigration in a holistic manner to see the benefits that immigrants bring to this country and not focus only on the negatives. Immigrants' contributions have helped ensure that we came out of the pandemic stronger than any other advanced economy. A nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found that recent immigrants will cut the deficit by \$900 billion and add revenues of \$1.2 trillion over the next decade. Immigrants make essential contributions to our society, our economy, and our character as a country, and they do so despite an immigration system that has been profoundly broken for decades. My Republican colleagues have shown they do not have an interest in fixing the system so that we may take advantage of the remarkable contributions that immigrants make to our country while keeping out those who would do us harm. Instead, they would rather blame Democrats and push unworkable solutions.

Republicans spent a year saying that their dream bill, H.R. 2, is the only way to secure the border, even though they know that it can't become law having failed twice to pass the Senate receiving just 32 votes earlier this Congress, in a Senate I would note with 49 Republicans. Then, they insisted that the price of helping protect Ukraine against Russian aggression was enacting harsh border enforcement legislation. Senate Republicans even managed to find bipartisan support for border bill in the Senate, a bill that Minority Leader McConnell called the toughest border bill in 30 years, but Republicans could not take yes for an answer. Donald Trump said that he did not want to do anything that might help with the border in an election year because he wants immigration as a campaign issue. Other Republicans said it out loud, too, saying that they don't want to "do too damn much to help a Democrat."

Republicans showed clearly what Democrats have been saying over and over again, that they don't want to do anything that would help address the immigration system. They clearly have given up. They just want the demagogue. I wish that was not the case. Vice President Harris has made it clear we need a reformed immigration system with robust lawful pathways to citizenship, strong security and controls at our border, and a modern approach

to a global issue that has been neglected for far too long. Democrats stand ready to work on real solutions to these problems. I only wish we had a willing partner. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today and I yield back.

Chair JORDAN. The gentleman yields back. Without objection, all other opening statements will be included in the record.

Today's witnesses, we start with the Hon. Mike Boudreaux. Sounds like that he got roots in Louisiana with that last name. Sheriff Boudreaux is a life-long resident of Tulare County, California, a place I have been. His 38-year career in the Sheriff's Department began as a Sheriff Deputy when he was 19 years old. He has served as Sheriff since 2013. Sheriff Boudreaux holds a certificate of criminology and administration of justice, an Associates of Science degree in Administration of Justice, a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminology and Management, and a Master's degree with course study in the Administration of Justice and Organizational Development. Sheriff, we welcome you today.

Ms. April Aguirre began her crime victim advocacy in Houston, Texas after her nine-year-old niece was shot and killed while riding in a car with her parents. She is a veteran of the United States Air Force where she trained as a nurse. She has an Associate's degree in criminal justice from Houston Community College and a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Houston. We appreciate you being with us today.

Ms. Tammy Nobles is a realtor from Norfolk, Virginia. She volunteers part-time as President of the Downs Syndrome Association of Hampton Roads, and is a mother of Kayla Hamilton, a victim of a criminal illegal alien and we appreciate you and sympathize with your loss.

Ms. Patricia Morin, a mother of six, including Rachel who was the victim of a criminal illegal alien, stay at home mom for 25 years, home schooled her children. She returned to the workforce after her oldest child graduated from high school and worked in the mortgage banking industry in retail management until she retired. She currently works part-time as an Office Administrator of her church and resides in Maryland, and we appreciate you being with us as well.

Ms. Anne Fundner is a wife and mother of four whose 15-year-old son Weston was poisoned by fentanyl. Since then, she has spoken publicly about her son's death to promote change and educate American families about the consequences of the fentanyl crisis. We appreciate you being with us as well.

Ms. Alex Nungaray is a resident of Houston, Texas, and is the mother of Jocelyn, a victim of criminal illegal aliens.

Dr. Cecilia Farfán-Méndez is a researcher with the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation at UC-San Diego and the Center for Studies on Security, Intelligence, and Governance at the Institute of Technology de Mexico. Her research and work focus on organized crime, female participation in criminal groups, and U.S.-Mexico security cooperation.

Finally, Ms. Melissa Lopez. We will now yield to the gentlelady from Texas to introduce a witness from her district.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is my pleasure to introduce a fellow El Pasoan to the Committee this morning. Melissa

Lopez who is doing vital work as the Executive Director of the Estrella del Paso organization. Estrella del Paso is the largest legal services provider in our region. They assist asylum seekers, victims of trafficking, and migrants who have faced a host of dangerous and life-threatening situations. Over a career spanning 17 years providing legal services for immigrants, Melissa has met countless immigrants and experienced firsthand just how many people come to the United States to pursue a better life for themselves and their families.

Ms. Lopez, thank you for all your work and welcome.

Chair JORDAN. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back. We welcome our witnesses and thank them for appearing today. We will begin by swearing you in. Would you all 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, correct, and to the best of your knowledge, information, and belief so help you God?

Let the record show that each of the witnesses answered in the affirmative. Thank you. You can be seated. Please know that your written testimony will be entered into the record in its entirety. Accordingly, we ask that you summarize your testimony in five minutes. We are going to go right down the line, and we will have to break in about 35 minutes. There is an important ceremony taking place over in the Capitol for the families of folks who were killed in Afghanistan three years ago and the Members want to be there. We will take a break, and we will have some food for you, but we are going to start with the Sheriff and then move right now the line. So, Sheriff Boudreaux, you are recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF SHERIFF MIKE BOUDREAUX

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Chair Jordan and Ranking Member Nadler, and distinguished Members of the Committee, my name is Mike Boudreaux. I am the Sheriff of Tulare County in California. Tulare County sits in the heart of California, right in the center. We are a very large agricultural community.

I have spent 38 years in law enforcement working in the Sheriff's Office and working with victims throughout my career. I am also an FBI National Academy graduate in Class 251 where I have law enforcement leaders from all over the country and, as well, all over the world who I have connections with.

When it comes to the dangerous and sometimes deadly impacts of what I feel is a failed Biden–Harris Administration on open border policies, the impacts of illegal immigration in California, I must say that I have a front-row seat. I also serve as the California State Sheriffs' Association President where I meet regularly with all other 57 sheriffs, there is 58, me being number 5–8, in the State of California hearing their stories.

There are a few examples that I would like to be able to provide today. We have a long issue of illegal immigration in California, however, over the last three years of the Biden–Harris Administration, we have a deadly impact of violent criminals coming into our communities. We have migrant communities of farm workers who are now infiltrated and terrorized by those that they have fled other countries from, who are now in our communities terrorizing

them, threatening their children to be involved in drug trafficking, gun running, drug dealing, as well as gangs, and sexual activity of children. I am very involved with these migrant communities as the sheriff, and I can tell you the personal stories and impacts are heart wrenching.

Many of these communities have to do what is called paying rent. You must give money to the drug lord or the gang member or the violent criminal of those that you fled if you want to live peacefully within that migrant community. I am very familiar with Kamala Harris as the Senator and Attorney General in California and I can tell you that the words that she has often spoken when it comes to defunding the police and ICE, akin to the KKK, is demoralizing to law enforcement and those trying to protect our country and protect victims here in California and the United States.

I have, as the President, walked the border, and over the course of the 38 years as Sheriff, I have visited the border many times and I have many friends in the Border Patrol, as well as Homeland Security, and I can tell you that they are frustrated. Thousands of people coming through a day where I visited, and I saw people from Yemen and China coming through. In our town, we had a friend of mine Jody Jones, his brother was shot and killed at an AMPM minimart where an illegal immigrant who had been deported three times over found his way back into the United States, attempted a robbery, and shot and killed a man. My deputies got into a pursuit and got into a violent shootout with this man.

We have a case where that is called the Reign of Terror. I can tell you as the Attorney General Kamala Harris often lessened the impact of law enforcement with her quotes of “defunding the police.” I have story after story, but most recently what we are starting to see is an influx of Mandarin or those from China. We are unraveling a human trafficking case of over 40 women who are involved in sexual prostitution up and down the State of California, who have found their way across the border and are here illegally and that case is ongoing.

We have financial crimes from Mandarin, thieves from China, who are stealing millions of dollars online from our elderly in the Central Valley and up and down the State of California. We had an illegal immigrant, El Mano Negro, he was a hired hand by the cartel, where we arrested and finally, he admitted to killing and assassinating over 25 people in our county at the hands of the cartel. We just unraveled a cartel in our county, dismantling that cartel. The people in that cartel that we arrested openly admitted that within the last three years it is easier now to move human beings, drugs, guns, and fentanyl most specifically, across the border and that is it easier now than in the history of their cartel. I can tell you because of the Biden and Harris Administration law enforcement resources are quickly depleted. We have victim after victim that we see as you will hear today and that these stories are not unfamiliar to law enforcement up and down the State of California.

So, with that, I will conclude and turn it back over to you, Mr. Chair.

[The prepared statement of Sheriff Boudreaux follows:]



Tulare County, Ca

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**United States House Committee on the Judiciary
“The Biden-Harris Border Crisis: Victim Perspectives”**

Tuesday, September 10th, 2024

10:00am

Opening Statement

Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member Nadler, and distinguished Members of the Committee, my name is Mike Boudreaux, and I am the Sheriff of Tulare County in the great state of California.

When it comes to open borders and the impact of illegal immigration in California, as the Sheriff of Tulare County, I have a front row seat to the havoc those can wreak. I'd like to give you examples of some of our more notable cases in the Central Valley that put the impacts of flawed border policies on full display.

The Central San Joaquin Valley of California is known for its robust agriculture. The San Joaquin Valley California is commonly referred to as the major breadbasket of the world as a source of food. We have long had issues of illegal immigration with nearly 80 % of agriculture workers being undocumented however in the last three years we have seen an unprecedented increase of those here illegally who are not associated with agriculture work. These increases have impacted law enforcement stretching resources thin with investigations of violent crime, human trafficking, drug trafficking, gun trafficking, and crimes against children.

Back in December of 2018, we had an incident that became known as the “Reign of Terror”. It was essentially a 24-hour crime spree that one man inflicted upon the people of Tulare County. That man, 36-year-old Gustavo Garcia, had been deported twice and arrested just two days before his reign of terror, which included a murder in Visalia, attempted murders in Exeter and Tulare, as well shootings in Pixley, Sultana and Visalia and an armed robbery in Exeter. Gustavo was killed during a multi-vehicle crash, after he led officers on a high-speed chase through the County. Just minutes before that, he'd shot at TCSO Deputies, who then fired back. He ran off into an orchard and carjacked several farm workers, leading officers on a chase.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement requested an immigration detainer on Garcia after learning of his arrest two days before his terror spree. Due to California's sanctuary state law, the Sheriff's Office was legally prohibited from recognizing or honoring the detainer of this would-be murderer and we were further prohibited from notifying ICE of his release from jail.

What followed was his release from jail and a terror spree on innocent civilians in my community.

As you're aware, Senate Bill 54, California's Sanctuary State Law, forbids law enforcement from working with ICE.

Simply put: the issue of immigration enforcement is not a local issue, but rather a concern which needs to be actively and aggressively addressed by Federal and State officials.

The people who live here, regardless of immigration status, need to be able to reach out to law enforcement when they become a victim.

The current law will not allow the Sheriff's Office to work with ICE, even when a person is identified as being a menace to the undocumented community, such as Gustavo Garcia and so many others.

This creates an environment where people who are undocumented become repeated victims of criminals who are also undocumented. The current California law will not allow ICE to work within our jail system and contact people who pose this threat of committing heinous and violent crimes against members of our community, regardless of their immigration status.

February 19th, 2023 K9 Duke with the with the San Joaquin County sheriff's office was stabbed to death while attempting to apprehend a burglary suspect in a railyard in Tracy. Officers with the Tracy Police Department had responded to a burglary at the railyard near Bricchetto Road and Banta Road at about 12:00 pm. As officers arrived on the scene two men fled from the officers into the train yard. When K9 Duke arrived on the scene one of the men entered the engine room on one of the trains in the yard and barricaded himself inside.

As Duke engaged the subject the man stabbed him multiple times. Officers were able to take the man into custody after he stabbed K9 Duke. K9 Duke was taken to Central Valley Veterinarian Hospital, in Manteca, where he succumbed to his injuries. The suspect was an illegal immigrant Rafael Montoya-Velazquez 30 years of age. Rafael Montoya-Velasquez had been deported multiple times with committing crimes in other states but easily found his way across an open and unsecure border.

When it comes to our open border, the Central Valley is at the foot of the mountain staring down an avalanche. We are confronting a barrage of violent criminals, guns, and drugs flow from the border into our community.

Today, the free flow of illicit and deadly drugs – principally fentanyl – have turned the corridors of Highway 99 and Interstate 5 into two highways of death that unleash unspeakable carnage.

In March of this year, 21 teams from state, local and federal agencies served 31 simultaneous search warrants at various homes throughout Tulare, Kings and Fresno counties. These warrants were the result of a nine-month investigation into information the Tulare County Sheriff's Office received about a large amount of meth that was being transported between Kings and Tulare County.

Throughout the next several months, the Tulare County Tactical–High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Unit (or TNT-HIDTA) investigated these drug trafficking organizations further and developed more information about their operations up and down the state, as well as across state lines. Detectives quickly learned Tulare County was being used as a hub to traffic illegal drugs coming from Mexico. During these operations, more suspects were identified, more drugs were found, and more guns and cash were confiscated.

In October 2023, TNT-HIDTA and the DEA began working together on a larger scale operation naming it, “Operation SLO Ride”.

In March, teams from across the state went after known drug traffickers in our area with direct ties to the Sinaloa Mexican Drug Cartel.

Of the 31 locations, 37 known drug traffickers were arrested; 22 will face federal charges related to narcotics and/or the sales of drugs, 15 will face state charges. Interviewing suspects in this cartel it was explained under the Biden-Harris Administration it is easier now in the last three years than in the history of the drug organization to move illegal drugs across the border into the United States.

In total, “Operation SLO Ride” netted 85 arrests (28 of which were federal), 955 pounds of meth, 6.5 kilos of cocaine, 64,020 fentanyl pills, 81 guns and \$640,476 in cash.

Back in June 2022, we saw the biggest fentanyl bust in my department's history, when Tulare County HIDTA investigators were called to an area on Highway 99 to help CHP Officers with a traffic stop.

During their investigation, Detectives with the Tulare County High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Unit (HIDTA) found 150 packages, each of 1,000 Fentanyl pills. In total, 150,000 pills were found hidden inside the vehicle. Each pill sells for approximately \$5, making the street value of the seizure \$750,000. Just one pill could be deadly.

Detectives arrested two men out of Washington who were later determined to be illegal immigrants. They faced charges of possession, transportation and sales of illegal drugs. They were booked into jail but let out the next day on their own recognizance and never showed up for their court dates. Detectives believe they were illegally transporting

fenentanyl for the Mexican cartel over the southern border up to Washington. Their release, which I strongly disagreed with, was a slap in the face to the criminal justice system and a direct repercussion of failed immigration policies and an open border. There are drug traffickers, just like these two individuals running up and down our state every day. There are no ramifications for their actions. California has basically become an open territory for the cartel to do what it wants.

When it comes to the cartel, the destruction of our communities doesn't just stop at drug transportation. These cartels are infiltrating our communities, unleashing incredible violence, and taking the lives of innocent people.

On January 16th, 2023, TCSO Deputies were called to a home in Goshen for multiple shots fired. When Deputies arrived, they found six people shot to death execution-style, including a 16-year-old mother and her 10-month-old baby.

Detectives worked the case tirelessly and identified the killers as rival gang members. It appears this family was targeted and there are gang associations involved, as well as potential drug investigations. A week before the murders, TCSO Detectives conducted a narcotics search warrant at the victims' home. It's believed the suspects and some of the victims had ties to the cartel, due to their involvement with drug sales and transportation.

But it doesn't end there. We've had cases upon cases that trace back to Mexican drug cartels. Another one that stands out was "El Mano Negro". Jose Manuel Martinez was a gun for hire, collecting debts and killing people in California from 1980-2011. Martinez said he worked for Mexican drug cartels, and they called him El Mano Negro or The Black Hand. Martinez was responsible for the murders of 23-year-old David Bedolla in 1980, 30-year-old Sylvester Ayon in 1982, 22-year-old Raul Gonzalez of Earlimart also in 1982, Domingo Perez in 1985, 56-year-old Santiago Perez of Pixley in 2000, who was shot to death in his bed while his four children were home, 25-year-old Jose Alvarado in 2007, Juan Bautista Moreno in 2009, 45-year-old Joaquin Barragan of Earlimart in 2009 and Gonzalo Urquieta in 2011. The violence is a constantly rotating wheel.

But there is also the human trafficking aspect of open borders.

In 2016, what began with an interview between a female deputy and one underage female victim at a school, grew into the largest human trafficking investigation in Tulare County to date,

It single-handedly opened our eyes to what young people face here in Tulare County, across the country, and throughout the world.

We began with our largest human trafficking detail, Operation Baby Face, freeing more than 50 juvenile and adult victims, arresting three primary suspects and a dozen co-conspirators or johns. Since then, we have done annual details to arrest predators, johns, and human traffickers always with the goal to free more victims of human trafficking.

Since this operation, we have conducted countless similar operations, and typically, our open borders are a key element to the conspiracy.

We have also recently seen an uptick in Chinese Nationals coming across our southern border and being involved in either illegal massage parlors or financial scams.

We are currently working an investigation on an individual who is engaged in prostitution with Chinese immigrants coming into Los Angeles. This individual is running a local massage parlor, cycling through Chinese immigrants every few months operating in the Central San Joaquin Valley of California.

The massage parlor is posted on the dark web, and we became aware of it after we got called to a robbery there. As it turns out, it wasn't a robbery, it was a contract dispute between the owner and one of the workers.

Our Deputies were told the workers have work visas. But we have no evidence of that. At this point, it appears they're here illegally. This investigation is ongoing.

In regard to financial scams, these are hitting Tulare County hard. In these scams, someone reaches out to our victims and tells them their bank account has been compromised and they need to put their money into another account. The suspects are acting as if they're a security firm for the bank, convincing the victims to pull money out of their accounts. The suspects then steal the money from the account the victim transferred it into. The couriers being sent in these scams are typically Chinese nationals crossing the Mexico border illegally. It appears a Chinese food store and a Chinese Jewelry Store are fronts for the operation.

You might be surprised to know that our Agricultural Industry is also being impacted heavily by open borders. While we often think of the open border problem in relation to people entering the country illegally and the illegal trafficking of drugs and guns, we recently became aware of large equipment stolen in Tulare County being shipped to Mexico.

Since late February, more than half a million dollars' worth of large equipment, including backhoes, forklifts, farm tractors and excavators have been stolen from Tulare County farmers. Two pieces of the stolen equipment, a backhoe, and a forklift, are equipped with GPS. They were found to be mobile in Jalisco, Mexico.

After opening several investigations for stolen large equipment, our Ag Detectives were tipped off about an additional piece of equipment believed to be at the Loves Truck Stop in the city of Tulare. Deputies responded to the scene and contacted the occupants of a tractor trailer registered out of Chihuahua, Mexico. In it, deputies found multiple pieces of equipment loaded inside of the refrigerated tractor trailer destined for Mexico. The occupants of the truck were arrested and booked into the Adult Pre-Trial Facility for possession of stolen property and conspiracy.

The next day, detectives served a search warrant on their tractor trailer and found a stolen John Deere backhoe, valued at \$120,000; and a stolen Case 580 backhoe and a Bobcat Mini Excavator, together worth \$100,000.

Shortly afterward, our detectives located the staging area where stolen farm equipment was stored while waiting to be shipped to Mexico. This is not an isolated case. It is happening all over our county, and we are currently working another case where Mexican Nationals are stealing large agriculture equipment and shipping it illegally back to Mexico.

Our flawed border policies and the flood of illegal immigrants into this country has caused a major crisis in California and in America. We are seeing murders, marijuana grows, drug and human trafficking, financial scams, agricultural crimes, robberies and so much more. It is time that something is done to protect the people living here. Because as it stands now the anticipation of increased demands on law enforcement will soon deplete the ability to keep and maintain peace in our communities. The rest of the world is taking advantage of the current policies concerning our border. The world recognizes the Biden-Harris administration has removed the foundation of legal immigration. Allowing an unsecured border has encouraged the world to violate immigration laws. As a result, local law enforcement is overwhelmed with increases in demands for service to provide public safety.



Mike Boudreaux
Tulare County Sheriff - Coroner

Chair JORDAN. Thank you, Sheriff. Ms. Nobles, you are recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF TAMMY NOBLES

Ms. NOBLES. Good morning to the Members of the Committee. Thank you for allowing me to speak. On July 27, 2022, I received the worst news that a parent can ever get that my newly 20-year-old daughter, Kayla Hamilton, was found deceased with injuries consistent with homicide. There are no words that describe the heart-wrenching, soul-crushing pain of losing your child so horrifically. Kayla was a happy and loving person. She loved life and God. She was extremely ambitious and despite having autism, she was determined to make her way in this world. She loved animals, especially her cat, Oreo, and cared about the homeless.

At first, we knew very little details of the murder until an arrest. At the end of March 2022, Walter Javier Martinez was apprehended by Border Patrol crossing illegally into the U.S. Martinez stated that he was 16 years old and fear of gang activity in his country in El Salvador. As an unoccupied alien child, Martinez was granted access into the United States with no background checks or vetting. Homeland Security did not verify the sponsor and allowed Martinez to go live in Frederick, Maryland. There were behavior issues with him living with his sponsor and he ended up staying with his half-brother who lived in the same neighborhood mobile park as Kayla. There were behavior issues with Walter, so the half-brother called the property manager owners of the mobile home park which I thought was a legit company. We learned that an illegal immigrant couple owned the mobile homes, and it took it on themselves to allow this 16-year-old to rent a room in the same mobile home as Kayla. Martinez was living there less than five days before he violently and brutally murdered my daughter. Walter Javier Martinez broke into Kayla's room while she was sleeping that morning. Kayla left a voice mail on her boyfriend's phone. According to the voice mail a struggle was going on and Kayla can be heard crying, groaning, and struggling to breathe. Martinez can be heard on the voice mail hushing her and near the end telling her I am sorry in Spanish while strangling with her phone charging cord. After she was deceased, Martinez tied her up and sexually assaulted her. This was confirmed by the anal swabs that matched Martinez' DNA. Kayla fought for her life that day. She had bruises up and down her arms, her fingers, the left side of her face, her back, and down her leg, and deep wounds to the neck from the charging cord.

Local police knew right from the beginning he was the main suspect just by their initial investigation. It took the Aberdeen police to confirm that Martinez was a known gang member of MS-13 and that Martinez had a criminal record in El Salvador in 2020. If Homeland Security did a background check, then they would have known this, and Martinez wouldn't have been able to be on U.S. soil. With Martinez being 16 years old, Maryland Child Protective Services took custody of Martinez until the DNA results came back. The Aberdeen Police Department was very transparent to CPS. The Aberdeen Police demanded that Martinez be held in a secure location because he was a threat to society based on the murder

and injuries of Kayla Hamilton. It was later learned that Child Protective Services placed Martinez in a group home with other children and then placed Martinez in a foster home which allowed him to be enrolled in high school. This was also confirmed by an investigative reporter with *Fox 45 Project Baltimore*, who got an actual confirmation from Edgewood High School.

While in jail, a letter was intercepted that Martinez wrote confessing to four murders and two rapes. Martinez ended up pleading guilty and taken a plea deal of 70 years. Since he was a juvenile at the time, even though he was tried as an adult, Martinez couldn't get life without the possibility of parole. This is not a political issue. This is a safety issue for everyone here living in the United States. Not only was Kayla's life put at risk and taken, so many other children and adults were at risk.

The Biden-Harris Administration is not putting the American citizens' safety first. The U.S. Government must secure our border. We need to properly vet and background check all border crossers. This isn't about immigration. This is about protecting everyone here in the United States.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Nobles follows:]

Testimony of Tammy Nobles
Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security and Enforcement
The Biden-Harris Border Crisis: Victim Perspectives
September 10, 2024

Good morning to the members of the committee and thank you for allowing me to speak.

On July 27th, 2022, I received the worst news that a parent can ever get that my newly 20-year-old daughter Kayla Hamilton was found deceased with injuries consistent with homicide. There are no words that describe the heart wrenching soul crushing pain of losing your child so horrifically. Kayla was a happy and loving person. She loved life and God. She loved going to church and learning about Jesus and the Bible stories. She showed the world that being yourself was ok and you didn't have to follow everyone else. She was extremely ambitious and despite having autism she was determined to make her way in this world. She loved animals, especially her cat Oreo, and cared about the homeless.

At first, we knew very few details of the murder until an arrest. At the end of March of 2022 Walter Javier Martinez was apprehended by Border Patrol crossing illegally into the U.S. at the southwest border in Rio Grande City, Texas. Martinez stated that he was 16 years old and feared gang activity in his country in El Salvador. As an unaccompanied alien child Martinez was granted access into the United States with no background checks or vetting. Homeland Security did not verify the sponsor and allowed Martinez to go live in Frederick, Maryland. There were behavior issues with him living with the sponsor and he ended up staying with his half-brother who lived in the same neighborhood mobile park as Kayla. There were behavioral issues with Walter, so the half-brother called the property manager/owners of the mobile home park which I thought was a legit company. We learned that an illegal immigrant couple owned the mobile homes and took it upon themselves to allow this 16-year-old to rent a room in the same mobile home as Kayla.

Martinez was living there less than 5 days before he violently and brutally murdered my daughter. Walter Javier Martinez broke into Kayla's room while she was sleeping that morning. Kayla left a voicemail on her boyfriend's phone. According to the voicemail a struggle was going on and Kayla can be heard crying, groaning, and struggling to breathe. Martinez can be heard on the voicemail hushing her and near the end telling her "I'm sorry" in Spanish while strangling her with her phone cord. After she was deceased Martinez tied her up and sexually assaulted her. This was confirmed by the anal swabs that matched Martinez's DNA. Kayla fought for her life that day. She had bruises up and down her arms, her fingers, the left side of her face, her back and down her leg and deep wounds to her neck from the cord.

Local police knew right from the beginning he was the main suspect just by their initial investigation. It took the Aberdeen police to confirm that Martinez was a known gang member of MS-13, and that Martinez had a criminal record in El Salvador in 2020. If Homeland Security

did a background check, then they would have known this, and Martinez wouldn't have been able to be on U.S. soil. With Martinez being 16 years old Maryland Child Protective Services took custody of Martinez until the DNA results came back. The Aberdeen Police department was very transparent to CPS. The Aberdeen Police department demanded that Martinez be held in a secure location because he was a threat to society based on the murder and injuries of Kayla Hamilton. It was later learned that Child Protective Services placed Martinez in a group home with other children and then placed Martinez in a foster home which allowed him to be enrolled in High School. This was also confirmed by an investigative reporter with Fox 45 Project Baltimore who got an actual confirmation from Edgewood High School. While in jail a letter was intercepted that Martinez wrote confessing to 4 murders and 2 rapes. Martinez ended up pleading guilty and taking the plea deal of 70 years. Since he was a juvenile at the time, even tried as an adult Martinez couldn't get life without the possibility of parole.

This not a political issue this a safety issue for everyone living here in the United States. Not only was Kayla's life put at risk and taken so many other children and adults were at risk. The Biden-Harris administration is not putting the American citizens safety first.

The United States Government must secure our border. We need to properly vet and background check all border crossers. This isn't about immigration this is about protecting everyone in the United States.

Chair JORDAN. Thank you, Ms. Nobles. Doctor.

STATEMENT OF CECILIA FARFÁN-MÉNDEZ

Ms. FARFÁN-MÉNDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Chair Jordan, Ranking Member Nadler, and the Members of the Committee, thank you for conducting this hearing and the opportunity to explain why characterizing the U.S.–Mexico as a region in crisis is an inadequate and unproductive way to addressing North America’s cross border challenges. I appreciate the invitation to participate.

I am an expert on organized crime and U.S.–Mexico security cooperation. As a scholar of U.S.–Mexico relations, and as a proud resident of the border region, I am convinced that transnational problems require transnational solutions.

To the families testifying today, I want to acknowledge your grief. There are no actions that can reverse the tragedies that you have experienced. My testimony today does not seek to invalidate yours, on the contrary. It is precisely because I have witnessed and corroborated with families on both sides of the border that have lost loved ones, that I here to offer what I believe is a more constructive and sustainable path forward.

Chair JORDAN. I apologize. We have got someone checking. You can continue, Doctor.

Ms. FARFÁN-MÉNDEZ. The human costs of our shared tragedies cannot be overstated. Today, Americans are more likely to die from an opioid overdose than a car crash. Equally important, homicide is the leading cause of death for men ages 15–44 and the second cause of death for women ages 15–24 in Mexico. Painfully, while families who have lost loved ones to overdoses or homicides may find some degree of solace in visiting their graves, this remains a dream for the thousands of family members who search for the more than 110,000 Mexicans who have disappeared.

North America is facing simultaneous and connected health crises. Perhaps paradoxically, the silver lining is that there is no secret solution awaiting to be discovered. Actions available to Congress can contribute to stemming the devastating effects of these public health challenges and can be implemented through U.S.–Mexico cooperation. Even though the border is characterized in Washington, DC, and Mexico City as a perpetual crisis, for those of us who live and work in the region, we know this is where the most creative and innovative developments in the bilateral relationship take place. This is not an overstatement.

Consider, for instance, the health challenges the world faced with COVID–19. In a time of fear and uncertainty, where countries closed borders, the governments of California and Baja California, worked in partnership with public health experts, academia, and the private sector, to engineer a cross-border vaccination program, a program, I might add, that actually benefited supply chains for the defense sector in the U.S. as well. This type of proactive, collaborative ingenuity rather than unilateral measures is what is most urgently needed.

Today, I present to you an evidenced-based cultural action from the border with these actions to start.

First, support the Stop Arming Cartels Act. Simply stated, by failing to address firearms trafficking into Mexico the U.S. is subsidizing the operating costs of criminal groups. It is as if cartels receive an annual aid package with state-of-the-art technology to carry out the crimes this Congress wants to stop.

Develop mutually accepted vetting mechanisms for exchanging information. Best practices from other parts of the world show that weakening the activities of organized crime requires trusted partnerships across countries. As long as Mexico and the U.S. lack these mutually accepted vetting mechanisms, bilateral cooperation will be hindered.

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act is an important step in addressing straw purchasing and trafficking. However, successful implementation requires resources for prosecutors and the ATF. The BSCA also provides an opportunity for seeking meaningful cooperation with Mexican counterparts.

Second, provide funding and support research for improved metrics of border security. In 2024, it is unacceptable that the indicators of border security are detentions and seizures. Recording how many people were stopped or how many drugs were seized hardly builds a smart border. There is significant room for improvement. These metrics should be developed in partnership with civil society, the private sector, and academia.

Finally, visit the border and its bi-national communities. The border is not only a legal definition or a boundary between two countries. Our shared problems, and their solutions do not stop and start where the fence meets the ocean. There is no substitute for first-hand experience.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your questions.
[The prepared statement of Ms. Farfán-Méndez follows:]

The Biden-Harris Border Crisis: Victim Perspectives
Written testimony submitted by Cecilia Farfán-Méndez, Ph.D.
Affiliated Researcher, Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation
University of California San Diego

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The Biden-Harris Border Crisis: Victim Perspectives

Written testimony submitted by Cecilia Farfán-Méndez, Ph.D.ⁱ
 Affiliated Researcher, Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation
 University of California San Diego

I. Our Shared Tragedies: Homicides, Disappearances, and Overdoses

Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member Nadler, and Members of the Committee, thank you for conducting this hearing and the opportunity to explain why characterizing the U.S.-Mexico border as an area in crisis is an inadequate and unproductive way for addressing North America's cross-border challenges. I appreciate the invitation to participate.

I am an expert on organized crime and U.S.-Mexico security cooperation. As a scholar of U.S.-Mexico relations, and as a proud resident of the border region, I am convinced that transnational problems require transnational solutions.

Mexico and the U.S. recently celebrated 200 years of diplomatic relations and despite the myriad ties that unite both countries, today Mexico and the U.S. find themselves unable to chart a path forward. Worryingly, the urgency to save lives is fueling xenophobic discourses and reviving the worst policy failures of the war on drugs. But we do not need to repeat past mistakes. The U.S. and Mexico have robust evidence produced by the public sector, civil society, and academia on how to acquire and maintain the health and safety of our communities.

The human costs of our shared tragedies cannot be overstated. Today, Americans are more likely to die from an opioid overdose than a car crash.ⁱⁱ Equally important, homicide is the leading cause of death for men ages 15 to 44 and the second cause of death for women ages 15 to 24 in Mexico.ⁱⁱⁱ Painfully, while families who have lost loved ones to overdoses or homicides may find some degree of solace in visiting their graves, this remains a dream for the thousands of family members who search for the more than 110,000 Mexicans who have disappeared.^{iv}

Suffering on both sides of the border is inextricably linked. The U.S. is facing one of its worst public health crises due to the availability of illicitly manufactured fentanyl and Mexico faces its own lethal epidemic with 70% of homicides perpetrated with a firearm.^v Adding insult to injury, harm reduction providers along the U.S.-Mexico border must smuggle naloxone to save both Mexican and American lives.^{vi} The greatest tragedy of all is that all these deaths are preventable.

II. Firearms as a Business Input

Low production costs are often cited as a key reason suppliers move away from heroin and into synthetic opioids like fentanyl. Overlooked in this conversation is that the same has happened with firearms and ammunition. The ease of acquiring firearms from the U.S. has lowered the costs of perpetrating violence for criminal groups in Mexico.

Even though there are significant variations as to the frequency and the ways criminal groups use violence, they all must issue credible threats on their ability to perpetrate this violence.^{vii} Their businesses depend on it. The newer and the more sophisticated the armament is, then the more

credible these threats become. Why intimidate potential victims with a rifle left over from the Mexican revolution when your arsenal can include everything from semi-automatic pistols to .50 caliber weapons?

This strategy has paid off for organized crime. Today, 74 percent of Mexicans believe criminal groups have more and better weapons than the armed forces; access to illegally trafficked weapons from the U.S. has allowed Mexican criminal groups to amass both a tremendous capacity for violence and a troubling capability to intimidate.^{viii} Simply stated, by failing to address firearms trafficking to Mexico, the U.S. is subsidizing the operating costs of criminal groups. It is as if cartels received an annual aid package with state-of-the-art technology to carry out the crimes this Congress wants to stop.

II.I Changes in the Drug Retail Market^{ix}

Considering that the population of drug consumers in Tijuana includes a substantial number of U.S. nationals, public health in the border region is an issue of concern for Congress. Evidence from Tijuana shows that substance users are not free to acquire their drugs from any given dealer in the city. Interest in controlling neighborhood retail points means that drug dealers are unwilling to sell to unknown individuals lest they are members of a rival group posing as customers. This creates invisible borders in the city with negative health outcomes for the CaliBaja region as a whole.

Because substance users are not free to transit the city, this excludes them from accessing harm reduction services that are essential for the well-being of the community. For instance, when people who inject drugs (PWID) cannot access clean syringes and needles, there is a greater chance of contracting and spreading HIV and viral hepatitis.^x Sharing syringes is the second-riskiest behavior for getting HIV.^{xi} Additionally, the challenge of accessing harm reduction services contributes to the risk of accidental overdose in cities like Tijuana and Mexicali where users continue to inject fentanyl and fentanyl analogues with varying degrees of potency.^{xii}

Street level dealers, most of whom are hardly criminal kingpins, are able to enforce these invisible borders precisely because of the availability of firearms and ammunition. Access to firearms allows street vendors with minimal linkages to transnational criminal organizations to issue credible threats to substance users who might otherwise transit the city to access services. As a result, substance users might consume adulterated products without a choice.^{xiii} Even though harm reduction service providers who are known to the community conduct rounds in the city to visit substance users *in situ*, these rounds also present potentially lethal dangers to them.

II.II Criminal Diversification

In recent years, more scholarly and media attention has been placed on criminal diversification in Mexico.^{xiv} While my research shows that criminal diversification is not an automatic process for drug trafficking organizations, criminal groups that engage in predatory violence like kidnapping and racketeering have benefited considerably from the ability to traffic firearms and ammunition from the United States.^{xv}

Protection rackets require *public* displays of violence.^{xvi} This is because potential or current victims need to be convinced that there is not another viable alternative for protection.^{xvii xviii} In racketeering, “victim[s] and victimizer[s] establish a sustained, medium-or long-term relationship that affects the former’s commercial or productive activity. Each week or month the “protection providers” visit their “clients” to collect their share of the businesses’ earnings.”^{xix}

Research conducted in Tijuana by a binational team of civil society experts and scholars on commercial extortion and racketeering (*cobro de piso*) showed that a “central aspect of forging ‘racketeering-protection’ relationships consists in constructing an ambience of violence that foments the need for protection and obliges people to accept an offer from one criminal provider of protection.”^{xx} Furthermore, “racketeering is a crime that escalates, and represents the first step in what may be a long chain of violence.”^{xxi}

Proximity to the border amplifies the firepower that these organizations can access and deploy in generating this violent atmosphere. According to the most recent data, 73.2 percent of adults ages 18 and above reported feeling unsafe in Tijuana.^{xxii} The threat of violence is such that the city’s mayor moved her residence to the local army barracks in an attempt to ensure her safety.

II.III Erosion of Civilian Public Safety Institutions

For citizens of Culiacán, Sinaloa the botched arrest of an alleged kingpin on October 17, 2019 marks a clear before and after in their lives.^{xxiii} That day, the Mexican army sought to arrest Ovidio Guzmán, son of Joaquín Guzmán Loera a.k.a “El Chapo.”. With the operation still underway, videos and audio of his arrest began to circulate on social media. By 3:30 pm gunmen working for the Sinaloa organization engaged in shootouts with army troops in the commercial and residential area of Tres Ríos. Gunmen subsequently surrounded the military housing complex in the city and encouraged a jailbreak from the Aguaruto penal facility. By 4:30 pm, gunmen had blockaded roads leading into Culiacán. During these hours, citizens sheltered in place in stores, restaurants, and strangers’ homes trying to escape the battle taking place in the city. With the city paralyzed as evening arrived, Mr. Guzmán’s lawyer confirmed he had been released. By nightfall, the gunmen who had materialized seemingly out of thin air had vanished, returning to safehouses or leaving the city altogether.

Images from the battle made international headlines. But beyond the “narco spectacle”, what is remarkable about that day is that it exemplifies the escalation of violence that is taking place.^{xxiv} As criminal groups display and deploy more firepower, the Mexican state responds with ever-increasing levels of force and violence. Guzmán was (re)arrested in early 2023. Anticipating another gunbattle and blockades that would throw the city into chaos and fear, the army used helicopter gunships to support the ground operation in a nearby hamlet, using overwhelming and indiscriminate force.^{xxv} This escalation in the use of force has contributed to weakening the development of civilian institutions for public safety, and ultimately eroded citizen security.

III. Gendered Impacts of Firearms Trafficking

More people are killed in the Americas than any other region in the world. The most recent data shows the Americas have a homicide rate of 15 victims per 100,000 compared to the world average of 5.8 victims per 100,000.^{xxvi}

Homicide rates alone do not capture the differential impacts of armed violence. Illicit firearms trafficking has aggravated violence against women and LGBTIQ+ individuals.^{xxvii} Not only are more women killed today in Mexico with firearms, compared to two decades ago, hate crimes are also more easily perpetrated with firearms and increase the risk of groups who are already in vulnerable positions. Reports from civil society organizations in Mexico show that 56.6% of trans people were killed with firearms and 23.4% of homosexuals were killed in the same way.^{xxviii}

Unsurprisingly, these differential impacts on women, children, and the LGBTIQ+ community have taken a toll on communities, at times forcibly displacing families who have been victimized, and by extension changing the migrant population seeking relief in shelters and with immigration authorities on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.

In 2021, Linda was forced to leave her home in Ixtaro, Michoacán after her brother was killed by a criminal group. Knowing well that this group acted on its threats, she fled with her children towards the U.S.-Mexico border hoping to escape violence in the same country that had facilitated the weapons that led to her family tragedy.^{xxix} Linda's story, unfortunately, is increasingly common. Shelters along the U.S.-Mexico border increasingly receive women with adolescent or young children who are escaping violence.

Without official data, tracking forcibly displaced populations is a challenging task. Nevertheless, civil society in Mexico has found that as of the end of 2021, a documented 357,000 people in Mexico have been displaced because of violence and conflict—likely an underestimate because some of the displaced chose not to disclose their locations out of fear.^{xxx} These differential impacts of violence underscore that migration policies will remain inefficient as long as the negative impacts of firearms trafficking in displacing communities are not considered as a factor driving displacement.

IV. A call to action

Fentanyl and firearms trafficking have changed dynamics in illicit economies. But these changes are not as simple as prevailing narratives of organized crime suggest. Even though places like Sinaloa, Mexico have been portrayed as a Shangri-La for criminality, transnational drug trafficking in Mexico to the U.S. is not masterminded by three men hiding in the mountains. There is “no special ‘narco highway’ connecting the highlands of Sinaloa to the streets of Los Angeles or Philadelphia” but stakeholders on both sides of the border that take advantage of legal economies for the advancement of illicit activities.^{xxxi}

The examples shared in this testimony seek to highlight the *business* side of organized crime and how different criminal groups, with diverse portfolios of illicit activities, benefit from lowered costs of building state-of-the-art arsenals. The consequences are not only higher homicide rates, but

forced displacement, criminal diversification, and preventable negative health outcomes that affect entire communities. Equally important, these examples highlight the binational nature of our shared tragedies. North America is facing simultaneous and connected health crises with preventable overdose deaths, homicides, and disappearances. Perhaps paradoxically, the silver lining is that there is no secret solution awaiting to be discovered. Actions available to Congress can contribute to stemming the devastating effects of these public health crises and can be implemented through U.S.-Mexico cooperation.

Even though the border is often characterized in Washington D.C. and Mexico City as a perpetual crisis, for those of us who live and work in the region, we know it is where the most creative and innovative developments in the bilateral relationship take place. This is not an overstatement.

Consider, for instance, the health challenges the world faced with Covid-19. In a time of fear and uncertainty, where countries closed borders, the governments of California and Baja California, worked in partnership with public health experts, academia, and the private sector, to engineer a cross-border vaccination program. This type of proactive, collaborative ingenuity—rather than unilateral measures—is what is most urgently needed.

What to Stop

- 1) **Drug induced homicide laws.** Decades of evidence show that mass incarceration does not save lives, nor does it reduce the supply of illicit substances. On the contrary, these laws weaken communities and set in motion long-term structural inequalities that can reproduce lethal and non-lethal forms of violence.
- 2) **Accusatory statements.** Language matters. The U.S. and Mexico have a complicated history on security cooperation. It is one of the most challenging areas of the bilateral relationship. Accusatory rhetoric, on either side of the border, stalls bilateral action to the detriment of communities in Mexico and the U.S. Equally important, statements based on xenophobia and racism will not improve the safety and health of our communities. Policies based on evidence will.

What to start

- 1) **Support the Stop Arming Cartels Act.**
- 2) **Develop mutually accepted vetting mechanisms for exchanging information.** Best practices from other parts of the world show that weakening and precluding the activities of organized crime requires trusted partnerships across countries. Successful operations that take out entire management structures, instead of just one alleged kingpin, can take years to develop. As long as Mexico and the U.S. lack these mutually accepted vetting mechanisms, bilateral cooperation will be hindered.
- 3) The **Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA)** is an important step in addressing straw purchasing and trafficking. However, **successful implementation requires resources for prosecutors and the ATF.** The BSCA also provides an opportunity for seeking meaningful cooperation with Mexican counterparts.^{xxxii}

- 4) **Provide funding and support research for improved metrics of border security.** In 2024 it is unacceptable that the indicators for border security are detentions and seizures. Recording how many people were stopped or how many drugs were seized hardly builds a smart border. There is significant room for improvement. These metrics should be developed in partnership with civil society, the private sector, and academia. The bottom line is that we can help but the government needs to share data.
- 5) **Work with the government of Mexico to start a naloxone distribution pilot program along the U.S.-Mexico border.** This will save lives and stop excess mortality for both countries.
- 6) **Visit the border and its binational communities.** The border is not only a legal definition or a boundary between two countries. Our shared problems, and their solutions do not stop and start where the fence meets the ocean. There is no substitute for first-hand knowledge.

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Chair JORDAN. Thank you, Doctor.
Ms. Lopez, you are recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF MELISSA LOPEZ

Ms. LOPEZ. Thank you. Good morning the Members of the Committee. I'm grateful for this opportunity to appear before you today.

My name is Melissa Lopez, and I am the Executive Director of Estrella del Paso, formerly known as Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services. I'm an attorney who has spent my 17-year career working with and representing immigrants in immigration matters. Estrella del Paso is the largest provider of free legal services in far West of Texas and New Mexico, serving nearly 58,000 people in 2023.

In my experience, immigrants come to the United States to contribute in positive ways. They make our communities more vibrant by sharing their culture, language, and traditions.

I was born and raised in El Paso, the child of immigrants from Mexico. Though born in Mexico, my parents are now naturalized U.S. citizens and have spent more of their lives in the United States than in Mexico.

I graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso in 2004, and then, attended the University of Texas School of Law in Austin, graduating in 2007.

As much as I loved living in Austin, I knew that I would be returning to El Paso after law school. I was blessed to be hired at Estrella del Paso and the rest, as they say, is history.

In my 17-year career, I have been blessed to work with thousands of immigrants from all over the world. My experience working with immigrants has taught me one special lesson: The only difference between me and my clients is where we were born. Had I been born just a few miles South of where I was in the hospital in El Paso, I would be them. It has been my experience that the people I am blessed to serve are simply trying to provide for their families and ensure they are safe.

My mom always says that a parent's goal is to create a life that allows their children to do better financially than their parents did. I find this to be particularly true in my clients. They walk well over 2,000 miles to ensure that their children are safe, can thrive, and live a peaceful life where they can achieve their dreams.

In truth, I'm a prime example of what children of immigrants can do. I'm the first in my family to graduate college. I'm the first in my family to obtain a professional degree, and I'm the first in my family to become an attorney. I am who I am because I have seen my mom work hard and fight through adversity and have a grit that I wish I had just a little bit more of.

I think one of the biggest blessings of my life is being born and raised in El Paso. El Paso is a binational, bicultural community in far West Texas that sits on the border between the United States and Juarez, Chihuahua, and Mexico. El Paso is a community rich in love and culture. El Paso is an immigrant community. So many people are born in El Paso, but raised in Juarez, or vice versa, as was the case for my parents.

El Paso is consistently ranked among the safest cities in the country, surrounded only by Honolulu, Hawaii, a few years here

and there. El Paso is a safe city because we are an immigrant community.

The worst crime committed against Hispanics in U.S. history was a mass shooting that occurred in El Paso on August 3, 2019. The perpetrator of that crime was a White supremacist born in Dallas, Texas, who drove over 600 miles to massacre 23 people and injure hundreds more at a Walmart in El Paso. He systematically sought out immigrants due to the dangerous rhetoric that all immigrants are bad.

After the shooting that killed both United States citizens, as well as immigrants from Mexico and Germany, El Pasoans wrapped our arms around the survivors, because that is who we are. El Paso, very simply, is love.

We recognize, appreciate, and respect the humanity in every single person. We treat people with the dignity they deserve, because at the end of the day we all are human beings.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lopez follows:]

Testimony of Melissa M. Lopez

Good morning members of the Judiciary Committee. I am grateful for this opportunity to appear before you today.

My name is Melissa M. Lopez. I am the Executive Director of Estrella del Paso, formerly known as Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services. I am an attorney who has spent my 17-year career working with and representing immigrants in immigration matters. Estrella del Paso is the largest provider of free legal services to immigrants in West Texas and New Mexico serving nearly 58,000 people in 2023. In my experience, immigrants come to the United States to contribute in positive ways – they make our communities more vibrant by sharing their culture, language, and traditions.

I was born and raised in El Paso, the child of immigrants from Mexico. Though born in Mexico, my parents are now naturalized United States citizens and have spent more years of their lives in the United States than Mexico. I graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso in 2004, then attended the University of Texas School of Law in Austin, Texas graduating in 2007. As much as I loved living in Austin, I knew that I would be returning to El Paso after law school. I was blessed to be hired at Estrella del Paso, and the rest, as they say, is history.

In my 17-year career, I have been blessed to work with thousands of immigrants from all over the world. My experience working with immigrants has taught me one special lesson: the only difference between me and my clients is where we were born. Had I been born just a few miles South of where I was, I would be them. It has been my experience that the people I am blessed to serve are simply trying to provide for their families and ensure they are safe. My mom always says that a parent's goal is to create a life that allows their children to do better financially than their parents did. I found this to be true in my clients. They walk well over 2,000 miles to ensure that their children are safe, can thrive and live a peaceful life where they can achieve their dreams. In truth, I am a prime example of what the children of immigrants can do. I am the first in my family to graduate college. I am the first in my family to obtain a professional degree. And I am the first in my family to become an attorney. I am who I am because I have seen my mom work hard and fight through adversity and have a grit that I wish I had just a little bit of.

I think that one of the biggest blessings of my life is being born and raised in El Paso. El Paso is a binational, bicultural community in Far West Texas that sits on the border between the United States and Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. El Paso is a community rich in love and culture. El Paso is an immigrant community. So many people are born in El Paso, but raised in Juarez, or vice versa, as was the case for my parents. El Paso is consistently ranked the safest city in the country – surpassed only by Honolulu, HI a few years here and there. El Paso is a safe city because we are an immigrant community. The worst crime committed against Hispanics was a mass shooting that occurred in El Paso on August 3, 2019. The perpetrator of that crime was a white supremacist born in the Dallas area who drove over 600 miles to massacre 23 people and injure

hundreds more at a Walmart in El Paso. He systematically sought out immigrants due to the dangerous rhetoric that all immigrants are bad. After the shooting, that killed both United States citizens and immigrants from Mexico and Germany, El Pasoans wrapped our arms around the survivors because that is who we are. El Paso, very simply, is love. We recognize, appreciate, and respect the humanity in every single person. We treat people with the dignity they deserve because at the end of the day, we are all human beings.

For many years, El Paso non-profit organizations have provided support and assistance to migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, victims of trafficking, and other migrants facing dangerous conditions. As the leader and representative of the largest legal service provider in our region, I can without a doubt state that most immigrants are law abiding people. When given lawful pathways to the United States, people follow those pathways. Currently few pathways exist for people fleeing for their lives. We are a nation of laws and our own law at 8 USC 1158 provides that any person regardless of their status and regardless of how they entered the country has a right to seek asylum, yet we have seen a concerning trend over the past several years to curtail this right. As such, we are deeply concerned for the safety and wellbeing of migrants and asylum-seekers who have become stranded on our border because of the migration policies that violate human rights and systematically violate the right to asylum. In my 17-year career, I have never been concerned about my safety or that of our team out of fear of harm by the immigrants we serve. In fact, we had to increase security for our team only after the 2019 massacre in El Paso out of fear that the harmful rhetoric that brought a white supremacist to El Paso would result in similar actions by others.

As El Pasoans, we respond with compassion and welcome. But cruel and inhumane actions and policies by the United States Border Patrol, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), and local law enforcement have made it incredibly difficult for individuals fleeing violence and insecurity to live safely. We understand and appreciate law enforcement that is professional and responsible and focused on securing the El Paso community. However, we want to transition from security focused, punitive measures to a humanitarian approach to immigration.

El Paso has long been the testing ground for new and harshly punitive immigration policies, like family separation which began in El Paso in the summer of 2017 long before the Trump Administration publicly acknowledged the nationwide policy in April 2018. As a result, there is distrust by community groups and migrants of law enforcement agents who use violence to enforce inhumane policies. The current immigration situation is a by-product of the criminalization of migration at the border and the excessive investment in enforcement that comes with it. Harsh punitive deterrent policies simply do not work. What works is providing lawful pathways for people seeking refuge that both allow for people's safe passage to the United States while also allowing the United States to vet and know who is entering its borders.

As part of civil society in El Paso, we are doing our part to welcome and accompany those arriving in our community who seek the simplest of human needs: protection, safety, a warm meal, and a safe place to rest their heads. We provide kindness after their long and arduous journey to the United States. Yet, we face a lack of resources and a system that punishes organizations and volunteers seeking to help them. We also provide critical legal support. Despite the severe consequences of the outcome of an immigration legal case, immigrants are not afforded legal counsel at government expense. Instead, organizations like Estrella del Paso provide this critical resource. As an organization, we focus resources on those individuals without the money to hire an attorney. Despite serving nearly 58,000 people in 2023, we still turned away thousands more. Along with our partners at the Border Servant Corps and Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center, we run pro bono clinics to assist individuals eligible for work authorization to apply. We have seen that these welcoming efforts create a net positive not only for the immigrants to this nation but also to our community.

The coalition of immigration advocates in El Paso includes a wide variety of immigration advocates, including those providing shelter, legal services, and civil rights defense. We have direct contact with migrants and are tasked with helping them navigate day-to-day survival as well as an ever-more-complicated immigration landscape. However, we are often excluded from key conversations at every level. To address concerns at the border, it is critical that those involved in this work daily be consulted and involved in the process of developing policies, regulations, and laws. The realities of immigration on the Southern border cannot be understood by individuals who do not live that reality daily.

Congress must ensure real commitments and resources to provide asylum at the border and provide access to the immigration legal system. United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is constantly overwhelmed by the number of applications for benefits being submitted. As a result, immigrants are forced to wait years for a response on their case. As an organization, we submit thousands of applications every year. We receive approvals on most of the applications submitted and only a minimal number of denials every year. This means immigrants are forced to remain in limbo status for far too long.

Migrants on United States soil must be given an opportunity to apply for asylum and be paroled. Sending migrants to Mexico where they are preyed upon by cartels and smugglers is cruel, irresponsible, and unlawful. Deporting migrants to their home country and asking them to follow the new protocols for refugee applications is not practical. The actions of politicians have made migrants the scapegoats for all social and economic problems. Migrants, especially those from Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean, who seek safety and protection are systematically prevented from applying for asylum as required by international law and our own laws. In the 1940s, the United States rejected thousands of European Jews returning them to Europe to be murdered in concentration camps. In the 1940s, we also saw thousands of Japanese Americans

interned in camps in the United States merely for being of Japanese descent. In the 2000s following the attack on 9/11, we saw persecution of Muslims across the United States. As a nation we should learn from history and not repeat our past mistakes of excluding immigrants. Instead, we should build upon successful programs where we have welcomed immigrants to the country. The United States welcoming of people from both Afghanistan and Ukraine occurred due to creative use of resources. Creativity is abundant when migrants are European, but migrants from Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean are treated as criminals and that should not be the case.

CBPOne was created to allow individuals to enter through our Southern Border and seek asylum. As of the end of July 2024, only 1,450 people are processed per day across the Southern Border. This is but a small fraction of the people who have been stuck in Mexico since the start of the COVID pandemic waiting for the opportunity to enter the United States and seek asylum. Parole, and asylum with it, cannot be accessible only to the wealthy who have the necessary technology to use the application. Migrants and asylum-seekers should not be pushed to cross through dangerous and isolated regions between ports-of-entry, but instead they should be given meaningful channels for regular migration not subject to de-facto criminalization. For years we have tried failed approaches rooted in deterrence, we do not need more. Congress must focus on building new legal and rights-affirming pathways and abandon efforts to otherwise put greater restrictions and barriers on the asylum process.

We know the border can be a place of immense opportunity and that our communities embody America's great capacity for welcome and hospitality.

Sincerely,



Melissa M. Lopez

Executive Director/Attorney at Law



*A Catholic Legal Services Ministry for Migrants
(formerly Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services)*

Chair JORDAN. Thank you.
Ms. Aguirre?

STATEMENT OF APRIL AGUIRRE

Ms. AGUIRRE. As a daughter of immigrant parents—

Chair JORDAN. Ms. Aguirre, just hit the mic there, if you could.
Thank you.

Ms. AGUIRRE. As a daughter of immigrant parents, I am ashamed of what the Biden–Harris Administration has done to our country by opening our borders to all, including criminals who are wolves in sheep’s clothing.

Doctor, I heard you mention that over 115,000 people are missing in Mexico. I know. One of those people is my cousin, and all my family lives in Mexico.

We have to comprehend that the majority of those are women. There is a word that is used in Mexico, and it is called femicidio, and that is called femicide—the act of being murdered just because you are a woman.

It is unimaginable for us to think that alongside those seeking refuge are not the same people that are there to victimize them, and alongside victimized citizens as well. I have personally worked three cases within the city of Houston where little girls were targeted simply because they were young, beautiful, vulnerable, and, of course, underage.

Predators have an appetite for children. In all these cases, there was an 11-year-old; a 12-year-old, whose mom is here today, and a 16-year-old freshman in high school.

I am going to be the voice today for Maria Gonzalez, who was also a migrant. She arrived here and her father didn’t own a vehicle. He walked to work. Her father is the essence of the type of immigrants we should want in this country, a law-abiding, hard-working man, working for \$7 an hour 14 hours a day. He left that weekend, and he told his daughter he was going to work. She had a cell phone. She was in the safety of her home.

This migrant that came here as a child, crossed the border, was given to a sponsor, and was only here three weeks before he decided to leave his sponsor’s home; go to Pasadena, Texas, from Louisiana, and he saw Maria. At one point or another, he decided that was going to be his prey.

He saw her father leave to work. He knew their schedule. He knocked on Maria’s door. Maria, recognizing that it wasn’t a neighbor, told her father on WhatsApp on a voice message, “Hey, Dad, somebody is knocking on the door.” She said it in Spanish, “[Speaking foreign language.]” “Dad, is that you knocking on the door?”—thinking her father had forgotten something. That was the last time he ever heard Maria’s voice.

When Maria went to the door—there is a little chain that we have in those apartments, right, when you open the door to try to keep us safe?—that chain was not enough to keep this animal out of Maria’s apartment. He pushed his way in, and Maria fought for her life. She was 11 years old.

To all of you, three little girls passing away may not be many, but what if one of those little girls was your daughter, your granddaughter, or your niece? Can you imagine them trying to fight off

a grown man off them—the shock of being undressed; the pain of being beaten and smothered; trying to fight for your life while a predator’s one objective is to use them to satisfy their sick and demented appetites?

Our girls deserve protection. Our girls deserve to live their life without fear. Our girls deserve to perish in a natural manner of old age.

We live in a society where we have gained so much medical advancements that, if you have cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, they will take care of you. We’re losing healthy children.

This case to me resonates because she is also a migrant child. This says to me we’re letting everything through the border because we’re not checking them. You’re victimizing citizens; you’re victimizing immigrants alike. We’re not against immigration. We’re against unvetted immigration.

I want you to know, as a woman who has a majority of their family in Mexico that are not privileged enough to be in this country, there’s no such thing as collecting DNA swabs. There’s no such thing as embalming. There’s no such thing as doing a real autopsy, like we do here.

Mexico and Central America is where predators thrive. You think they come here to this country, and it is the first time they do this? No, this is just a place where we figure out and we care about our daughters, and we are going to find out. Finding a little girl in Mexico that has been sexually assaulted is just a normal Tuesday. It’s nothing unusual.

So, I want you to know immigration is good. I am the living proof of that. My parents don’t even have a speeding ticket. That is the type of migrants we want.

Bringing them to this country, it is further victimizing what these same immigrants got away from in their countries. We have to have some form of check and balances, a real system to identify these criminals that are hiding. They are wolves in sheep’s clothing, is what they are.

So, I ask you, I implore you, close your eyes. I know you have a little girl in your family. Imagine somebody undressing her. Imagine somebody fighting her. Imagine somebody strangling her.

Maria was so covered in bruises. I had to go and shop for a funeral dress for her to cover the damage that the man did to her. Maria lost fingernails in her fight. She is a migrant child.

Not everybody is the same and we have to identify these monsters. Because, like my dad says, “they are giving all us good migrants such a bad name.” We owe it to the migrants that are getting away from these communities, and we owe it to our citizens to offer them a safe society.

People say, well, citizens kill, too. In these cases, all these cases are migrants that cause this. It is the failure of our policies by not checking them.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Aguirre follows:]

Testimony of April Aguirre, Crime Victims' Advocate

HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

The Biden-Harris Border Crisis: Victim Perspectives

SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

As the daughter of immigrant parents, I am ashamed of what the Biden Harris administration has done to our country

Our country was built by strong proud immigrants that abandoned their homeland for the hopes of a better future for them and their children. Immigrants risked it at all to be a part of the American dream. Coming into this country used to be a privilege awarded to hard-working people of all education levels that wanted to come to this country and build alongside with Americans as one. That is the type of immigrants is the immigrants they want us to believe are entering our country.

Unvetted migration is not only dangerous but it's criminal. The people that are paying the price for these radical policies are the most vulnerable members of our community. The Biden / Harris administration betrayed us by not keeping our communities safe from harm. They gambled with public safety at the expense of American citizens. Of those many families paid the ultimate price.

Today that American dream has turned into a nightmare for United States citizens and immigrants alike. These monsters that we are allowing into our country have no intention of ever going to an asylum hearing. These monsters blend in with other migrants and only a dive into their past truly shows who they really are.

However, conducting background checks does not get done well into asylum hearings begin. The other issue primarily with people from Venezuela is there is no cooperation in regard to being able to conduct a background checks. Meaning if they ever make it before a judge, they basically have nothing to go on to determine their past good or bad. This leaves Americans completely vulnerable to predators. However many immigrants knowing they have questionable pasts don't ever show up to their scheduled hearings. Instead some opt to quickly remove their ankle monitors once they enter the country.

For migrants like my parents, the reputation we are gaining is troubling due to these criminals crossing the border who are wolves in sheep's clothing.

I have personally worked three cases in the last year involving illegal immigrants who preyed on vulnerable girls. 16 year old Lizbeth Medina, 11 year old Maria Gonzalez and 12 year old Jocelyn Nungaray.

All of these little girls died at the hands of illegal immigrants. The reason they were chosen is simple they were young beautiful and vulnerable targets. I often lose sleep thinking about their final moments on this planet. After living a childhood filled with American values, a structured education system, and an overall sense of safety only to perish in such a violent way. To die at the hands of people our government allowed into our country without thinking of the wellbeing of its citizens. I could not imagine the thoughts during their violent deaths. These three little girls were all violently raped, tortured, and ultimately killed.

To you all, three little girls passing away may not be many. But what if one of those little girls was your daughter, your granddaughter, your niece. Can you imagine them trying to fight a grown man off of them, the shock of being undressed, the pain of being beaten and smothered? Trying to fight for your life while a predators one objective is to use them to satisfy their sick and demented appetites?

Our girls deserve protection, our girls deserve to live their life without fear. Our girls deserved to perish in a natural manner. Close your eyes, picture a little girl in your family being violated, picture her clothes being ripped off picture her trying to get away and fight crying screaming for help. This is not a scary movie this is not a myth this is happening.

Unless you have parents from these countries or families that still live there, most American politicians are unaware that in Mexico and south American countries are a place where sexual predators thrive. Finding a dead girl who was sexually assaulted is common, even more common are abducted girls whose bodies are never found. Predators thrive in these countries so when they come here and commit such heinous acts I want you to know it is NOT their first time.

The Biden and Harris administration has blood on their hands. We must put the wellbeing of American citizens first. No, not everyone should be allowed entrance into our wonderful country. The process of allowing immigrants into our country should be meticulous to ensure that we are not allowing sexual predators, murderers or those who wish harm to America into our country. As an American with Mexican parents family and I alongside thousands are an example of the positive effects of immigration done right. This is not the way.

Chair JORDAN. Amen. Well said.
Ms. Fundner, you are recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF ANNE FUNDNER

Ms. FUNDNER. Thank you. Dear Members of the House Judiciary—

Chair JORDAN. Do you just want to hit that microphone, too? Hit that button right there, yes.

Ms. FUNDNER. Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Anne Fundner, and I'm a wife and a mother of four beautiful and amazing children.

I'm here to share the story about the devastating consequences of the Biden–Harris Administration's open borders. I hope that, by sharing my pain, others may be spared the same heartache.

I want to tell you about my first-born son Weston. He was an extraordinary child. He was the best big brother. He was a sweet and loving son and a great friend to so many and a joy to everyone who knew him. We attended church. He loved football, hockey, surfing, and had so many friends. He had a great heart of gold and a compassion for others that I have never seen on another person. He was always standing up for other people.

My husband and I were fully involved in our children's lives. Weston, like so many teenagers, he wanted to fit in. During his second semester of his freshman year in high school, at the early age of 15, he succumbed to a moment of peer pressure. He made a tragic mistake, and it took his life.

In February 2022, our lives were shattered. Our first-born son, my everything, he was gone. His whole future and everything that we prepared him for, all of our hopes and dreams were stolen in that instant. Despite our best efforts and our conversations about the dangers of drugs, and our constant support, and our love for him—he knew he was so loved—fentanyl claimed our son.

Our kids are supposed to learn from their mistakes. Twenty years ago, this would not have killed my son. They are dying from them. Kids today can't make mistakes. Fentanyl changes everything. Illicit fentanyl came over the open borders illegally that killed my son. It didn't give him a chance to learn from his mistake.

I hold Joe Biden and Kamala Harris responsible for my son's death. Their open border policies have led to this devastating crisis. Our tragedy could have been prevented if they had taken decisive action to protect Americans from fentanyl flooding over the borders.

Instead, they have exacerbated this issue with their open border policies. Vice President Harris, appointed to manage the border situation—and I have heard a tweet from March 2021 that specifically says that she has been appointed to the border. Every Democrat, I hold them all—excuse me—I hold Vice President Harris, appointed to manage the border situation, and she has failed to act. Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, and every Democrat who supports these open border policies are complicit in the deaths of 300,000 innocent Americans, including my son Weston. Say his name. Look at his picture.

Since this administration took office, 300,000 sets of parents have had to bury their children. In 2021 up until now, 300,000, and

that doesn't include 2024. It is now the leading cause of death for Americans ages 18–45, and it is rapidly becoming the No. 1 killer of teens, with 14 and under being the fastest-growing demographic. I can show you every day babies are dying from this, toddlers, 12-year-olds, 14-year-olds—your children and your grandchildren. It can happen to anybody's children.

President Biden, who knows the pain of loss and losing a child and has another child who has battled addiction, you would think that he would prioritize this issue. Yet, he remains absent.

Vice President Harris' March 23, 2021, her tweet claimed that she was appointed to address the border crisis. She acknowledged the difficulty of the task, but that it was a necessary one. However, for over three years, she has done zero—zero—to address this problem.

The open borders are a matter of national security. When this administration opened the borders, they gave operational control to the cartels, who are operating a multibillion business on American soil—I just want to say that—unregulated, tax-free. While not addressing the problem, it will continue to happen.

I want to tell you how evil this drug is on our children. If your child tries fentanyl one time, it is not a matter of if they will die: It's a matter of when. The drug dealers are very well-trained, and they are manipulative and predatory. They know it's 50 times more addictive than crack. So, if your child tries it once, they've got a customer.

Withdraw symptoms set in after one time of trying it. Within 2–3 hours, your child will be battling severe symptoms that we, as adults, could barely handle. Drug dealers, like groomers, convince your child that they can't tell their parents; they've done something wrong. So, they give them more. Now, you have a child trying to deal with an addiction that they never wanted for the first time in their life. For \$7.50, you can deliver it to your front door, placed under a mat for your child, or their child can deliver it to their front door on social media.

Parents are finding their children dead in their beds, a place that should be their safe space of comfort where they lay their heads at night. In the morning, parents are waking up to this nightmare.

It is being supported by drug dealers; supported by the cartels coming over our wide-open borders.

Chair JORDAN. Ms. Fundner—

Ms. FUNDNER. OK. I'm almost done.

Chair JORDAN. Yes, go ahead.

Ms. FUNDNER. OK.

Chair JORDAN. Quickly.

Ms. FUNDNER. OK.

Chair JORDAN. Thank you.

Ms. FUNDNER. Few in this room can truly understand the depth of my pain, and unfortunately, too many families in America can. Weston is gone and his death is a direct consequence of the decisions made by the Biden–Harris Administration. The open borders have been allowed to persist and have led to tragedies like the one that I shared and that shattered my family.

I stand before you today to hold them and anyone who supports open borders accountable, and I implore you to take this to heart.

Chair JORDAN. Thank you.

Ms. FUNDNER. Let this be a catalyst for change. Because the decisions that we make will prevent further tragedies and save lives.

Thank you for your time and thank you for the extra time.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Fundner follows:]

Testimony of Anne Fundner
The Biden-Harris Border Crisis: Victim Perspectives
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
September 10, 2024

Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Anne Fundner. I'm a wife and mother of four beautiful and amazing children. I am here to share a story that is far from uplifting. I come before you with a heart shattered by the devastating consequences of the Biden-Harris administration's open border policies.

I hope that by sharing my pain, others might be spared the same heartache. I want to tell you about my first-born son, Weston.

He was an extraordinary child. He was the best big brother, a sweet and loving son, and a joy to everyone who knew him. Our life was vibrant and full. We attended church every Sunday and the kids attended youth groups on Wednesdays. Weston thrived in private school, excelled in football and hockey, and loved to surf. He was a diligent student with a 3.5 GPA, he had a generous spirit who would give anyone the shirt off his back, and he lived to make people laugh. Weston had a heart of gold and a deep compassion for others feelings, always trying to stand up for others and for doing what was right.

I did everything I could to be the best mother I could be, always doing fun activities with Weston and my other children like taking them to museums, splash pads, parks, zoos, even Disney. I was the room mom, school ambassador, and a constant presence at his sports events. My husband and I were fully involved in our children's lives, planning fun trips, throwing fun birthday parties and venturing often on family outings, including hiking and camping trips.

Weston, like many teenagers, wanted to fit in. During his second semester of his freshman year of high school, at the early age of 15, in a moment of heavy peer pressure, he made a tragic mistake. He took something that a new "friend" gave to him. It wasn't what he was told it was, and instead, it only contained the lethal poison, "illicit fentanyl."

On February 27, 2022, our world was shattered. That morning, my husband found Weston lifeless in his room. Weston's whole future, all of our hopes and dreams for him, were stolen in an instant.

We did everything right!

Despite our best efforts—our conversations about the dangers of drugs, our constant support, and love for him—fentanyl claimed our son. It is a tragedy that could have been prevented if this administration had taken decisive action to protect Americans and illicit fentanyl flooding over our southern borders.

The Biden-Harris Administration could have addressed this crisis, but instead, they have exasperated it with their open border policies. Vice President Harris, appointed to manage the border situation, has failed to act meaningfully and only recently visited the border – and that was for political reasons. Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, and every Democrat who supports these open

border policies are complicit in the deaths of 300,000 innocent Americans, including my son, Weston. Since this administration took office, 300,000 sets of parents have had to bury their children!

The number of fentanyl deaths has surged under the Biden-Harris administration. It is now the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18 to 45 and is rapidly becoming the number one killer of teens, with 14 and under, being the fastest-growing demographic.

You would think President Biden, who knows the pain of losing a child and also has another child who has battled addiction, would prioritize this issue. Yet, he remains absent. Vice President Harris's March 23, 2021, tweet claimed she was appointed to address the border crisis and acknowledged the difficulty of the task, but one that was necessary. However, for over three years, she has done nothing to address the problem, only allowing it to worsen.

The Biden-Harris administration gave operational control over to the cartels when they opened the borders. While not addressing the cartels, this problem will continue to happen. Cartels are a multibillion dollar corporation being allowed to operate on American soil, dealing death to American children, unregulated and unpunished.

Open borders are a threat to our country's national security. I hold Joe Biden and Kamala Harris directly responsible for my son's death. Their open border policies have led to this devastating crisis.

To parents and leaders, how does fentanyl in youth happen?

When your child dies, the whole family dies. We've lost everything with Weston's death. We lost everything but each other. It has been a very hard road.

I wonder if Kamala Harris and Joe Biden know the facts about fentanyl at all, because if they did, maybe that would motivate them.

These drug dealers are well-trained. They are manipulative groomers and predators. They know that illicit fentanyl is 50 times more addictive than crack, so if your child tries it even once, withdrawal symptoms set in within 2 to 3 hours: cold sweats, fevers, bowel problems, intestinal issues, shakes, heart palpitations, overall body and bone aches, and many more unbearable responses. Then the groomer-illicit-drug-death-dealers step in and convince them that they can't tell their parents, they'd get in trouble, and anyone involved would too. They guilt and shame them. Your child is scared and tries to deal with a massive addiction, most adults can't handle, on their own at their very young age. They ease their withdrawal with more illicit doses of the poisonous deadly drug. This is where children die, dosing themselves with the direction of manipulative drug dealers who know exactly what to say. Now you have a child who never sought out an addiction, addicted to deadly poison. They get your child addicted, and your child may live a week, two weeks, three weeks... The longest I've heard so far is about five weeks. If your child doesn't die the first time, which many do, they will die soon after. It is not a matter of if they will die, but when.

If you, as a parent, don't know how to deal with fentanyl regarding your child, and without severe medical and recovery intervention, when you find out your child has tried it just once—because that's all it takes—your child will die. I can't tell you how many parents lost their children after being

told their child tried it because they didn't understand fentanyl. They didn't realize that a child admitting to trying a pain med wasn't actually the truth—that it was illicit fentanyl—and they didn't understand the importance of getting the child into a recovery facility immediately. Many die waiting for a bed to open up. Parents aren't being educated enough to know the dangers, what to look for, or what to do if they find out. The government certainly isn't teaching the parents and it's being left up to us as parents to crusade and go out and teach parents when the government should be putting education in place for the number one killer of young adults in this country. Where is the Covid response?

Most parents will think they can simply tell their kids not to use it again, not realizing how badly their bodies and mental state are struggling. Since their child's brain is now rewired to need fentanyl, after just one time trying it, they will seek it out behind their parents' backs to ease their discomfort and anguish. For \$7.50 they can go on an app like Snapchat or Instagram and have it delivered and put underneath the doormat at your front door. \$7.50. And while trying to ease their discomfort and ease out of an addiction, they never wanted, they die... they die. Parents are finding their children dead in their beds. This should be their safe space of comfortable beds that they lay their heads down at night and rest, and they're being murdered by illicit fentanyl, pushed by drug dealers, supported by the cartels coming over the open borders getting the precursor chemicals from China, who aren't shutting down the factories that are killing our children!

This is such an evil drug pushed by the most evil of people employed by the most evil of businesses, and our government and this administration knows all of this - or they should know all of this, but with their complete ignorance of this issue, I have my doubts- yet does zero to protect our children.

Few in this room can truly understand the depth of my pain. Unfortunately, TOO MANY families in America can. Over 300,000 Americans with this year's numbers not even included. My son, Weston, is gone, and his death was a direct consequence of decisions made by the Biden-Harris administration in power. The open borders that have been allowed to persist have led to tragedies like the one that shattered my family. I stand before you today to hold them and anyone who supports open borders accountable for the choices you/they have made.

My son did not have to die. His life was cut short because of political decisions—decisions that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, those in positions of authority, have made. They've allowed this to happen, and must acknowledge the gravity of that responsibility. Lives are being lost, families are being devastated, and it all stems from the choices Joe Biden and Kamal Harris and many in this room have endorsed.

Weston was a vibrant, loving child. He was cherished by many, including me. As his mother, I shared a bond with him that was pure and profound. The love between a mother and her firstborn is unparalleled, and I will never get that back. Weston was my everything.

He faced the typical challenges of adolescence, trying to fit in and navigate his way through high school. He was led astray by a counterfeit substance, which took his life. The source of this substance? It crossed our open borders. This is not just about a single decision but a systemic issue that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris and everyone in this room has the power to address.

One day, our lives were filled with joy, and the next, they were in ruins. This tragedy could have been prevented. This administration has had the authority to close the borders and stop these dangerous illicit drugs from entering our country. Yet they have chosen not to, and as a result, people like my child, my 15-year-old son, Weston, are paying the ultimate price.

I urge you to look at my son's face, to remember his name—Weston. Understand that his death is not just a statistic but a consequence of complete inaction. I hope that this reality weighs heavily on your conscience. You need to recognize that this administration including many of your decisions have real-world consequences, and that people are dying because of them.

I implore you to take this to heart. Let this be a catalyst for change. Make the decisions that will prevent further tragedies and save lives. It is not enough to offer empty promises; we must forget politics and instead do what's right by acting with principle and integrity.

Thank you.

Anne Fundner

Weston's mom, Forever 15



Chair JORDAN. You bet. Thank you.

We are going to go, if we could go really quick, and then, we have got to take a recess.

Ms. Morin, you are recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF PATTY MORIN

Ms. MORIN. Thank you.

I have before me a written statement, but it is hard for me to read off a piece of paper. So, I'm just going to share from my heart.

Chair JORDAN. Yes.

Ms. MORIN. My daughter, a 37-year-old woman, she has five children. On August 5th, she went for a walk on a trail in a small town. We live in a small town in Maryland. We've walked this trail for over 25 years as a family. So, it was very familiar, very safe.

She went for her daily run. She didn't come home that night. The next day, they went out looking for her. They found her—and I'm going to tell you what the court records have said—they found her badly beaten. She was strangled. She was raped. The medical examiner said she had bruises that blanketed her body. She had 10–15 head wounds. She was stuffed into a drainpipe.

I went to the funeral home because I had to decide if we could do an open casket for her, for our grandchildren, for our family. You could tell from looking at my daughter that they had filled in all the holes with wax. They tried to straighten her broken nose and tried to align her face back the way that it—to look normal. She was covered with makeup so thick, it didn't even look like it was a human being. I wasn't allowed to see from the neck down the rest of her body.

This person is, we found out after investigation—we had DNA that came off my daughter, DNA from a crime that he had committed in Los Angeles, where he attacked a nine-year-old girl and the little girl's mom. It turns out that this man was an illegal immigrant from El Salvador.

Tammy Nobles and I live in the same town that Tammy Nobles' daughter lives in Maryland. My daughter lived 15 minutes South of this town.

An illegal immigrant, he crossed the border three times; was sent back. The fourth time, he was a got-away. If they had at any time did the cheek swab for the DNA, they would have known that this person had an Interpol warrant for his arrest for murdering a woman in El Salvador, which is why he was fleeing to America.

After he murdered my daughter, he stayed in the same town where he murdered her, continued to work in restaurants, and changed his appearance.

We did a nationwide search. We did flyers. We did commercials. We've done everything, interviews, everything we could to keep her story alive, to tell the horrible thing that happened to my daughter.

I wish there was a way to show you pictures of her and what she looked like, what the crime scene looked like. It is the most brutal crime that has happened in Maryland that they can even remember.

Her children are having a hard time. All of us as a family are having a hard time. We have nightmares.

I want to tell you another story. This story happened—I'll make it really short—in 1975. There was a 14-year-old girl who was abducted from her house by a criminally insane man. She was kidnaped. She walked 60 miles toward the Canadian border with this man with no food, no water. Walked through the woods. At night, she was raped multiple times.

The parents and the police did not expect to find this girl, and if they did, they did not expect to find her alive. I'm that teenager and I can tell you that what I suffered as a teenager at the hand of a criminally insane man is nothing compared to the horrors that my daughter suffered.

It is because of these open borders. I realize some of you are disinterested in this because you just think it's a partisan thing. These are American people. These are American families. These are our children, and pretty soon, they will be our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren.

We need to close the borders. If I can survive a crime from an American citizen, these people that are coming over the border, if they are coming over illegally, it is because they have something to hide. Those that come here legally, they are doing the due process which is necessary to protect them and to protect us.

My grandparents were immigrants. They came into America at Ellis Island. They stayed at Ellis Island. They were vetted before they were allowed to come into the interior of the United States.

I just left the Southern border, where I spoke to Border Patrol. They showed me their gunshot wounds. They told me their stories about how they suffered broken necks, broken backs, and fractured skulls. It's a war zone there.

We need to close it. We need to put those policies back into place that kept our citizens safe.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Morin follows:]

Committee on the Judiciary

Patty Morin's Written Testimony

Chairman, Ranking Members, and Members of Congress: Good morning!

My name is Patricia Morin. Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of my family and my daughter Rachel Morin, who was brutally raped and murdered at the hands of an illegal immigrant. This is her story.

The American people need to hear, know, and understand the truth of the horrendous war zone we call the southern border.

President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris's open border policy is having a devastating impact across our great nation. I live 1,800 miles from the southern border in a small town in northern Maryland. Yet a man who was wanted for murder in El Salvador made his way to my community... and ambushed my daughter on a quaint walking trail in broad daylight.

I'm here today to make sure that my daughter is remembered as more than a victim. I hope that her story will be the wake-up call that this country needs to secure its borders and protect American citizens.

As a child, Rachel was imaginative, kind, and upbeat - qualities she brought with her into adulthood. She was a loving daughter and formed strong bonds with her siblings. She was funny and exuberant, with an infectious laugh.

Life wasn't always easy for Rachel. She had a speech impediment growing up, which led to a lot of bullying. She did not let that challenge slow her down or define her worth. It made her even more sensitive and loving towards others who felt unloved.

As a mother, Rachel was playful and silly. She often laughed, joked, and played with her kids like she was a kid, too. This is pretty remarkable when you consider that Rachel was a mother of five, which is a tremendous responsibility.

Holidays and celebrations were very important to Rachel. She went all out to decorate and create memorable and magical moments for her children. Those efforts are

especially meaningful now since memories are all that her children have left of their mother.

Rachel created meaningful connections with her kids through everyday activities as well. She believed in health and movement. Walks, swimming, working out, and bike rides were always part of Rachel's routine.

She grew up walking the quaint "Ma & Pa" trail near our house. We always thought of the trail as a safe haven to get outside and find peace in nature. It never occurred to us that a predator would target Rachel while she was jogging on that bright, sunny day in August 2023.

The circumstances of Rachel's death triggered extreme shock and denial for our family.

We felt heartbroken at the severity and cruelty of the crime.

We experienced extreme terror and nightmares for months. To this day, we still do not feel completely safe in our own homes and community.

We are grieving the loss of Rachel's life and the future that was taken from her. That trauma is different for every member of the family. I lost my daughter, and I am heartbroken for her children. Rachel's siblings are mourning the bright light that Rachel brought to our family. The most traumatic impact is on Rachel's five children, each of whom is struggling to figure out how to cope without their mom.

Rachel's eldest daughter is pregnant and will soon have a daughter of her own. She is navigating that path into womanhood and motherhood without her own mother. Her baby's birth is another milestone Rachel can't share with us, and that sadness underscores every life event now.

The circumstances of Rachel's death compounded our grief. It took months for investigators to find Rachel's killer. While that process played out, our family endured false accusations and assaults on our character. Instead of lifting us up, some community members froze us out. Relatives lost jobs because some community members thought it was bad business to mix with a family amid a murder investigation.

We felt helpless and defeated as the months passed without an arrest. Finally, police released a sketch of the suspect, which renewed our hope. We made commercials, distributed flyers, and did countless interviews to bring attention to the case. The

nationwide manhunt ultimately led police to an El Salvadoran national. This suspected gang member was arrested at a bar in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and extradited to Maryland.

We felt relieved when the suspect was finally caught. But that relief quickly turned to horror and outrage when we learned that the suspect was an illegal immigrant. This man was wanted for killing a woman in his home country when he walked into ours.

What's worse is that border patrol would have known that if they had followed the law and swabbed him for DNA the first three times he tried to get into this country. They just turned him around and allowed him to come back again and again until he finally got through the border.

Border patrol let a man with an open interpol warrant for murder walk right into our country to continue his crime spree. The open border policy of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris caused my daughter's death. It allowed a dangerous man to flee his home country to avoid capture and bring his reign of terror to American citizens. Not only did this man brutalize my daughter. He's also accused of attacking a nine-year-old girl in California. Who knows what else he did while traveling from coast to coast?

American citizens are not safe because Joe Biden and Kamala Harris removed the policies and safeguards that keep criminals out of our country. Their failed open border policies have led to two murders by illegal immigrants in my small town alone.

I really want you to hear my words and take to heart what I and other families across America are saying. Please hear our cries for help! You each have taken an oath...an oath to serve our nation and the citizens who make it great. Protect Americans by securing our borders.

We are losing American mothers, daughters, and children to criminals. These deaths are 100 percent preventable. Let's use our resources to protect Americans and welcome immigrants who choose to enter our country legally. This makes much more sense than spending taxpayer money to feed, house, and provide medical care to illegal immigrants.

The Biden /Harris administration has turned a deaf ear to the people they swore to protect. Please don't do the same. It's common sense to screen the people entering our country to ensure that they are here to contribute to our society rather than debase it and harm our citizens.

Do this for Rachel. Please.

Chair JORDAN. Thank you.
Ms. Nungaray?

STATEMENT OF ALEXIS J. NUNGARAY

Ms. NUNGARAY. Good morning to the Members of the Committee. I want to thank you all for having me here to share my daughter's story on how the current administration open border policies have affected us in Texas.

I was 14 when I found out I was going to be a mom. I knew I was young, and I didn't know how I was going to do it, but I know I needed to do what was right, which is be the best mom I could be to my daughter. I fought for her.

On December 27, 2011, was the day the rest of my life changed for the better. Jocelyn Lisel Nungaray was born. She was the happiest, chunkiest, little baby. She grew up to be this spunky, quirky, funny, beautiful, little, 12-year-old young lady. She had a personality like no other. She was so caring, loving, thoughtful, one of the greatest friends you could ask for. She was so talented. She had the biggest dreams to be an actress, and she swore that she was going to be famous one day.

It has been two months and 25 days today since my daughter has passed away. On Monday, June 17, 2024, my daughter Jocelyn was murdered and thrown in a bayou of water underneath a creek.

On that Sunday night before, I went to bed and told Jocelyn goodnight, and I loved her. She was there when I closed my eyes that night. That Monday morning, when I opened my eyes, she was gone. She was a preteen out doing what teenagers do, going to the corner store to get a soda.

She was preyed on by two illegal Venezuelan immigrants. They saw an innocent young girl and made her a target for their horrendous actions.

That Monday morning, June 17th, it was terrifying waking up to know your child was missing and frantically searching the area where her phone was being pinged, just two minutes away from our home.

Driving up to that exact location to see crime scene tape and officers by a bridge, my heart sank. I ran out of the car to the officers. I explained I woke up to my daughter missing and I don't know where she is, but her phone is pinging right where we were.

They said they hadn't seen anything, and they would let me know. Within 45 minutes, I receive a phone call from a sergeant asking me to come downtown to discuss her whereabouts. I'm still hanging on the hope that my 12-year-old daughter is still somewhere out there.

They bring me to the floor labeled "Homicide Division." I didn't know what to think. After being taken to a room, speaking for about every minute I remember leading up to my last moments with her, was when they had finally told me that the body where my daughter Jocelyn's phone was being pinged, followed by seeing the photo I showed them, confirmed their suspicions, and they did believe the Jane Doe body that was found matched the picture of my daughter Jocelyn Nungaray. My heart shattered. I couldn't believe what was just told to me.

A day after being told about my daughter, I was told they were going to need to release pictures of the illegal immigrants and my daughter from footage to the local news stations to help find who murdered my daughter Jocelyn.

They proceeded to tell me how my daughter was murdered. She was strangled to death. She had no clothing from the waist down. Her hands and her ankles were tied and thrown under the bridge of water like she was nothing but garbage.

The community of Houston was the biggest support. Just 24 hours for them to be found, arrested, and charged with capital murder. Within those same hours, I received a phone call from the medical forensics confirming that the body was, in fact, my daughter Jocelyn.

The two illegal immigrants were Johan Jose Martinez Rangel, 22, and Franklin Pena Ramos, 27 years old. They are both Venezuelan natives.

The Border Patrol apprehended Johan near El Paso on March 14th, and was released that same day on an order of recognizance with a notice to appear.

The Border Patrol also apprehended Franklin Pena on May 28th, also near El Paso. On that same day he was apprehended, a judge also ordered Franklin to appear in court at a later date.

Because of the Biden–Harris Administration open border policies, catch and release, they were enrolled in the alternatives to detention program. This meant that they were released into the United States.

It was not even a full three weeks later that they would take my daughter Jocelyn Nungaray's life. They saw a young girl, my daughter Jocelyn, and placed a target on her without her even knowing.

They were seen on video at 12:57 a.m. on June 17th walking across the street down by the bayou under the bridge. At 3:04, only the two illegal immigrants emerged. They were down there for two whole hours. I can't even fathom what was going through Jocelyn's mind, the amount of fear she was feeling in the last moments of her life.

Franklin Pena confessed that they had did something bad; the fact that they knew that their faces were exposed all over the news. They were trying to ask their boss for money, so they could leave town.

It was told, one of the illegal immigrants told the other one after they were finished to throw Jocelyn down in the bayou under the bridge to, quote, "get rid of any DNA." Individuals like that do not have a heart. They are nothing but monsters who are predators, and those are the kind of individuals that we so openly let in this country.

I believe the Biden–Harris Administration open border policies are responsible for the death of my daughter. The program where the two illegal immigrants were enrolled failed my daughter.

I'm here to use my voice and raise awareness of how broken our country has become with these open border policies. My daughter should have been able to safely walk across to the store knowing that she was going to make it home.

In regard to our open border failed policies, I have been working closely with Senator Ted Cruz to push the Justice for Jocelyn Act of 2024, which would require ICE to fill every single open detention center bed before releasing immigrants who entered the country illegally and to have GPS monitoring tracking for certain immigrants with strict curfew hours restricting them from being able to be out all hours of the night, and immediately be deported with who violates the terms of their release.

My daughter Jocelyn Nungaray was 12 years old. She was an innocent kid doing kid things. She did not deserve to have her life ripped away from her and our family. She had her entire life ahead of her.

Because of these open border policies, I'll never get to see her start high school, go off to prom, walk down the aisle, get married, or have her own kids, or ever reach her full dreams. All of it is gone.

I now and forever will continuously be her voice, and I will not stop fighting for Jocelyn. I come to you all as a grieving mother to please help make this country make a change for the greater good. This country needs to make a change. We need to properly secure our borders. We need to be able to have that security, knowing we are safe in our own country. Most importantly, we need to protect our children. They are supposed to be our future.

Thank you so much for your time and for the extra time. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Nungaray follows:]

**Written Testimony of Alexis J Nungaray,
Mother of Jocelyn L Nungaray**

House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary
The Biden-Harris Border Crisis: Victim Perspectives
September 10, 2024

Good morning members of the committee. I wanted to extend my gratitude and say thank you all for having me here and being able to share my daughter's story on how the current administration's open border policy has affected us in Texas.

I was 14 years old when I found out I was going to be a mother. I knew I was still a child myself and wasn't really sure how I was going to do it but I knew I was going to give it everything I had. Everyone in my family was terrified that I was going to ruin my life by being a teen mom. They tried to throw every option at me as a way out because I still had my whole life ahead of me. Regardless of my young age, I needed to do what was right, which was be the best mom I could be to my daughter. I fought for her.

December 27, 2011, was the day the rest of my life changed for the better. Jocelyn Lisel Nungaray was born. She was so beautiful. I couldn't stop staring at her. I was just in awe that I was able to create something so beautiful. She was the sweetest, happiest and chunkiest little baby. She grew up to be this spunky, quirky, funny and still so beautiful little 12 year old young lady. She had a personality like no other. She was so caring, loving, thoughtful, and one of the greatest friends you could ask for. She made everyone in a room laugh. She had the most creative mind, so very talented. She had the biggest dream to be an actress and swore she was going to be famous one day.

It has been 2 months and 25 days since my daughter has gained her wings. On Monday, June 17, 2024, I received the worst news any parent can receive. My daughter, Jocelyn Nungaray was murdered and thrown in a bayou of water underneath a creek like she was garbage.

On the Sunday night before that, I went to bed. I told my daughter Jocelyn "good night" and told her I loved her. She was there when I closed my eyes that night. Then that Monday morning when I opened my eyes, she was gone. She was a preteen, months away from becoming a teenager, out doing what teenagers do. Going to the corner store to get a soda, she was being preyed on by two illegal Venezuelan immigrants. They saw an innocent young girl and made her a target for their horrendous actions. That Monday morning, June 17, 2024, was absolutely terrifying, waking up to know your child is missing and frantically searching the area her phone was pinging, just 2 minutes away from our home. Driving up to my daughter's pinged location to see crime scene

tape and officers by the bridge, my heart sank even deeper. I ran out of my car right to the officers but they wouldn't let me get too close. I explained that I woke up to my daughter missing and her phone was pinging just feet away from where we were standing, frantically asking if they had seen her. The officer said he hadn't and didn't really have any news to give me. He took down all the description I could give him about my daughter Jocelyn and he told me to keep my phone nearby. Within 45 minutes, I received a phone call from Sergeant Oliver, asking me to come downtown to discuss my daughter's whereabouts. I'm still hanging onto hope that my 12 year old daughter Jocelyn Nungaray is still out there somewhere. Then, they brought me up to the floor labeled "Homicide Division." My heart sank even more. I didn't know what to think, still hanging onto hope. After being taken to a room and speaking for half an hour about every minute I remember leading up to my last moments with her, to finally being told that they did find a body where my daughter Jocelyn's phone was pinging, followed by seeing the photo I showed Sergeant Oliver, that confirmed their suspicions and they did believe the Jane Doe body that was found under the bridge matches the picture I showed of my daughter, Jocelyn Nungaray. My heart shattered in that exact moment. I felt like I was placed in an alternate universe, like reality wasn't real. I couldn't believe what was just told to me.

There weren't very many details he was able to give me at that moment, so I had to do the waiting game while I was told they endlessly were trying to find who did this to my daughter, Jocelyn Nungaray. Even though Sergeant Oliver told me they believed who they found was indeed my daughter Jocelyn, I still was hanging on to hope it really wasn't Jocelyn and it was unfortunately another little girl who just so happened to look just like my daughter. A day after being told about my daughter, I was told they were going to need to release pictures of the illegal immigrants and my daughter from surveillance footage to the local news stations to help find the ones who murdered my daughter, Jocelyn. They proceeded to tell me how my daughter was murdered, she was strangled to death, no clothing from the waist down, hands and ankles each tied together and thrown under the bridge in the shallow creek water left like she was nothing but garbage. I was devastated to hear how they left her. The community of Houston gave me and my family the biggest support. It took a matter of just 24 hours for there to be suspects and for them to be found, arrested, and both charged with capital murder. Within those same hours, I received a phone call from the medical forensics office confirming by dental records that the body was in fact my daughter Jocelyn. My heart shattered in that moment.

A couple of days went by before we learned more about these illegal immigrants and what happened that night. The illegal immigrants were Johan Jose Martinez Rangel, 22 years old, and Franklin Pena Ramos, 26 years old. Both are from Venezuela. Border Patrol apprehended Johan Martinez near El Paso on March 14 but he was released that same day on an order of recognizance with a notice to appear. Border Patrol also apprehended Franklin Pena on May 28 also near El Paso. On that same day he was apprehended, a judge also ordered Franklin Pena to

appear in court at a later date. There were over 300 detention center beds available they could have had them detained until their immigration court hearings, but no. Because of the Biden-Harris administration's open borders, "catch and release" policies, they were enrolled in an "Alternatives to Detention" program. This meant they were released into the interior of the United States. It was not even a full 3 weeks later that they would take my daughter Jocelyn Nungaray's life. They saw a young girl, my daughter Jocelyn, and placed a target on her without her even knowing. They asked her for directions and being the helpful young girl she was, she was trying to help them. They were seen on videos at 12:57 am on June 17 walking across the street walking down by the bayou under the bridge. At 3:04 am, only the two illegal immigrants emerged. They were down there for 2 whole hours. I can't even fathom what was going through Jocelyn's mind knowing she was never coming back home, the amount of fear she was feeling in the last moments of her life being through that awful pain.

Franklin Pena confessed they did something bad. The fact they knew their faces were exposed all over the news, they were trying to ask their boss for money so they could leave town. It was told one of the illegal immigrants told the other one after they were finished to throw Jocelyn down in the bayou under the bridge to "get rid of any DNA." Individuals like that do not have a heart, they are nothing but monsters who are predators and those are the kind of individuals we so openly let in this country.

I believe the Biden-Harris Administration's open border policies are responsible for the death of my 12 year old daughter. The program the two illegal immigrants were enrolled in failed my daughter, Jocelyn. I'm here to use my voice and raise awareness of how broken our country has become with our open border policies. As a U.S citizen it shouldn't be a privilege to have safety in this country, it should be a requirement. My daughter should have been able to safely walk to the store without having to wonder if she was going to make it home or not.

In regard to our failed open border policies, I have been working closely with Senator Ted Cruz to push the Justice for Jocelyn Act of 2024, which would require ICE to fill every single open detention center bed before releasing immigrants who entered the country illegally and to have GPS monitoring tracking of certain immigrants with strict curfew hours restricting them from being able to be out at all hours of the night where it has been proven majority of when crime happens in the late hours of the night and immediately deport those who violate the terms of their release.

My daughter, Jocelyn Nungaray was only 12 years old. She was an innocent kid doing kid things. She did not deserve to have her life ripped away from her and our family. She had her entire life ahead of her. Because of these open border policies, I will never get to see my daughter start high school, never get to see her go off to prom, never get to see her walk down the aisle to get

married, never get to see her have her own kids and never get to see her reach her dreams.... all of it, gone. I now and forever will continuously be her voice and I will not stop fighting for Jocelyn. I come to you all as a grieving mother, to please help make this country change for the greater good. This country needs to make a change. We need to properly secure our borders. We need to be able to have that security knowing we are safe in our own country, and most importantly we need to protect our children. They are the future.

Chair JORDAN. Thank you. God bless you.

We are going to take a recess.

Back here, we will have something to drink for you and lunch will be coming at some point.

Hopefully, we will be back and resume the Committee as quickly as possible.

The Committee stands in recess.

[Recess.]

Chair JORDAN. The Committee will come to order. We will now proceed under the five-minute rule with questions. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. McClintock.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sheriff Boudreaux, one of the obvious and most frightening aspects of this open border is the migration of the most violent gangs in the world into our community such as MS-13 and Tren de Aragua. You said that the cartels are already trying sink roots into your community. Could you go a little bit more into the details of what you're dealing with now in Tulare County?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Yes, sir. What's interesting is that the cartels have actually infiltrated within California, even within agricultural businesses and businesses up and down the State of California. They are very smart and very good at what they do. They're businessmen.

They're also very dangerous and violent and they lead by intimidation and fear. In our county alone, the cartel that we dismantled was a Sinaloa cartel. Of the 50 people we arrested, the DEA is still hunting down the primary suspect who actually lives in Sinaloa, Mexico. During the course of this investigation, we did learn that homicides had taken place up and down the State as well as in the Central San Joaquin Valley.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Did you say that one suspect was responsible for 25 murders?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Yes, sir. So, in another case—

Mr. McCLINTOCK. So, what you're seeing in California today in real time?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Real time. We have a man who was an assassin working for the cartel. This man admitted to over 25 different assassinations that took place at the direction of the cartel. He was discovered after he had committed a homicide and accidentally had left a receipt from a gas station.

We caught him on video and was able to speak with him. During the course of the investigation, admitted to those. What he also admitted is that he was responsible for a certain area of California and there were many other assassins assigned by cartels in California, throughout California that were responsible for those areas.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. So, this is going on all over the State, presumably all over every State. Are you hearing from other sheriffs about these issues?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. I am.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. What are they saying?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. They're saying much of the same thing. Sheriff Lamb is a good friend of mine out of Arizona who he and I speak pretty regularly. Much of what I speak of in regard to Cali-

fornia and the violence as well as the human trafficking, it's mirrored in other States all throughout the United States.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Now, illegal migrants often arrive into this country deeply indebted to the Mexican cartels that do actually control the border. How do the cartels enforce these debts on the other migrants?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Enforce on who?

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. On the other migrants.

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. What's happening in our communities, we're seeing people who have come into the United States on work visas and/or victim visas where they're living in these small migrant farming towns. The cartel wants to control these migrant towns and truly lead the same way that they are in other countries, specifically in Mexico.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. So, the violence we're seeing in Mexico is already here and is in the process of getting deeply rooted into our communities?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. It's already rooted.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Wow. What impact would you say sanctuary policies are having on this phenomenon as well as the Democrats no cash bail bonds?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Well, I can speak to California. As you are aware, Senate Bill 54 made California a sanctuary State. Here's some of the problems that we're facing.

Every sheriff in the State of California in times past used to be able to ask immigration status of those who are arrested and coming through our jails. That no longer is in existence. Sheriffs and law enforcement are no longer allowed under Senate Bill 54 supported by Kamala Harris at the time, spearheading much of the Senate Bill 54 with Sacramento Democrats.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. So, when the Democrats tell us, well, there's no real evidence that illegal migrants cause more crimes, you're not even allowed to ask if they're illegal migrants.

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Well, and that's part of the formula. If I'm not able to ask, then there's no data to support. So, we are legally bound in California from asking someone their immigration status under Senate Bill 54.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. The *New York Post* recently reported that NYPD officers were estimating about 75 percent of the violent crimes they're arresting in Manhattan are committed by illegal migrants. Can you give us a rough estimate just from your experience what you think is going on in California?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. I'd have to give you experience and opinion because the data doesn't allow me to collect it through the formula.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Right. What's your estimate?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. What I can tell you is that the crimes that we're seeing based on our investigations that we're well over 50 percent.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Wow. I see my time has expired. Thank you.

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Thank you, sir.

Chair JORDAN. I thank the gentleman. The gentleman yields back. The gentleman from Maryland is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. IVEY. Thank you, Mr. Chair. My staff prepared a speech for me today. I'm going to set that aside and just speak to the witnesses today who are survivors.

I want to say that I certainly offer my condolences. My heart goes out to you for the losses that you've suffered. I did want to say this too, though, a slight departure from the script that these hearings typically take.

I'm a former prosecutor. I spent four years as a prosecutor here in Washington, DC. During the height of the crack wars, we averaged about 450–500 murders here per year.

In a short time after that, I became the State's Attorney in Prince George's County, Maryland. Ms. Morin and Ms. Nobles, I think you're both from Maryland. I think the people that handled your cases were State's Attorneys as well.

One of the things I found, I got there in office in 2002. I didn't realize it when I was running, but there was a gang called MS-13 that had come to the District, Maryland, and Virginia and was a highly violent gang. They are organized criminally, and they were 20-plus years ago at the time.

They commit extreme violent acts along the lines of what you're talking about. I think the first case we had was they killed a witness with a golf club. It was a 14-year-old girl. They tricked her into going into a cemetery, and they beat her to death in the head using a golf club to kill her.

I guess Bush was the President at the time. We had similar kinds of issues as what we're talking about today, people going and coming back. They get deported from here, even after being prosecuted.

They made them serve out their jail time, then they would deport them back to El Salvador. One of them I talked to subsequently. He'd become a witness against other members in the gang. So, basically, they just viewed it as a free trip home because they knew that they could come back whenever they wanted to. That was 2003.

I think one of the things I'd like to say to you all is I deeply respect taking up the mantle that you've taken up today. You're able to speak with the moral authority that politicians like me really can't. I know you'd rather trade that in a heartbeat to get your loved ones back, and I know we can't do that today.

I'll say this as well. I've been involved in public service for a long time. In fact, that was my first boss in politics right there, John Conyers.

He was the Chair of the Committee. Last time it passed legislation on immigration which was over 35 years ago. I also had a chance to—and they did that on a bipartisan basis by the way.

When I was State's Attorney in Prince George's County, we did a joint prosecution with a Federal prosecutor in a RICO case. We took down 23 gang leaders. The prosecutor in that case was Rod Rosenstein.

Rod and I had known each other because we'd been on the opposite sides of the *Whitewater* Case. I worked for the Senate Democrats essentially defending the Clinton Administration. He worked for Ken Starr essentially trying to take down the Clinton Administration.

He was obviously Republican. I was obviously a Democrat. We were able to come together and work that case together and do it in a successful way.

Now, you'll notice that at this hearing that there's no legislation connected to the testimony that's being presented today. I think one of you actually referenced Ted Cruz legislation, the Senate side. There's nothing pending here in the House that would address the problems we're talking about today.

We had a chance to do that, but we chose not to do that. The Chair and my Republican colleagues chose not to do that. There's a story behind that I don't have time to tell. It does really get to the point I want to make to you which is this.

Beyond the selection cycle because that's an issue that's in the way of getting something done right now that'll address the kinds of problems that you're talking about, there's going to be more opportunities for you to use your voices and your platforms to address these kinds of issues. I'm a Democrat. You're Republicans or they're Republicans.

You may be Independents. I don't know. I know that there's truth on both sides on this issue. There's a way to get to a place where we can resolve it, but we won't do it in a partisan way.

So, I want to thank you for coming today. I urge you to continue the struggle, the fight, and the voice. I think, Ms. Nungaray, you said you will forever be her voice. I know that's true for all of you, and I encourage you to continue in that fight and that effort.

I hope that we can get to a point where we move beyond the partisanship, beyond the politics that have nothing to do with resolving the problem and can get to a place where we can address it. Just for an additional moment, Mr. Chair. If I could read Justice Kavanaugh. This is a quote I read every time we have a hearing like this. He's a Republican obviously. I want to say,

As the District Court found, the Executive Branch does not possess the resources necessary to arrest or remove all of the noncitizens covered by the arrest and removal statutes. That reality is not an anomaly. It is a constant.

For the last 27 years since those laws were enacted in their current form, all five Presidential Administrations have determined constraints necessitated prioritization in making immigration arrests. In light of the inevitable resource constrains and regularly changing public safety and public welfare needs, the Executive Branch must balance many factors when devising arrest and prosecution policies.

I read that just to say this. Five administrations have come and gone. We still haven't gotten things done. We're not going to get anything done today from a legislative standpoint, but there's a way to get it done if we can come together and work in a bipartisan way to do it. So, I thank you for the work that you've done and you will continue to do, and I yield back the balance.

Chair JORDAN. The gentleman yields back. Before yielding to the gentleman from Arizona, I would just point out bad things may have happened 20 years ago. Obviously, more bad things are happening now in light of 10 million people in 3½ years coming into the country.

That's the different dynamic. That's what our witnesses are talking about. I yield to the gentleman from Arizona for five minutes.

Mr. IVEY. If I might, Mr. Chair.

Chair JORDAN. I gave you an extra two minutes.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chair, thank you. What I point out is I don't want to get distracted by responding to all of what I would call blather I just heard. I will say this.

The Republican party joined with Democrats to pass H.R. 2, 15 months ago and that was a border security bill. That would've taken care of a lot of issues that we see on the border. So, I first want to thank, in particular, all our witnesses for coming, but in particular pay homage to Ms. Nobles, Ms. Aguirre, Ms. Fundner, Ms. Morin, and Ms. Nungaray.

Thank you for your courage and your very poignant testimony today. We won't forget. I want to read a quote here from one of the witnesses that the Democrats invited.

But cruel and inhumane actions and policies by the United States Border Patrol, Texas Department of Public Safety, and local law enforcement have made it incredibly difficult for individuals fleeing violence and security to live safely.

Sheriff, an open border that lets people come in by the millions unvetted that terrorize Americans, can you describe that as anything but cruel and inhumane?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. What we're seeing is very cruel. When I look in the eyes of 11-year-old girls who have been brought across the border and have been raped, when we have young families who have been brought across the border as victims of human trafficking landing in the United States, specifically to what I can speak to in the Central San Joaquin Valley of California, not one or two. These are hundreds.

Hundreds of people coming across as victims where they're brutally raped, beaten, and used in a sexual way and in the sex industry is cruel. I feel that if we secure our border, we vet the people coming in. We identify the most egregious and felonious and those with mental health conditions that are impacting the safety of Americans and Californians as to what I can speak to. I would identify your statement as being true, very cruel.

Mr. BIGGS. So, just for relational or contextual matter, the Yuma Sector which is one of the largest on the Southwest border in the last year of the previous administration, their encounters were about 8,600. That includes unaccompanied minors, single men, family units, and others, about 8,500. During the height of what we've seen going on under this administration, the Biden-Harris plan on the border, Yuma at one point was getting that weekly.

There have been weekends that they've gotten that. It's now back a pace where it takes about 3-4 weeks to get that. What they experienced in one year, that small community is seeing about once a month now.

It comes with it the flow of individuals that are totally nonvetted. Away they go. We don't know where they're going.

The No. 1 got-away corridor, the Tucson Sector in which I live, No. 1 got-away, we don't know who they are or where they're going. We know that they are trying like crazy to evade capture. They get into their communities and you see what's happened by the testimony today.

I keep on my computer, and I was just looking at it earlier today. There are literally hundreds of articles over the last three months

of violent crimes perpetrated on Americans and those who are legally in the country by those who have illegally come into the country and been released. It isn't a matter necessarily of resources because there are ICE beds and ORR beds available.

It is a matter of policy because they won't like you, Sheriff, actually report to ICE and request information. If there's an ICE hold, can you turn them over to ICE? You cannot. It is policy that has driven the grief that you see here today. My time is up.

Chair JORDAN. The gentleman yields back. The gentlelady from Texas is recognized.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I first want to also express my profound condolences to each and every one of you who've suffered loss. I have two kids. I'm a mom. I would do anything for my kids, and I cannot imagine the grief of losing a loved one in such a tragic way.

So, I want you to know how much I respect the courage that it took for you to be here today to share your grief and your pain. I represent El Paso, Texas, an incredible community on the U.S.–Mexico border. I'm the only Member of this Committee who actually lives on the border, raised her kids on the border.

I'm a third-generation border resident. There is no one who wants to modernize our outdated laws more than those of us who live on the border. We are the families that have for decades been trying to help the Federal Government treat people with dignity and humanity.

We have long been asking for reform. I think what is most frustrating to me as a Member of Congress is what is happening today at this Committee hearing where we have colleagues who are exploiting people's pain for political purposes. Unfortunately, that's what's happening today.

The finger pointing at the administration by Members of Congress is frustrating to me as a Member of Congress because we are the ones who write the laws. It is legislatures who are responsible to write the laws around immigration, around border policy. It is up to legislatures to adequately fund the resources necessary.

I can tell you that I have been pushing a bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill that addresses outdated border policies and that addresses migration and immigration together. There are eight Republicans who've had the courage to join that bill. None of them are on this Committee.

That bill cannot move because of the obstacles put in front of that. The administration has tried and asked over and over again for adequate resources. They've been hamstrung by obstacles put in the way preventing those resources from getting to where they need to be.

Mr. Ivey mentioned a Senate bill, a Senate Bill so draconian I could not have voted for it. It was enforcement only. It was to me not workable because it was so focused again only on enforcement.

It wasn't Democrats who stood in the way of that. It was the folks on the other side of the aisle who torpedoed what was the most border hardening bill ever written. That's what Republicans called it.

With regard to—Mr. Ivey, you mentioned wanting solutions and one of our colleagues mentioned H.R. 2. I know you're aware of

this. Their bill, H.R. 2, relies almost exclusively on Mexico. If Mexico wasn't doing the job that they're determining needed to be done in H.R. 2, H.R. 2 was a fantasy. It wouldn't do anything.

My point is this. When there were mass shootings including as Ms. Lopez mentioned the mass shooting in El Paso, Texas, by a white supremacist, 23 people shot and murdered in cold blood with an assault style weapon, traumatizing an entire community. We held hearings that were linked to solutions.

We wanted to solve the issue. We wanted to bring resolution. We wanted to find a path forward so that people wouldn't live with the kind of pain that communities like ours that have lived through mass shootings had to live through.

There really, truly—there is very little interest on the other side of working in a bipartisan way to find meaningful solutions. You all deserve that. Our country deserves that. There are those of us in Congress fighting to get to those bipartisan solutions because we don't want to see families living in pain.

We don't want you to endure the loss—we don't want anyone else to endure the loss that you all have endured. I and other colleagues are going to continue to work on those bipartisan solutions because that's what our country deserves. I hope you will join us in fighting for those bipartisan solutions because it's long past time that we get there. Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Chair JORDAN. The gentlelady yields back. Ms. Nobles, did Republicans on this Committee—Ms. Nobles, did Republicans on this Committee or any Republican staff exploit you in any way to come to today's hearing?

Ms. NOBLES. No, I am not being forced to be here. I am here because I want to be here, and I want changes to be made. I'm fighting here for my daughter. I can't speak for everyone else, but I'm sure the other witnesses weren't even forced to be here either. They want to because they love their children.

Chair JORDAN. In fact, my understanding is our Republican staff helped you get answers to the murder of your daughter that you didn't get from anywhere else. Our staff helped get that information by going to DHS.

Ms. NOBLES. Yes, you have. Yes, you have.

Chair JORDAN. How about you, Mr. Morin, do you feel exploited in any way? That's what the Democrats have said.

Ms. MORIN. No, I don't feel exploited at all.

Chair JORDAN. You're here to tell your story about what's going on out there.

Ms. MORIN. Yes.

Chair JORDAN. Ms. Nungaray?

Ms. NUNGARAY. No, I do not feel exploited. I simply want to raise awareness that we need change. My daughter's voice and her memory should not get lost in that.

Chair JORDAN. Well said. Ms. Fundner?

Ms. FUNDNER. No, I don't feel exploited in any way. As a matter of fact, I find it very interesting that all five minutes for both of your testimonies on the left have not had any questions for us up here but instead give a speech. I will tell you I'm getting tired of hearing about the most comprehensive border bill which did nothing for immigration—for American citizens.

It gave visas to people who need to extend their visas, and it gave asylum to people coming over. It did zero for an American citizen. I would love somebody to answer to me what it actually did for American citizens. It did not do anything for American citizens.

Chair JORDAN. Ms. Aguirre?

Ms. AGUIRRE. It's insulting that you would say that to these families, that you would make an assumption that they're being used or exploited in any way. What I will do is, I'll give you my number.

I'd like a phone call from you to see what you can do to help these families because every single week I get bombarded with calls from victims all over the United States. I'm just a small person with a small foundation that helps people here locally in Houston and Harris County. Not one time when her daughter was murdered, and I was helping her navigate the criminal justice system, did one Democrat call me to offer their assistance. It was only Republicans. I am an Independent. I vote both ways. So, it's insulting.

Ms. ESCOBAR. I'm happy to call you.

Ms. AGUIRRE. No, please don't speak over me because I'm still talking. I'm not done. I have the mic. I have the floor. I have the floor. If you want to answer me, you ask.

Chair JORDAN. The Chair has the time, and the witness is allowed to respond.

Ms. AGUIRRE. You said some very broad statements. It's insulting. These people lost loved ones. They lost children. We want to see a difference.

We may not understand everything that's going on. I assure you that we're not being used in any way. If today somebody calls that number that wants to help from any side of the aisle, we want solutions.

Ms. ESCOBAR. That's what I just talked about.

Ms. AGUIRRE. I'm still talking.

Chair JORDAN. The time—

Ms. AGUIRRE. So, please don't—

Ms. ESCOBAR. I just talked about solutions, ma'am.

Chair JORDAN. The time belongs—

Ms. AGUIRRE. Don't make an assumption—don't make an assumption that we're being used. That is insulting.

Chair JORDAN. The time belongs to the Chair. The Chair now yields—

Ms. AGUIRRE. It's insulting.

Chair JORDAN. The Chair yields the remainder of his time to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. ROY. I thank the witnesses. I thank the Chair. Ms. Nungaray, your daughter was taken from you in June 2024 of this year, correct?

Ms. NUNGARAY. Yes, that's correct.

Mr. ROY. She was killed by two Venezuelan men who crossed into Texas in March and May of this year, correct?

Ms. NUNGARAY. That's correct.

Mr. ROY. Those two Venezuelan men that crossed into Texas were released by this administration into the community after crossing, correct?

Ms. NUNGARAY. That's correct.

Mr. ROY. Do you believe that your daughter would be here today if they had not been released into the United States?

Ms. NUNGARAY. I so heartedly believe that, yes.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Morin, your daughter was taken from you in August 2023, correct?

Ms. MORIN. Yes.

Mr. ROY. Killed by a man from El Salvador who crossed illegally and was a got-away. Is that correct?

Ms. MORIN. Yes.

Mr. ROY. Do you believe your daughter would be here today if the current administration were not overwhelming border patrols such that we have two million known got-aways over the last three years?

Ms. MORIN. I think that if we had the policies in place that we did a few years ago that vetted the immigrants that came in that my daughter would still be here.

Mr. ROY. Ms. Nobles, your daughter was taken from you in July 2022. Is that correct?

Ms. NOBLES. Yes.

Mr. ROY. By a 17-year-old from El Salvador who entered in March 2022, just a few months before, correct?

Ms. NOBLES. Correct.

Mr. ROY. Was released into the country. Is that correct?

Ms. NOBLES. Correct.

Mr. ROY. Do you believe that your daughter would be here today if that individual had not been released into the country according to a mass release program that has been underway for the last three years?

Ms. NOBLES. Yes, she would be alive today if they would've made that one phone call to El Salvador to check because he did have a criminal record in 2020 and gang related tattoos.

Mr. ROY. I yield back.

Mr. BIGGS. [Presiding.] Thank you. Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr. Nadler.

Mr. NADLER. Thank you. Dr. Farfán-Méndez, we've heard about some devastating tragedies in today's hearing. Unfortunately, tragedies occur far too often in this country at the hands of noncitizens and citizens alike. Parents are afraid that their kids won't be safe at school, at parades, at grocery stores, and even at houses of worship.

The United States has long struggled to pass meaningful gun violence prevention measures into law. Last Congress, we were able to enact some much needed reforms, but far more must be done. How does our inability to ensure that guns are well regulated as the Second Amendment calls for emboldened cartels and incentivize more people to migrate to the United States?

Ms. FARFÁN-MÉNDEZ. Thank you for your question, Congressman Nadler. One of the things that when we discuss organized crime is often lost in the conversation is that like any organization, they also have operating costs. One of these operating costs is related to guns and the ability to perpetrate violence.

Because it's so easy to traffic guns from the United States into Mexico, essentially what has happened is it has significantly lowered the cost of perpetrating violence in Mexico and other parts in

the Western Hemisphere. What these criminal groups are able to do because violence is an essential component of their activities is issue very credible threats to people, meaning that I can convince you because I have an arsenal to prove it that either you comply with what I'm saying or there will be consequences. What we have seen is that to the extent that criminal groups are better armed and have these arsenals again that are very easy to acquire and traffic from the U.S. into Mexico and other parts in the hemisphere, this creates displacement in communities meaning that it puts pressure on migration corridors.

It creates challenges in terms of addressing the migration flows that we're discussing here today. What I'm hearing today essentially is I think all of us in this room are interested in having the health and safety of our communities. What I will say to you is that to the extent that this arms trafficking is not addressed, it's going to be a root cause that is basically left unattended.

We will be asking questions where the answer is very clear. Again, to the extent that these criminal groups have access to firearms that are very easy to acquire from the U.S. and also ammunition, this will make it very cheap for them to perpetrate violence. It would put a lot of pressure on migration flows.

Mr. NADLER. Thank you. Ms. Lopez, over the past few years, we've seen harmful rhetoric thrown at religious organizations that help migrants, including the Catholic Church and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, HIAS. Such rhetoric was echoed by the gunman who murdered 11 congregants at the Tree of Life synagogue in 2018.

We've also heard attacks on religious organizations from Members of this Committee. Your organization is affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church of El Paso. Can you talk about how your faith calls you to serve all those in need of help, including asylum seekers?

Ms. LOPEZ. Yes, thank you, Congressman Nadler. For me at a very fundamental level as a Catholic, it's important to me that every single person be treated with human dignity and respect. At the very core of the work that we do, that's what it comes down to is treating people with respect. Even sitting here today, having to hear the stories and the losses of the witnesses on the panels, I can't even imagine the losses that they're dealing with and the pain that they're going through.

So, we as an organization try really hard to make sure that we are treating people with that same dignity and respect. That as attorneys, we're bound by the law. We are bound by what we are allowed to do within the legal system. We work really hard to make sure that those individuals who do qualify for a benefit that we treat them with the respect and dignity that they deserve.

Mr. NADLER. Thank you. How do attacks on religious organizations impact your work?

Ms. LOPEZ. It makes it really scary for us to do the work day-in—day-out. I will say that it doesn't hinder our work, but it certainly makes us more wary of our surroundings. Following the mass shooting in 2018, we did have to increase security around our building out of fear that we might be the next target.

Mr. NADLER. Thank you, Dr. Farfán-Méndez and Ms. Lopez, you both live and work on the border. Can you please tell us about live on the border and how living there has shaped your view of immigration in the United States? Dr. Farfán-Méndez, let's start with you.

Ms. FARFÁN-MÉNDEZ. Thank you, Congressman Nadler. I'm an immigrant and let me share a story with you. On August 30th, is International Day of the Disappeared and August 31st, is Overdose Awareness Day. It's by happenstance that these two days happen to be together. It seems very pertinent to the reality of North America.

In those two days, we sat empty chairs, one on the San Diego side of the U.S. border and one in Tijuana for the Mexican side. Those empty chairs symbolize precisely the loved ones that are no longer at the table together with their loved ones. What it meant to do and what it is, is a call to action, to think about how border communities can work together.

What's interesting and pertinent to this hearing from this call to action at the border is that families on both sides came together to say these are sure tragedies and these are sure pain. We should be thinking about how we can work together and have meaningful engagement to stop deaths on both sides of the border. So, I will leave you with that story of pragmatism and hope again from the border in terms of how we can find a path forward.

Mr. NADLER. Ms. Lopez.

Ms. LOPEZ. I would say for me, there's something really beautiful about being on the border. We have the opportunity to live a life that's quite complex in that we know what it's like to be in Mexico. We know what it's like to be in the United States.

We have a sharing of culture, a sharing of language, a sharing of so much that it almost feels like one large community along the border. There are the complexities of immigration and immigration matters along the border that I have family members that are unable to cross into the United States because they don't have immigration status. So, it's a complex life, but it's a very beautiful culturally rich place to live.

Mr. NADLER. Thank you. I yield back.

Chair JORDAN. [Presiding.] The gentleman yields back. The gentleman from Texas is recognized.

Mr. ROY. I thank the Chair. I want to finish the line of questioning that I started before. Ms. Aguirre, I'm going to come back to you on something more specific. Just on this simple question, you told a story of Maria Gonzalez, the 11-year-old girl who was taken from her father and was killed, was killed by a 17-year-old Guatemalan released into the United States. Is that correct?

Ms. AGUIRRE. That's right.

Mr. ROY. In the microphone, yes.

Ms. AGUIRRE. That's right.

Mr. ROY. So, that is correct. Then I would say for Ms. Fundner, your son, Weston, lost his life to fentanyl poisoning, correct?

Ms. FUNDNER. Correct.

Mr. ROY. Now, unlike the specifics of some of these other witnesses, you can't say for certain exactly how that fentanyl got through and got through to your son. You would agree that Weston

is one of hundreds of thousands, correct? I think one of you testified that 300,000 lost lives.

So, the many faces of fentanyl, right? The many faces of fentanyl. Can we say that we are losing more Americans to fentanyl poisoning as a direct consequence of open borders allowing fentanyl to pour into our communities? Would you agree with that, Ms. Fundner?

Ms. FUNDNER. One hundred percent.

Mr. ROY. We have witnesses here at the table talking about the crimes that affected them directly. I would ask Sheriff Boudreaux a yes or no or quick response to this question. In 2021, there are 11,200 pounds of fentanyl seized. You go to crime. In 2022, we had 12,000 criminal alien arrests at the border.

In 2023, border agents apprehended 15,000 criminals. With two months left in Fiscal Year 2024, we are also at 15,000 criminal arrests, and the year isn't over yet so it's surging. Here's the real problem.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle will say, oh, look, it's working. They're doing their job. While Border Patrol has intercepted those increasing numbers of criminals, DHS whistleblowers revealed on August 11, 2024, that as many as 950,000 violent criminals have gone unidentified. In your experience, do you think it is an accurate assessment that scores, thousands of criminals are coming into the United States and being released or getting away from authorities?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. That is accurate and true.

Mr. ROY. That in your experience, you see it in real time. Is that correct, Sheriff?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. In real time.

Mr. ROY. So, we've talked about all the impacts on the individuals that are testifying here. Ms. Aguirre, I wanted to see if this would surprise you. I released a report, my office did, entitled, "Border Invasion" or "America Invaded."

In it, I detailed 50 examples that we found, 50 examples. There were more. We had to cut the list off to make sure we had room. I'll read a few of these across the country and see if you agree that you think this is a problem and what you're experiencing in your life representing people that are victims:

- On September 3rd, the consequences of the Biden–Harris Administration's open border policy, the case of the illegal alien brutally assaulting a teenage Louisiana girl.
- On August 30th, the case of the illegal alien who brutally assaulted a New York woman.
- On August 17th, Brazilian migrant accused of multiple Massachusetts sex crimes arrested.
- On August 15th, Haitian illegal immigrant charged with raping pregnant woman at Massachusetts migrant motel.
- On August 15th, U.S. officials nab Peruvian gang leader wanted for nearly two dozen killings in home country.
- On August 14th, machete wielder at Capitol was an illegal immigrant despite being a priority, quote, "for detention."
- On August 13th, migrant charged with rape in third NYC sex crime bust of an asylum seeker in two weeks.

- On August 12th, NYC migrants, including one charged in sex assault four months ago, raped woman at knife point, beat her boyfriend.
- On August 7th, Venezuelan migrant with suspected gang ties released in the United States before terrorizing NYC and is yet to be deported.

I can go all the way back, date by date, through the year, into last year, November 4, 2021. Without objection, I'll insert this into the record and the thousands of examples that are plaguing Americans across the country. With that background, first, Ms. Aguirre, can you confirm that these are just a sampling of what you're experiencing as a victim advocate out of Houston and people that are contacting you across the country that this not hyperbole, that this is not political, that these are, in fact, real human beings that we're trying to advocate for? Second, can you explain to the American people why was Maria targeted?

Ms. AGUIRRE. I'm going to start with the fact that the reason there's so many sexual assaults committed by illegal immigrants is because in their countries, there's very little consequences, meaning that when there's a girl found that has been raped and murdered, it's not unusual. There isn't DNA collection and there's no embalming and there's no autopsy. She's buried.

Along with her is what they did to her. So, these predators thrive in these countries. If you're not from those countries, you don't know that. Everybody thinks that it's like America everywhere else and it's simply not.

So, when they come to this country to do this because they are accustomed to doing that in their countries. There is a problem with letting everybody in. The case of Maria Gonzalez echoes this, because also Maria was here illegally as well.

Her father and she were living an honorable, quiet, hardworking life while this other individual came into this country as a child migrant, came in at 17 years old. He was 18 years old when he killed her. Three weeks into being in this country and he killed her.

The reason he chose her is because she's a child. The second reason, because she's a beautiful little girl. The third is because she was vulnerable.

They don't even have respect for their own communities because both of these individuals were from Guatemala. Did that stop him from killing her? Absolutely not. Absolutely not.

It was not necessarily something that we could say, oh, well, she passed away peacefully. No, she passed away fighting. She passed away hurting. She passed away losing nails, biting him, trying to get him off her in her own home.

These individuals see a little girl and they have an appetite for her. They see a woman and they have an appetite for her, because they do this in their country and it's not unusual. These are the type of people that we're letting in.

By not checking, we don't know who's coming in. You're not only—while you're reading your list, a lot of these people they're harming are within their own seeking the people that are in their hotels as well that are also migrants that are being hurt. So, they're hurting each other.

As you two are here and the testimony, Ms. Lopez and Dr. Mendez, you guys advocate for immigrants. Immigrants are also being victims of these bad immigrants. I just don't understand how we could let everybody in without checking them.

Mr. ROY. Thank you, Ms. Aguirre. I yield back.

Chair JORDAN. The gentleman yields back. The gentleman from California is recognized. We'll go down the line. I'll do whatever—

Mr. SWALWELL. Mr. Swalwell.

Chair JORDAN. Swalwell. OK.

Mr. SWALWELL. I'm sorry to each of you for the circumstances that have brought you there. I'm truly sorry that this has happened to your loved ones and the persons responsible for the deaths of Weston, Arlene, Rachel, Kayla, and Jocelyn should die in jail and then rot in hell. That's what they deserve.

I believe in security. I want barriers on our Southern border at every place that makes sense. I don't want anybody to come into our country if we don't know who they are.

I was a prosecutor. I'm probably one of the only persons in this room who's actually prosecuted and put away for the rest of their life some of the most violent people in our community. I'm the son of a cop.

My brothers are cops. The two of them walked the beat every single day. I believe we can have security first and address a workforce crisis and find a pathway to earn citizenship in our country.

I want to be real with you. Congress is divided. It's hard to get everything you want. On gun violence, I want an assault weapons ban and background checks.

We have a divided Congress. So, we had to settle for Republicans and Democrats coming together for the Safer Communities Act. It wasn't perfect, but it was something. Fewer kids will die in their classrooms today because Congress compromised.

I want to be real with you. They don't want a compromise. Donald Trump walked away from the second most conservative Republican in the Senate offering a compromise. Don't take my word for it. Take theirs.

[Video shown.]

Mr. SWALWELL. Each of you came here today not easily but you expected a serious forum. You are serious. This issue is serious. They are not serious.

The Chair yesterday tweeted, are the aliens—the Chair yesterday tweeted, “When President Trump was in office, the border was secure and illegal aliens weren't eating your pets.” He also then tweeted, again, knowing that you're going to come here to talk about your loved ones who are lost, you would expect some seriousness, some gravitas, and respect for the people who came here. What in the hell is this?

The Chair tweets, “protect our ducks and kittens in Ohio,” because he goes down some crazy rabbit hole, completely debunked that aliens are eating pets. My God. Are you OK, Mr. Chair? Because last year for a very long time, you tweeted and promoted Kanye West as he was calling for genocide against the Jews.

You kept it up. Now when we have victims coming here, you're tweeting this nonsense. I don't know why you would do this. I hope

you're OK. I don't know if the aliens who are eating your ducks are in the room with us right now.

Mr. Chair, this is a serious issue. These people have loved ones who have been lost, and you tweeted this. So, I am sorry that you came here expecting seriousness. You are serious. They are not. You deserve a hell of a lot more than what you're getting from them, and I yield back.

Chair JORDAN. The gentleman yields back. The gentleman from Wisconsin is recognized.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you very much. I hope you appreciate the drama that just came out here. We passed a bill called H.R. 2. It's the best secure the border bill that has ever passed through a House in the U.S. Congress.

If you read it, it secures the border. It accomplishes what you would like to see happen. By the way, to secure the border, it doesn't even require an act of Congress at this point.

The President undid it and the Vice President as the border czar undid it. They can put it back together anytime that they want to. It's as simple as that. Ms. Fundner, last week in my home State of Wisconsin, an illegal alien gang member from Venezuela was charged with domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and strangulation. Are you surprised?

Ms. FUNDNER. No, no.

Mr. TIFFANY. Are you surprised that he already had active warrants in the neighboring country for similar offenses?

Ms. FUNDNER. Absolutely not.

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Boudreaux, Sheriff Boudreaux, would you be surprised that this illegal alien had two fictitious immigration documents on him, including a Social Security card when he was arrested?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Not surprised at all.

Mr. TIFFANY. Would you be surprised that during the investigation by the police chief in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, he uncovered that this illegal alien came to the United States about a year ago in El Paso.

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Not shocking.

Mr. TIFFANY. Since he came across in El Paso, he was arrested in Minneapolis in November 2023, for receiving stolen property. Would that surprise you at all?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. No.

Mr. TIFFANY. Would it surprise you that Minneapolis did not issue a detainer to ICE for his deportation?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Would not shock me.

Mr. TIFFANY. Minneapolis being a sanctuary city. On December 1, 2023, in Dane County which Madison is the seat of Dane County. He was charged with strangulation, suffocation, false imprisonment, battery, and disorderly conduct. Would that surprise you at all?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. No.

Mr. TIFFANY. Sheriff Boudreaux, are you from California?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. I am.

Mr. TIFFANY. I did not hear your opening testimony. Isn't it correct that the Vice President called for the end of ICE detainers as an elected official?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Correct.

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Chair, I think we should have a hearing in the State of Wisconsin. Prairie du Chien is a community of about 5,000 people, beautiful little community, South of La Crosse on the Mississippi River. As a result of the failure, certainly in Minneapolis, probably in Dane County also, there is a person that has come to that little community now that has been charged with violent crimes including against a minor.

As we're hearing from the people that are here today, they're not surprised at all that this would happen. While making the joke in regard to ducks and things like that, it underlies a more serious issue in Springfield, Ohio, where you have upward of 10,000 Haitians that have been pushed into that small community? They think—they being the President and the Vice President—that they're simply going to assimilate into that community.

It's not happening. It's not happening across America. So, Mr. Chair, I'm going to reissue the call once again. I think this Committee should come to Wisconsin. If you could come to Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, people want answers.

They want answers of why this is going on in the United States of America, how people can commit multiple offenses across various jurisdictions, and nothing is done. America is being destroyed. The fabric of family, community, it's being destroyed, isn't it, Ms. Fundner?

Ms. FUNDNER. Yes, it certainly is.

Mr. TIFFANY. So, I hope you'll come to Wisconsin. I know it's happening in every State. I hope you'll come to Wisconsin because maybe it can make a difference to stop people like the current border czar from continuing this carnage of an invasion that is happening across America. Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Chair JORDAN. The gentleman yields back. It looks like we may be heading to the Badger State.

The gentleman from California is recognized.

Mr. CORREA. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to also echo my condolences to the parents of the victims. Thank you for being here today. Thank you for sharing your stories. They will not be forgotten.

I also believe that those individuals who perpetrated those crimes should never see the light of day; they should fry in Hell. Murder, rape, some of those most heinous crimes that can ever be committed against a human being, it leaves scars to the survivors that never go away.

Back home in Orange County a dozen years ago I came home from work and came home to a number of police cars and helicopters surrounding an apartment building right across the street from where I am living. Went to find out what was going on. I soon realized that a rapist had been caught right in the middle of his act, raping a woman in the laundry room.

This young man decided to dash off. Took off through my neighborhood. They finally caught him. Found out through DNA and other instruments that he had raped at least 20 women, all undocumented in the area. These are the women who actually stepped up to testify that they had been violated, that they had been raped.

This is an American citizen who was preying on those that are undocumented.

Sheriff BOUDREAUX., I know you are very—when I was a young man picking oranges and plums, I did stuff for a living in your area. In your area there is a lot of undocumented farm workers, honest, hard-working individuals that support the local economy, farm worker economy in that area. Farmers rely on them. Your economy relies on them.

I would imagine you wouldn't be supporting mass deportation of undocumented workers in that area. I would imagine you would probably be more interested in an ordinary way of vetting individuals looking to work here honestly with a Green Card.

What would you support, sir?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. A lot of that goes outside my purview because my focus is public safety. What I can say is this.

Mr. CORREA. Sure.

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Were you going to comment?

Mr. CORREA. No, sir. Please, continue.

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. What I would say is this: What we are finding is that we are having victims at all levels, those who are here illegally and those who are here on work visas. We are finding that more and more of the violent, either cartels, gang members, are coming into the area intimidating and terrorizing those that you speak of, those that are working—

Mr. CORREA. I sit on Homeland Security, so we are working on a lot of these issues, trying to coordinate with other countries around the world to make sure that these folks that commit crimes in other countries don't come here to do the same.

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. If I could say this?

Mr. CORREA. Go ahead.

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. I have said this often, Mexico is not our enemy. Mexico is an ally of the United States. Who our enemy is the cartels and the human traffickers.

Mr. CORREA. Couldn't agree with you more.

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Drug traffickers.

Mr. CORREA. Couldn't agree with you more.

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. I believe that we need to secure the border so that we can vet those coming in, so that we can have those working on work visas, as you mentioned, in our agricultural community. We have lots of people there that are here illegally, living peacefully.

Mr. CORREA. Let me in my last minute, we will talk more later on. I think everybody in this Committee would probably be in favor of a secure border with a system to let those that are looking for good, honest work, have the opportunity to find opportunities in America, just like our forefathers did.

I look forward to continuing to work with you, sir, and others. I have a very good relationship with Sheriff Barnes in Orange County.

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Yes.

Mr. CORREA. A great man. It is a mess. Eighty percent of the women by the time they get to our border from Central America are raped or sexually assaulted. Horrible statistic. These are a lot of young girls as has been described today.

We have a lot of work to do. In my opinion it is not a Democrat or Republican issue. I hope all of us here can figure out how to work together because these solutions have been proposed, we just can't get them implemented.

Thank you much, Mr. Chair. I yield.

Chair JORDAN. The gentleman yields back.

The gentleman from California is recognized.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My good friend from California is one of the more moderate Republic—Democrats. I appreciate his friendship. In this case he is just dead wrong.

We had 10, 12, 14 million illegals in this country before this President came in, and we hadn't been able to clear them out in years. We hadn't been able to get them vetted into jobs, including the two million jobs in agriculture that my farmers say they want.

This President and this Vice President have allowed more than 12 million additional illegals to come into this country. They come disproportionately, not from Mexico, as you know, they come from some of the worst places on earth.

I have been at the border. I am a border Congressman with over 80 miles of border in my district, the busiest land port anywhere in the United States. You know what? Every time I go there and lead a trip to the border what I see are Venezuelans, Afghans, Syrians, Russians, and the list goes on, Chinese.

Yes, Mexico is our ally but Mexico is an ally that violates international law by allowing these people to come in without visas. If you are Chinese you cannot go to Turkey without a visa, unless you say you are going to America and have no visa. From Turkey when you come to Mexico City, you cannot land there and not be immediately pushed out without a visa unless you say that you are going to the United States and have no visa. Then, they sweep you all the way to the border. That has to change.

For the mothers who lost their children here today, I will tell you it would have been avoidable. It would have been avoidable if we had the mass deportation of people illegally here.

Dwight David Eisenhower was one of the most moderate members that has ever served as a President. He was also the Commander-in-Chief, and before that he was a five-star general. He understood that laws need to be enforced.

We are not enforcing the law. We have over 22 million illegals and we still have shortages of farm labor, as Mr. Correa would say. We have that because nobody has been told if you want to come here we will give you a visa to come here to be a farmer.

By the way, that is not a Green Card. A Green Card is a pathway to citizenship. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle for my 24, this is my 24th year I have served here, for 24 years they have talked about wanting reform. Every time they want a reform it is like that cockamamie thing that was going to come out of the Senate where you could do 5,000 people a day. If the President objected, if he objected, you could slow things down. That is not a solution.

Now, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are calling this a stunt. This isn't as stunt. This is the fourth year of an administration that has willfully allowed people to come here with no vet-

ting whatsoever again, and again, and again. They know it. The border czar, now Presidential Candidate, was the first person assigned the job and hasn't yet done it, just as she was the last person in the room before the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

So, I will tell you, I am going to ask you a question, Sheriff, that is pure law enforcement, and it is something I would like to hear your opinion on.

In my district we had a hearing just a week ago. We had one of our mothers explaining how her child came to be confronted by illegal adult males trying to force themselves onto a school bus. Because they had come illegally, and if you can come illegally in the U.S., why can't you also illegally get onto a school bus and make them take you where you want to go? In my home district they couldn't figure out where a law was broken.

Can you help me figure out how something so wrong can, in fact, not find a crime to charge these people with under State law?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Well, I can't answer to the law enforcement in the area. We support law enforcement. I know that you do as well.

Mr. ISSA. I love my D.A. She let me down.

I like my sheriff, but I can't figure out how you could not come up with a charge. I know one thing, if I try to push my way onto a bus, a school bus, somebody will figure out a way to charge me.

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. I would figure out a way to charge you. In California, in my county, we would figure out a way to charge you.

Mr. ISSA. There are laws for a reason, and we have safety for those reasons. When you don't enforce the laws, safety is no longer in existence.

To all the brave parents who came here to talk about their losses, the only thing you can tell by many of us up here on the dais that are not—I tend to be a pretty laid back member after so many years, and I don't yell and scream, but I am animated today about your losses and the fact that they will continue until we change how we do business.

It won't be with the people across the aisle until we can actually bring them to understand we can't have 22 million people here. We will need a mass deportation. The priority, of course, should be criminal aliens. It should be people unvetted. It should be those 1.4 million who have already been ordered deported, none of whom have been sent out.

Mr. Chair, thank you for your indulgence. I yield back.

Chair JORDAN. The gentleman yields back.

The gentleman from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My objective in my five minutes, which is not much, is to hear from the moms. Before I do, I just want to take a trip down memory lane.

Kate Steinle, does anybody know her name? Kate Steinle? She used to be a stark outlier. She was shot on a pier in San Francisco in 2015. It was accidental, I think they said. Sort of an occasion, sort of a freak encounter with an illegal alien.

Now, we have a hearing in front of us today in which I think I counted five dead. I think I got four brutal sexual assaults, a cou-

ple of those children. Lincoln Riley's murder seems to have announced this phase.

In my own community a Guatemalan was arrested in rural Gaston County on an Interpol warrant for a child rape.

A Honduran was charged with murder one in Mecklenburg County, Charlotte, where I am from, arrested in Houston.

In July a Honduran illegal 18-year-old with a 16-year-old undisclosed identity went on a random shooting spree in Charlotte, North Carolina, killing one person, injuring a number of people. It was an MS-13 gang initiation, we heard.

We are hearing about Aurora, Colorado, apartment buildings being taken over by a local Venezuelan gang.

Eric Swalwell can laugh about it if he wants to because he thinks it is funny. You hear in the report the guy is standing in front of a city council talking about migrant, Haitian migrants dumped, like 20,000 of them dumped on one small community in Ohio picking up ducks to eat, and killing cats to eat them. I don't know if this happened. We will find out. They denied the Aurora thing at first, right, too.

Witnesses have come before Committees I have been on and they have talked about hyper violence.

To the ladies, Ms. Lopez and Dr. Mendez, with all due respect, conditions are not the same in the United States as in the countries from which people are fleeing. That is why they are fleeing. If you replicate the conditions in those communities, what will you have solved. Where will people flee?

Here is the thing. When I was elected in a special election in September 2019, in October I went to the border. It was calm and quiet. There was one asylum seeker at the port of entry I went to. Because in May all hell had broken loose and the Trump Administration had responded with the Migrant Protection Protocols, Remain in Mexico. It crushed the number of people coming in. It stopped the overwhelming flow.

So, the question I have for the moms, and I am going to ask you one by one, do you think it is getting worse? Do you think it can get even worse than it is now?

Ms. Nobles?

Ms. NOBLES. Yes, most definitely. We are seeing more and more cases every day, a lot, way too many.

Mr. BISHOP. Ms. Fundner?

Ms. FUNDNER. Yes, absolutely. I acknowledge that every year it gets larger and larger, the deaths. This is on American soil. We have 300,000 people dead since 2021 under the Biden-Harris Administration. It is just growing. We expect it to be much bigger this year.

We have reports that they are underreporting right now. I am not surprised, because it is embarrassing.

Yes, absolutely it is getting worse. It is 100 percent getting worse.

Mr. BISHOP. Ms. Morin?

Ms. MORIN. Yes. I think that if things continue, we are going to have a war on our soil. I think that this is a security risk for our country.

The reason why I think that is because people are turning a blind eye to what is actually going on. That allows these unvetted criminals to come into our country, set up camp in all different States.

I was just telling one of the gentlemen here that I was at the border. I met some folks at the border. I saw who lives at the border.

I was also up in New England a week ago and I was surprised at the amount of immigrants from the Congo, and from Sudan, and from South America in Northern New England. That is unheard of.

In Massachusetts they have spent over \$1.5 billion to—

Mr. BISHOP. I want to save about 30 seconds for Ms. Nungaray. So, give me 30 seconds.

Ms. MORIN. Oh, OK. All right, but yes.

Mr. BISHOP. I didn't mean to cut you off, Ms. Morin. Quite to the contrary.

Ms. Nungaray, how about you, is it getting worse and do you think it can get worse than it is?

Ms. NUNGARAY. I do believe, yes, it is getting worse. It will continue to get worse if we do not use every detention center facility bed to detain them until their Immigration Court hearings to confirm and make sure for us U.S. citizens that we will be safe with letting new individuals in this country.

Because they are taking our future, our children. They are taking people who are supposed to be making a difference in this world. It will get worse if we don't make a difference.

Mr. BISHOP. I am going to fire off one more question.

They told us that there are about 2,500 children who were separated from their parents when we heard all the uproar about that. Now, I understand that there are 300,000 children who are disconnected, gone missing. What about that?

Ms. AGUIRRE. To me it clearly says that there is more worry about immigrants' well-being than Americans' well-being. That is troubling because they would rather comfort migrants by not putting them through the process of getting them vetting, and that means staying in a detention center while that vetting process is taking place in an asylum hearing; right?

So, they are willing to jeopardize American lives in the process. So, it almost, they have these back-room arrangements where they are, OK, well, we might lose some American lives, some of them might be criminals, and we are willing to gamble with the Americans' public safety.

That is where we are at right now. Because people need to understand that.

I, personally, am not against migration. I am against unvetted migration. Because, as you said, these migrants are fleeing from something, and here we are creating the same environments here in the United States soil that they are fleeing from.

It is astonishing to me how many of these victims are actually also asylum seekers that are victims of their own migrants that are there with them in these groups that are being housed together. It is very troubling to me because it is not good for anybody.

Mr. BISHOP. I join you. I think it is getting worse and it can get worse.

Mr. Chair, I yield.

Chair JORDAN. The gentleman yields back.

I apologize. We are going to have to take another recess. There are two votes on the floor. I will try to get back ASAP. You can take a break, and we will be back as quick as we can.

The Committee stands in recess.

[Recess.]

Chair JORDAN. The Committee will come to order.

The gentlelady from North Carolina is recognized for five minutes.

Ms. ROSS. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, I want to thank all the witnesses for speaking with us today. I know several of you had to travel here. Thank you for taking the effort to share your stories with us. They are truly heart-breaking.

I want to extend my condolences to the witnesses who have lost family members to criminal activity. I am an attorney—I have been a champion for against violence, against women, and have tried to work to do everything that I can in all communities, but also in immigrant communities, to make sure that we stop the scourge of violence against women.

I stand with my colleagues for any way that we can do bipartisan work in this area.

I also want to point out I am from North Carolina, so we are not a border State. We have had incidences of illegal immigrants who have killed not just innocent victims, but also members of law enforcement. We are celebrating the anniversary of that tragedy in my district right now.

Immigration doesn't happen in a vacuum. It is a result of a lot of forces that push people from their native countries and pull them to ours. Perhaps one of the greatest forces is our American labor market. I appreciate the comments of Mr. Boudreaux, understanding that there are labor issues in this country that bring people here, and that opportunity.

Our economy relies on foreign workers and to fill some jobs, particularly in times of low unemployment. That is one of the times that we are having right now.

Migrants, the ones who don't perpetrate these horrible crimes, take a lot of risks traveling to the United States to seek a better life because they know their labor is needed. Employers in my own district are begging for legal pathways that have the kinds of background checks and review that I know you are asking for.

This is particularly in the agricultural area, as we have discussed, and also in construction.

I am 100 percent for checking everybody out when they come to the border.

However, excessive criminalization of immigration inhibits labor flow. To only focus on that side keeps us from being able to do the kinds of background checks that we need to do. What has happened that we have seen, particularly in the agricultural community, is that seasonal workers in decades past who could come temporarily, now feel like they have to stay the entire time to do the work that they want to do because they don't have that free flow back and forth.

The criminalization of immigration and the increasingly limited legal channels to come to the United States, particularly for seasonal jobs, has led to a growth in criminal enterprises. We have discussed that. We absolutely must crack down on those criminal enterprises.

Those criminal enterprises result in human trafficking, drug trafficking, and trafficking in firearms. They hurt the immigrants. They hurt our citizens. They hurt the fabric of our communities.

So, I agree with my colleagues who have said that comprehensive immigration reform would address all these issues—the issues at the border, the issues with trafficking, and then the issues in our labor force—if we could create more legal pathways and ways to create an incentive to check people’s backgrounds before they come to the United States.

Legal pathways would also ensure that migrants coming to work in the U.S. are completely vetted before they are able to integrate into our communities and would allow their skills and labor to fill the needs that we have and, hopefully, reduce crime in the future.

My first question is for Ms. Lopez. I only have 15 seconds.

To the extent that you are able, can you comment on the typical employment prospects of many migrants?

Would you describe the contributions that they make to the local communities they settle?

Ms. LOPEZ. Sure. I can tell you that the biggest impediment for them is obtaining work authorization. Currently, there are significant backlogs in the processing of those applications.

However, the majority of them when they do find, are able to obtain work authorization, they do tend to work in lower income fields. Typically, agriculture is a very common example.

We have a lot of people, not very many of the immigrants actually stay in El Paso, the vast majority leave El Paso. They tend to, we see them settle in North Carolina, South Carolina, other places where there is agricultural work.

Then we also see a lot of people who have advanced degrees and then are able to get those recognized in the United States and continue on with their being a doctor, or a nurse, or any of that type of work as well.

Ms. ROSS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for allowing me the extra time.

Mr. BISHOP. [Presiding.] My home State colleague yields back.

I recognize the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. Fitzgerald.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you all for being here today. I was able to hear each one of your presentations. I know it is a long and gut-wrenching day to be here, but so thank you very much for that.

Mr. Biggs, Mr. Issa, and I was just in the San Diego Sector Thursday. I had been there before. One of the facilities that they want Members of Congress to be able to see is where the 9th Circuit keeps all the evidence from the cases that are pending before that court. They call it The Vault.

It is just mind boggling when you are in there because there is so much fentanyl that is being smuggled across the border. Specifically in the San Diego sector, 60 percent they are estimating—not

my numbers, this is what DOJ is saying—60 percent of all the fentanyl is coming through that San Diego sector.

So, I wanted to kind of focus on that and kind of respond to some stuff that was said earlier about there is no real legislation kind of that brings us here today.

Ms. Fundner, your son Weston, and unfortunately, I know it is difficult for law enforcement to kind of track down, I just want to ask you was there any success in finding out where your son ended up getting the fentanyl that ultimately took his life?

Ms. FUNDNER. Yes, they know where he got it. They know who gave it to him. It is on camera, and it is on text. The case was dismissed.

Mr. FITZGERALD. So, in the other cases in my State in Wisconsin where there are parents that find themselves in the same situation that you do. That has been part of it. So, the trafficking and how it makes its way across the States.

So, let me just bring that back together again because 66 percent of those deaths involving synthetic opioids, the fentanyl stuff, is not permanently designated as a Schedule I narcotic. This is something that is just still unbelievable to me, that we passed in the House last year a bill that would permanently designate that. I think this could make all the difference in the world.

Ms. FUNDNER. Absolutely.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Unfortunately, it has become a partisan vote as well, which makes no sense.

So, if I could turn to the Sheriff. Sheriff, can you just give me an overview of how Schedule I is viewed?

Do you think that would make a significant difference in the way law enforcement is able to handle fentanyl as it continues to pour across the border?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Well, the drugs listed under Schedule I, obviously, are the most egregious and dangerous to the human body without strict regulation from physicians and/or those who would be able to oversee Schedule I type drugs, for one.

When you talk about how, if I can touch into the fentanyl coming into our country, obviously, China is working with the cartels. That is how it is coming in, stamped in Mexico and then freely coming across the Biden–Harris open and unsecure border into our country.

In my county alone, and up and down California, we had over 150,000 fentanyl pills in a traffic stop where two illegal immigrants were released under California law, where they were off into the wind and never to be seen again.

I tell that story because it is not uncommon to law enforcement all up and down California and across the country. That is how this fentanyl, this dangerous fentanyl is getting into the United States.

Having said that, under a Schedule I, it would get far more Federal regulation and/or a sting and the bite into prosecution and those being held accountable for jail time. It would send a very strong message to hold people accountable for the dangerous, deadly fentanyl that is impacting American citizens.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Thank you very much.

Chair, I would just like to reiterate again what we are hearing at the border when we talk to the Border Patrol. Oftentimes, they

are saying that it is the trafficking, it is the smuggling of the narcotics across the border that absolutely is linked to every other aspect of those that are coming across illegally.

So, it is the basis of a lot of the organized crime that is actually being utilized right now to make all this happen.

So, I think we bring the bill back. We focus on this. We pass it through the Committee. We get it back on the floor of the House. I yield back.

Mr. BISHOP. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Indiana, Ms. Spartz.

Ms. SPARTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to know, Sheriff, I was looking at a little bit at your bio. You are a native of California and spent almost 40 years as a sheriff. So, you have a very long history perspective and how changed California and what has really happened at the border.

What do you believe from your perspective, if you look at this historically, and where we are right now, what things have worked?

Obviously, we have no border security. We have completely broken immigration system where if you are here illegally you get a lot of benefits. You are just approved in a lot of welfare; it really becomes problematic to really support our own citizens.

If you want to try to something legal it is almost impossible becoming to immigrate to our country. There is a long line and really very unreasonable and I would say very stupid immigration policy.

From the border security perspective, what have you seen work, what hasn't worked?

You have worked under a variety of administrations, Republicans and Democrats. What could you share with us that you think is important and where we are right now, and what you think are the urgent needs that Congress needs to address?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. Yes. Quite frankly, I don't feel that it is all that complicated. I feel that it is pretty reasonable:

We have a strong and secure border that we are able to vet those who are coming and going; that we provide the opportunity for people to come into this country through the legal system which we have had for years.

There are laws in place that just need to be adhered to and obeyed. We find that the drug activity, and transportation and trafficking of drugs, guns, and human beings across the border is less.

Will it completely eliminate it? No. That is just part of crime and criminal activity.

We will have a controllable handle on it if we enforce the laws that are currently in place, and that we get rid of the most egregious and felonious people causing harm to American citizens, holding them accountable.

If you are bringing fentanyl into this country and people die, you need to be held accountable.

If you are bringing human beings into this country and you are using them for a sex trade or gaining criminal—making money through criminal means by trafficking humans, you must be held accountable. I believe there should be Federal laws that if you are trafficking young children for the purposes of sex trafficking or any other means, or any other human being for that matter, that there

should be a Federal law that you are held in Federal prison for whatever determinate amount of time that is so that a message is sent very clearly to those who are doing that.

If you hold people accountable, if you enforce the laws that are in place you will see a drastic reduction in the amount of people killed by fentanyl, the amount of cartels that are involved in coming across the border into our country. You will actually have immigrants that are here living peacefully, working in this country with the idea of chasing the American dream.

I do not think it is complicated.

Ms. SPARTZ. Thank you. I agree with you. Unfortunately, we haven't seen it, and especially in the recent years.

If you would look at some things, what Congress is doing, because they are really the most important power, we have this power of the purse; right? We set out policies and we give direction. The Executive Branch should follow these directions. Funding is the way for us to actually hold the other branch accountable. We haven't been doing our job very well—not just very well, it is terrible.

I always say the only good thing that makes me optimistic that Congress has, what, about 12 percent approval rating. So, American people can see there is some hope.

From some of the things, what do you think are the most important things if we look at the funding, and maybe someday Congress will have a funding discussion. We haven't had it for a while. We just do CRs and presentations.

What do you think are the most important things?

Because we heard some very tragic stories, with real consequences, real lives affected because of negligence and disregard of duty by Executive Branch. What do you think things that Congress should maybe take a look, looking at the funding, and other things, that we try to force the other branch actually enforcing the laws?

Sheriff BOUDREAUX. I believe that law enforcement across the country should be supported. The idea of defunding the police is one of the most ridiculous things that I have ever heard in my 38 years of law enforcement. We must support law enforcement at every level.

What that means is, on the border we need to spend money to make sure that we have a strong and secure border.

If you are asking me my opinion, and I am only law enforcement, but common sense is something that I pride myself in, I would argue that if infrastructure was put in place that you had enough people along the border in regard to the judicial process, providing as many judges as you can, as well as possibly an incarceration facility to hold people in custody if they are coming across the border outside the means of the legal system, that you have enough resources at the border that you can actually keep it from becoming this funnel that everyone is so worried about in not being able to get into this country.

If you use the purse strings to help support resources along the border with infrastructure as well as people, that we would eliminate some of the issues that we, quite frankly, are facing in this country right now.

Ms. SPARTZ. Thank you.

I yield back.

Mr. BISHOP. The gentlelady yields back.

Sheriff BOUDREAUX., I want to say Tulare County must be very proud of you. You have in two quick two-minute speeches you have about distilled this area more effectively than maybe anybody I have ever heard.

I understand that you have a flight to catch and need to leave the Committee by in about within five minutes. So, you are dismissed to leave at your discretion.

Thank you, sir, for being here.

With that, I recognize the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Cline, for five minutes.

Mr. CLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank the witnesses for being here today.

To the Sheriff, Ms. Fundner, Ms. Morin, Ms. Nungaray, and Ms. Nobles, I listened to your testimony and our hearts are with you. It is a difficult task to discuss the loss of your children. This Committee appreciates your presence and recognizes how difficult it truly is.

As to Ms. Nungaray, as the father of twin 12-year-old daughters my heart was especially touched by your testimony. Thank you.

This Biden–Harris Administration’s failed immigration policy, the border crisis created by this administration continues to harm communities across not just the Southern border but across the country. Having traveled to the border three different times, twice to Texas, once to Yuma, Arizona, we not only got to see the impact that it had on those communities but how every community is impacted.

We talked to farmers whose crops were invaded by illegals who were camping in the fields in Yuma. If anybody has been to a convenience store in the middle of winter and turned over a ready-made salad and looked at the bottom, it says “Made in Yuma.” So, not only are you dealing with food supply issues, food price issues, but also farmer costs.

Then we went to a hospital and NICU. The NICU directors talked about how many of their NICU beds are filled with migrants because it is a dangerous journey. Women are assaulted on the trip up. They are often pregnant by the time they arrive at the border. They don’t have prenatal care. They are often delivering prematurely and have to take up those NICU beds.

If you are a citizen of the United States and you are in Yuma, Arizona, and you need a NICU bed, you are traveling to Phoenix, a couple hours away.

Talking about the education system and the need for ESL teachers, and the impact on the tax rates, and the transportation, and the housing costs. This is a humanitarian crisis but also a crisis at the border. It is also a crisis across the country in communities like mine, which is thousands of miles away in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Having been a prosecutor, I worked with a county that had an ICE agreement so that when illegals were arrested for committing crimes, they were tried, they were jailed, but the day they got out

of jail they didn't go walk the streets of Harrisonburg, they were taken by ICE to the airport and they were sent back.

To any of you who would like to answer, why should everyday Americans care about the border crisis even if they are thousands of miles away from the Southwest border in places like Virginia?

Ms. Aguirre?

Ms. AGUIRRE. I can tell you that all the people sitting here today didn't choose this path. Tragedy struck them without choice.

Alexis had no idea that was going to be the last day she was going to have her daughter, alongside these other mothers. So, whether or not you want to take notice of what is going on at the border, it might come knocking at your front door.

Mr. Gonzalez when he left to work that day had no idea that was going to be the last moment that he saw his daughter alive. The next time he was going to see her was at the medical examiner's office identifying her body.

So, whether you are Republican or whether you are a Democrat, the criminal element of the immigration population do not care.

Mr. CLINE. Yes.

Ms. AGUIRRE. They are going to inflict their criminal ways on our communities regardless.

Not even mentioning any of the financial things that you just mentioned, which are important, my primary focus is the preservation of life.

Mr. CLINE. Right.

Ms. AGUIRRE. Right? Quality of life.

I am just besides myself that we prioritize giving a complete stranger who has never contributed to our society a chance at the likelihood that they may or may not harm a U.S. citizen.

Mr. CLINE. Yes.

Ms. AGUIRRE. Or, in my case, a little girl who was also a migrant.

Mr. CLINE. All you have to do if you are in any part of the country and have a relationship with your law enforcement officers, go talk to them. Because, as Sheriff Boudreaux said,

Even my sheriffs in rural Virginia can tell you when they pull over an unmarked van on the interstate highway and find sex trafficking, human trafficking, and minors being abused.

That is happening right in our backyard.

So, we have a responsibility to protect the citizens of our districts just as we do to ensure that you can be protected in your homes as well.

So, with that, Mr. Chair, I thank you. I thank the witnesses again.

I yield back.

Mr. BISHOP. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Wyoming, Ms. Hageman.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Thank you.

There are a couple of statements that I would like to make. Then, I would like to give you an opportunity to make a statement about why you are here and give voice to the victims that you are representing here so beautifully.

First, the Senate bill is not a border hardening bill, as you have pointed out. In fact, it would allow a minimum of 5,000 illegals to cross the border every single day without any enforcement whatsoever.

I come from the State of Wyoming. Under the bill that has been proposed by the Senate, every two weeks we would have a minimum of 70,000 people crossing the border. That is more than the entire population of the largest city in the State of Wyoming.

So, I agree with you, that is not a border security bill.

There has also been a comment made that we are not here talking any particular bill. That is not actually true. In fact, this week I am leading a bipartisan coalition of House Members to introduce what is called the Fight Illicit Pill Presses Act, a bill which requires serial numbers for pill presses, that prescribes penalties for tampering with pill processes.

These pill presses are one of the methods by which traffickers are disguising lethal doses of fentanyl to look like other pills. This bill will help law enforcement better track and punish those responsible for distributing these pills into the country. So, we are working at trying to find a solution.

I have listened to your stories today. I have watched your body language. I have watched as you have engaged with various Members of this Committee. I think what I would really like to do is give you the opportunity, each one of you who has been, who has suffered these terrible tragedies because of the crimes of illegal aliens, I would like to give you just a few minutes to describe your family member. What is the message that you would give to the Biden-Harris and Mayorkas Administration?

Ms. Nungaray, I am going to start with you.

Ms. NUNGARAY. Well, my daughter was definitely her own personality. She wasn't like any other child. She was spunky, quirky, was an amazing friend, an amazing friend. I have had the pleasure of hugging so many of them because they just miss her so much.

She had a love for animals. Her dream was to save every stray animal and take care of them. She didn't want any animals to be left out in the world, left out in the streets without a home.

She was a kid, a preteen, a few months shy of being a teenager, doing what teenagers do. We have all been there.

I wasn't expecting to wake up and not find my daughter. I really wasn't expecting to not find her and realize she was never going to come home again.

Ms. HAGEMAN. She won't be forgotten.

Ms. NUNGARAY. Thank you.

Mr. HAGEMAN. She won't be forgotten.

Ms. NUNGARAY. We need better security. We need to make sure we are looking into who we are letting in.

They were both reprehended and released the same exact days for both of them. The last one was not even three weeks. It took my daughter's life; they took my daughter's life. Because of these policies we have in place it is the pain and the trauma is irreversible.

So, now I am here to advocate for her. As much as I am not a public speaker, I am standing strong and facing my fears for Jocelyn.

Thank you.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Thank you.

Ms. MORIN.

Ms. MORIN. Thank you.

Rachel was a tiny little girl. She was probably five feet. She always said 5'2", but we knew she was five feet.

She was feisty. She was like a little spitfire. She was actually born with orange hair, very red. She didn't like her red hair too much, so she always bleached it blond.

She was very active. She loved her children. She had a very bad stammering problem, and as a child she was bullied a lot because of her speech.

So, I told her a story when she was a little girl. I said, "You know that there was another person that was very famous, and he had a stutter, a stammering problem?" I told her the story of Moses.

Mr. HAGEMAN. Uh-huh.

Ms. MORIN. I told her that God gives special people special gifts because it makes them stronger. So, she looked at it not as an impediment, impediment, as a handicap. She looked at it as that was her strength.

So, she went out of her way to be outgoing and to choose jobs like a hostess at a restaurant where she put herself in the public way to speak. She ended up making so many friends. I think when we had the walk there was over 2,000 people that came out for her walk the first time.

She also was very compassionate and kind toward others because she knew what it was like to be bullied. So, she accepted people for the way they were.

I am here today to speak about her, but also to speak about all the women that are attacked that aren't killed. Because I have done some speaking, I have a lot of ladies that come up to me in the areas that I have traveled, and they will tell me that where they have been attacked. Someone will come up from behind them and try to put them in a, what is it, choke hold. They will fight to get away.

One person, in particular, said that she was able to get away from this particular man. Went to the police to report it, and it turned out that the man had attacked seven other women.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Oh my.

Ms. MORIN. Nobody hears these stories because there is not a dead person, or maybe the crime hasn't been fully committed.

So, there are still crimes that are going on far larger than we expect that are being unreported.

So, I really want Rachel's life to make a difference. I really want and hope that you take into consideration what we are saying because we want to save lives.

It is not about politics. It is not about if you are a Republican or if you are a Democrat, it is about being American, protecting our families. The only way we are going to do that and have this really be a land of opportunity for both the American citizen and for the immigrant that wants to come in, is to do it legally and to have people vetted before they come into our country. We should be protecting ourselves.

Chair JORDAN. [Presiding.] The time of the gentlelady has expired.

We will let Ms. Fundner and Ms. Nobles give a quick response, if you could, to the gentlelady's question. Then, we have two more Members to question.

Ms. FUNDNER. The Biden–Harris Administration is doing nothing. The fentanyl problem is such an issue. It is pouring over our borders. It is killing more people in America, more young people in America than any other ailment in the country. It is killing children.

It is nothing that is being done about it. There is no excuse or no reason why we are not doing something. Three hundred thousand Americans have died. I have said it so many times. It is a war on our soil, and nothing is being done.

Why aren't we securing the borders? Why aren't we going after the cartels? Why aren't we telling China shut down your factories, this is not OK? Why isn't fentanyl, aside from Schedule I, it is a weapon of mass destruction. There are things that can be done with this. It is just this fentanyl it is insanity that they will not shut the borders down.

It is killing our children. It is killing more children and more people in this country than anything else right now. It is an epidemic. It needs to be dealt with. There is no excuse why they haven't done anything.

Chair JORDAN. Ms. Nobles, if you would like to give a brief response.

Ms. NOBLES. I believe that the Biden–Harris Administration is responsible. He, Kayla's murderer, came over as a UAC, unaccompanied alien child, saying that he was scared of gang activity in his country, knowing that he was an MS–13 gang member.

Chair JORDAN. Uh-huh.

Ms. NOBLES. Kayla was a very loving, happy girl. She loved to help. She wanted to help the homeless. She loved animals.

She worked so hard to become independent with having autism. She could live on her own. I made sure she could live on her own. I would never have let her live on her own if I knew she couldn't do it. She worked so hard to overcome all the obstacles in her life. This monster just ripped her life out. After all that hard work, her life was just snuffed out just like that.

Ms. HAGEMAN. I am sorry. Your voices are being heard.

Thank you. With that, I yield back.

Chair JORDAN. The gentlelady yields back.

I believe we just have four more. I'll go with Mr. Van Drew, Mr. Nehls, Mr. Hunt, and Mr. Rulli, and then, again, I apologize for the long day and the breakup, but we'll go as quickly as we can here.

The gentleman from New Jersey?

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

To our witnesses here today I am sorry for your pain. I can't say that I know what it feels like as a father and now a grandfather. I don't.

Nobody will ever know. People shouldn't even say that, in my mind. I am sorry, though, and there's no words I can say.

The worst of all this is it didn't have to be this way. I hear crocodile tears. I hear people they should rot in hell. They should this and that.

We can fix this, and it should have been fixed and it wasn't this way, names like Lakin, Weston, Rachel, and Kayla. Human souls, human beings that were raped, that were murdered, that were disfigured, that were tortured and thrown away like garbage.

This is because, and I'm going to say it, of the Harris-Biden failure. Everybody can say what they want to over there and I'm going to talk about that in a minute, and I'm sad to say this because I don't want to be mean. I do not want to be partisan.

I'm simply telling you the truth. The truth is tens of thousands of Americans are being killed by fentanyl and you know it—I don't have to repeat all the testimony that you all gave—and the drug flows freely through our borders.

The truth is in Aurora, Colorado, gangs of Venezuelans are taking over apartment buildings and extorting rent from people. Think how scared those people are. They're having to pay them money so they can live safely in their own home.

The truth is in Ohio Haitian migrants are beheading the ducks in public parks and yes, it's weird. It is weird, but we didn't bring that weirdness here. We didn't bring that distorted behavior here, but it's forced on a small town in Ohio when 30,000 illegals have been pushed on them by the Federal Government.

The truth is that Kamala Harris and Joe Biden let these people in. You all remember when the administration changed, and they had t-shirts on at the other side of the border—Kamala Harris t-shirts and Joe Biden t-shirts.

There was a reason for that. It is telling the truth time for a change. Who rescinded the Executive Orders, the Executive Orders that Donald Trump had put in that were there to protect us?

Who wouldn't finish the wall? Who wouldn't keep the Remain in Mexico policy? Who instituted catch and release into our country? Who let Title 42 lapse with no replacement at all?

Kamala Harris and Joe Biden. When you do wrong you have to own up to it and be blamed, and when our party—and I hope you look at old videos from the past because this is not the only hearing we have had. We have had these hearings all across the country.

When we brought these concerns up the left laughed at us and they said that we're fabricating stories and that we were being political. This is the end result of what they did.

I pray to God, and I mean this—I pray every single day, and I'm not giving you a political speech. I pray to God that Americans see and know this truth. They trusted our government. They trusted them to protect us from foreign threats.

Their trust was shattered and was destroyed by that administration. Our witnesses today, your stories, that's the truth. It's the ugly, horrible, sinful truth.

The truth is this administration knowingly, purposefully, methodically destroyed our protection at the Southern border. That is the truth.

They may not like it now. It's an election year so now we care about the border. It's a lot of bull. I'm telling you the truth.

Month after month we watched, year after year, as millions of illegal immigrants poured into this country. We watched as tens of thousands of pounds of fentanyl poured into this country killing our youth, killing our most vulnerable, good kids that made sometimes just one mistake, and we watched as terrorists come into our country.

We have got hundreds of terrorists in our country. We don't know where the hell they are, what they're doing and what they're going to do. You know what we watched? Kamala Harris and Joe Biden do absolutely nothing and welcome it.

Worse than all they encouraged it. They've created this evil, and it is evil in our country. Not all undocumented are evil but the process is evil and wrong, and it allows evil to come in.

You know what? When they asked her—and we all remember. It's on video. It's not hard to find. They asked her about it. What did she do? Do you remember?

She laughed. She laughed. She said she hadn't been in Europe—she hadn't been at the border. She didn't give a damn. It was a joke. It was funny.

It isn't funny. Your lives will never be the same. That's not funny. Over here we hear that we're really better and safer in the country because of illegals and we're even told that they are better and safer than our own Americans—that our own Americans commit more crimes, and they've even said it today in this hearing room. You heard it.

So, I'm going to bring you real quick questions. Ms. Fundner, if that fentanyl-laced pill hadn't been smuggled across our border would your son still be here today? Yes or no?

Ms. FUNDNER. Yes.

Mr. VAN DREW. Ms. Morin, if the man who murdered your daughter had been stopped at the border would your daughter still be here today? Yes or no.

Ms. MORIN. Yes.

Mr. VAN DREW. Ms. Nobles, would your daughter be here today if an MS-13 gang member with a history of murder was stopped at our border and sent back to where he came from? Yes or no.

Ms. NOBLES. Yes.

Mr. VAN DREW. God help us. We must be strong. We can't save these shattered lives. If we want to do something in their name that next bill that we finally get through and pass when we have a new president should be named for all of you and their lives will still have meaning and your lives have meaning.

Chair, I yield back.

Chair JORDAN. The gentleman yields back.

The gentleman from Texas is recognized.

Mr. NEHLS. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Well said by my friend here, Mr. Van Drew.

I'd like to thank our witnesses for being here, taking the time. To the witnesses that have lost a child at the hands of this crisis, as a father of three I can't fathom what you're going through and I'm truly sorry for your loss.

Ms. Nungaray, I introduced the House version of the Justice for Jocelyn Act, which I thank your family. You helped write it. You helped write it—I want to thank you for that—to honor the mem-

ory of your daughter and make sure preventable deaths of American citizens at the hands of illegal aliens never happens again.

It doesn't have to happen and thank you again for your family's help on that and, again, my apologies. Spend a minute and share with the Committee how important it is that this bill, this Justice for Jocelyn Act, that it gets passed.

Ms. NUNGARAY. I believe it's super important for it to get passed because we don't know who we're allowing in this country, and the fact there were hundreds of beds they could have had them in there was no reason to do the catch and release.

What we have going on there is no reason for it. They should have stayed apprehended until their immigration court hearing.

Mr. NEHLS. That's right.

Ms. NUNGARAY. It's not right. It's not fair. It took an innocent child from a future. She was supposed to be part of the future for the next generation and—

Mr. NEHLS. Well, I can assure this. You have my commitment. I think you have the commitment of the Chair and this entire Judiciary Committee that we're going to move on this. I think it's the right thing to do. It's very, very important.

Unfortunately, there are countless other victims out there in the Kamala border crisis that didn't get an opportunity. They didn't get an opportunity to tell us their story in this Committee today and our witnesses are far from alone in their suffering.

Ms. Fundner is not alone in the loss of her son from the fentanyl. We have talked about the fentanyl and how it's poisoning our people, the No. 1 cause of death for Americans 18–45.

In 2021, more than 1,500 children died from fentanyl poisoning. In 2023, fentanyl deaths over a 100,000 and it could all be prevented. It could all be prevented, and fentanyl is just one part of the story.

There are many other victims, the countless businesses been victimized by mass retail theft committed by gangs, rural areas near the border who fear for their families as illegals trespass on their property. The New York police officers being beaten by these mobs of illegal aliens. People who themselves or other family members assaulted, been robbed, killed by an illegal alien including those by drunk driving happened when I was the sheriff of Fort Bend County before I came up here.

I had illegal—and the knucklehead, after we caught him, we find out he was deported six previous times. How the hell do you get deported six previous times?

Because you just go back and forth. Easy peasy for. Hard to look at a guy. Look at the family of Ms. Boo who was killed by this illegal and say I'm sorry, but this guy shouldn't be here.

Unacceptable. Reports of the armed Venezuelan gangs of illegals taking over entire communities—I think you touched on it, Colorado, that Tren de Aragua—and what's frustrating about that is the Border Patrol back in September 2022, they knew. They were alert. Hey, look out for these bad hombres coming out of Venezuela.

Because what do we know? Back in 2015, Trump was right. I can remember when he said it. They're not going to send us their best or their brightest, right? Then Trump is all of a sudden labeled as this racist because he says it. He goes, "they're going to send mur-

derers and rapists.” He’s right. He’s right. He’s right all the time, quite honestly. He’s certainly right here.

So, I sent a letter to Mayorkas in September 2022, expressing my concerns about what we’re hearing from the Border Patrol. What kind of response do you think I got from him? Nothing. I hear nothing.

Now, we go into February 2024, with Lakin Riley, that wonderful, beautiful nursing student murdered by, again, another Venezuelan, right. Sent a letter to Mayorkas and what do you think I get? What do I get back? Nothing. He just doesn’t want to talk about it. He avoids it.

Then, we go to June 2024, Jocelyn Nungaray. Again, two Venezuelans. Nicolas Maduro is not a dummy. He’s not. He sends all the worst people up here because he knows it’s going to cause chaos for our country, so he embeds them. He sends them into our country, and this is what we get.

Venezuela—their inflation is over 222 percent. Their poverty rate is at 50 percent. Why would he want them back? We can’t find out what kind of people these are when they enter our Southern border. We don’t have a relationship with Venezuela to find out what kind of people these are.

I’ll guarantee it, Kamala Harris, you’re responsible for this. Do you know what her position was in the border, really quick? I’m going to—and then I’m going to finish.

Her campaign positions—pledge to end immigrant detention. I’m going to taxpayer fund gender care. I’m going to decrease the funding of ICE and I’m going to end ICE detainees.

The American people are smarter than this, and if we’re going to save our country let’s bring Donald Trump back. The American people are smart enough and we’re going to save our country and secure our border on November 5th. Donald Trump will do it for all of us because he puts America first. He puts you first and your families.

God bless you all.

Chair JORDAN. The gentlemen yields back.

The gentlemen from Texas is recognized.

I’m sorry. I’m sorry. I’ve been joined by the lady from Vermont. You’re recognized for five minutes.

Ms. BALINT. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I come here as a new Member of Congress. I was a teacher prior to that. I have two teenagers myself and I know that there is nothing that matters more to us as moms as our kids. Nothing.

So, I want to start there because I know there is absolutely nothing that any of us can say to alleviate the suffering that you have been through and continue to endure, the loss of a child.

Prior to coming into the Committee today I was in a hearing on the online dangers that girls and teenagers face. I have committed my life to work on the mental health crisis, the crisis of loneliness in this country, especially among teens and young people.

I’m concerned about gun violence prevention. I’m concerned about solving real problems, and what’s been so hard for me being on this Committee is I come from a State legislature where people do sit down across the aisle.

They sit down and they solve problems together, and it's been very frustrating for me when I know coming in here that this problem, this terrible problem of broken immigration, of dangers at the border, predates this Congress—predates this president.

We can go back decades. This is a can that has been kicked over and over again. Now, again, there's no comfort in that for any of you. I think what Americans need to be demanding of us—I don't care what party you are—what they should be demanding of all of us are real answers to these problems because nobody should have to bury their child because they've experienced violence. Nobody should.

So, I guess I want to make a plea honestly. We don't know who's going to be president come January. We don't know who is going to be in charge of this chamber, whether it's going to continue to be the Republicans or be the Democrats. We don't know.

What we do know is that we as Members of Congress should be working every single moment of every single day in our Committees to actually get work done together.

The American people deserve better from all of us, and I think what pains me the most as a parent who just sent my kids off to school again in the last two weeks is spending so much time worrying about the gun violence that they experience in schools, and I hear from parents all over my district that they're worried about the safety of their kids.

Again, whether it is the violence at the border, whether it is a broken immigration system, whether it's gun violence prevention, I wish that we could stop the grandstanding and actually sit and do work together.

That's why we're sent here. We are not sent here to serve any person running for president. I don't care what side of the aisle you're on. That is not what we're here for, to talk about your guy or your gal that you want to see in that office.

The American people deserve better from all of us. My family deserves better from all of us and, again, there is nothing that I can say to you who have lost your children other than to say we need to do better, and I make my commitment to you to do my part to work across the aisle to stop demonizing each other, to stop demonizing Americans.

I also come to this hearing as the child of an immigrant who came here for a better life, and I never imagined that I would be in the halls of Congress as the child of an immigrant.

So, I am holding many stories here as I sit here and I'm just very deeply, deeply sorry for your loss and I will do everything that I can in my job to make sure it doesn't happen again.

I yield back.

Mr. BISHOP. [Presiding.] The gentlelady yields back.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Hunt of Texas.

Mr. HUNT. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Today we have family members of victims who were murdered by illegal aliens who should not have been in this country in the first place.

I want to start by saying to the victims' mothers—Ms. Nungaray, Ms. Morin, Ms. Nobles, and Ms. Fundner—how sad I am for your loss, and I genuinely mean that from the bottom of my heart.

It takes so much courage for you to stand before us today—sit before us today, it's been a very long day—and for us to hear your testimony and for us to hear your stories. It really warms my heart, and I know that there's bravery left in this country, and you represent that. You embody that.

Ms. Nungaray, I am a fellow Houstonian, and I want to especially thank you for being here. Your tragedy hit very close home to me. Your testimony is heartbreaking.

Two illegal aliens walked across the border, thanks to the Biden-Harris Administration's open border policies. Within months of being in this country they took the life of your young daughter, Jocelyn, which is ridiculous, and I'm a cosponsor and I'm also a strong supportive of the swift passage of the Justice for Jocelyn Act, so that no child or parent will ever have to experience this tragedy again and sit before us in this hearing room again. Thank you for being here.

A question for you as well, ma'am, if you're open to it. I would like to give you the opportunity to tell us anything that you have not mentioned in your testimony about your beautiful daughter Jocelyn.

Ms. NUNGARAY. I didn't want to press what she was. She was a child. I believe all of us as adolescents have done things our parents wouldn't recommend doing.

We didn't always all listen to our parents and a lot of kids just want to have fun and a lot of these children really do believe that they're invincible and they don't know the harms that they have and that are right in front of them in this world, and a lot of them are being preyed on.

My daughter really should have felt safe, even if it was late at night, which she should—she had no business doing—we know—but she should have been able to walk a couple minutes from our home and be able to safely get home without having to be lured somewhere by being the helpful little girl she was. Was just trying to help them get to wherever it was they were going, and they took advantage of her.

Mr. HUNT. Thank you.

Again, this touches home to me because I have two daughters, Olivia and Victoria. If some of this happened to them, I actually don't know what I would do.

Actually, I have an idea, and I probably wouldn't be in Congress anymore. So, I understand your frustration, and you're right, our children should be able to walk these streets safely no matter what hour, no matter what decisions that they make.

The left keeps saying that statistically Americans commit more crimes than non-Americans in this country. Well, I'd like my colleagues on the left to know that these mothers that are dealing with this understand that's actually not true and, in fact, police sources told the *New York Post* that around 75 percent of people arrested in midtown Manhattan, which is not necessarily a direct border State, in recent months they've been illegal aliens.

The Federal Government must do everything it can to protect American citizens. That's actually our sole purpose. That's our No. 1 job, and we can do that. It's simple. We need to reestablish

the immigration and border policies that worked under President Trump.

This is not difficult. My colleagues on the left want to say this is not political and it doesn't matter who your guy or gal is. Yes, it does. It really does, actually, because if President Trump were in office right now, we wouldn't be sitting here.

I don't care what political affiliation that you have. Those are facts. Kamala Harris wants you to confuse her border policies, because now she's claiming that she supports Trump's border policies, and she wants you to believe that she's tough on the border.

We know that's not true, and as we know that the best predictor of future performance is past performance.

There's been a lot of talk today about policies. House Republicans in May of last year passed H.R. 2, the Secure the Border Act. House Republicans have done our part to attempt to prevent these tragedies from recurring and happening again, but the Democrat-led Senate didn't even take up the bill.

If you think things are bad right now, if Kamala Harris, our border czar, is back in office after November 5th, we will continue to have these hearings.

We are doing this to elucidate the American people, to let them know that we have got to stop this from happening in this country and we have the ability to do just that.

I'll end with this. I have 18 seconds left, and I want to tell you I can see your faces right now. Ma'am, this picture in front of me has really touched my heart. I took a picture of it, and I will show it to my children, and I will show it to those people in Houston, Texas, to prevent this from ever happening again.

I can see the pain on your face. As a father I understand exactly how you feel. As a combat veteran—and tomorrow is 9/11—as a combat veteran that went to war after 9/11, I fought for this country to keep these animals from killing our young children.

I will continue to fight tirelessly to do just that. Thank you so much. Thank you for your bravery. God bless you all, and we are trying our best to prevent these tragedies from ever happening again. Thank you so much for being here.

Mr. BISHOP. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina Mr. Fry.

Mr. FRY. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for this hearing today, and thank you, ladies, for being here. When I was in the South Carolina legislature I chaired an opioid task force that was our State's response to the opioid epidemic and at the beginning of every hearing we did you get into the policy, right. You get into the weeds of where you are and how do you get out of this.

We always started and ended every hearing with the faces and voices of those who are going through this themselves, and so it's incredibly brave for you to be here. I really appreciate you sharing these stories. I know it's not easy to do so but thank you.

Ms. Nungaray, your daughter Jocelyn was murdered by Venezuelan nationals who entered the country illegally and they were released in the country with notices to appear in front of an immigration court. Is that correct?

Ms. NUNGARAY. Yes, that's correct.

Mr. FRY. One of them had an ankle—an ICE ankle monitor when he murdered your daughter. This, to me, is just like incredibly unfathomable that we're allowing these individuals into this country.

What does it say about the policies of the Biden–Harris Administration? Are their border policies, or lack thereof, working for the American people?

Ms. NUNGARAY. There's a huge lack for public safety for us U.S. citizens. We should be able to feel safe throughout all cities of the United States and it is a very, very broken failed system and I'm very appalled to be in this country because of how failed it is, especially after losing my daughter.

We should be safe and that shouldn't be a question. That shouldn't be a privilege. That should be a requirement. As a U.S. citizen we should be safe at all times.

Mr. FRY. No, I completely agree with you and, unfortunately, there are so many that are similarly situated to you and all of you that are going through this.

Ms. Nobles, I want to turn to you. The illegal alien who murdered your daughter was an unaccompanied minor when he entered the United States. Once he committed murder local police were able to determine that he was actually in a gang, MS-13. Had a criminal record in El Salvador.

Can you tell us what happened when Martinez became custody of Child Protective Services after he murdered your daughter?

Ms. NOBLES. The Aberdeen Police Department asked CPS to put him in a secure location because of the crimes that he was being—what he did and they agreed to put him in a secure location.

When they went to go arrest him, they found out that it was a group home and he was in a group home with other children and the local police said, oh, this is secure.

They did not know—CPS did not let the Aberdeen Police Department know that they moved him from the group home to a foster home and enrolled him in high school.

Mr. FRY. What types of freedoms did he have after he did this? You said he was enrolled in high school, which is—

Ms. NOBLES. He was in—yes, he was put in high school with 1,400 other students knowing that he was in a premeditated first-degree murder case—rape and assault.

Mr. FRY. Exposed to all these other individuals?

Ms. NOBLES. All these other individuals, and it makes me so angry that they put other children at risk.

Mr. FRY. If Kamala Harris were here right in this Committee hearing today, if she was sitting here on the House side, what questions would you have of her?

Ms. NOBLES. Well, actually, I would say, well, you can have Walter come live with you because Kayla was murdered in her own bed. She was sleeping and she had to wake up to this monster breaking into her room and strangling her with her own phone cord. She can have him.

Mr. FRY. She won't.

Ms. NOBLES. Of course. Of course, she doesn't want him in her house but she's all for them, and it's not a joke. I would tell her

this is not a joke. You're laughing. These are real people, real children, who had lives and was taken from them in the worst way.

Mr. FRY. Thank you for that.

Ms. Morin, I want to turn to you. In your testimony you talked about how the Border Patrol let a man with an open Interpol warrant for murder in our country. Do you feel safe under the broader policies of the Biden–Harris Administration?

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Fry, Ms. Morin stepped away.

Mr. FRY. Stepped away. Well, any of you, do you feel safe under the Biden–Harris policies?

Ms. AGUIRRE. No. They chose to give people that have never contributed to our country the possibility of a better life while making the lives of the citizens worse while risking public safety.

They gambled because it's not their lives to gamble with. They have their private security. They have bulletproof car vehicles. They live in gated communities. What about everybody else that has to live with these individuals in their communities?

Going back to the case of Maria Gonzalez, her neighbor was one of those individuals that was brought here. He was an unaccompanied minor, and ironically since he left his town in Guatemala the murders of little girls stopped.

Mr. FRY. You know what is remarkable to me? I was hearing—listening in my office or listening to the commentary on the other side. I'm happy to work on securing the border.

Every time that we have come forward with a bill or a policy initiative to do that, that you actually secure the border, that you stop the flow of people who don't know why they're in the country, that we stop the criminals from coming into the country, they don't engage.

They shut down debate. They say we're engaged in conspiracy theories. In fact, you know what's so strange? The first hearing—one of the first hearings that I was ever in, in this room, the Ranking Member said that we were imagining a border crisis.

That is insanity. You all are living this every single day and there are millions of people who are in your shoes. Thank you for your bravery today. Thank you for being here, and we will be praying for you and with you and continuing to push this and make sure that we can secure our borders. Thank you.

Mr. BISHOP. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Rulli.

Mr. RULLI. So, I spent six years in the Ohio Senate and I'm only in my third month in Congress, so I've seen a lot of testimony over the last 6½ years.

This is the first time I was nervous, being in front of all the mothers, and my days are long. I have a lot of different things—hats I wear in my life. I came home a couple months ago, and I watch a lot of news, and I saw Jocelyn's picture. I just completely broke down.

Anyone that has a daughter there's no way you could get around that, and I started thinking about what kind of questions I could ask the moms and, like, I'm drawing a blank and so, my cousin died young. My best friend got killed.

So, I got a lot of their moms together so they could help each other and have a coffee group and they get together and then they talk.

Then, I was thinking about the ultimate mom Mary and how her son was sacrificed and she had to watch that and she had to carry on, and you guys are going to carry on.

You're here and you are empowering yourself. You have to say this story over and over and over again, and I can't imagine how you wake up in the morning and you don't have her or your kids, you don't have them with you, and how you go on.

All my grandparents were born overseas and then we celebrated going through Ellis Island. My one grandma Gina, she was stuck in Ellis Island for a year because there was medical things. We vetted everybody and then we assimilated. We're a country of immigrants. We're not anti-immigrant.

We don't know who's here, and you guys are the biggest stories of them all. In Ohio I know handfuls of people that have been killed in drunk driving that are from illegal aliens that are driving these vehicles and shouldn't be there.

I really encourage all of you to continue this venture and don't stop. It's easy for me to say but I don't—no matter how bad it hurts you have to keep telling the story because people in everyday life it's just a little blurb of your stories and it's coming to a theater near them.

In Springfield, right now—you've heard in Ohio there's tens of thousands of Haitians that are there. There was a little boy, 11 years old, killed by one of them.

I'm not going into all this—stories about all the other different cultural things. I'm just talking about bare bones here and this is Ohio.

So, I just want to take a second, and I know a couple of the moms are from Maryland and so when I heard that Maryland and being in Ohio, and living our lives when you hear the border crisis you think it's Texas or you think it's Arizona.

You don't think Maryland. You don't think Ohio. You don't think Vermont. You don't think Massachusetts. You don't think Minnesota. You think Texas.

Maryland is as far away from the border as you can get. So, just with the moment for the moms that are from Maryland there's no way you could have ever thought that in your neck of the woods that your kids wouldn't have been safe, and here we are.

We have to vet these people. So, if the moms from Maryland could just say a word or two.

Ms. NOBLES. I didn't think I would be living the journey that I am. I thought Kayla would be safe in her own home and it's just—it could happen to anyone. It could happen to anyone anywhere and you don't have to be close to the border to have this affect you.

We picked out a pretty white dress for Kayla for her viewing. She couldn't even wear it. She had to wear a granny dress to be covered from her chin down because of the bruise, because of all—because she was covered in bruises and her neck and all that was messed up from the cord.

So, this could happen to anyone.

Mr. RULLI. Well, I can't thank you enough, and if you can continue the journey the public needs to know. This isn't Democrat or Republican. This is just America, and we could do better, and your kids didn't die in vain.

With that, I yield back.

Chair JORDAN. The gentleman yields back.

Once again, I want to thank you all for being here and telling your story. I apologize once again for the breaks and then they just—in some ways a typical day on Capitol Hill.

We do appreciate your valuable testimony that I think a lot of Americans—a lot of Americans are going to take to heart.

So, with that, our Committee is—the Committee stands—wait, I need to one other thing.

This concludes today's hearing. We thank our witnesses for appearing. 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 3:24 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

All materials submitted for the record by Members of the Committee on the Judiciary can be found at: <https://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=117608>.

