



# The State of the Border: an Illustrated Analysis of Biden's Failure to Secure the Southwest Border

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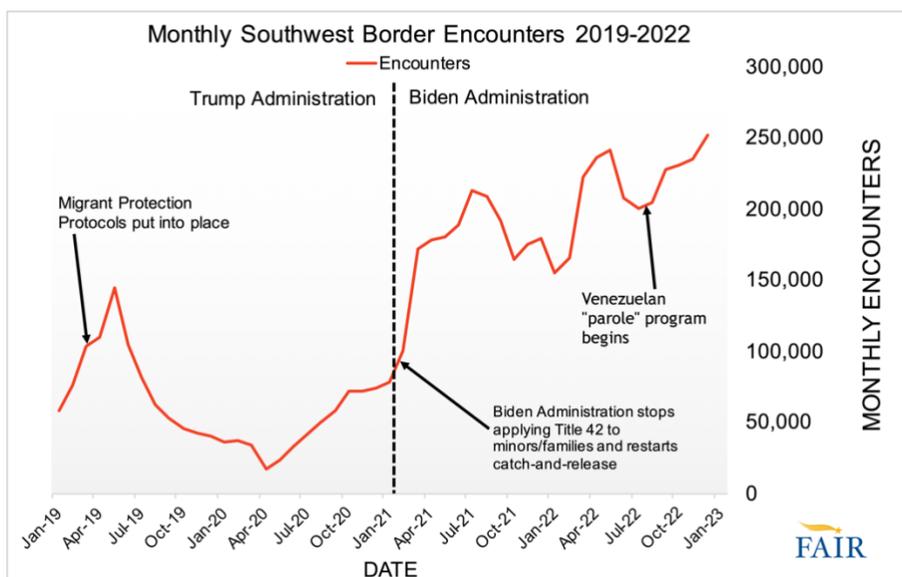
## The Issue

The first two years of President Joe Biden’s administration have ushered in a systematic dismantling of the American immigration enforcement system. Many of the positive changes made during the previous administration have been reversed. In their place, the Biden administration has launched new policies that encourage and even directly facilitate illegal immigration.

In this issue brief, FAIR takes an in-depth look at immigration enforcement data from President Biden’s first two years in office. The following figures paints a dire but unsurprising conclusion: weakening border enforcement while making illegal immigration easier has created a historic crisis by every measure examined.

## The Impact

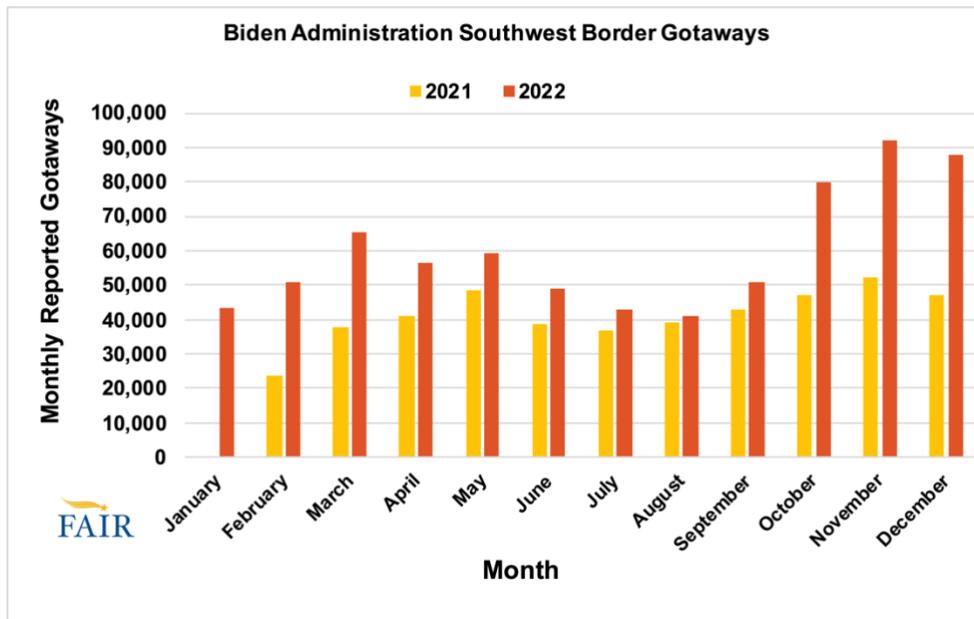
### Encounters



The monthly number of encounters (formerly called apprehensions) at the Southwest border has historically served as a general indicator of how secure the border is. Encounters at the border tend to significantly increase when the administration in power weakens border enforcement, and vice versa. The Biden administration is expelling far fewer illegal aliens annually than both the Trump and Obama administrations, and is abusing “humanitarian parole” to quickly release apprehended aliens into the country’s interior. This has led to the apprehension of more than 4.5 million illegal aliens during first two years of the Biden presidency.

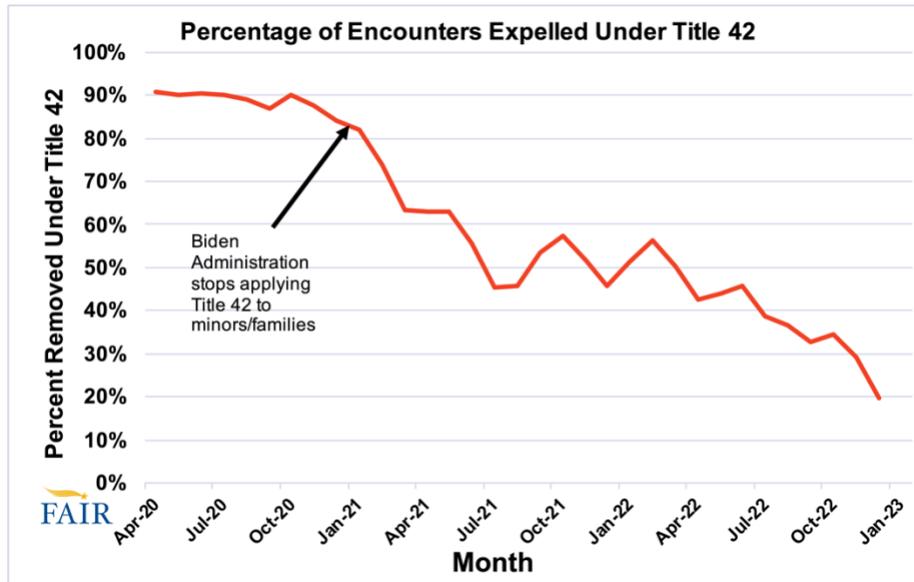
Unfortunately, beginning in 2023, this data will become far less useful as the Biden administration is now redirecting many illegal aliens at the Southwest Border to [new “expanded legal pathways” programs](#) that are not counted in these statistics. These programs don’t reduce the actual number of illegal aliens entering the U.S., but they will make this highly visible number less useful for gauging the severity of the border crisis.

### “Gotaways”



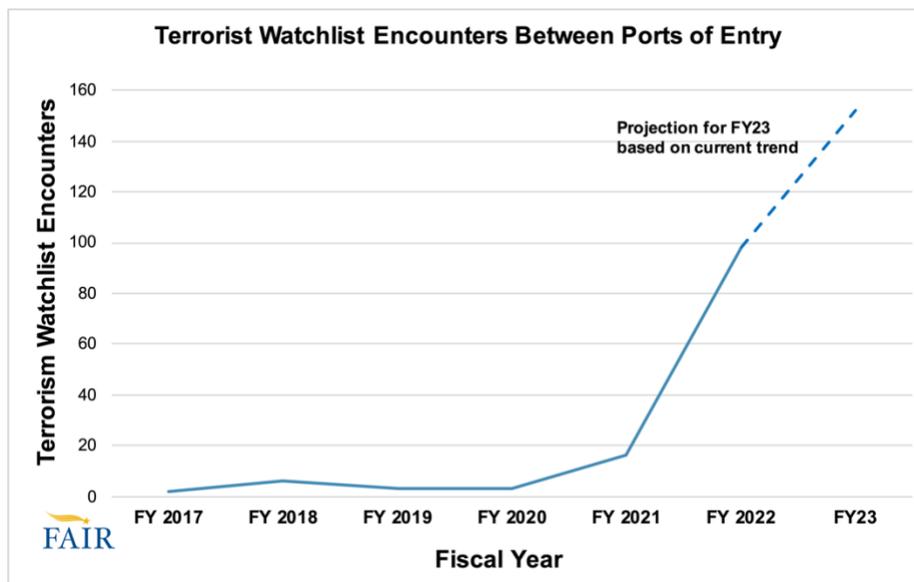
Another important but less commonly reported metric is the total number of “gotaways” at the southern border. Gotaways are those illegal aliens observed to have entered the country, but successfully evaded apprehension. Data obtained through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) reveals that gotaway numbers have dramatically increased throughout the Biden presidency. Because gotaways actively avoid law enforcement as opposed to surrendering themselves in hopes of being released into the country, they are [more likely to have criminal records](#) or connections to illicit activity. There were 1,174,385 gotaways during the first two years of President Biden’s tenure. This means the combined encounter/gotaway total at the Southwest Border alone totaled 5,704,806 individuals during the first 24 months of the Biden administration.

## Title 42



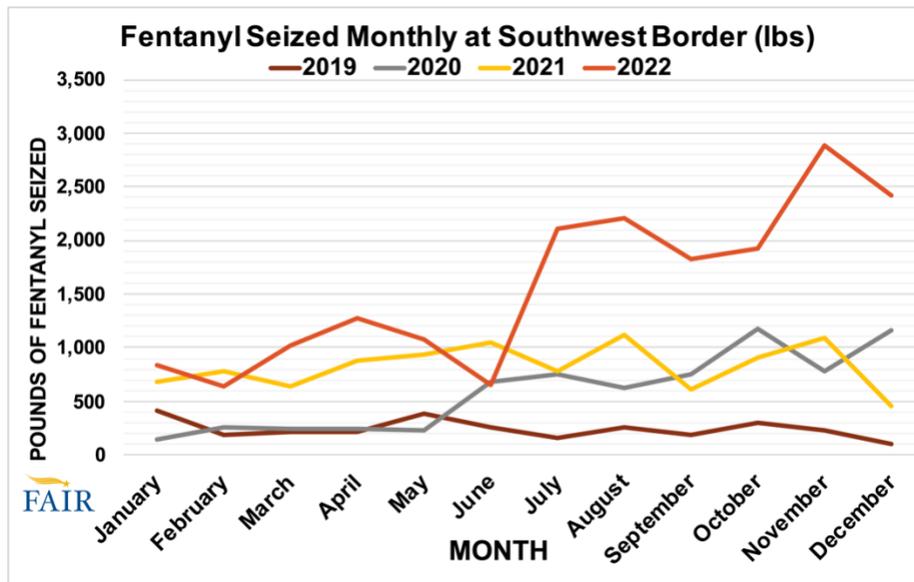
Title 42 expulsions take place under [a law](#) that allows the U.S. government to expel individuals who arrive from a country where communicable diseases are present. The Biden administration has repeatedly attempted to end the program, but multiple court rulings have [kept it in place](#) so far. However, the administration has reduced the program's overall usage by more than 75 percent since taking office and exempted many classes of illegal crossers. It is estimated that, if this program ends, apprehensions at the Southern border could reach [up to 18,000 individuals daily](#) – or more than 500,000 each month.

## Terrorist Screening Database Encounters



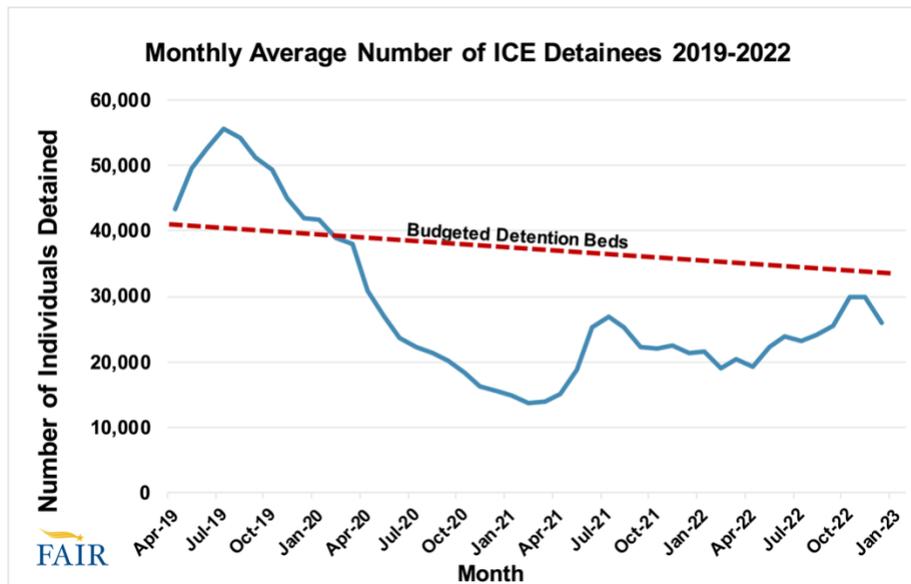
Illegal border-crossers who actively avoid law enforcement are far more likely to have nefarious connections, including ties with terrorist organizations. The number of individuals listed on the federal Terrorist Screening Database (TSDB) who are apprehended between ports of entry has ballooned from around three in a typical year prior to the Biden administration, to nearly 100 in Fiscal Year 2022. If the current trend holds, this total will easily surpass 150 in Fiscal Year 2023. With gotaway totals at an all-time high, it can be assumed that many additional illegal aliens with ties to terrorism are evading law enforcement entirely and freely entering the country's interior.

## **Fentanyl**



Fentanyl, the drug responsible for a huge portion of America's opioid crisis, is another deadly threat smuggled across the Southern border. Traffickers become emboldened when border agents are preoccupied with processing record numbers of migrants, as is currently happening at the border. Law enforcement seized approximately 19,000 pounds of fentanyl at the Southern border in 2022 – [enough to kill every American almost 13 times](#). It's also important to remember that this is nowhere near the total amount that is successfully smuggled into the U.S. via the Southern border. Instead, it's only what law enforcement are able to discover and seize.

## Detainees



Despite a huge increase in illegal border crossings, existing detention capabilities have not been fully utilized at any point during the Biden administration. This is a stark departure from the previous administration which, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, managed to detain far more immigration lawbreakers during a period when illegal immigration was far lower. The Biden administration has proposed a further reduction in detention bed capacity from the current 34,000, and seems determined to not utilize the existing capacity in the meantime.

## **The Takeaway**

While FAIR conducted an extensive analysis of the available data for this report, there continues to be a lack of accurate statistics on important immigration issues. This is primarily due to the current administration opting to either withhold important data, or hide it with dishonest creative accounting. For example, the administration continues to improperly utilize humanitarian parole to release thousands of apprehended illegal aliens into the country's interior every month. Despite this, they have failed to publish any statistics detailing exactly how many illegal aliens have been released under this program or under what terms. Additionally, in many cases, the Biden administration simply stopped publishing informative government reports, such as the Alien Incarceration Report.

When it comes to the border, even the numbers that are available increasingly fail to tell the whole story. For example, in order to falsely portray that the situation at the Southwest Border is improving, the Biden administration [has started bypassing the](#)

[border entirely](#) by letting many illegal aliens fly directly into the United States. These illegal aliens are then not counted in the monthly “encounters” data.

What is clear, however, is that the Biden Administration’s open-borders policies have been an abject failure so far, with American citizens paying the price. Until these policies are reversed, America’s border disaster won’t end, and the Biden administration can’t be allowed to hide the full scope of the damage it’s inflicting.