

OVERSIGHT OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND
IMMIGRATION SERVICES

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION INTEGRITY,
SECURITY, AND ENFORCEMENT

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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OVERSIGHT OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

Wednesday, December 4, 2024

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION INTEGRITY, SECURITY,
AND ENFORCEMENT

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Washington, DC

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:15 a.m., in Room 2141, Rayburn House Office Building, the Hon. Tom McClintock [Chair of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives McClintock, Jordan, Biggs, Tiffany, Van Drew, Nehls, Hunt, Jayapal, Lofgren, Correa, Ross, Swalwell, and Garcia.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. The Immigration Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee will come to order.

Today the Subcommittee meets to conduct oversight into the administration of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The USCIS is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the immigration adjudication process, including for naturalization, employment authorization, employment-based green cards, and certain non-immigrant visas.

The USCIS also runs E-Verify, which allows employers to determine the work eligibility of their employees and the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements, SAVE, Program, which allows States and other jurisdictions to verify the immigration status of foreign nationals for purposes of receiving public benefits.

We welcome the USCIS Director Ur Jaddou to answer questions about her conduct as head of this agency.

During the Biden Presidency, America has suffered an illegal mass migration on a scale never seen in recorded history. The 7.6 million foreign nationals have been allowed—indeed, many would say encouraged—to illegally enter our country, overwhelming our social services, our public schools, our public hospitals, and inflicting all manner of crimes on our people.

The USCIS, under its current Director, has played a central role in this calamity by abusing its authority and twisting the law to permit millions of illegal aliens to claim special privileges not available to legal immigrants or American citizens.

From the first day of Biden's Presidency, USCIS rescinded the Trump policies that protected the integrity of our immigration system. It adopted policies. It transformed temporary programs into de facto permanent residency programs and helped lock in decades-old decisions that had obviously been contradicted by events. For example, temporary status for victims of a hurricane in Honduras that occurred 20 years ago.

Most infamously, they took a parole authority that required case-by-case review of individual exigent circumstances to provide temporary entry to the United States and transformed it into a fraud-ridden mass admission of more than a half a million Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans, up to 1,000 every day.

The administration's illegal parole program purports to require a sponsor to take personal responsibility for supporting such parolees during their stay in the United States, but USCIS has perverted this requirement by accepting sponsors who receive welfare benefits themselves, who have submitted fraudulent documents, or who are subject to deportation themselves.

No attempt is made to determine criminal history or to check the veracity of sponsors' claims. In some cases, sponsors advertise their services for a fee. Literally, one parolee can immediately arrive in this country, receive indefinite status, and then sign up as a sponsor for the next. This is illegal chain migration on steroids, all made possible by an agency willing to contort and ignore the law.

The goal of this agency and its Director is obvious and it's undeniable: To funnel as many aliens as possible directly into the country by flying them directly to every major city in America. In fact, when the Committee staff asked questions about how the agency ensured sponsors fulfilled their legal responsibilities, they told us not to worry. That's because the goal is that the sponsor becomes irrelevant once the USCIS grants the alien a work permit.

Now, we learn the agency intends to increase temporary work permits from 180–540 days. If anyone wonders why real wages for working families have declined under this administration, look no further than the agency before us today.

Fortunately, the American people are already connecting these dots in large enough numbers to change the direction of our government. It shouldn't surprise us that internal USCIS audits have revealed rampant fraud throughout the program. With results like these, it's no wonder that the USCIS has consistently refused to answer questions from this Committee regarding the CHNV program. We sent the USCIS questions on March 26, 2024, and despite numerous followups, did not get responses until August 19th. We sent DHS additional questions in September after a briefing on the program. Three months later, the Committee has yet to receive answers. So, we're going to try again today.

We'll also ask Director Jaddou to explain why the USCIS asylum backlog has roughly quadrupled in size to 1.4 million cases. We'd like to know why 83 percent of the affirmative asylum cases heard by this agency last year ended up being dismissed or administratively closed.

The USCIS should be denying or granting the majority of cases so that the alien immigration status has certainty. We would like to know why the USCIS Director has refused to implement DHS

Inspector General recommendations to prevent misuse of the U Visa program, and why she seems to ignore fraud and abuse in programs like those for VAWA self-petitioners, T visa applicants, and special immigrant juveniles.

I suppose in one sense our Nation should be indebted to the Director for helping to awaken a sleeping giant on November 5th, and to awaken the American people to the destructiveness of the Democrats' open border policies. The damage they've done is immense, but they at least have produced a backlash now that will give us the opportunity to restore the integrity of our borders, the force of our laws, and the welfare and safety of our people. If successful, we will not see the likes of this administration again.

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

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Director Jaddou, thank you very much for being here. Thank you for your service.

We often hear the majority talk about the need for people to enter the country legally, making it sound like the vicious fight that they have waged against immigrants is solely about the need to come here legally. Yet, for four years, under Donald Trump and Stephen Miller, the Republicans did everything possible to destroy the legal pathways that our country desperately needs, taking away most of the ways that people had to come legally, even to re-join family members or to fill job offers.

They left the agency responsible for this, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, in shambles, needing to be entirely rebuilt. You and the Biden Administration have done just that, rebuild the agency.

Director Jaddou, let's review what you inherited from the Trump Administration. In 2020, USCIS was broken. Legal immigration slowed to a trickle. Despite a backlog of over a million applications, many employment-based visas were going unused. Applications for citizenship were way down and taking over a year to process, and processing delays were rampant and at record high levels.

The Trump Administration stripped away USCIS' service-oriented mission and eradicated commonsense policies that improve agency efficiency, replacing it with policies designed to destroy the legal immigration system and make it even harder for anyone to apply for a legal pathway.

Now, let's be clear. It is no coincidence that more people came to the border when those legal pathways were intentionally destroyed.

Despite claiming to be pro-legal immigration from time to time, multiple Members of this Subcommittee have advocated for stopping all legal immigration to the United States for a period of time, and that's on the other side.

This would take us in completely the wrong direction. Countries that have severely restricted immigration have paid the price. As the baby boomer population continues to age and retire, coupled with declining birth rates, America will continue to need more legal immigration.

The truth is that we benefit from the contributions of immigrants and their families in every single field of work, whether it is in the

dairy industry in Idaho or the home healthcare industry across the country or, yes, even the electric car industry pioneered by an immigrant named Elon Musk, who was undocumented when he launched his company. The U.S. needs and benefits from immigrants.

From a purely economic standpoint, immigrants helped us to recover from the pandemic downturn and grow our economy far more quickly than we would have otherwise.

Earlier this year, the Congressional Budget Office found that immigrants will add \$7 trillion—that's trillion with a "T"—to the economy over the next 10 years, increase Federal tax revenue by 1.2 trillion, and decrease the Federal deficit by 900 billion.

Americans are rightly frustrated at an outdated, slow, and unfair immigration system. We need a full reform, something that can only be done by Congress and that Republicans time and time again have refused to do.

The last time we tried to pass a comprehensive reform of the immigration system in 2013, just imagine that that legislation received 68 bipartisan votes in the U.S. Senate, 68 bipartisan votes for a comprehensive reform of the immigration system. Yet, when it came to the House, Speaker John Boehner on the Republican side refused to bring it to the floor for a vote. Why? Because Republicans knew that it would pass, and they didn't want to reform the immigration system.

It is quite convenient to have immigrants to scapegoat and blame at every turn. America desperately needs Congress to pass a modernization of our 30-year-old immigration laws, update visa numbers, so that they meet the needs of today's economy and families, and legalize the millions of undocumented immigrants who have carried out the daily labor of our country in the shadows for decades now.

We need to fund the agency, your agency, that makes the legal system work. Making the immigration system work will not only decrease pressure on the border, but it'll help America to meet its labor needs, unite families, and keep critical tax revenue flowing to boost our economy, as well as programs like Social Security and Medicare.

Just think, undocumented immigrants paid \$26 billion into Social Security in 2022, a program that they are not even eligible to receive benefits.

Director Jaddou, you and your team have spent four years rebuilding an agency left in shambles by the Trump Administration. Despite still largely being a fee-funded agency, USCIS is on sound fiscal footing now and adjudicating more applications than ever before.

Over the last two years, the agency has naturalized nearly 1.9 million people, has worked to fully vet and admit the most refugees in 30 years, all while dealing with increased strain and workload on its humanitarian portfolio.

Without Congressionally appropriated funding, the agency is often forced to rob Peter to pay Paul. When resources are shifted to focus on processing green cards or humanitarian applications, other areas suffer. We've seen that with long wait times to process waivers vital to keeping families together and consistent delays in

the adjudications of work authorization and temporary protected status applications.

Stephen Miller and Donald Trump have threatened mass deportations and a complete crackdown on legal immigration. Elon Musk, recognizing his own journey from undocumented immigrant to documented immigrant, has at least recognized that, quote, “super talented immigrants deserve additional legal pathways.”

While he’s probably only thinking of himself and the tech sector, the reality is that we have super talented immigrants in every sector of our economy, and they deserve the same respect from a legal immigration system that recognizes their contributions.

Thank you, Director, for coming today, but most important for your tireless dedication to ensuring that America continues to be a Nation that values and respects the contributions of immigrants.

I yield back.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Without objection, all other opening statements will be included in the record. We’ll now introduce today’s witness.

The Honorable Ur Jaddou is the Director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, a position she’s held since July 2021. Director Jaddou previously served as Chief Counsel at USCIS from June 2014–January 2017. We’d like to welcome our witness here today and thank her for her appearance.

We’ll begin by swearing you in. Would you please rise and raise your right hand?

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

Ms. JADDOU. I do.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Let the record reflect that the witness has answered in the affirmative. Thank you.

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

Director Jaddou, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. UR M. JADDOU

Ms. JADDOU. Good morning. Chair McClintock, Ranking Member Jayapal, and the distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, I’m glad to have this opportunity to discuss the work of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Our day-to-day work centers on adjudicating applications and requests for immigration services in a fair, accurate, timely manner and, above all, with integrity. On a higher level, the USCIS plays a critical role in helping our Nation reunify U.S. citizen families, ensure a steady supply of needed labor for U.S. employers, and implement the Nation’s humanitarian values preserved in our immigration law. It’s important work and we take that very seriously.

I want to take this moment to recognize the dedicated USCIS workforce of more than 22,500 individuals who work to carry out this mission every day. In my time as the Director, I’ve had the privilege of meeting many of these exceptional public servants, and hope that today’s hearing will allow me to share more of the great work they do every day on behalf of the American people.

At the USCIS, the impact of our work is life-changing, with each application, petition, or request for a benefit representing an individual or a family, not just a file.

For many immigrants, the USCIS is the beginning of an American story. These immigrants are healthcare professionals, lawyers, members of the U.S. Armed Forces, entrepreneurs, elected officials, and public servants. They're caretakers, high-tech workers, and laborers, who fill critical gaps in our workforce. Of course, they are family, friends, and neighbors. Many of them go on to become proud Americans.

This work we do at the USCIS is more than just a public service. My own parents immigrated from Iraq and Mexico and instilled in me a sense of devotion to family, community, and our great Nation. Their dedication and purpose led me to my current role. Many in USCIS have navigated the immigration process themselves or are second-generation Americans and bring that experience to all they do.

I joined USCIS as the Director in August 2021. Before I arrived, a perfect storm of policy and operational decisions, COVID, and a severely outdated fee structure led to a fiscal crisis at the USCIS. The results were a hiring freeze, the termination of support contracts, the issuance of furlough notices to 70 percent of the workforce, and as you might imagine, very low morale. All of this led to a significant and unprecedented backlog in adjudications. Although we're still working to eliminate that backlog, our diligence and focus has led to the decrease of the backlog for the first time in a decade, two years in a row.

Despite these and many other challenges that come our way, I have seen firsthand how resilient the USCIS workforce is. They adapt to challenges with a creativity and dedication to deliver on our mission.

Recovery wasn't easy. I set priorities to help USCIS get back on track fiscally and operationally. My top three priorities were to strengthen the fiscal health of the USCIS, reinvigorate our workforce, and make our adjudication processes more efficient.

With the financial support of Congress and much-needed investments in our people, processes, and technology, we're now positioned to better serve the Nation and ensure that the USCIS can continue to operate effectively in the long term.

On the humanitarian front, USCIS and our partners across government have modernized and strengthened the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, while continuing to reinforce the capacity of our Asylum Officer Corps. We continue to carry out our role implementing strategies to discourage irregular migration while expanding the availability of safe, orderly, and lawful pathways to the United States.

The USCIS is also implementing better ways to do business. We're expanding online filing and improving avenues of communication with applicants. In an increasingly digital world, we're transforming our agency into one that is secure, transparent, responsive, and keeping pace with online advancements.

My goal every day has been to ensure the USCIS is able to uphold America's promise as a Nation of welcome and possibility with fairness, integrity, and respect for all we serve. This was my com-

mitment when I was confirmed in 2021, and it remains my commitment today.

This Nation needs—needs—a strong and effective immigration system and policies which reflect our values as Americans. That policy must promote family unity, economic growth, and the value of citizenship. It must support our humanitarian values and demonstrate our place as a leader among free Nations. It must promote lawful immigration and discourage irregular migration.

My USCIS colleagues and I know this, and it shows in our work. We stand ready to work with you to continue to bring our immigration system into the 21st century.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Jaddou follows:]



TESTIMONY OF

Ur M. Jaddou

Director

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

BEFORE

**Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement Committee on the
Judiciary**

U.S. House of Representatives

ON

“Oversight of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services”

December 4, 2024

10:15 am

Washington, D.C.

Chairman McClintock, Ranking Member Jayapal, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about the critical work of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. USCIS is an agency that Congress created in 2002 under the Homeland Security Act to administer the lawful immigration system in the United States. Our role as directed by Congress is to adjudicate applications and requests for immigration services in a fair, accurate and timely manner, while preserving the integrity and security of our immigration system. Our tremendously dedicated workforce of more than 22,500 work tirelessly every day to carry out our important mission. As our workload continues to grow, our staff are always ready to roll up their sleeves and act with professionalism, integrity, and compassion.

I am incredibly proud of how far we have come since I joined USCIS as Director in August 2021. In 2020, in the midst of COVID, our agency was rocked by a fiscal crisis which resulted in a hiring freeze, the termination of critical support contracts, and the issuance of furlough notices to 70 percent of our federal workforce. These drastic cuts led to the worst backlog in USCIS history. While we ultimately avoided moving forward with furloughs, the challenges took a significant toll on workforce morale, and our backlog reached an all-time high.

However, the people of USCIS are resilient. They are innovative. They respond with excellence when faced with challenges. I have seen it time and time again. It is because of this that, today, USCIS has stabilized its fiscal health and management, increased hiring to fill critical roles across the agency, improved employee morale, promoted efficiency and integrity in adjudications, delivered on our humanitarian mission, and strengthened public engagement while improving customer service. Moreover, with the help of Congress and investments in our people, processes, and technology, our backlog has decreased for the first time in a decade. These efforts have positioned us to better serve the public and ensure that USCIS can continue to operate effectively in the years to come.

Our work represents much more than adjudications, policies, and regulations. For many immigrants, USCIS is the beginning of their American story. These immigrants are doctors, nurses, lawyers, and members of the U.S. Armed Forces. They serve as the backbone of our economy as laborers, caretakers, chefs, transportation workers, and high-tech workers, among many others. And they fill critical gaps in our workforce that would otherwise go unfilled. The work that we do is more than just a public service to me; it's also personal. My own parents' immigration stories began like this, my dad from Iraq and my mom from Mexico. Their love and devotion to each other, our family, and our great nation led me to my current role.

At USCIS we know that behind every eligible immigration application is a person, a dream, a family building a life together, an opportunity for economic growth—the future of our nation. I am honored to serve alongside our federal employees and contractors who—in more than 200 USCIS offices at home and abroad—strive every day to accomplish our mission.

My mission every day has been and continues to be upholding America's promise as a nation of welcome and possibility with fairness, integrity, and respect for all we serve. I strive to make USCIS more effective. At my confirmation hearing in 2021, I affirmed my commitment to the

American people. And today, I am pleased to provide this Committee with an update on what we have accomplished.

Strengthening USCIS Fiscal Health and Management

Strengthening the fiscal health of USCIS has been and continues to be my top priority as Director. Unlike most federal agencies, USCIS relies on the fees we collect from applicants for approximately 96 percent of our funding, with only 4 percent coming from congressional appropriations. Ensuring we are properly resourced, projecting costs and income for today and tomorrow, and making critical investments in our team and priorities is always top of mind. This year, we finalized the agency's new fee rule, which took effect on April 1, 2024, and marks the first fee adjustment since 2016. The rule is the cornerstone of our fiscal health and overall operational strategy because it enables us to better recover our operating costs and support timely and secure processing of new applications. The new fee schedule will be directed at our current and projected workloads and will allow us to strengthen our workforce, and develop and implement innovative solutions that improve efficiency, integrity, and customer experience.

While the new fee rule will generate much needed funding to keep pace with incoming workloads, I want to emphasize that continued congressional funding is the only way we will be able to fully and meaningfully address the full scope of the work of our statutory mission to administer the nation's lawful immigration system.

We are grateful for the support we have received from Congress over the past few years. It has been crucial in helping us make progress. Specifically, the \$68.7 million in the FY 2024 DHS Appropriations Act for backlog reduction has been vital in our efforts to reduce pending workloads and invest in technology to create efficiencies.

Increased Hiring and Improved Employee Morale

Hiring and rebuilding employee morale is another focal point. Due to the dire financial situation in 2020 that resulted in a potential furlough and a hiring freeze that lasted almost a year, our workforce fell below 19,000 employees. Since then, our collective efforts to prioritize hiring and rebuild employee morale have paid off: we are now 22,500 employees strong, more than at any other time in our history.

Innovative hiring strategies have been at the center of our growth. We created additional entry-level positions for mission-critical roles, allowing USCIS to recruit talented individuals earlier in their careers, with a goal of training and providing long-term development opportunities to ensure they continue to build their futures with USCIS. We held 16 USCIS-centric Career Fairs across the nation to recruit new talent and utilized direct hiring authority and other tools aimed at meeting critical position needs to decrease our overall hiring timelines. Our newest team members come to USCIS with a diverse range of experiences and talents from both the public and private sectors—as recent graduates, veterans, attorneys, and technologists. We are very proud to count 30 percent of our workforce as veterans.

We are equally committed to fostering an environment that encourages open communication between employees and management. Since joining the agency, I have led numerous initiatives to ensure the voices of our workforce are heard and their efforts are recognized. We have held nine all-employee town halls across the country, each drawing over 10,000 virtual participants and featuring nearly 300 employee questions; hosted three annual award ceremonies to honor the outstanding contributions and exemplary work of more than 200 individuals and teams; and actively encouraged direct feedback from employees through the “Ask the Director” virtual Suggestion Box, which encourages employees to provide ongoing, direct feedback about the state of USCIS.

Our success could not be clearer—the 2024 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results for USCIS show an all-time high of 79 percent positivity on the employee engagement index, two points higher than in 2023 and six points above the government-wide average. What is even more encouraging is that our 2024 results show improvement across all core areas, from leadership and supervision to performance, recognition, and accountability.

Promoted Efficiency in USCIS Adjudications While Ensuring Integrity

My third priority has been to promote efficiency in adjudications while maintaining our commitment to ensuring integrity in the immigration programs we administer. USCIS has experienced year-over-year increases in filings – from 9 million filings in FY 2021 and FY 2022, to 10.9 million in FY 2023, to well over 13 million in FY 2024. We have implemented a myriad of process improvements to meet this challenge, and those efforts are already yielding impressive results. In FY 2023, USCIS completed more than 10 million cases and reduced overall agency backlogs by 15 percent – reducing its pending workload for the first time in over a decade, even in the face of a record number of filings. In FY 2024, USCIS continued FY 2023 trends and decreased the backlog by 11.2 percent despite a 23.4 percent increase in receipts in FY 2023. We also increased our case completions by 21.7 percent representing a record high of 13.2 million completions in FY 2024.

Although much work remains to deliver timely decisions, USCIS has made incredible progress in efficiently adjudicating cases and reducing the amount of time individuals wait for decisions on their applications, petitions, and requests. USCIS has taken proactive steps to strengthen and enhance the integrity of our adjudicative outcomes through expansion of screening and vetting processes including for example, full integration of USRAP and affirmative asylum applications within the National Vetting Center (NVC). Additionally, to further fulfill USCIS’ national security and public safety missions most effectively, USCIS has begun implementing policies on the use of classified information for our adjudicative processes, consistent with the May 9, 2024, DHS memorandum entitled *DHS Policy and Guidelines for the Use of Classified Information in Immigration Proceedings*.

We have eliminated the backlog of naturalization applications. For the third year running, together with the Department of State, we ensured that no available employment-based immigrant visas were wasted in FY 2024. Our median processing time for employment authorization documents reduced nearly in half, from 2.1 months in FY 2023 to just over one

month in FY 2024, meaning those eligible for employment authorization can more quickly get to work for U.S. employers and contribute to the nation's economy.

Beyond program efficiency, I have also focused on integrity. Last year, we proposed a rule to modernize the H-2 temporary worker visa program clarifying the scope and consequences of on-site inspections and closing loopholes that have otherwise allowed petitioners to avoid liability for prohibited fees. The rule also proposed new grounds for denial of petitions filed by employers who committed labor law violations or abused the H-2 programs. Likewise, we published a final rule strengthening the integrity and reducing potential fraud in the H-1B registration process by ensuring each beneficiary would have the same chance to being selected, regardless of the number of registrations submitted on their behalf. This reduced the number of registrations by almost 290,000, and greatly increased the chances for legitimate beneficiaries to be selected.

Fulfilling Our Humanitarian Mission

We have also made progress in meeting the extraordinary demands on our humanitarian programs while simultaneously improving our screening and vetting processes to ensure the integrity of our immigration processes. Since 2021, we have rebuilt, modernized, and strengthened the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), resulting in the thorough screening, vetting, admission, and resettlement of over 100,000 refugees in FY 2024 in the United States. America is once again a global leader in third-country refugee resettlement. This success is the result of the collective work of the Departments of State; Health and Human Services; and Homeland Security, as well as our international governmental and nongovernmental partners. In FY 2024, USCIS refugee officers participated in 107 circuit rides to 69 countries and interviewed over 165,000 refugee applicants – a more than 68 percent increase since FY 2023.

Also in FY 2024, USCIS completed more than 125,000 affirmative asylum cases; this included prioritizing processing of asylum cases for Afghan allies and their families as mandated by Congress. We also completed over 216,000 credible fear and reasonable fear screenings of individuals expressing a fear of return after being encountered at the border, breaking the prior year's record of 146,000, an approximately 48 percent increase.

Along with these adjudicative accomplishments in the refugee and asylum programs, we have expanded the already robust screening and vetting by integrating these programs into the National Vetting Center (NVC). In March 2022, the existing classified refugee vetting process was integrated into the NVC, expanding the breadth of information available to ensure adjudicative decisions take into account all relevant classified material. In February 2024, we deployed a similar NVC check for all affirmative asylum applicants, expanding existing vetting and introducing continuous vetting against relevant national security related holdings to facilitate immediate notification if an applicant poses a national security risk.

We have also implemented additional unclassified mechanisms to enhance the integrity of our refugee and asylum programs. Our Fraud Detection and National Security teams review certain categories of cases based on risk to ensure higher risk cases are reviewed for potential fraud,

national security, and public safety issues and to ensure any such issues are highlighted for the adjudicator prior to interview. Additionally, we have embedded Fraud Detection and National Security staff with our ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) partners at several facilities along the southwest border to enhance collaboration and information sharing related to fraud, national security, and public safety risks in the credible and reasonable fear caseload.

We continue to carry out our role in implementing the Administration's and the Department's strategy to disincentivize irregular migration and expand the availability of safe, orderly, and lawful pathways and processes to the United States. We continue to grow our asylum officer workforce to more effectively administer regulations governing credible fear assessments, including the Circumvention of Lawful Pathways and Securing the Border rules. We have implemented Operation Allies Welcome to support Afghans, including those who worked alongside American troops in Afghanistan, as they safely resettle in the United States. In collaboration with the intelligence community, we are also delivering needed essential immigration benefits to vulnerable Afghans who worked in concert with the U.S. government, reinforcing our commitment to protecting those who stood with us. We also implemented Uniting for Ukraine, a process to provide Ukrainian citizens who have fled Russia's unprovoked war of aggression.

In addition, we partner with our colleagues at U.S. Customs and Border Protection to administer the parole processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans and have put in place several measures to strengthen the integrity of these processes and enhance our vetting of U.S.-based supporters, in addition to the applicants themselves. We have successfully collaborated with partners across DHS including DHS Policy, ICE, DHS Intelligence and Analysis, and CBP to implement rigorous and appropriate screening and vetting of applications for immigration benefits, and have adjusted that screening and vetting when warranted. We have developed similar partnerships across the U.S. Government including both the Department of State and members of the intelligence community. We have leveraged these partnerships to shape and inform our adjudicative decisions, consistent with law and policy, while also engaging in legal and appropriate information sharing with these entities to support their lawful missions.

Strengthened Public Engagement and Improved Customer Service

Finally, I am incredibly proud of the work we do to improve the experience of interacting with USCIS to ensure that we are a responsive, transparent, and trustworthy agency. USCIS is committed to implementing smart, sensible, and meaningful ways to resolve the most inefficient and burdensome processes for those who interact with us – from U.S. citizens and U.S. employers to those seeking humanitarian assistance. One of the ways we do that is by communicating with the people and communities we serve, to improve their access to us and our delivery of services to them. I am proud to say that in FY 2024, USCIS held 2,314 stakeholder engagements, with a combined reach of 139,235 total participants.

Today, the UCSIS toll-free customer service line is at a 5-minute average wait time for callers, down from 22 minutes in the first half of FY 2022. For those who require a callback from USCIS, we launched a new Text Ahead feature that allows USCIS to text individuals 30 minutes

to one hour before a call from the USCIS Contact Center. Meeting people where they are is critical to our customer experience work.

USCIS continues to expand online filing, recognizing the growing need to improve the online experience. In February 2024, ahead of our annual H-1B cap season, USCIS—for the first time—provided a fully digital experience for employers and their attorneys while revamping the H-1B registration system through the issuance of new rules to ensure that bad actors cannot game the system.

In October 2024, we launched the first phase of PDF intake, an online filing experience that mirrors filing a paper application and eliminates mail and paper applications with the intake of PDFs through an authenticated online account.

We also improved our ability to communicate and collect the data we need to securely process cases. We added an online tool to easily allow those we serve to change their address, ensuring that we send our communications to the correct location. This has proved incredibly popular, with more than 1.7 million people using it since its launch in October 2023. We also added the online ability to reschedule biometrics appointments to avoid delays in processing. This allows for a more efficient process.

Though we still have more to do to ensure that people who need to connect with us can do so in an accessible manner, we have heavily invested in and improved our public engagement and customer service.

Conclusion

USCIS has made incredible progress in achieving a vision of a healthy and functioning lawful immigration system. At my confirmation hearing, I committed to providing the dedicated team at USCIS with the resources, support, and leadership necessary to carry out our mission with excellence. And I committed to ensuring that USCIS retains the confidence of the American public. I am so proud to be a part of this incredible workforce striving to make USCIS the best it can be.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to be here today. I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Thank you for your testimony, Director.

We'll now proceed with five-minute questions from the Members. I'll begin.

Our staff asked a series of straightforward questions to get some basic data figures back in September. Your office has simply stonewalled us. We informed you to be prepared to answer those questions today so there's no excuse for further evasion or obfuscation.

I'm going to ask you now again, how many aliens who have entered the country pursuant to CHNV programs since October 2022 have changed their immigration status?

Ms. JADDOU. First, let me start by saying I highly value the role that Congress plays in our oversight. I once was here. It's an odd position to be sitting here. I appreciate—

Mr. McCLINTOCK. I appreciate that, but that's not an answer to the question that we've been asking since September. Could you please answer the question. How many aliens who've entered the country pursuant to the CHNV program since October 2022 have changed their immigration status?

Ms. JADDOU. So, I understand that just before this hearing, in preparation for this hearing, understanding the importance of returning those responses to you, you should have received a response to various questions that were requested in September.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. We received a response to one question. I again repeat my question for the third and final time. How many aliens who've entered the country pursuant to the CHNV since October 2021 have changed their immigration status?

Ms. JADDOU. At the moment, I don't have those numbers with me, but—

Mr. McCLINTOCK. This is outrageous.

How many aliens who've entered the country pursuant to the CHNV since October 2022 remain CHNV parolees?

Ms. JADDOU. Again, I don't have those numbers with me specifically.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. You were asked these questions in September. You were told in advance of this hearing that they would be asked again, and you were advised to have answers for us. These are basic questions of data.

I am astonished and appalled that you would appear before this Committee with all this advance notice and not be prepared to answer these basic questions.

Ms. JADDOU. So, Mr. Chair, as you understand, I am the Director of USCIS. I obviously will do my best to get back to you.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. There's no excuse for your appearing before this Committee unprepared to ask—or to answer questions that you were specifically informed would be asked. This is a dereliction of duty, among other things, and, frankly, a contempt of this Congress.

Ms. JADDOU. Mr. Chair, with all due respect, this is a process that you're asking about, the CHNV.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. These are basic data numbers. Again, it's not like you're being surprised by them. You've been asked these questions since September, and you were told they would be specifically asked at the outset of this hearing as you prepared to be here.

Ms. JADDOU. Yes. That's why—

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Yet, you come here completely unprepared.

Ms. JADDOU. That is exactly why we—I did my best to ensure we could answer what I could answer. As you know—

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. This is one of the saddest appearances by an agency head that I have observed in now 16 years in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Let me ask you this. You posted a FAQ response back in October, noting that there's no parole process under any of the CHNV parole processes. How many CHNV aliens have had their parole expire and have not changed their immigration status?

Ms. JADDOU. So, again, those are figures that not only require review of our systems at the USCIS, but this is a joint program with CBP.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. That you've had since September and were told it would be asked.

Let me ask again. For aliens who are not reparaoled, does their employment authorization terminate immediately on the expiration of their parole?

Ms. JADDOU. Employment authorization was granted for the period of parole. So, if that parole period ends, so would the employment authorization document.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Well, why would an alien who has no legal means of being in the U.S. still be able to work legally in the U.S.?

Ms. JADDOU. The employment authorization document is tied very directly to the end period of the parole.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. What's the largest number of aliens that one supporter has sponsored between October 2022 and present?

Ms. JADDOU. Again, another question that I tried to get answered by today but, unfortunately, it requires more work and not just work at the USCIS.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Let me ask you this: What percentage of your workforce is still working at home?

Ms. JADDOU. I don't have the answer to that, but what I can say with regard to—

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. What do you mean you can't answer that question? That's another fundamental basic question of the administration. How many of your employees are still working at home?

Ms. JADDOU. I don't have that answer with me, but I can get it for you. That is definitely—but what I can say is that the USCIS has never been more efficient than it is today and has never been more secure and more full of integrity than it is today.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Your appearance here today totally contradicts that conclusion.

My time's concluded. I recognize the Ranking Member.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you.

Thank you again, Director Jaddou, for being here. As you just said and as I mentioned in my opening statement, you and the hardworking staff at the USCIS have done extraordinary work in getting the agency back on track from what it was handed to you as by the Trump Administration.

Somehow in Fiscal Year 2023, you completed a record number of more than 10 million pending cases while constantly having unexpected issues thrown your way, and you processed nearly 200,000

employment-based green card applications, which is almost 40 percent more than normal. You ensured that none went unused and were, therefore, wasted, as happened in the previous administration.

So, tell me, when you began as the Director, what were some of the biggest challenges that the agency faced? What was the primary cause of those challenges, and what did you do to address them?

Ms. JADDOU. Thank you for the question. As you know, USCIS, our primary responsibility is upholding and administering the legal immigration system for the Nation. We take pride in that. We take pride in doing it with—in timely ways, with fairness and with integrity and security always top of mind.

So, we were so proud to take this agency from a place where a fiscal crisis, just coming out of the 2020 fiscal crisis, and we were able to restabilize it financially. We were able to remove the hiring freeze that was required to recoup the money that we needed to protect the agency and move forward. We've invested in technology. We've invested in people. We are now 22,500 strong. Just before that, we were under 19,000. This was no way to run a legal immigration system.

When our legal immigration system is strong, so is our economy, so are our families who are wishing to reunite with their spouses and children, and so are our humanitarian values. The security and integrity we have in the legal immigration is strong as well.

I am proud that the USCIS has achieved those over these last four years.

Ms. JAYAPAL. So, you inherited an agency that was in a fiscal hole, that had a hiring freeze, that had not enough staff, and wasn't processing any applications, and you turned it around substantially.

Over the past several years, the types of individuals that have been appearing at our Southern border has shifted from primarily immigrants from Latin America to individuals around the globe of various ages and education levels, some with advanced degrees.

Do you think that our outdated immigration system and the fact that visa categories for individuals in specialty occupations and with exceptional abilities are severely oversubscribed contributed to that shift of what we're seeing, who we're seeing showing up on the border, that, in short, our legal immigration system is not working to facilitate our ability to bring in the talent that we need?

Ms. JADDOU. Thank you. That's a really important question.

Immigrants have played a vital role in our economic recovery. They have played it in all sectors of our economy, from the high skill to the low skill to everything in between. We do not have effective legal immigration systems to meet the needs of the Nation, and that has shown up in each one of our processes at USCIS.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Well, it's been 30 years since most of these things have been adjusted, so we're still working off a 30-year-old caps in some cases and programs that haven't been updated.

You don't set immigration policy, obviously, as Director of the USCIS, but you certainly see the laws' real-life impact in the cases that your agency adjudicates. Are there reforms that you would recommend to help the USCIS better fulfill its mandate?

Ms. JADDOU. Yes. Thank you. That's really helpful and thank you for asking that question.

First, USCIS has been a primarily fee-funded agency since it began. Today, it's 96-percent fee-funded. So, that leaves us at what we can do based on what we can charge people who pay for other benefits. That limits the work we can do, for example, on our work at the border. We only can hire so many asylum officers to do the work we do so well, alongside with our partners at Customs and Border Protection. It limits us in our humanitarian work, and it also closes off avenues for us to grow our technology and our processes. That's the first.

Second, I would very much welcome and suggest that, we are once and for all, make DACA recipients the Americans they should be.

Third, our agricultural community. We need to be sure that our food industry is strong, and many immigrants support us in our food industry, and we need to make that clear for this Nation.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you, Director. I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Director, thank you for being here. The CHNV program was paused for about five weeks earlier this year because of rampant fraud, and we have supporters that were using all kinds of—in their applications all kinds of misinformation and fraud. So, I just want to cover a few of these really quickly.

Do you agree that the same Social Security number was used on at least 20 different CHNV supporter applications?

Ms. JADDOU. So, first let me start by saying—

Mr. BIGGS. These are yes-or-no questions, so yes or no.

Ms. JADDOU. I just want to make clear that the role that USCIS plays is on the supporters.

Mr. BIGGS. I'm asking about supporter applications.

Ms. JADDOU. OK. I'm sorry. Can you repeat that question then? I heard it as a parole—the parolee.

Mr. BIGGS. No. The same Social Security number was used on at least 20 different CHNV supporter applications. That's the question I asked.

Ms. JADDOU. Thank you. Sorry.

Mr. BIGGS. You're aware of that?

Ms. JADDOU. So, yes, I am very aware of—

Mr. BIGGS. It has happened at least 3,200 times.

Ms. JADDOU. I don't have the exact number.

Mr. BIGGS. That's according to the DHS' report.

Ms. JADDOU. OK. I don't have the—

Mr. BIGGS. You don't dispute the DHS's report, do you?

Ms. JADDOU. No, I absolutely will not—I will not dispute—

Mr. BIGGS. Also, the same phone number was used on at least 20 different supporter applications at least 3,300 times. That's according to the report.

Do you agree that that report's accurate?

Ms. JADDOU. I don't have that report in front of me, but—

Mr. BIGGS. I'm reading from it.

Ms. JADDOU. I won't dispute—yes. I don't have it in front of me and I would prefer—

Mr. BIGGS. So, you would dispute it?

Ms. JADDOU. No, I am not disputing. What I am saying is—

Mr. BIGGS. So, you would deflect and ramble around. You don't disagree with that number. You don't think I'm deliberately cherry-picking a number and just saying, oh, I'm just throwing this stuff out. I'm giving you the numbers from the report. Do you trust me on that? Do you at least trust me that far?

Ms. JADDOU. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS. OK. So, then you agree with that number.

The same email address was used on at least 20 different supporter applications nearly 2,000 times. Do you agree with that?

Ms. JADDOU. Sir, if there is a situation where we have concerns of fraud and integrity, we take action at USCIS. That is exactly what we have done with regard to CHNV. Where we—

Mr. BIGGS. OK. So, let's clarify here. I'm laying foundation. You don't really want to admit that there's this much rampant fraud here. You're trying to tell me that when you find fraud, we cure it. Yet, nearly 2,000 times you had the same email address used on 20 different supporter applications. The same exact 184-word text response to a question on the supporter application was used on more than 1,800 such applications by nearly 190 different CHNV supporters. More than 460 nonexistent ZIP Codes were used on supporter applications on behalf of more than 2,800 CHNV aliens.

So, you see, you can dance around and say you don't have the report in front of you and whatnot, but these are the facts. This program is rife with fraud.

As of August 6, 2024, DHS had approved more than 80,000 CHNV supporters who were in the U.S. on a temporary basis. Temporary basis.

I'm going to give you some numbers. The 224 CHNV parolees approved as CHNV supporters. That seems awkward. The 170 additional parolees non-CHNV approved as CHNV supporters. The 28,322 temporary protected status holders approved as CHNV supporters. The 19,865 asylees approved as CHNV supporters, 311 DACA recipients approved as CHNV supporters, 1,300-plus aliens in the U.S. on temporary visas approved as CHNV supporters, 64 refugees approved as CHNV supporters, 1,912 conditional permanent residents approved as CHNV supporters.

That is the program that you are administering. That's the section that you're administering. That's the supporters. I'm not talking the aliens. I'm not getting into the violation of law of the U.S. Code 1182 when the use of parole is supposed to be on a case-by-case basis, where Secretary Mayorkas himself has sat here and under oath said, "it's supposed to be on a case-by-case basis. I'm not getting into that."

What I'm getting into is a program, the side that the USCIS is supposed to actually administer, and that is the supporter applications. The fraud was so rampant you closed down the program, but you didn't fix it. It's still ongoing. We're waiting for the next report to confirm that these things are still going on, because it wasn't fixed.

Mr. Chair, my time's up. I yield back.

Ms. JADDOU. Mr. Chair, can I respond to the question?

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Sure.

Ms. JADDOU. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS. There was no question, because I asked questions you couldn't answer. That's why I gave a statement. There was no question for you, ma'am.

Ms. JADDOU. Can I comment on—

Mr. McCLINTOCK. No, you can't comment. If you can answer the gentleman's question, I'll extend you the time to do so, but I don't want another speech explaining why you can't answer the question.

Ms. JADDOU. I was trying to explain what CHNV and the changes we have made to ensure its integrity. I think there were some points made that suggested we haven't made multiple changes, and we have.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. If you've got excuses, you can put those in a followup memo to the Committee.

Ms. JADDOU. We'd be happy to.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. We will have many other questions that we won't be able to ask directly at this hearing.

Ms. JADDOU. Be happy to. Thank you.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Ms. Lofgren for five minutes.

Ms. LOFGREN. Thank you. I move to strike the last word.

In your introduction, you talked about Ms. Jaddou's service in the administration. However, I'd like to note she was also Senior Counsel to me from 2002–2007 and served as Chief Counsel for the House Judiciary Immigration Subcommittee, this very Subcommittee from 2007–2011.

I would note, despite kind of—well, I don't want to categorize the tone of the questions, but when she served as Chief Counsel, although we did have from time-to-time differences of policy between the Republicans and the Democrats, we never had animosity among the counsel. We worked in a way that was very cordial and constructive at that time. I would like to thank her for the work that she did for the Committee.

Before I ask you about the improvements made in the CHNV parole program, I did want to talk about what you've done on the proposed rule in October of last year, modernizing the H1-B requirements and providing flexibility in the F-1 program.

I realize this isn't finalized, but you are able to talk about the purpose of the proposal, even though the rule isn't finalized. It seems to me that the finalized portion of the rule addressing the Lottery Integrity Measures would close a significant loophole that was being misused by certain applicants.

Can you explain how that rule enhances the fairness and transparency in the H1-B selection process?

Ms. JADDOU. Thank you so much for the question and the acknowledgement of my time here. I really appreciated my time here with you.

So, this is an exact example of how we see a problem, we have taken action at the USCIS. When we started to see the numbers of multiple filings—and these weren't just onesies and twosies, these were multiple filings—spike, we were—we took immediate action. We were transparent. We let the public know, and we took action with a regulation, and we took action behind the scenes as well.

We introduced a notice of proposed rulemaking that you noted. In fact, because we couldn't finalize the whole rule fast enough in time for the latest lottery to correct that problem, we took a portion of it and finalized the piece to create that beneficiary-centric system that eliminated those concerns.

Ms. LOFGREN. Thank you very much.

I would just note that when the first Trump Administration was closing out, the agency was going to actually close its doors. There were frivolous activities underway that were not supported by the fee structure.

The former Congressman Jeff Fortenberry and I actually worked together to put together a structure to prevent the agency from completely closing, but it was a mess when you took over.

I want to credit you for what you've done to turn it around, and also ask you, could you or would you like to explain the changes that you've made with the CHNV parole program so that the Committee can have a full understanding of the improvements?

Ms. JADDOU. Absolutely. When we do our work at the USCIS, we are always iterating, reviewing, and making changes because we see problems. It may be with regard to how we process. It might be a security issue. It might be an integrity issue. We have people around the agency and including a full directorate whose job is to focus on fraud detection, national security, and public safety.

So, in CHNV, in all our other processes, we saw some issues. We took action. Here, we've added in the biometrics collection of sponsors. That includes fingerprints as well as photos. We've also introduced automated systems, not just manual systems but automated systems that allow us to connect to other additional systems, for example, the Social Security Death Match Index, before a reviewer ever even opens that request.

We have also trained and retrained and provide guidance and things like be on the lookout for information for each of our reviewers who are conducting that work. There are many more things that we have done, and we will continue to do.

Ms. LOFGREN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chair, my time is expired. I yield back.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chair, may I submit a request?

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. I'd like to submit that for an article entitled "Fraud plagues Biden 'parole' program: Michelle Obama's passport used; dead people named sponsors."

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. This is a unanimous consent request to insert into the record—

Mr. BIGGS. Yes. Correct, sir.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Thank you. Without objection.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Tiffany.

Mr. TIFFANY. Director, there's significant fraud that's happened in the Afghan SIV program. There's a bribery scheme that was identified by the Department of Justice and brought to light where they're submitting fraudulent letters recommending SIVs to the State Department.

Are you familiar with those SIV cases that are being taken care of fraudulent—where there's fraudulent applications being put in?

Ms. JADDOU. Thank you. I am familiar with the issue. I'm not sure I can go into detail, given the investigation.

Mr. TIFFANY. How widespread is it?

Ms. JADDOU. Again, it would be—it's not something that I can explain to you publicly.

Mr. TIFFANY. You can't answer the question because you don't know the answer or are you saying you're hiding behind a legal shield?

Ms. JADDOU. I think in an appropriate setting, I think I'd be happy to get back with you on that.

Mr. TIFFANY. What would be an appropriate setting?

Ms. JADDOU. I think that given the investigation you've noted, I think it would be really important for us to do that—

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Chair, I think that's something we should take into consideration as we go forward. Do you think there's national security concerns with this?

Ms. JADDOU. So, let me start by saying in our Afghan programs, the USCIS—

Mr. TIFFANY. So, I got a lot of questions.

Ms. JADDOU. OK.

Mr. TIFFANY. Do you think there are national security concerns, considering this is Afghanistan, the bull's-eye for terrorism concerns in the world? Do you think there's national security concerns?

Ms. JADDOU. With regard to each application before us, we take every case we review case-by-case. We run them against our security and vetting systems.

Mr. TIFFANY. Do you believe there's national security concerns with the Afghans, when there are Afghans coming in fraudulently with fraudulent applications? The Department of Justice has referred to them. They know this is happening. Don't you think that there's national security concerns?

Ms. JADDOU. The security and vetting and the American—the safety of the American people is number one for us.

Mr. TIFFANY. Will you re-vet—so these people that have been identified, will your agency re-vet them now that you know some of them have submitted fraudulent applications?

Ms. JADDOU. We look at every case before us, any request before us, and use the strongest security and vetting we have available for whatever threat may or may not be in front of us. That is a connection that we have with our law enforcement and intelligence partners.

Mr. TIFFANY. So, this is the strongest vetting when you have the Department of Justice that's forwarding these cases now saying these are being done fraudulently.

Mr. Chair, I think this is part of the reason why the other side was saying, we've completed 10 million cases. It's not hard to complete 10 million cases when you're not reviewing them.

I want to change topics a little bit here. Do you think that children of foreign tourists should receive citizenship?

Ms. JADDOU. The children of foreign tourists?

Mr. TIFFANY. Do you think they should receive citizenship? Let me give you a context so you can answer.

Ms. JADDOU. OK. I'm not quite understanding your question.

Mr. TIFFANY. Since 2009, Communist Chinese passport holders have been permitted to sidestep the U.S. visa requirements to enter the Northern Mariana Islands through categorical parole.

My first question is, the Department of National Intelligence says Communist China is the greatest national security threat to the United States. Do you agree with DNI on that, that Communist China is our greatest threat?

Ms. JADDOU. I'm not a foreign policy expert.

Mr. TIFFANY. I think most people would say that's probably the case.

Ms. JADDOU. Sure, sure.

Mr. TIFFANY. So, why is the administration allowing this to continue, where it is not required of a Chinese Communist national coming into the Northern Mariana Islands without a visa having a child and that child becomes a citizen? Do you think that should be the case?

Ms. JADDOU. Congressman, I—

Mr. TIFFANY. There are more children being born via birth tourism on the Mariana Islands right now than there are domestic children being born because of that loophole. They don't even have to have a visa to come in here. Here's a Chinese national, may be affiliated with the Communist Party, that is able to get citizenship for their child.

I'm just going to close with this, Director. I'm going to ask you the Vice President Harris question. First, you're a political appointee, right?

Ms. JADDOU. Yes.

Mr. TIFFANY. Yes. Do you have any regrets over what's happened over the last four years with the open borders policies in all its different ways here in America?

Ms. JADDOU. I am proud of the efforts that this administration has made with regard to its efforts at the Southwest border.

Mr. TIFFANY. You have no regrets? You have no regrets?

Ms. JADDOU. Again, I—

Mr. TIFFANY. The largest—I'm just going to close with this: You have been part of the largest human trafficking operation since slavery in the United States of America. The people of the United States voted for change on November 5th. We can only pray, Mr. Chair, that it happens soon.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Correa.

Mr. CORREA. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Director Jaddou, welcome. I'm going to switch topics a little bit and talk about renewal backlogs. In Orange County, California, where I'm from, a lot of my constituents have been calling me regarding the news that the USCIS is eliminating essential contract work, the California Service Center, yet the backlogs are still unacceptable.

I get phone calls, for example, from DACA recipients who are advised by your website not to renew their DACAs until 4–5 months before they're actually eligible for renewal. Yet, I get calls from employers saying, I have an employee whose DACA just expired.

Tell me, how are we doing on the backlog?

Ms. JADDOU. So, thank you for raising that important contract at the California Service Center. I understand—thank you for the

work that you've done to help us promote our hiring fair so that we can bring on some of those contract workers. We will continue to do those, and we appreciate the cooperation and help to promote.

I want to note that we are moving away from paper-based filing. Where paper-based filing must continue, we are moving to a system of digitization. That is why we have become more able to be efficient in our processing.

This contract at the California Service Center was aimed at the way we used to do business. We are now moving into a new space and now we are needing new things, and so we are bringing on some of those individuals to help us.

Mr. CORREA. So, ma'am, I've asked your office in writing, requested to give us some information on the backlog. Is it getting longer or shorter? Give me an answer here. I've not gotten that answer.

Ms. JADDOU. Yes. I'm very, very proud of the work we have done to eliminate—to get toward eliminating that backlog. It was very large when we landed in 2021.

Mr. CORREA. How long was it then compared to today?

Ms. JADDOU. We have decreased it for the first time in over a decade two years running, and we are on track to continue to do that. That is despite the number of receipts spiking up. So, I'm proud of the work we're doing, and if we continue moving in this direction, we're going to get there.

Mr. CORREA. Fiscally, you're a fee-based operation. Ninety-six percent of your revenue's fee-based. So, you're doing OK economically, fiscally?

Ms. JADDOU. At the moment, I'm thankful for our fee structure, but I will say that we continuously need more asylum officers so that we can continue to do our work at the Southwest border and achieve our work here on the affirmative asylum backlog.

Mr. CORREA. Thank you. Let me shift very quickly. I represent Orange County, a large Middle Eastern population. A lot of Afghan refugees have decided to make Orange County their home.

A lot of calls, a lot of visits to my office. A lot of Afghan allies we left behind in Afghanistan are desperately trying to get to the U.S. the way we essentially promised them. We said, if you fight along us as allies, we will always welcome you in the United States. Yet, right now we have a situation where they are not being processed. They're essentially caught up somewhere around the world. Heaven forbid, if they're still in Afghanistan, their lives are in danger.

Explain to me, what are we doing to make sure we process those American allies we left behind before they're actually caught, and their lives are lost?

Ms. JADDOU. So, the USCIS, to help the individuals who are still outside the United States, we have taken this role very seriously. Our U.S. Refugee Admissions Program continues to work on this population, and we have very specific processes for Afghans.

We also continue to work our humanitarian parole backlog to try to get through that. It also means that we need to process the people who are already here working through their immigration journey so that they could then sponsor their close family members and ensure that they can come to the United States.

Mr. CORREA. Now, let me say that I agree with my colleagues, fraud is a very serious issue. I'm going to give you the last 30 seconds to address what have you been doing to mitigate/eliminate fraud in the process?

Ms. JADDOU. Thank you for that really important question. I have never seen better cooperation at USCIS with our partners across law enforcement and our intelligence partners. It is the strongest it has ever been.

At USCIS, we also have an entire directorate who is focused on fraud detection, national security, and public safety. We have people inside each of the operational directorates, teams of people focused very directly on assisting the officers who are looking at those cases.

They are on the ground doing the work, advising, looking out for concerns, making changes, bringing things forward so that we can make process and operational improvements to protect the American people and also the integrity of our lawful immigration system.

Mr. CORREA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm out of time. I yield.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Van Drew.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Chair.

I don't want to be partisan. I don't want to be mean, so you're going to have to forgive me in advance. I think you're doing a bad job. I think your administration has done a bad job. You've hurt legal Americans, legal immigrants, and helped some folks that shouldn't be in this country.

We all support legal immigration. There's always this desire to typecast us as people who don't support legal immigration. Legal immigrants are some of the very best Americans that there are. There's nobody better than legal immigrants. They appreciate America. They come to America because they believe in our values. They're willing to work hard. They pledge allegiance to our flag. They love this country as deeply as we do. Some of these legal immigrants love the country, sad to say, more than some of our Americans who were born here.

These individuals, they wait patiently, sometimes for years and years and years. I know this because I get really involved in my district on the street, as I'm sure all the other Members of Congress do.

We see good legal people. I even have families here that deserve to be here, that have done it the right way, that haven't crossed the border illegally, that haven't done anything wrong, that haven't been given preferential treatment because of virtue signaling. Just good people that love America, and they're in the back of the line and they're shoved back there. They wait for years, and it costs money and it's complicated and it's hurtful.

Under this administration, fraud-ridden parole programs are undermining their dream. Instead of honoring the commitment of legal immigrants, we see them, as I said before, being jumped in line, jumped in line by hundreds of thousands of migrants under parole programs that lack comprehensive oversight that they should have, making it dangerous for everyone in America, as riddled with fraud. In fact, many of these migrants that you are let-

ting in now have no legitimate path to enter our country without programs like the CHNV.

I'm going to tell you a story, a story on the street, a guy I've known for years. His name is Kala (ph). I've told the story before. He's a South Asian. He's Indian. Came over to this country and he got a green card. Works hard, works his back off. Has two kids and a wife. They live above their store, which is a store and a gas station that they bought. They pay their mortgage every single month.

He works probably 12–16 hours a day. His kids are at the top of their class in school. They're obedient. They're great. He believes in America so strongly. I have conversations with him all the time.

One day I went there and he's got tears in his eyes after years and years of waiting and other people jumping the line who couldn't give a damn about America. I say, "hey, what's up? You're crying." He said, "Today I was sworn in and I became a United States citizen." We made him wait all those years and he shouldn't have.

When we allow hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants, migrants to leap ahead in the line, we lose the trust of people like Kala who have waited for years to become Americans. We lose the trust of legal immigrants who come here in good faith seeking a better life and we lose the trust of the American people.

I'm telling you, I'd love to take you out on the street. I'd love to take you to my district or any district and talk to Americans and how tired of it they are. They're sick and tired of it.

This American system is a great system, and it's a system where you're supposed to follow the law, the rule of law, and it's supposed to be equal for everybody.

So, I have questions for you. I'm going to ask you for a simple yes or no, because we're running out of time. It's an easy question. The USCIS, has it diverted resources from legal processing, from processing legal immigration applicants, to address issues stemming from parole programs like the CHNV programs, yes or no? Are we removing some resources? I know the answer already.

Ms. JADDOU. No.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Chair. OK. Well, I disagree with you. We are and we have to.

Do you believe that the current administration of the CHNV program has strengthened public trust in our immigration system? This is where I'll take you out on the street if you want to talk to people. Yes or no?

Do you think people have more trust in our immigration system now than when you started four years ago, yes or no? Simple question.

Ms. JADDOU. Creating lawful pathways is one piece of the strategy.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Chair. Yes or no? Is there more confidence now than they did before? Yes or no, is there more confidence?

Ms. JADDOU. Effective border management that's enduring requires both—

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Chair. Yes or no, please Respectfully, yes or no. Do people have more confidence now on the street? The American people who pay the taxes, who pay your salary and my

salary, do they have more confidence now than they did four years ago? Yes or no?

Ms. JADDOU. I have not surveyed the American public—

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Chair. You can't answer the question because you know the answer is no, they don't, according to what happened in selection.

Mr. Chair—

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. I'm afraid that the gentleman is not going to get a straight answer from this witness and his time has expired.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Chair. I know. So, Mr. Chair, I yield back. I would like to submit for the record a question, which I don't have time to get to right now, regarding the visas for foreign nationals to operate as airline pilots. I would like a response from you as well. That question I ask be put in.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. The Members will have the opportunity to submit written questions to the answer at the conclusion of the hearing.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Chair.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. The Chair recognizes Ms. Ross.

Ms. ROSS. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Director, for being here today and for your public service over the last several years.

I will actually continue on the path of people who have come here legally and really the system has been so backlogged they have not been able to either remain here or improve their status. One of those many groups impacted by you and impacted by the backlog is the situation of so-called documented dreamers. These are people who were brought to the United States legally as children, but they lose that protection when they turn 21, and their families may still have all their legal documentation, and then there would be a 21-year-old who would have to self-deport to the country that they barely know.

Because our immigration system has been broken for so many years, and there are so many backlogs, that's forced these kids to separate themselves from their families. We know that there are about 250,000 documented dreamers, the vast majority of which are pursuing careers in the sciences, the STEM field. In my district I even have a documented dreamer trying to pursue a military career. They want to contribute their skills to our economy and they want to stay with their families.

A bipartisan bill I introduced in the House called the America's CHILDREN Act would solve this issue by providing them with lawful permanent resident status. It passed the House in two different forms in the last Congress. We also had another chance to help these dreamers with a bipartisan border deal that failed to advance in the Senate last May.

So, it has bipartisan support on the Senate side as well. That bill would have amended the law so that these children would not have lost their status and would have a legal path to citizenship when they turn 21 years old. It also gave more funding to asylum officers and made the noncustodial asylum processes for border entrance more efficient by creating a more streamlined channel.

Changes like these are desperately needed to overhaul our broken immigration system and ensure that we stay competitive as a

Nation to attract the best and brightest to our shores. They also help you do your work.

I would love to know what the USCIS has done to provide any kind of relief for documented dreamers and what you hope USCIS could do in the future for this population.

Ms. JADDOU. Thank you for that really important question.

These children of our highly skilled workers has been something that has been on my mind for a very long time. I had a meeting with a group of documented dreamers, and it was very touching and very emotional. So, I appreciate how much work we need to do here. We have taken steps. We have made some changes in our policy manual to assist, but there's, frankly, a lot more to do. As you noted, the only final action, the real action that needs to happen is a change in our statute, and that is something that we cannot do. We will continue to look at ways to assist and try to put some Band-Aids here and there where we can, but the crux of the problem lies in the statute.

Ms. ROSS. To that end, because the Senate bill would have both enhanced your resources and directly dealt with this issue, were there any other aspects of that bipartisan Senate deal that was blocked last year that you would like to see incorporated into future legislation, particularly as they relate to your ability to fulfill your mandate and help remove some of these backlogs?

Ms. JADDOU. Absolutely. I mentioned earlier that we are a fee-funded agency, 96 percent fee-funded. So, the work we do at the border alongside our partners at Customs and Border Protection, the work we do on the refugee program, these are all unfunded, and we are constrained on how much we can do. Therefore, we have to, as I heard earlier, rob Peter to pay Paul to be able to meet not only our mission but really our statutory mandate. That cannot be done unless we are appropriated by Congress.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Thank you.

Ms. ROSS. Thank you.

I yield back.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. The Chair recognizes the Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, Mr. Jordan.

Chair JORDAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Director, in recent history has there ever been a parole program of this magnitude?

Ms. JADDOU. Which parole—are you talking about the CHNV?

Chair JORDAN. The CHNV. Two years, 531,000 people get deported.

Ms. JADDOU. There have been parole—

Chair JORDAN. Of that magnitude? In a two-year timeframe, that magnitude?

Ms. JADDOU. I don't have all the numbers in front of me, but I'm familiar with the historical use of parole through multiple administrations, Republican and Democrat. There have been many uses, some large, some small, and some have been very large.

Chair JORDAN. OK. So, this is not unique you're saying? This is just run-of-the-mill type of parole that you're doing?

Ms. JADDOU. I'm not saying it's run of the mill. The parole—

Chair JORDAN. You give it a whole new term, "lawful pathway," some term I never heard before, because we didn't pass any law

saying you should do this. So, is this—I'm just trying to get—is this a special deal you guys are doing? Because it sure seems like it.

Ms. JADDOU. No. What I am suggesting is that this is not something new.

Chair JORDAN. Not special?

Ms. JADDOU. This has been something that has been used. This parole authority has been in the statute for decades, and it has been used for multiple—

Chair JORDAN. I'm just saying is the way it's being done now somewhat unique, somewhat different? Because that's our impression on this side. I'm just asking, do you think that?

Ms. JADDOU. The CHNV process is one piece of an effective forward management strategy.

Chair JORDAN. That's the piece I'm asking about.

Ms. JADDOU. Effective border management that we want to be enduring, not short term, but enduring, must include both enforcement and enduring and meaningful lawful pathways.

Chair JORDAN. I'm still stuck on this—

Ms. JADDOU. The CHNV is one piece of it, but so is the rest of our lawful immigration.

Chair JORDAN. I'm asking about CHNV. It seems like it's something out of the ordinary to me, and I think probably every Republican up here would say it's out of the ordinary. The American people would probably say it's out. The \$30,000 a month coming in from four countries that you selected that started with Venezuela and then you added the other three, that seems somewhat different than the normal process.

I'm saying, how about this? What's the goal of that program? Why this unique approach, what we think is unique, why do that type of approach with the CHNV?

Ms. JADDOU. As I stated, if we want to have enduring border management, border control, we need to have all our immigration systems working together. That includes enforcement, so Customs and Border Protection and ICE, working hand in hand with us at the USCIS. We each play different parts of that management strategy. That includes the enforcement of my partners, but it also includes all the lawful immigration that we process at the USCIS. So, it is not just the CHNV. There are multiple other things that we do at the USCIS. Every single day, requests come in for all sorts of lawful immigration pathways.

Chair JORDAN. OK. We have this specific program for four countries. Why do we need that specific program for those four countries? Tell me the why.

Ms. JADDOU. I'm not—

Chair JORDAN. Migrants coming in from those four countries—

Ms. JADDOU. I am not going to—I'm not able to speak to the management piece of paroling the individuals in and the numbers of people that are coming from these specific countries. Part of that management was an identification of a need for meaningful lawful pathways for certain populations.

Chair JORDAN. OK. Well, can someone who is paroled in then become a supporter and sponsor for some new parolee?

Ms. JADDOU. The CHNV—86 percent of supporters—

Chair JORDAN. That's a simple question. Someone that's come in under this program, can they then become a supporter or sponsor for someone else who is coming in?

Ms. JADDOU. The 86 percent of them are U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents—

Chair JORDAN. That's not what I asked. Can someone do that?

Ms. JADDOU. Yes.

Chair JORDAN. Yes, that can happen?

Ms. JADDOU. Yes.

Chair JORDAN. OK. Is that unique? Is that something that's kind of new?

Ms. JADDOU. Historically, I'd have to think I—

Chair JORDAN. Sure seems like it's new—You've got a special program for four countries. You come in under that program, and then, shazam, you can sponsor someone else to come in. I think that's probably pretty new, probably something that hadn't been done before. Do you know that?

Ms. JADDOU. Our law passed by Congress has many instances in which, for example, a U.S. citizen can sponsor—

Chair JORDAN. I'm not asking about a U.S. citizen. A migrant who comes in under the program; can they then become a sponsor or supporter of some new migrant coming in. You said, "yes, that can happen." That's not a U.S. citizen.

Ms. JADDOU. Right. We have other places in our law that do similar things. So, the CHNV, again, is a piece of an entire border management strategy, just one piece. It cannot work alone. Neither can enforcement measures work alone, if we want it to be long lasting, and that's why this process is important.

Chair JORDAN. OK. All right. Director, thank you.

I yield back.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Swalwell.

Mr. SWALWELL. Thank you.

Thank you, Director, for—

Ms. JADDOU. There you are.

Mr. SWALWELL. —the work that you and your team continue to do. Any shortcomings or issues with your team, I believe, are because we are asking you to do things that the law doesn't allow you to do, and that's a failure of us to put in place a comprehensive immigration policy that reflects the demand to come to America.

I just want to say to my colleagues as we go into this new Congress where I am and where I think many of my colleagues are, we want security at the border, and where we can work with you to find security at the border, you will find in me an ally and a partner who will want to bring security at the border.

When it comes to violent, undocumented immigrants, I want them out of the United States. I personally think they should serve their sentences if they are in custody here before removing them and sending them back to their countries because you risk that they could come back. If there are folks who have hurt people, put others in harm's way, have committed sexual assault, they should be gone. I don't think you're going to find a lot of people on our side who are arguing for violent undocumented immigrants to stay in the United States.

My concern, though—and I hope the Director can speak to this—is that we also have a workforce crisis in America. We have a workforce crisis as it relates to agriculture. We have a workforce crisis as it relates to hospitality. We have a workforce crisis as it relates to food and beverages, particularly our restaurant industry.

So, Director, I ask if there is going to be a massive deportation as the President—that the President-elect has said he's going to do, what type of pressures will that put on you to address and process legal immigration pathways? Could we actually harm ourselves? If we don't do this right, if we don't prioritize violent offenders, if it's just a grab all/catch all, could we affect our ability to attract the best and brightest to take the jobs where we have vacancies in the United States?

Ms. JADDOU. Thank you for that question.

Legal immigration, in many industries, can often be the backbone of that industry. You noted some of them, and it is our job at the USCIS to administer the lawful immigration system. The more effectively we can do that, the better we can assist our economy at all levels where immigrants are needed in certain labor forces.

Mr. SWALWELL. The President-elect has said he's going to put in place a Department of Government Efficiency. I think both sides would like to see the government always be more efficient. On your side, will there be a movement, or are you looking at a way to completely digitize the process for applicants? I know right now, it still is very dependent on paper filings. Is that something that could reduce just your workload and also more expeditiously process applicants?

Ms. JADDOU. Again, a question I get really excited about. We have grown leaps and bounds in using our technology to help us better process and become more efficient, but also smarter and have more security and integrity in our systems. Instituting technology throughout our process is the number one thing that we can do to make us work smarter, faster, and safer for the American people. That's what we're doing.

Mr. SWALWELL. Thank you, Director.

I also just want to point out to my colleagues the census data last week noted that my Congressional district is the eighth wealthiest Congressional district in the United States. I'm not doing much to contribute to that number, but many of my constituents are and that reflects that 40 percent of my constituents were born outside of the United States. They come largely from places like India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, North—or Korea, Philippines, and they reflect the best of our community, and they reflect a resilient mindset that has grown our local economy.

I'll just leave my colleagues with this: Recently a foreign minister of another country told me the population of the United States is three billion people, and I thought that he had misspoken. I said, "Actually, sir, it's closer to somewhere between 300–400 million." He said, "No. You have three billion people in the world who will give up anything to come to the United States, and if you all can figure out a way to get it right, you can take the cream of the crop to help your economy." I hope we can work at the next Congress to try and make that happen.

I yield back.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. The gentleman has put his finger on exactly the problem that we face.

Mr. Nehls.

Mr. NEHLS. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Eric, you mentioned just a minute ago about a large—your district is a lot of migrants, 40 percent in Pakistan. I'm going to make a safe assumption, most of those individuals, it probably took them a decade or so to get here, and they did it through the legal channel. I think at the beginning of your talk you talked about we've got to get these bad hombres out of here, the ones that are committing crime.

Do you think the Director would agree with you on that?

Mr. SWALWELL. If the gentleman would yield?

Mr. NEHLS. Sure.

Mr. SWALWELL. I'll let the Director speak for herself, but I will just say I am in agreement with you that I want to bring down those processing times, and I want the bad guys gone.

Mr. NEHLS. That's right. Even Eric Adams is now on board with President Trump and Tom Homan, and we're going to get them out. We're going to get them out of our country.

The Tren de Aragua, tell us a little bit about that, those that are listening on this. Tell us a little bit about this gang, Tren de Aragua. Are you familiar with them?

Ms. JADDOU. Yes. Thank you for the question.

At the USCIS we are always in constant communication with our law enforcement and intelligence partners to learn about new threats—

Mr. NEHLS. OK. Yes.

Ms. JADDOU. —so that we can apply that new knowledge into every step of our process.

Mr. NEHLS. OK. So, tell me a little bit about Tren de Aragua. You're just—tell me about that gang. What do you know about them?

Ms. JADDOU. I probably don't want to accept too much of that—

Mr. NEHLS. Are you kidding me? Oh, my goodness gracious, yes, you're hiding from it. They're a very violent gang out of Venezuela, which is part of that the CHNV.

Ms. JADDOU. Yes, they are.

Mr. NEHLS. They're coming in here. They're killing our American people. They're taking over some States. They're taking over city blocks. How do you feel about that?

I tell you, in some sarcasm, I want to almost thank you guys for the job you have done because you totally blew it. The American people are sick and tired of what they've seen over the past four years, and you should all be fired. Well, you will be here shortly, because the American people say we're not going to tolerate this anymore. I don't know, quite honestly, how Mayorkas and some in the administration even sleep at night with the job you've done with this parole, and you put some fancy words, you try to change a definition to justify this incompetence. It's criminal, quite honestly, what you've done.

When you see the families of these victims that have been tortured, raped, brutally murdered by individuals coming into our

country, violent criminals—and I sent letters to Mayorkas. I got nothing. I heard nothing. The Border Patrol, everybody knew about Tren de Aragua, the gang. They didn't do nothing. They did nothing. You didn't think the people were paying attention, the American people. You think they're too naive. They woke up, and now you're gone. I can't wait until January 20th when President Trump will secure our border and put the American people first.

I yield the rest of my time to the great Chair.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

First, I just need to note Mr. Swalwell said, "The Democrats want illegal aliens who have been convicted of other crimes to be deported once they serve their sentences," that is demonstrably false. Sanctuary cities and sanctuary States like California specifically forbid notifying ICE when they're about to release a prisoner who's here illegally so they can be deported.

I'd suggest that the workforce crisis we face is by adding millions of cheap illegal labors to the labor market to dramatically reduce the wages of working American families and working legal immigrants.

Mr. Swalwell was right about one thing, billions of people want to come to this country, and if we allow them, we have no borders and, therefore, we have no country.

Director Jaddou, our Subcommittee has noted that in millions of cases credible fear interviews are not even conducted before migrants who have illegally entered the country are then released into the country. How do you explain that?

Ms. JADDOU. Thank you.

This is exactly the point that I've been trying to express for many years now. The USCIS, being a fee-funded agency has to use fees we charge others to support the work we do at the border alongside our partners, Customs and Border Protection. That is not funded by Congress. It is funded by fees. Therefore, we are limited in the numbers of—

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Those fees—until we opened our borders, those fees were more than adequate to conduct those interviews, and under your administration they are not. One of the tactics you seem to have employed recently is simply to close cases of asylum claimants without ruling on their legitimacy that effectively grants them permanent residency. Why are you doing that?

Ms. JADDOU. Granting permanent residency—I'm sorry, sir, Mr. Chair—

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Instead of ruling on asylum claims, the cases are simply closed out.

Ms. JADDOU. Oh, on those cases. So, many cases in the asylum backlog are wrongly in asylum backlog. They're actually maybe defensive asylum which should be before the Immigration Court and we have, as we open each of these cases, discovered that, in fact, we do not have jurisdiction and it belongs elsewhere.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. My time has expired.

Mr. Garcia.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Chair McClintock.

Thank you, Director Jaddou, for being here today.

As a proud immigrant and a representative of one of the largest immigrant populations in the country, I see firsthand the chal-

allenges faced by individuals and families that are navigating our immigration system. The USCIS plays a critical role in upholding the premise that we are a Nation of immigrants.

This Congress I led several efforts, including a letter to USCIS, expressing concerns about significant backlogs in processing applications and affecting the availability of work permits for long-term immigrant communities. Many of these individuals have worked for decades, paid local, State, and Federal taxes without the freedom and peace of mind that comes with the work permit.

Can you discuss what steps USCIS is taking to specifically address the backlog in processing work permits? I'm referring to form I-765 and how you're prioritizing cases for individuals that have been waiting in the system for years, sometimes decades?

Ms. JADDOU. Yes. Thank you.

That is an area that we have been heavily focused on, our backlog. As you stated, work authorization, work permits are critical for an individual to put food on their table, put a roof over their heads, be self-sufficient. It's also critical to the community and the economy that they live in so that their economies improve.

We have worked quite a bit to improve our processes on employment authorizations. We have digitized quite a bit of that. We have used technology to help us move faster, and we have, across the board, on all our work permit processing, some better than others, but overall, we have achieved incredible strides, and we're going to keep going.

Mr. GARCIA. Why do some work permit renewals take longer than mandated processing times? What additional resources or policies are needed to reduce the significant delays? How can the USCIS significantly reduce those backlogs?

Ms. JADDOU. What I would like to continue doing is exactly what we're doing, which is bringing in more technology to help us, and that is exactly what we have done. The difference is in processing times, there are many factors, and including there will be court orders, for example, that require certain timeframes. There are also different statuses underneath the individual that give them the ability to work. We need to take different steps, depending on the form, depending on the status of the individual.

Mr. GARCIA. Changing gears, according to the USCIS website—and previous members have addressed this in part—DACA recipients are currently advised not to apply for renewal until 4–5 months before their current DACA expires.

Given the incoming administration's stated desire to conduct mass deportations, how will USCIS protect data to ensure that it is not misused or not used for enforcement purposes?

Ms. JADDOU. That's a really important question. As I stated earlier, this population should not be living in two-year increments, and that is what they have been doing for the last 12 years, which is why I strongly support the idea of finally providing a pathway to legalization for DACA recipients.

With regard to their information, it is guided by the forms that they fill out every two years, and that information is generally protected unless there's a fraud or law enforcement or intelligence matter.

Mr. GARCIA. Do you feel secure in saying that you're confident that a subsequent administration would respect the information on those forms?

Ms. JADDOU. I can't speak to what another administration would or would not do. I can speak for the administration that I currently serve in.

Mr. GARCIA. Do you expect that the fee for naturalization services will remain or increase over the coming four years?

Ms. JADDOU. I certainly can speak about what we did in this administration, and our fee increase in the naturalization space was quite minimal and, in fact, in some cases lower for many, but I can't speak to what a future administration might do.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you. My time has expired.

Thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Chair.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Hunt.

Mr. HUNT. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Do you know how you reduce illegal immigration according to the left? It's really simple. You make illegal immigration legal. Biden was upset that the American people were complaining about the increase in legal immigration numbers at the border. What did Biden do? He legalized illegal immigration by expanding the intended use of parole to fit his needs.

The American people may be asking, what is parole? The USCIS says that parole allows an individual who may be inadmissible or otherwise ineligible for admission to the United States to be paroled to the country for a temporary period. That's right. They created a lawful pathway for illegal aliens who would otherwise have no other entry into America. It should be temporary, but it's not.

Specifically, the Biden Administration expanded its parole authority by creating a new parole program specifically for citizens of Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. As of October 2024, more than 530,000, 530,000 Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans have flown into America under this program.

President Biden doesn't care that he has allowed over a half a million people legally into this country as he vacations in Nantucket with billionaires and won't encounter any of these people there. Just look at what happened to the people who arrived at Martha's Vineyard. They were barely there for 16 hours, and Martha's Vineyard kicked them out.

It should come as no surprise that the CHNV program is full of fraud. There was, in fact, so much fraud that they had to stop the program entirely in July of this year, as you know, ma'am.

This rampant fraud and abuse shouldn't come as any surprise because Biden doesn't believe in the rule of law. We've seen this—and I'm from Texas—it has been despicable what has happened at our Southern border. It's the opposite of what I would call the rule of law. Biden only believes in the rule of law when it benefits him, his son Hunter, as we saw a couple of days ago, and other members of the Biden crime family. The border didn't benefit him, so he expanded parole. Having Hunter being a convicted felon didn't benefit him, so he gave him a blanket pardon for the last decade.

I have a question for you, ma'am. This is one I want to revisit back with Mr. Jordan. Does the parole program allow non-U.S. citi-

zens to be financial supporters of parolees? I'm talking about the CHNV.

Ms. JADDOU. Can you repeat?

Mr. HUNT. Does the parole program allow non-U.S. citizens to be financial supporters of parolees?

Ms. JADDOU. Yes, that's correct.

Mr. HUNT. Why would you allow that?

Ms. JADDOU. Every supporter we confirm has the financial ability to support—

Mr. HUNT. Every? All of them?

Ms. JADDOU. That is what—we will not confirm if a person does not have the financial ability to support an individual. I will note we allow for co-supporters.

Mr. HUNT. They're not citizens?

Ms. JADDOU. They may be. They may be.

Mr. HUNT. Are they tax-paying citizens?

Ms. JADDOU. The 86 percent of supporters, 86 percent, so the vast, vast majority are U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents.

Mr. HUNT. What I'm getting at is you have the tax-paying public that's funding noncitizens to be financial supporters of parolees. Do you know how ridiculous that sounds, ma'am?

Ms. JADDOU. I also want to note when a person enters on parole, they are eligible to apply for employment authorization, and most of them do, and they become very quickly self-sufficient.

Mr. HUNT. Switching gears, so why was the program shut down in July? At that point, over a half million people had entered our country.

Ms. JADDOU. Every day at the USCIS, we are looking at all our processes to ensure we are doing the best we can, both at efficiency, at integrity, and security, all of it.

Mr. HUNT. By that point—

Ms. JADDOU. When we see a problem—

Mr. HUNT. By that point, 400,000 people had already entered. So, it took you that long to figure that out?

Ms. JADDOU. In fact, we have been studying every process as we have studied CHNV. We have made changes throughout. We decided, most recently, that we needed to make some additional changes that required us to momentarily pause while we could institute additional changes, notwithstanding the many changes we have been making throughout, to stay many steps ahead of people that are trying to get around it.

Mr. HUNT. Do you think that 530,000 people is acceptable? That's almost the size of a Congressional district. You have to admit that that is an unbelievable high number of people that entered this country that are not citizens. You have to admit that, correct? That's the size—almost the size of a Congressional district in the United States. There's 435 of them.

Ms. JADDOU. As I've stated, effective border management has got to be a combination of the enforcement that we have in place—

Mr. HUNT. There's been no enforcement. There's been no enforcement, because we had 21 million people enter this country illegally, and you have to admit that 530,000 people is unacceptable.

I yield back the rest of my time. Thank you.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. The gentleman's time has expired. If there are no further questions, that will conclude today's hearing.

I want to thank our witness for appearing before the Subcommittee today.

Without objection, all Members will have five legislative days to submit additional written questions to the witness, or place additional materials in the record, although I hope that they will have more luck at getting a straight answer than we've gotten today.

Without objection, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:48 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

All materials submitted for the record by the Members of the Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement can be found at the following links: <https://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=117744>.

