



Immigration REPORT

FAIR SPECIAL REPORT: Segments of the Arizona Border Controlled by Criminal Cartels

As many media outlets have assumed overt advocacy positions on immigration and the border crisis – reporting some facts, while consciously omitting other facts that conflict with their advocacy positions – FAIR has been gathering firsthand information that provides a fuller picture of what is actually going on.

As the crisis along our southern border has intensified, FAIR has dispatched senior staff four times in the last 12 months to assess the situation in key areas. Our latest effort to fill in the (very large) gaps left by mainstream media outlets took place in early December along the Arizona border with Mexico. FAIR met with Customs and Border Patrol agents (both those who patrol the border, and those who oversee the legal ports of entry), and local Arizona law enforcement officials.

Among the key findings of FAIR’s fact-finding effort that have not been widely reported in the media:

- Large stretches of the Sonoran Desert, on both the Mexican and U.S. side, are under the control of the dangerous Sinaloa criminal cartel, one of the criminal cartels responsible for mass murders on the Mexican side of the border.

- Arizona has become a key point of entry for narcotics, ranging from marijuana to more lethal drugs like fentanyl and other opioids.
- The ongoing abuse of our asylum laws and detention policies are stretching thin our Border Patrol manpower, thus enabling the criminal cartels to expand their reach.
- The lack of effective border security fencing in many stretches of the border is being exploited by criminal cartels that smuggle narcotics and illegal aliens into the United States, as well as engaging in human trafficking.

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FAIR at the Border

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- Local law enforcement is being forced to step into the breach to protect communities along the border.
- Local law enforcement reports a new spike in illegal entries. The majority are not apprehended.
- Illegal sanctuary policies are a magnet for illegal immigration.

The Border Security Fence is Extremely Effective. And Then It Stops.

Sections of the Arizona border, primarily near legal ports of entry, are protected by secure border fencing and border walls. In these areas, according to Border Patrol officials and local law enforcement, few if any illegal aliens and contraband enter the country. These stretches of secure border fencing are constructed of vertical steel slats that allow border agents to see what is happening on the other side of the border. In

rural sections of the border, the security fence is enhanced by concertina wire that prevents people from scaling it. In more urban sections, it includes wire mesh between the slats to prevent criminal cartels from handing contraband to associates on the U.S. side who can quickly disappear into the community.

And then the fence just stops. In the remote border hamlet of Sasabe (population 54), there is an imposing section of virtually impenetrable border fence. However, drive a mere 2.3 miles west of the Sasabe port of entry and the security fence comes to an abrupt end. In its place are two strands of waist-high barbed wire connected to the security fence by a piece of rope. While we were there, that stretch of border was patrolled by one agent in a jeep. Likewise, in other areas along the border, secure and effective fencing comes to an abrupt end and is replaced by a few flimsy strands of barbed wire or nothing at all.

The Sinaloa Cartel, one of Mexico's most dangerous criminal gangs, uses lookouts on both sides of the border and radio communications to signal when the Border Patrol is present and when they are not. Cartel lookouts operate

brazenly in the open. As we drove down Sasabe's main road, the off-duty Border Patrol agent escorting us pointed out the cartel lookout (who likely had some form of legal status in the U.S. and thus had no fear of the Border Patrol) and pulled up to talk with him. The cartel operative, who was clearly there to report on the Border Patrol's whereabouts, calmly explained that he was "just out for a walk" before we drove off (and our departure was likely relayed to compatriots somewhere in the brush on the other side of the border). Clearly, the Border Patrol needs more boots on the ground.

Sasabe's one commercial enterprise, cash-only, exists for the sole purpose of supplying the cartel with the provisions they require. The store (which was closed on the Tuesday we were there) stocks a variety of camping equipment (in an area where no sane person would camp), ammunition, and other things that smugglers might need to get their human and non-human cargo to their destinations.

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Images

1. Sasabe Store supplies smugglers and illegal aliens heading north.
2. Secure border wall near Sasabe abruptly ends.
3. Border agent puts his foot on a strand of barbed wire separating Arizona and Mexico.
4. Where the border wall meets the border "fence."
5. "Justice! No Borders!" scrawled on the wall on the other side of the fence separating Nogales, Arizona from Nogales, Mexico.

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Arizona Filling the Void Left by Congress

As the border crisis has raged over the past several years, the burdens associated with our unsecured borders are being borne by local communities. Admirably, Arizona and border counties have stepped up to the plate to fill the void left by Washington, and protect the citizens of that state. These efforts stand in sharp contrast to the growing number of sanctuary jurisdictions around the country.

In 2015, Gov. Doug Ducey established the Border Strike Force Bureau (BSF) with the support of the Arizona Department of Public Safety. The BSF's mission "not only targets border crimes but provides a comprehensive collaborative approach to help secure Arizona's border and thwart transnational criminal organizations." In executing its mission, the BSF is engaged in "integrating and aligning the intelligence capabilities of partnering agencies... integrating counter-network operations to identify and target transnational criminal organizations and illicit organizations while prioritizing investigative efforts to deter, disrupt, and dismantle criminal organizations."

These state efforts are augmented by county governments that have established their own task forces aimed at protecting

local residents from the criminal cartels that endanger their communities. Cochise County, which sits along a large stretch of border in southeastern Arizona, has set up its own task force, known as the Southeastern Arizona Border Region Enforcement (SABRE) group, within the sheriff's department. At the county's own expense, they have set up hundreds of cameras along the border to monitor illegal cross-border activity.

The network of cameras allows the SABRE team to gather

State and county governments "have established their own task forces aimed at protecting local residents from the criminal cartels that endanger their communities."

photographic evidence of every illegal border incursion. While the county cannot enforce immigration law violations, the SABRE team can go after the drug smugglers, and they do so with enormous effectiveness. They have an unblemished 100 percent conviction rate of the smugglers they arrest. Moreover, to deter the unscrupulous use of juveniles as cross-border "drug mules," the county has begun prosecuting minors and providing rehabilita-

tion programs for them while incarcerated.

In a positive example of local-federal cooperation, Cochise County shares the photographic evidence of illegal immigration with the Border Patrol. But, because of limited manpower, only about 48 percent of those photographed entering the country illegally are apprehended. The rest disappear into the interior of the country, bound, in most cases, for sanctuary jurisdictions that local officials cite as magnets for illegal immigration.

FAIR Border Missions Provide Valuable Information to the Public

Because many media outlets refuse to cover the dangers posed to Americans and national security because doing so does not promote their ideological objectives, these FAIR border missions provide vital information to the public. In the days following FAIR's fact-finding efforts in Arizona, our spokespeople appeared on more than 40 live radio programs across the nation to report our findings directly to the American people. These and other findings are also disseminated through op-eds on prominent news and opinion sites.

In the absence of objective coverage of the numerous crises raging along our borders, FAIR will continue these fact-finding missions to deliver much-needed information to the American public.

News from our State and Local Operations



ARIZONA

Voters in Tucson, Arizona, struck a decisive blow for common sense and the rule of law in the November elections. Voters in that city overwhelmingly rejected a ballot initiative that would have officially declared Tucson to be a sanctuary city for illegal aliens, by a whopping 71 percent to 29 percent majority. The defeat represents a stinging rebuke from the city’s largely liberal, pro-sanctuary voting base, and is a strong indication that these policies lack public support in all but a handful of far-left communities. FAIR estimates there to be 564 sanctuary jurisdictions around the country, nearly all of them imposed by local politicians responding to the demands of political fringe groups rather than the will of the people. The overwhelming rejection of sanctuary by Tucson voters should send a clear signal to politicians around the country that cooperation with federal immigration enforcement agencies is not only a matter of common sense, but also enjoys broad public support.

MARYLAND

In another partial victory for common sense and public safety, Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich was forced to eat some pre-Thanksgiving crow as he rolled back some provisions of a sweeping sanctuary executive order he signed in July. Elrich’s Promoting Community Trust Executive Order barred county law enforcement from asking individuals about their immigration status and prohibited local law enforcement from cooperating with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in all but exceptional circumstances. County residents saw the immediate results of this extreme sanctuary edict. Between August and September nine illegal immigrants were charged with rape and violent sexual assault, which led to public demands for changes to the county’s



Marc Elrich

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sanctuary policy. Though far from abandoning sanctuary, Immigration and Customs Enforcement will no longer be categorically barred from access to county jails. The revised policy will give ICE limited access to jails and an opportunity to take custody of criminal aliens before they are released back into the community.

CALIFORNIA



San Francisco County District Attorney Chesa Boudin is taking sanctuary for illegal aliens to a whole new level. The county's newly-elected chief prosecutor is making it clear that not only will San Francisco continue to hinder

and obstruct federal immigration enforcement, but he will attempt legal action to prevent ICE from carrying out its duties in the city by the bay. In a campaign video shortly before his election, Boudin vitriolically proclaimed that, "If ICE agents come to kidnap members of our community, if they endanger our children, they will be prosecuted." Of course ICE carrying out its statutory duty to arrest illegal aliens does not constitute kidnapping, nor does Boudin have any legal

authority to prosecute federal law enforcement officers who are acting lawfully, but it is an indication that San Francisco is moving beyond a merely adversarial relationship with federal immigration enforcement to an openly confrontational one. Boudin is the son of convicted Weather Underground terrorists Kathy Boudin and David Gilbert, and was raised by political radicals Bill Ayres and Bernardine Dohrn while his biological parents were serving long sentences for murdering several people.

NEW JERSEY

The New Jersey Legislature passed legislation granting driver's licenses to illegal aliens. The bill was signed into law by Gov. Phil Murphy, making the Garden State the 15th state to do so. In the past two years the state has taken numerous steps to normalize the status of illegal aliens, including an effort by the attorney general to force counties to terminate cooperative agreements with federal immigration authorities. New Jersey, like other states issuing licenses to illegal aliens, has no ability to verify the information provided to them by people who are otherwise "undocumented." In addition to attracting illegal aliens to the state, this lapse also poses a security threat as criminals and terrorists will be able to establish false identities. ■

The Farm Workforce Modernization Act Screams "Welcome to the 19th Century!"

It is no secret that Big Agriculture wields a lot of power in Washington, DC. Just how much muscle it flexes is on full display at the moment, as its lobbyists push the ironically named Farm Workforce Modernization Act, H.R. 5038.

At a point in history when lawmakers from our two political parties can barely stomach be-

ing under the same rotunda with each other, the powerful agriculture lobby has managed to push a massive amnesty bill to the top of the congressional agenda. H.R. 5038 would grant amnesty to an estimate 1.5 million illegal aliens and essentially indenture them to their employers for a decade or more. Amidst full-scale impeachment proceedings, the House ap-

proved H.R. 5038 by a 265-160 vote in mid-December. It now awaits action in the Senate.

At a time when efficient and productive agriculture (like just about everything else in the modern world) hinges on employing cutting edge technology, the Farm Workforce "Modernization" Act aims at enshrining cheap low-effi-

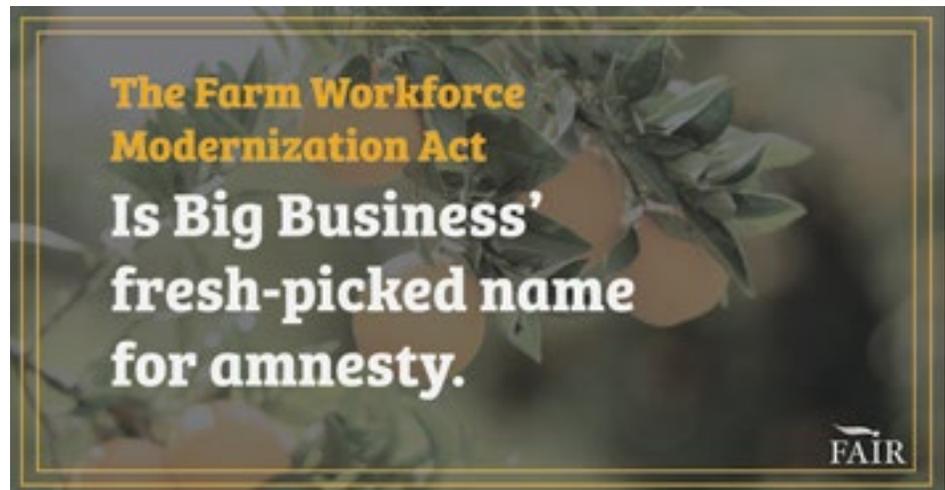
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ciency, manual labor as the future of this essential industry. The bill is not only regressive in an economic sense, but in a social one as well. As a condition of receiving amnesty as a Certified Agricultural Worker (CAW), illegal aliens would be required to labor in the agricultural industry, (almost certainly for poor wages and under poor working conditions) for between nine and 15 years.

The bill ignores the fact that agriculture already enjoys the most privileged status of any industry when it comes to access to foreign labor. Under the existing H-2A program, agricultural businesses can bring in unlimited numbers of foreign guest workers. But, because the H-2A program requires



jectionable on two counts – providing amnesty to illegal aliens and codifying a regressive form of indentured servitude – the Farm Workforce Modernization Act is also doomed to failure. While it might buy the industry a decade or so of low-wage toil from their existing labor force, history demonstrates that they will abandon these jobs at the first opportunity

fraud-ridden program, appended to the larger 1986 illegal alien amnesty, beneficiaries fled the poor wages and working conditions offered by their agricultural employers in search of more attractive jobs in other sectors of the economy. Because of a lack of effective enforcement mechanisms, these same employers simply reverted to their old practice of hiring the next wave of illegal aliens.

It is perhaps a sad commentary on the state of American politics that in a rare display of bipartisanship, lawmakers from the two parties have come together to promote an economically and socially regressive bill that smacks of the 19th Century, and label it as “modernization.”

FAIR is actively opposing H.R. 5038 and remains committed to promoting immigration reform legislation that benefits the public interest, not special interests – no matter how powerful.



employers to meet certain minimal wage and work standards, as well as requirements to provide housing and transportation for guest workers, many in the industry opt for even lower wage and lower cost illegal aliens.

Aside from being morally ob-

they get.

Proving Mark Twain’s quip that “History doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes” to be literally correct, the CAW amnesty is almost an exact replicate of the failed 1986 SAW (Special Agricultural Worker) amnesty program. Under that

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