

EXPERT INSIGHT | Center for Homeland Security & Immigration

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS GLOSSES OVER BORDER CRISIS

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TOPLINE POINTS

- ★ The Biden Administration's ineffective policies are responsible for the humanitarian crisis unfolding at the southern border.
- ★ The American people overwhelmingly want solutions that will secure the border, end human trafficking, and defeat the cartels.
- ★ Instead of presenting meaningful policy solutions, President Biden's State of the Union address glossed over the border crisis, doubled down on calling for amnesty, and offered no new strategy to secure the border.

Americans tuning in to the [State of the Union](#) address, hoping the president would offer a new strategy to secure the border, end human trafficking, and defeat the cartels, were left disappointed. During the past two years, the Biden Administration has overseen the worst two years of illegal alien border apprehensions ever recorded. In Fiscal Year 2022, which ended on September 30, U.S. Customs and Border Protection apprehended [2.38 million illegal aliens](#), a total that exceeds the combined levels apprehended from Fiscal Years 2017–2020. This number of apprehended aliens included a single-year record 157,000 vulnerable unaccompanied alien children who were trafficked or smuggled across the border. Furthermore, December 2022 set an all-time single-month record for apprehensions of illegal aliens. In December, [251,487 illegal aliens](#) were apprehended, which marked a 141% increase over the December average during the Trump Administration.

It is fair to say that the state of the southern border is in chaos.

Yet, during the approximately 73-minute State of the Union address, President Biden waited nearly one hour before he devoted only about 73 seconds to the border crisis. The president first implored Congress to “come together on immigration” before quickly blaming lawmakers for the crisis, claiming “America’s border problems won’t be fixed until Congress acts.” This statement, however, was incorrect. The Biden Administration

could solve the border crisis without assistance from Congress if it were willing to enforce the immigration laws already on the books. Although new laws would be helpful, the administration [has all the authority it needs](#) to secure the border. The America First Policy Institute (AFPI) has already identified [10 executive actions](#) the Biden Administration could take today to fix the crisis. These include reinstating the “Remain in Mexico” policy, renegotiating the Asylum Cooperative Agreements, fully utilizing expedited removal, and swiftly removing aliens once their claims are denied, among other important measures.

Though President Biden called on Congress to take action, the only legislative solution he mentioned was mass amnesty. First, he touted his “comprehensive immigration reform” bill that would provide amnesty to nearly every illegal alien in the country without pairing legalization with any new border security or enforcement measures. The previous Congress never considered this bill despite the fact that the president’s party controlled both chambers, which demonstrated that this legislation was not a serious proposal.

As an alternative, President Biden also used the speech to call for “a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, those on temporary status, farm workers, and essential workers.” Despite the difference in language, this policy would still be amnesty, and, while smaller than the other bill, would still add up to the largest amnesty of illegal aliens in history if it became law. It is absurd to claim that amnesty for illegal aliens who have been in the country unlawfully for many years would stop the current—or future—flow of illegal aliens appearing at the southern border. The options President Biden presented would do nothing to stop this flow and had nothing to do with fixing the current crisis.

President Biden also claimed that his “new border plan” is responsible for a 97% reduction in the “unlawful migration” of Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans since it was announced on January 5. As AFPI has [explained](#), the new border plan does not solve the border crisis but is designed to hide it from the American people. To achieve this reported drop—which is unconfirmed because the administration has yet to publish January’s border numbers—the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is unlawfully paroling 30,000 inadmissible aliens per month from those four countries into American communities. Parole is a narrow authority limited to a case-by-case basis and only for “urgent humanitarian reasons” or “significant public benefit.” The economic migrants being allowed in under parole satisfy none of these requirements, do not qualify for asylum and are otherwise ineligible for a visa. Although the Biden Administration’s plan may reduce the number of illegal aliens apprehended between ports of entry, the policy will allow the same number of illegal aliens into American communities. The difference is that DHS will now be unlawfully allowing them to pass through ports of entry instead of apprehending them crossing the border and then releasing them into American communities after processing them at Border Patrol facilities.



Tuesday's address glossing over the border crisis and doubling down on amnesty indicated that the administration continues to stand behind its misguided approach to the border. Unfortunately for the American people, continuing to do so will do nothing to stop human trafficking, decrease the number of apprehensions, and defeat the drug cartels.

