

HSGAC Hearing:
Remain in Mexico
January 16, 2025
Opening Statement, as delivered

There's been a significant question raised in the past year, or so, whether or not the president has enough power to fix the problems at the border. And that is what this hearing will be about—is there enough statutory authority for the president to do things that need to be done at the border.

Over the past four years, we have witnessed an unprecedented erosion of security at our borders. This deterioration was marked by a complete disregard for the laws

that were put in place to protect U.S. citizens.

Since the start of the Biden-Harris administration, nearly 11 million individuals have been encountered attempting to illegally enter the United States.

In his first year in office, President Biden repealed over 80 of President Trump's policies that had effectively secured the southwest border. What was once a controlled and secure boundary quickly turned into a revolving door.

These open-border policies allowed individuals—many with little to no

documentation—to show up, state their name, or “a name,” and waltz right into our country. The Biden-Harris administration claims they check everyone against criminal databases, but they only do so against U.S. and allied nations’ records—leaving massive blind spots for criminals from countries that don’t share information or have reliable databases. Criminals and terrorist-linked individuals were able to slip into the country undetected, often disappearing without ever appearing at their court dates.

Customs and Border Protection apprehended nearly 400 suspected

terrorists attempting to illegally enter the ports of entry. Another 1,500 at ports of entry. And these are just the ones they managed to get caught—countless others have evaded detection.

During these last few years, the laws that exist to protect this nation were bent, abused, or outright ignored. Parole, which is meant to be used sparingly, became a loophole, and asylum laws were distorted to justify an open-border agenda. Tragically, Laken Riley was brutally murdered because the Biden administration paroled her killer. No other family should ever have to endure the pain hers has.

President Biden discarded proven strategies like “Remain in Mexico,” which was undeniably successful in deterring illegal entries. The results were immediate and disastrous. During the last full month of Trump administration, when “Remain in Mexico” was in effect, border encounters were under 70,000. After its repeal, that number surged to over 100,000 and continued to rise.

Remember this, under the Obama administration, their “standard” for what constitutes a crisis was 1,000 attempted crossings in a day.
Under the Biden-Harris

administration, there have been, on average, over 6,000 encounters daily at the Southwest border, yet they insisted there was no crisis.

Their policies created a pull effect enticing migrants to pay cartels thousands of dollars for a treacherous journey to the southwest border. The message over time, over the last four years has been: if you show up, we will find a way to get you in. And who has benefited from that? The cartels, who profit from this human pipeline, and terrorist-linked individuals exploiting the chaos to slip in unnoticed.

All the powers needed to address this crisis, we believe already exist under current law. The President has the authority to implement “Remain in Mexico,” and the Department of Homeland Security can immediately return migrants to a neighboring foreign country. The President also holds broad powers to suspend or restrict entry for any group deemed detrimental to our national interest.

Section 208 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) says the President and the Secretary of Homeland Security “may” grant asylum—not “shall” grant asylum. Section 208 allows President

Trump to make anyone illegally entering the country ineligible for asylum. Additionally, under section 212, President Trump can stop the entry of illegal aliens altogether. Finally, section 235 authorizes him to immediately place illegal migrants back onto the Mexican side of the border.

The 2024 election was a clear mandate from the American people to reverse President Biden's disastrous open border policies. We must reinstate "Remain in Mexico" and use the other existing authorities to the full extent. That is why, immediately following this hearing, we will vote on affirming

the President's and the Secretary of Homeland Security's legal authority to secure the southwest border—including taking immediate steps to remove illegal aliens, reinstate “Remain in Mexico,” and end catch-and-release.

The Trump administration demonstrated that when the law is enforced properly, it works. This resolution reaffirms that President Trump—or any President—has the broad authority to resolve the ongoing crisis.

I urge my colleagues to stand with us, uphold the rule of law, and

restore order at our nation's
borders.