



MEMO

To: Republican Study Committee members

From: Chairman Jim Banks

Date: April 12, 2021

Subject: Immigration Strategy Memo

Having just returned from our southern border on a trip with a group of RSC members, I wanted to write down my thoughts on what we saw and what it all means.

In the matter of mere weeks, the Biden Administration has transformed President Trump's secured Southern Border into the sprawling site of an unmitigated and rapidly worsening disaster.

As we could clearly see with our own eyes what the Biden Administration desperately wants to hide from the American public: the situation is devolving and deteriorating by the day. When we met with local sheriffs, mayors and judges at the border, they told us in no uncertain terms that this is an indisputable crisis. They also told us they don't have time for Congress to drag its feet and pass laws—they need help now. **And they need it fast.**

President Biden must not be allowed to hide behind the liberal media's smoke screen. **We must urge he and Vice President Harris to visit the border and see the crisis they created firsthand.** It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that he is held accountable to the American public for his massive failure.

As Americans continue to bear the social and economic burdens of the pandemic – business closures, punitive restrictions on gatherings, lingering travel restrictions, and strict guidelines on social distancing – it is a free-for-all on the Southern Border.

Facilities are overwhelmed, inundated and stretched far beyond capacity.

Untested, unvetted, unscreened, unvaccinated illegal immigrants are being released into U.S. communities – jeopardizing public health and the availability of finite healthcare resources.

It is no wonder that news organizations are reporting that, inexcusably, a gag order has been placed on our brave border agents. That is because the situation on the ground cannot be defended by any rational person: it is a seemingly bottomless descent into chaos.

That's why we had to go down to the border, see the chaos firsthand, and continue to expose Biden's Border crisis. It is not hyperbole to say that lives are being lost—just recently, a family was seen drowning in the Rio Grande.

Perhaps never before in history – in any arena of domestic or foreign policy – has a new Administration so quickly turned the site of a historic success into the site of national humiliation.

Therein lies the core truth that must be repeated, and the core lie from the Biden Administration that must be refuted: what is happening at the border is not a natural disaster, but a man-made disaster. This disaster is the extremely predictable result of the Biden Administration's inconceivable decision to terminate – over the profound objections of career law enforcement professionals – the Trump Administration's proven border security measures.

Trump FIXED it, Biden BROKE it. *It's just that simple.*

Specifically, the Biden Administration terminated the enormously successful Migrant Protection Protocols (or Remain in Mexico), three historic Safe Third Country Agreements, and the humane return of unaccompanied alien minors (UAC's) under Title 42 to their home nations. Collectively, these and other Trump policies achieved unparalleled levels of security. They ENDED Catch-and-Release and ensured that those apprehended by Border Patrol could be safely and responsibly removed from the United States. By the time President Trump left office, America's border agents and ICE officers had the strongest set of tools ever created to protect and defend the territory of the United States.

Let us be very, very clear: the decision to rescind these proven policies - and to instead implement Catch-and-Release - is the SOLE reason for the current state of emergency.

Had President Trump's policies simply been left in place, and had CBP and ICE simply been allowed to do their jobs according to their own expertise in judgement, there would be no crisis, no overcrowding, no catch-and-release, and no breach in the security of the U.S. border.

The definition of a secure border is one in which those entering in violation of law are swiftly apprehended and repatriated. Forcing border agents to release illegal immigrants en masse is by definition an assault on American sovereignty, American law, and the American Constitution. And the victims of this assault are both the illegal immigrants themselves - who are abused and exploited by the criminal cartels who smuggle them - and the American People who bear the terrible cost of uncontrolled migration.

President Biden's Administration has taken a series of breathtakingly radical actions to eliminate all vestiges of immigration moderation:

- He has, through unlawful decree, transformed the Border Patrol into a conveyor belt for the re-settlement of illegal and unauthorized migrants at taxpayer expense
- He has jeopardized public health and public faith by failing by curiously exempting those who break our laws from the pandemic rules that apply to everyone else
- He has dangerously suspended the longstanding cooperation between ICE and local communities to remove dangerous criminals and categorically barred the enforcement of duly-enacted laws
- He ended any pretense of enforcing the rules against overstaying a visa or complying with immigration judges
- He resumed the large-scale entry of visa workers during a job-killing pandemic
- He overrode the government's own homeland security experts to allow for unrestrained travel from terror-ravaged regions
- He voided the longstanding legal requirement that newcomers be financially self-sufficient
- He made it easier for multi-billion-dollar technology corporations to hire overseas labor in place of qualified, willing and highly-talented U.S. workers

The Biden Immigration Agenda sacrifices the interests of the American People in order to serve the interests of foreign citizens, criminal cartels, and ultra-wealthy multinational corporations. Biden's agenda rejects responsible limits and controls on the number of people entering the country.

It's as if the Biden Administration recognizes no borders at all.

President Biden's policy is not liberal, or even merely left-wing - ***it is radical, extreme and beyond the bounds of rational thought.***

Americans across the political spectrum recognize the need for sensible limitations on how many people can enter and remain in the United States in any given year. Americans regardless of party recognize the need to afford basic protections to U.S. workers in the job market. And voters throughout America recognize that we must first consider the social, economic and financial well-being of all American citizens and lawful residents here today. Biden has rejected this mainstream consensus and, with virtually no announcement or discussion, is sailing the United States deep into uncharted waters.

We, as members of the Republican Study Committee, on behalf of all Americans who believe in the rule of law and the fundamental rights of our people, condemn the Biden immigration policies and will work to block all efforts to achieve it, including by rejecting requests for funding that would facilitate any aspect of it. We instead express our support for a return to a set of policies that live up to our nation's core obligations, values and principles.

While Biden reshapes our immigration system to serve rich donors and giant corporations, we believe it must serve the interests of American citizens, families and workers.

We therefore embrace these four principles:

- 1. National Security:** Immigration policy should protect our national security by protecting the American people from terrorism, cartels, and other threats to their safety;
- 2. America First:** Immigration policy should prioritize American workers first, help grow our middle class, raise wages, and enhance economic opportunity for all lawful residents well;
- 3. Rule of Law:** Immigration policy should respect the rule of law, along with immigrants that honor our legal immigration processes, rather than incentivize law breaking;
- 4. Patriotic Assimilation:** Immigration policy should aim to assimilate legal immigrants into the American family so they too can take pride in our values, history, and heritage.

In bright contrast to the illegal, immoral and callous policies of the Biden Administration, these four principles form the foundation of an immigration policy that is just, principled, moral, humanitarian and rooted firmly our nation's highest and most treasured values. They point the way toward a more secure, prosperous and truly unified nation.