



Immigration REPORT

SPECIAL EDITION: FAIR at the Border

This is a special edition of the monthly FAIR newsletter, dedicated to firsthand reporting by senior members of FAIR’s staff from the Southern border.

As the nation’s leading immigration reform group we believe it was important to get a firsthand look at all aspects of the crisis along our southern border. Despite being perhaps the most important national news story of the first months of the Biden administration, the American public’s access to vital information has been limited.

The Biden administration has severely limited the media’s access to the border and the teeming detention facilities that are filled with migrants – many of them children – who are entering the U.S. in unprecedented numbers because of the policies the president has put in place. Second, the increasingly ideologically driven media – which was harshly critical of former President Trump’s border policies – has shown a reluctance to report the ugly consequences of Biden’s policies. Third, the administration has slapped real and de facto gag orders on the men and women on the front lines of the crisis because they do not want the American public to see the full scope of the damage their policies have caused.

In light of these circumstances, FAIR sent three senior staff members to the border area near the epicenter of the crisis, McAllen, Texas, in late March. These included FAIR senior fellow Mark Morgan, who

has vast experience in immigration law enforcement having served as chief of the Border Patrol and acting director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Joining him were Matthew Tragesser, FAIR’s press secretary, and Luke Hanson, FAIR’s video content producer.

Over the course of several days, the FAIR delegation was able to gain access to key areas of the border to witness and document what is taking place. The group was also able to speak (off-the-record) with Border Patrol personnel, local government officials and residents of the border region. Like credentialed media, FAIR was denied access to detention facilities where untold numbers of migrants are being held.

In keeping with FAIR’s educational mission, the

[see FAIR AT THE BORDER | page 2](#)

Inside . . .

FAIR at the Border (continued).....	2
Border Trip By Luke Hanson.....	2
McAllen Trip By Matthew Tragesser.....	4
Sounding the Alarm.....	7

FAIR at the Border

from page 1

information and insights gathered during the three days spent at Ground Zero for the border crisis are being shared with the American public. Members of the FAIR delegation have reported on their findings on dozens of radio and television programs, and in widely circulated op-eds, as well as with members of FAIR in this special edition of the newsletter.

(FAIR's video reports from the border can be viewed on our YouTube channel by going to youtube.com and entering Federation for American Immigration Reform in the search bar.) ■



The Cries and Coughs in the Night: FAIR Border Trip March 2021

|By Luke Hanson

On FAIR's fact-finding mission to the southwest border in McAllen, Texas, the thing that was most jarring was the terrible toll President Biden's self-described "compassionate" immigration policies are taking on the migrants themselves. What we witnessed were signs of exhaustion and stress: Coughing from dozens of the border crossers mixed in with the mewling of infants and toddlers who had all just journeyed across difficult terrain and likely put their lives in the hands of smugglers to arrive in the dead of night just to willingly give themselves up to border patrol agents.

Smugglers who clearly have no concern for any migrants safely reaching a better future, as evidenced

by the news of that same week when footage showed them tossing 3- and 5-year-old sisters from Ecuador over a border wall in New Mexico. Clearly these child smugglers got all they wanted, the cash to "deliver" the children to the U.S. Perhaps they believed the girls would be rescued by Border Patrol agents who, in spite of being maligned by the media and members of Congress, truly care about the well-being of the migrants, or that they couldn't care less if the girls didn't make it through the night on their own, indicates how bad this situation really is.

The inhumanity that is being enabled by the policies of the Biden administration was evident to us on the faces of the migrants we saw. The complicity

[see BORDER TRIP | page 3](#)

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Border Trip

from page 2

of the president was forcefully noted by Rep. Brian Babin during the congressional press conference in which FAIR participated. “There’s nothing humane about what’s happening here and the cartels being empowered... and my heart goes out to these people,” he said, delivering the harsh truth about the border crisis that the Biden administration is denying. From our observations along the Rio Grande, it is clear that what is occurring is a humanitarian crisis, compounded by threats to the security and health of the American public while the White House does not just turn a blind eye to what is happening, but incentivizes and rewards it. Perhaps the only benefactors from the crisis created by the Biden administration are those who never cross the border at all – the human traffickers.

FAIR senior fellow Mark Morgan has stated over and over again about the cartels, “they started using families and unaccompanied minors (UACs) as a distraction,” in order to exhaust the resources of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) offering humanitarian assistance so that in other areas, “the border is wide open, it’s not monitored, and it’s



not secure. Drugs are pouring in and criminal aliens are pouring in.” Agents on the front lines of this crisis are clear that the criminal cartels that reap enormous profits smuggling illegal aliens to the United States are also using them to tie up the resources of the Border Patrol so that they can facilitate the entry of hardened

criminals and drugs in gaps in the border wall that President Biden has chosen to leave open.

Right in McAllen, Texas, you can see where the border wall abruptly ends. The construction crew is still on-site but not to put up the wall that has already been funded because building was halted as soon as President Biden took office. When you look at the big picture it all becomes less surprising. In the very areas where border wall construction was stopped, hundreds of border crossers enter the country in the middle of the night, day, anytime, every single day. What should concern us all the most is not just the heavy flows of traffic that we can easily see at



the border, but what’s happening as a result in other areas where patrolling resources have been pulled to deal with the surges.

As I go through footage of our trip, I keep hearing those heartbreaking sounds of the middle of the night. I keep thinking how, while all year long American citizens have been discouraged from traveling, children have been expected to stay in their homes and miss out on the much-needed experience of in-classroom learning, night after night, families and children with no accompanying guardians at all are being given a much different message from the executive branch. They are being told to leave their homes, to go out on a difficult journey, to be welcomed into overcrowded indoor facilities which were shut down to the American public during the pandemic, but now are reopened for illegal aliens to occupy while the Biden administration scrambles to find ways to disperse them into the interior of the country. ■

McAllen Border Trip Observations

|By Matthew Tragesser

FIRST NIGHT OBSERVATIONS

Immediately after arriving at the McAllen International Airport, FAIR joined a few national reporters near the Rio Grande River for a firsthand look the Biden Border Crisis.

FAIR met the group of reporters—along with former acting CBP Commissioner Mark Morgan and former acting Immigration and Customs Enforcement Director Tom Homan—at around midnight and within minutes of arriving to this location, Border Patrol agents apprehended dozens of unaccompanied minors and family units who had just crossed the river to enter the country illegally.

Within two hours, FAIR counted approximately 200 apprehensions—figures seen as a “quiet night” for Border Patrol, according to an agent we spoke to. Even for a “quiet night” the agent was sweating profusely under the strain of hundreds of migrants streaming across the river.

Rather than evade or resist arrest, nearly every single migrant voluntarily surrendered themselves to Border Patrol. But these migrants knew exactly what they were doing.

Migrants and human smugglers know full well that under the current administration, their chances of being removed from the country are virtually

zero. The Biden administration has suspended the Migration Protection Protocols (MPP), which would have required applicants to remain in Mexico until a hearing on their asylum claims could be scheduled and has directed ICE to apprehend fewer illegal aliens in the interior of the country. Additionally, the administration is not fully utilizing Title 42 (a COVID-related public health order) that allows CBP agents to return illegal migrants to Mexico.

Most of the migrants FAIR spoke with said that they were arriving from the Northern Triangle countries of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador—something that is in line with what many news outlets are reporting.

Towards the end of the night (approximately 3 am), the number of apprehended individuals became so large that a school bus—rather than a van—picked up these individuals and transported them to an undisclosed location.

After the tour, FAIR discussed the evening’s events with some reporters, with one reporter expressing frustration about the Biden administration’s “gag order” on most media members under which they have very limited interview and facility access. “What does President Biden want to hide so badly that he won’t let us see it?” the reporter asked.

[see MCALLEN TRIP | page 5](#)





McAllen Trip

from page 4

DAY OBSERVATIONS

On FAIR's first full day in the Rio Grande Valley, the delegation investigated and explored different portions of the U.S.-Mexico border.

It became clear that the Rio Grande Valley did not have much physical border infrastructure. In many places, nothing separated the U.S. from Mexico other than the Rio Grande River and some brush.

In some regions of the Valley, FAIR found portions of secure border wall that stands 25 to 30 feet high. But there are also areas where the wall has gaping sections missing due to President Biden halting all southern border wall construction after taking office. The materials and equipment for the wall are physically there but not being used.

FAIR traveled to the same location as the night before to see if migrants had left behind any items and to see if migrants were still crossing in large groups during the day hours.

Immediately after arriving to the location, FAIR witnessed dozens of unaccompanied minors and family units being apprehended and sent off in vans to undisclosed locations.

Some migrants were practically infants who could not walk on their own. The proliferation of children – with and without accompanying adults – is likely in response to the Biden administration not immediately expelling family units or unaccompanied minors who enter the country illegally.

FAIR had found left-behind travel documents

indicating that migrants were traveling to the border from the Northern Triangle countries—especially from El Salvador. This means that they were traveling thousands of miles and putting themselves at serious risk of violence (some 7 in 10 report facing violence on this trek) because the words and deeds of President Biden clearly indicated to them that coming to our border will be rewarded with admission to the United States.

It was also clear that the cartels and human smugglers in Mexico are exploiting President Biden's immigration changes and are profiting immensely from transporting migrants across the Rio Grande River into the U.S. This was confirmed after we had found dozens of neon green bracelets on the ground that read "entregas" in Spanish or roughly translated to "deliveries" in English.

A source told FAIR that some of these cartel groups are profiting more from human smuggling than they are from the drug trade under President Biden.

PRESS CONFERENCE

FAIR helped organize a press conference near Mission, Texas that featured former acting CBP Commissioner Mark Morgan and former acting ICE director Tom Homan along with local law enforcement, sheriffs, and the following members of the Texas congressional delegation:

Rep. Michael Burgess

Rep. Louis Gohmert

see [MCALLEN TRIP](#) | page 6

McAllen Trip

from page 5

Rep. Ronny Jackson
 Rep. Pete Sessions
 Rep. Beth Van Duyne
 Rep. Randy Weber
 Rep. Chip Roy
 Rep. Brian Babin
 Rep. Jodey Arrington

The press conference highlighted the Biden Border Crisis and talked about strategies to help mitigate it. The press conference was covered by many prominent national and online media outlets.

FAIR was represented at the news conference by senior fellow Mark Morgan. Morgan spoke about the scope of the crisis at the border – conditions he asserted are unprecedented during his many years in immigration law enforcement. Like many of the other speakers at the news conference, he places the blame for the crisis squarely at the feet of President Biden and his policies.

After the press conference, Morgan and Tom Homan, representing FAIR’s legal affiliate, the Immigration Reform Law Institute, conducted a nationwide radio tour. The pair were interviewed on 45 radio stations spanning from Massachusetts to Hawaii.



AIRPORT

While waiting to board a flight back to Washington D.C., FAIR witnessed a number of migrants who were boarding flights with manila envelopes that read “Please Help Me. I Don’t Speak English. What Plane Do I Need to Take? Thank You for the Help.”

The envelopes also had American cities and time stamps written on them in Sharpie.

It was unclear who was funding and orchestrating this system but a source told FAIR that it was likely American non-governmental organizations near the border.

It is also unclear how unlawful migrants were passing through TSA checkpoints and gate agents without proper identification.

This strange observation underscored the magnitude of the Biden Border Crisis. Facilities have become so overpacked that the administration may be coordinating with local groups to send migrants into the interior of the country. ■



275 Sheriffs from 39 States Are Sounding the Alarm on the Dangerous Biden Border Crisis



Image Credit: istock

The Biden border crisis is not staying at the border. As the administration continues to encourage mass illegal immigration and is releasing migrants into the United States (sometimes without even a court date to determine their eligibility to remain here or a COVID test), the migration crisis is affecting states and local communities all across the country.

In response to worsening conditions, a letter signed by 275 sheriffs from all across the United States was sent to President Joe Biden on April 7 imploring him to secure the nation's borders and end the illegal migration crisis raging at our southern border. The sheriffs, representing 39 states, expressed their grave concerns about the national security and humanitarian crisis at the border and laid the blame squarely on the president's policies.

"America's Sheriffs are deeply troubled about the dangerous impacts your administration's border policies are having on our citizens, legal residents and communities," they wrote. The elected law enforcement officials, from both political parties, demanded that the Biden administration take immediate action to restore order at the border. "You must act now before our nation's public safety resources are overwhelmed with the criminal side effects of unchecked illegal immigration, including transnational gangs, guns, dangerous drugs and human trafficking," the sheriffs warned.

The sheriffs bluntly accused the president of endangering the lives of American citizens and ignoring the impact of his actions. "[M]ore families will be exposed to the violence associated with drug trafficking and transnational gangs. More parents will suffer the loss of their children, not because they were irresponsible, but because of exposure to criminal illegal alien violence caused by the reckless and irresponsible policies of your administration... What is most troubling to America's Sheriffs is that you and your administration were well aware that this crisis would happen when you ceased construction of the border wall and changed border security policies," states the letter.

FAIR has worked closely with sheriffs across the country for years, demanding better border and interior immigration enforcement. Over the years, FAIR has sponsored delegations of sheriffs to come to Washington to meet with DHS officials, members of Congress (and to provide testimony), and with the media. These elected law enforcement officials, directly answerable to the people they serve, are a vital part of the effort to oppose the Biden administration's reckless policies. ■

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