

TRUMP IMMIGRATION POLICY: ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on the immigration policies enacted during the Trump administration, if Donald Trump is elected president in November 2024, his administration will pursue an enforcement-only approach to illegal immigration by resuming past policies, eliminating humanitarian pathways the Biden administration established, reducing legal immigration and attempting to deport immigrants on a mass scale. A Democratic victory in the November election would likely lead to a continuation of policies that returned legal immigration to pre-Trump levels and used new legal pathways and restrictions on asylum to discourage illegal entry. Illegal entry, based on border arrests, was lower in July 2024 than during Donald Trump's last month in office: 56,408 Border Patrol encounters in July 2024 vs. 75,316 in January 2021.

Among the findings in the research:

- The Trump administration separated parents from their children at the U.S.-Mexico border, believing it would deter illegal entry. When the policy became widely known, including after *ProPublica* published audio of separated children crying for their parents, Republican lawmakers joined with Democrats to criticize the policy, which led to its demise. A DHS task force identified more than 3,900 children separated from their parents during the Trump administration, with nearly 1,000 children still not reunited with their families as of February 2023. "Throughout the remainder of his presidency, Trump pushed to relaunch family separations," according to *The Atlantic*, indicating the policy could return in a second Trump administration.
- The Trump administration attempted to end DACA for young people brought to the United States as children. The Supreme Court blocked the effort to remove current DACA recipients from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. The Trump administration was also stopped in court from removing approximately 300,000 people from Temporary Protected Status.
- Despite using harsh policies, illegal immigration rose significantly during the Trump administration. Border Patrol data show the Trump administration's use of more punitive immigration enforcement policies was ineffective in reducing illegal entry. Apprehensions at the Southwest border, a proxy for illegal entry, [increased](#) by more than 100 percent between [FY 2016](#) and [FY 2019](#) (from 408,870 to 851,508). After the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, Border Patrol encounters initially declined. However, Border Patrol [encounters](#) on the Southwest border rose from 16,182 in April 2020 to 69,032 by October 2020, a 327% increase.

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- Government data do not support Donald Trump's statements that he left the "most secure" border in history. In January 2021, Trump's final month in office, there were 75,316 [Border Patrol encounters](#) along the Southwest border. Such a monthly pace would exceed 900,000 encounters a year, far more than the 408,870 Border Patrol apprehensions on the Southwest border [in FY 2016](#), Barack Obama's last full year as president and much higher than the yearly apprehensions between 1957 and 1965, which never exceeded 50,000.
- The Trump administration did not succeed in stopping illegal entry by forcing asylum seekers to "Remain in Mexico" under the "Migrant Protection Protocols," which began in January 2019. Border Patrol apprehensions along the Southwest border increased by 162% between December 2018 (the month before Remain in Mexico started) and May 2019. After the start of MPP, Border Patrol apprehensions along the Southwest border increased for four straight months and remained higher than in December 2018 for six consecutive months (February 2019 to July 2019). Eight months later, Border Patrol apprehensions along the Southwest border in September 2019 were almost identical (at 40,507) to those of September 2018 (41,486). In contrast, the Biden administration's humanitarian parole programs showed immediate and significant declines in illegal entry (a drop of over 90% for nationals of parole countries).
- Border Patrol encounters reached their highest levels during the Biden administration. The combination of the Covid-19 pandemic ending, the improvements in the U.S. economy and the political and economic crises in Latin America produced historic refugee flows. Approximately 7.7 million people have left Venezuela due to financial collapse and political repression, according to [UNHCR](#), as many or more than departed Ukraine following Russia's full-scale invasion. Venezuela, Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and other nations in Central America have been the most prominent source countries of migrants to the United States.
- The Biden administration did not frame the issue as a refugee crisis and enact policies sufficiently addressing the historic humanitarian scope.
- The Biden administration expelled more people under Title 42 than the Trump administration, primarily because it maintained Title 42 for much longer. "Biden's administration for several years used a Trump-era border expulsion policy, known as [Title 42](#), to quickly send many migrants back to Mexico," reported Reuters.
- In addition to "push" factors, the "pull" of the U.S. economy remains a primary factor in illegal immigration due to the lack of legal avenues (i.e., work visas) for migrants. Economist Dany Bahar (Brown University)

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identified a strong connection between border crossings and “job openings per unemployed person.” Looking at 25 years of data, he concluded there was no statistical difference in border crossings relative to the tightness of the U.S. labor market regardless of who was the U.S. president. He found the same connection across the Bush, Obama, Trump and Biden administrations.¹ Bahar recommended legal pathways as the best way to address illegal entry.

- An NFAP policy analysis found the Biden administration’s introduction of humanitarian parole programs proved effective in reducing illegal entry. “After the Biden administration introduced humanitarian parole programs, Border Patrol encounters declined by 92% for Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans as a group between December 2022 (the month before the parole programs started) and November 2023 compared to an 18% increase for nationals of non-parole countries,” according to the analysis.²
- Republicans denounced Vice President Kamala Harris after President Biden tasked Harris in March 2021 with “coordinating diplomatic relationships [with Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala] to address the ‘root causes’ of migration into the United States.” Whether or not she deserves credit for the fall in illegal entry from the countries, the data show a significant decline in Border Patrol encounters at the Southwest border for the four countries she was asked to work with—Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. Border Patrol encounters as a group declined by 64% for the four countries between March 2021 and June 2024 (from 144,680 in March 2021 to 52,023 in June 2024).³
- Border Patrol encounters dropped in April, May, June and July 2024 after the Biden administration introduced a new asylum policy and gained greater cooperation from Mexico in preventing migrants from reaching the Southwest border.

The immigration policies the Trump administration enacted signal the types of policies one can expect should Donald Trump be elected president in November 2024. A Democratic administration would likely continue policies similar to those of the past four years. A new Trump administration may enact harsher immigration policies than during its first term, including an effort at mass deportation, pursuing undocumented immigrants in schools and using the military for immigration enforcement.

¹ Dany Bahar, *The Often Overlooked “Pull” Factor: Border Crossings and Labor Market Tightness in the U.S.*, Center for Global Development, May 2024.

² *Legal Pathways: A Human and Effective Option*, NFAP Policy Brief, National Foundation for American Policy, January 2024.

³ Border Patrol, National Foundation for American Policy analysis.

FAMILY SEPARATION DURING THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

The separation of parents from their children during the Trump administration illustrates that it not possible to evaluate immigration policy based solely on monthly border statistics. Beginning in 2017, White House Senior Adviser Stephen Miller advocated separating parents from their children at the U.S.-Mexico border, believing this would deter illegal entry. DHS Secretary John Kelly opposed the policy, but after he left to become White House chief of staff, Miller and his allies persuaded Attorney General Jeff Sessions and DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen to implement a policy of family separation.

“Trump-administration officials insisted for a whole year that family separations weren’t happening,” writes Caitlin Dickerson, who won a Pulitzer Prize for her reporting on family separation for *The Atlantic*. “Finally, in the spring of 2018, they announced the implementation of a separation policy with great fanfare—as if one had not already been under way for months.”⁴

In April 2018, Attorney General Sessions announced a [“zero-tolerance policy”](#) that instructed federal attorneys to prosecute all individuals accused of unlawful entry. With the goal of deterring unlawful crossings, separating parents from their children became a primary objective of the Trump administration’s immigration policy. Health and Human Services could not track and house children separated from their parents, and no contingencies were made to deal with thousands of children.

In June 2018, when [“ProPublica published leaked audio of separated children crying for their parents”](#) inside a government facility. . . . it made clear that the targets of the Zero Tolerance policy were not criminals, but children,” writes Dickerson. “Throughout the seven-minute recording, a little boy speaking through a low, wobbly sob repeats ‘Papá, papá,’ over and over. ‘I want to go with my aunt,’ one little girl tells agents. Over their cries, a detention official can be heard joking with the children.”⁵

Following the public anger, Republican lawmakers joined in the Democratic criticism, and it resulted in Trump officials ending the family separation policy. As of February 2023, a DHS task force identified more than 3,900 children separated from their parents during the Trump administration, with [nearly 1,000](#) children still not reunited with their families.⁶ “Throughout the remainder of his presidency, Trump pushed to relaunch family separations,” reported Dickerson.⁷

⁴ Caitlin Dickerson, “The Secret History of Family Separation,” *The Atlantic*, August 7, 2022.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2022/09/trump-administration-family-separation-policy-immigration/670604/>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ted Hesson, “Close to 1,000 migrant children separated by Trump yet to be reunited with parents,” Reuters, February 2, 2023.

⁷ Dickerson.

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The ACLU spearheaded a family separation settlement in December 2023. “Under [the settlement](#), a policy similar to the one the Trump administration implemented will be banned until December 2031,” reported *Axios*.⁸ Still, given Donald Trump’s continued defense of family separation, the policy may return in some form in a second Trump administration.

“Analysts point out Trump officials could enact a new version of family separation by arguing they are carrying out a different policy from the one banned in the settlement,” according to a *Forbes* article. “Former government attorneys point out that federal agencies have used noncompliance with judicial decisions to attain desired national policy, including immigration policy. The term is ‘agency nonacquiescence.’”⁹

Due to a Supreme Court decision, it may be more difficult to obtain an injunction to stop unlawful agency actions. “Writing for the 6-3 Court in *Gonzalez*, Justice Alito . . . [declared] that even if the lawsuit only sought to require the government to follow the law, a court could not issue an injunction blocking an unlawful policy,” wrote attorney Aaron Reichlin-Melnick in *Slate*. “In Justice Alito’s reckoning, even when ICE is breaking the law, it is still ‘operating’ the law, meaning that a court stepping in to order ICE to follow the law would be a forbidden ‘restraint’ of the ‘unlawful operation’ of the law. As a result, the decision leaves federal courts with diminished powers to correct even the most outrageously unlawful conduct of immigration enforcement agencies.”¹⁰

Trump officials considered other controversial policies. According to a book by former Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, Stephen Miller proposed a plan “to identify children at school for deportation under the pretext of checking for gang members.” Also, “In FY 2020, the U.S. Army had approximately 480,000 soldiers, according to the [Center for Strategic and International Studies](#). According to former Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, Stephen Miller wanted to put more than half of the U.S. Army (or its equivalent) on the U.S.-Mexico border—and had taken steps to make it happen.”¹¹

ENDING DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS

In September 2017, the Trump administration announced it would terminate DACA or the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.¹² Created during the Obama administration, the program protected from deportation up to 800,000 “Dreamers,” young people without legal status who arrived in the United States as children. After

⁸ Jacob Knutson, “Judge prohibits Trump-era migrant family separation policy for 8 years,” *Axios*, December 8, 2023.

⁹ Stuart Anderson, “Trump’s Family Separation Immigration Policy: How History Could Repeat,” *Forbes*, August 11, 2024.

¹⁰ Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, “After a Harsh Supreme Court Decision on Immigrant Rights, Advocates and Lawyers Have Two Key Questions,” *Slate*, June 14, 2022.

¹¹ Stuart Anderson, “Revelations Show Trump Immigration Policy Was Supposed To Be Harsher,” *Forbes*, June 23, 2022.

¹² <https://www.npr.org/2017/09/05/546423550/trump-signals-end-to-daca-calls-on-congress-to-act>.

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years of lawsuits, in June 2020, the Supreme Court ruled the Trump administration’s action to end DACA violated the Administrative Procedure Act.¹³

Trump officials were allowed to prevent new people from applying for DACA, but due to the ruling, they needed to accept the renewals of existing DACA recipients. A September 2023 District court ruling in Texas declared DACA unlawful for new participants but allowed it to continue for current recipients. “In the summer of 2022, the Biden Administration announced a new DACA rule with the intent of further protecting DACA from legal challenges,” according to the [Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#). “The Texas judge found that, like the DACA policy, the DACA rule was also unlawful. This decision is not the end of the DACA litigation, and it will be appealed.” The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to rule again on DACA.¹⁴

TERMINATING TPS

The Trump administration attempted to end Temporary Protected Status for individuals from several countries. [Lawsuits](#) “enjoined DHS from implementing and enforcing the decisions to terminate Temporary Protected Status” for Sudan, Nicaragua, Haiti, El Salvador, Nepal and Honduras. The Trump administration’s decision to end TPS for those countries would have left [approximately 300,000](#) people without protection from deportation. The lawsuits compelled USCIS to publish a November 1, 2019, [Federal Register](#) notice to extend the “validity of TPS” documents for those countries through January 4, 2021. The Biden administration renewed TPS for nationals of those countries and allowed TPS for individuals from additional countries affected by war or domestic turmoil, including Ukraine.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION DURING THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Illegal immigration rose significantly during the Trump administration. Border Patrol data show the Trump administration’s use of more punitive immigration enforcement policies was ineffective in reducing illegal entry. As noted, the policies included separating children from their parents. Such actions, though not effective, illustrate the limitations of evaluating immigration policies based solely on whether they reduced monthly border crossings.

Table 1
Trump Administration Pre-Pandemic: Border Patrol Apprehensions Southwest Border

FY 2016 (pre-Trump)	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	Change from FY 2016 to FY 2019
408,870	303,916	396,579	851,508	+108%

Source: National Foundation for American Policy analysis of Customs and Border Protection data. Note: The Covid-19 pandemic began in early 2020. Title 42 and the switch to “encounters” as a measure starting in March 2020 make it difficult to compare FY 2020 to earlier fiscal years.

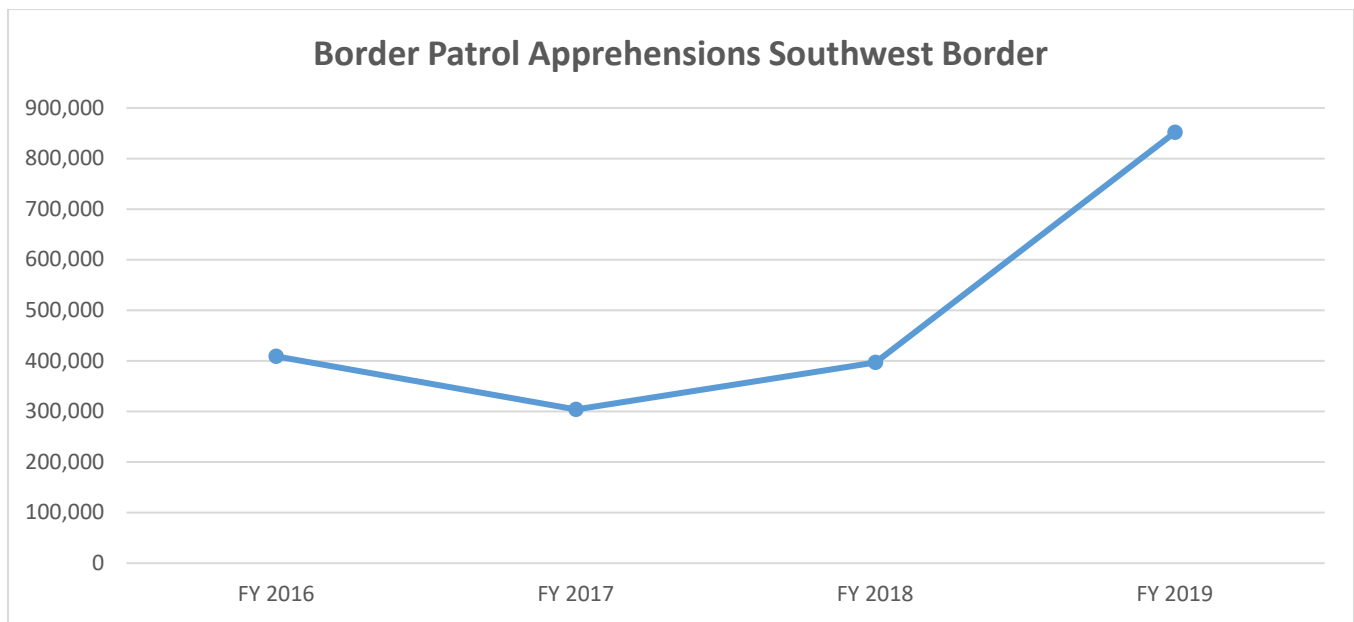
¹³ <https://www.nilc.org/issues/daca/alert-supreme-court-overturms-trump-administrations-termination-of-daca/>.

¹⁴ Stuart Anderson, “The Outlook On H-1B Visas And Immigration In 2024,” *Forbes*, January 2, 2024.

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Apprehensions at the Southwest border, a proxy for illegal entry, [increased](#) by more than 100 percent between [FY 2016](#) and [FY 2019](#) (from 408,870 to 851,508).¹⁵ After the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, Border Patrol encounters initially declined. However, Border Patrol [encounters](#) on the Southwest border rose from 16,182 in April 2020 to 69,032 by October 2020, a 327% increase. (The Border Patrol reported encounters in place of apprehensions beginning in March 2020 due to the use of the Title 42 health authority.)¹⁶

**Figure 1
Rise in Border Patrol Apprehensions During the Trump Administration**



Source: National Foundation for American Policy analysis of Customs and Border Protection data.

The increase in asylum applications indicated the Trump administration’s immigration policies were ineffective in overriding people’s motivations and need for protection. Pending asylum cases rose 300% between FY 2016 and FY 2020 (from 163,451 to 614,751), according to Syracuse University’s [TRAC](#). If the Trump administration’s immigration policies deterred people from coming to America, asylum applications would have declined or not have risen significantly.

¹⁵ See two NFAP reports for analysis in this section: *Legal Pathways: A Humane and Effective Option*, NFAP Policy Brief, National Foundation for American Policy, January 2024, and *Illegal Entry, Presidents and Effective Policy*, NFAP Policy Brief, National Foundation for American Policy, May 2023. See also Stuart Anderson, “GOP State Lawsuit Could Stop Sound Way To Reduce Illegal Immigration,” *Forbes*, March 21, 2023.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

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During the Trump administration, Other Than Mexico apprehensions, primarily Central Americans, rose from 175,978 in FY 2017 to 685,050 in FY 2019, an increase of 289%.

ILLEGAL ENTRY DOUBLED AFTER THE START OF REMAIN IN MEXICO

The Trump administration did not succeed in stopping illegal entry by forcing asylum seekers to “Remain in Mexico” under the “Migrant Protection Protocols,” which began in January 2019. Border Patrol apprehensions along the Southwest border increased by 162% between December 2018 (the month before Remain in Mexico started) and May 2019. After the start of MPP, Border Patrol apprehensions along the Southwest border increased for four straight months and remained higher than in December 2018 for six consecutive months (February 2019 to July 2019). Eight months later, Border Patrol apprehensions along the Southwest border in September 2019 were almost identical (at 40,507) to those of September 2018 (41,486).¹⁷

Table 2
An Increase in Border Patrol Apprehensions Southwest Border After Remain in Mexico in January 2019

Dec. 2018	Jan. 2019	Feb. 2019	March 2019	April 2019	May 2019	Change from Dec. 2018 to May 2019
50,751	47,979	66,883	92,833	99,273	132,856	+162%

Source: National Foundation for American Policy analysis of Customs and Border Protection data.

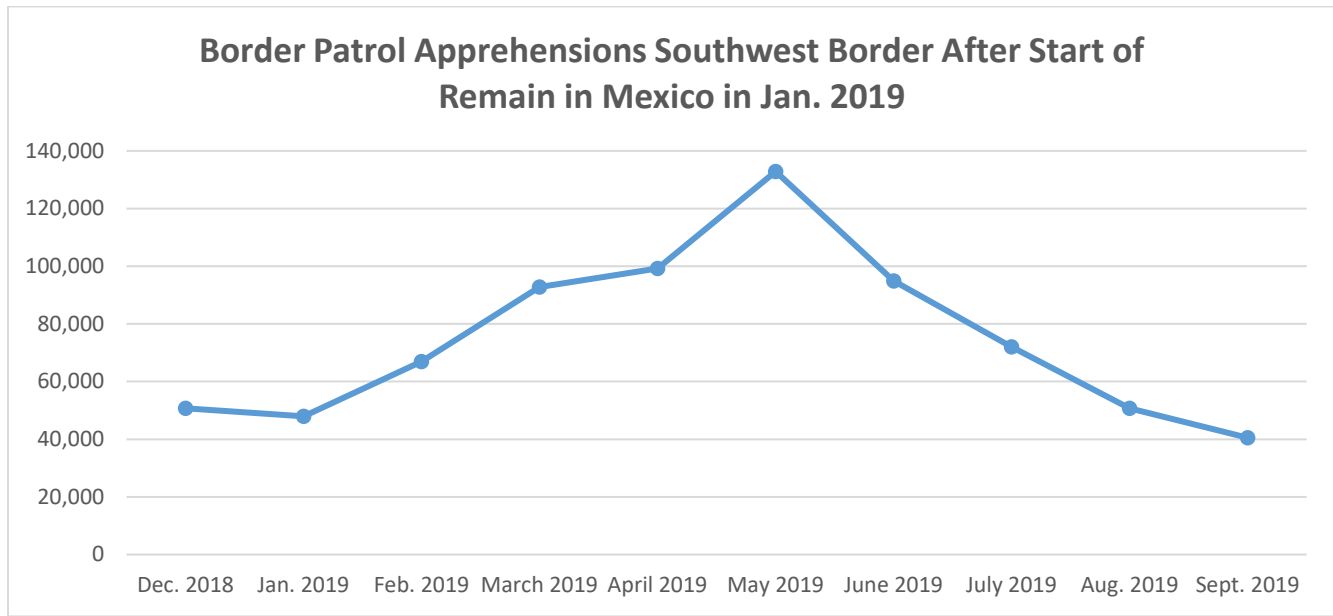
Reinstating Remain in Mexico may not be a realistic policy option. First, the Mexican government has stated it will not allow the policy to start again. "Regarding the possible implementation of this policy for the third time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the Government of Mexico, expresses its rejection of the U.S. government's intention to return individuals processed under the program to Mexico," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement in February 2023.¹⁸

Second, the approach could be unworkable when combined with other policies, such as those prohibiting individuals from applying for asylum in the United States for different reasons, including passing through other countries. A House-passed bill contained such a provision and could be attempted via regulation or executive action. If individuals cannot apply for asylum in the U.S., they would remain in Mexico indefinitely because there would be no hearings to attend in America. It is unclear why the Mexican government would agree to a policy that commits it to keeping asylum seekers indefinitely in Mexico.

¹⁷ <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration/fy-2018>; <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration/fy-2019>.

¹⁸ <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/mexico-rejects-effort-reinstate-remain-mexico-policy-asylum/story?id=96939554>.

Figure 2
Rise in Border Patrol Apprehensions After Start of Remain in Mexico



Source: National Foundation for American Policy analysis of Customs and Border Protection data. Remain in Mexico started in January 2019. Border Patrol apprehensions along the Southwest border in September 2019 were almost identical (at 40,507) to those of September 2018 (41,486).

Human Rights First identified approximately 8,000 reports of “kidnapping, rape, human trafficking, torture, and other violent attacks against migrants expelled or blocked in Mexico” under MPP.¹⁹

Government data do not support Donald Trump’s statements that he left the “most secure” border in history. In January 2021, Trump’s final month in office, there were 75,316 [Border Patrol encounters](#) along the Southwest border. Such a monthly pace would exceed 900,000 encounters a year, far more than the 408,870 Border Patrol apprehensions on the Southwest border [in FY 2016](#), Barack Obama’s last full year as president. The *New York Times* pointed out that approximately 75,000 encounters a month is much higher than several periods in U.S. history. Between 1925 and 1944, there were 33,000 or fewer *annual* number of apprehensions. Between 1957 and 1965, yearly apprehensions along the Southwest border never exceeded 50,000.²⁰

¹⁹ <https://humanrightsfirst.org/library/any-version-of-remain-in-mexico-policy-would-be-unlawful-inhumane-and-deadly/>.

²⁰ Stuart Anderson, “Employment Grew More Under Biden And Immigrants Did Not Get Most Jobs,” *Forbes*, July 21, 2024. Angelo Fichera, “Fact-Checking the Immigration Chart That Trump Says ‘Saved My Life,’” *New York Times*, July 19, 2024. The Border Patrol reported encounters in place of apprehensions beginning in March 2020.

THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The winding down of the Covid-19 pandemic and an improving U.S. economy saw an increase in people from countries that experienced significant political and economic upheaval in recent years. The most prominent sources have been Venezuela, Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and other nations in Central America. “Mounting violent crime and political upheaval” have also prompted people from Peru, Ecuador and Colombia to leave their countries, reports the [Wall Street Journal](#). The Western Hemisphere has been experiencing a historic refugee crisis.

The Biden administration did not frame the issue as a refugee crisis and did not enact policies addressing the historic humanitarian scope of the problem. Instead, the administration may have played into the hands of critics by focusing on the number of Border Patrol encounters or apprehensions at the Southwest border.²¹ After conceding that border numbers would measure immigration policy success for failure—rather than treating people humanely or ensuring legal pathways were used—the administration continued to use Title 42, started under Trump, which inflated the number of Border Patrol encounters (called apprehensions by many) due to many individuals being counted multiple times as repeat border crossers.

The Biden administration expelled more people under Title 42 than the Trump administration because it maintained Title 42 for much longer. “Biden’s administration for several years used a Trump-era border expulsion policy, known as [Title 42](#), to quickly send many migrants back to Mexico,” reported Reuters. “The public health measure, put in place in March 2020 at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, aimed to minimize the time migrants spent in custody and allowed border agents to rapidly expel them to Mexico without a chance to seek asylum. Border agents expelled migrants 2.8 million times under Title 42. The vast majority of those expulsions happened under Biden, who took office in January 2021, until he [lifted](#) the measure in May 2023 when the COVID emergency ended.”²²

Border Patrol encounters reached their highest levels during the Biden administration. The Covid-19 pandemic ending and the political and economic crises in Latin America produced historic refugee flows. Approximately the same number of people left Venezuela ([over 7 million](#)) after the economy collapsed as departed Ukraine following Russia’s full-scale invasion.

In addition to “push” factors, the “pull” of the U.S. economy remains a primary factor in illegal immigration due to the lack of legal avenues (i.e., work visas) for migrants. Economist Dany Bahar (Brown University) identified a strong connection between border crossings and “job openings per unemployed person.” Looking at 25 years of

²¹ This section is adapted from Stuart Anderson, *The Historic Refugee Crisis in the Western Hemisphere*, NFAP Policy Brief, National Foundation for American Policy, January 2023.

²² <https://www.reuters.com/graphics/USA-ELECTION/MIGRATION-DEPORTATIONS/akpeoeoerpr/>.

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data, he concluded there was no statistical difference in border crossings relative to the tightness of the U.S. labor market regardless of who was the U.S. president. He found the same connection across the Bush, Obama, Trump and Biden administrations.²³ He recommended legal pathways as the best way to address illegal entry.

An NFAP policy analysis found the Biden administration's humanitarian parole programs reduced illegal entry. "After the Biden administration introduced humanitarian parole programs, Border Patrol encounters declined by 92% for Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans as a group between December 2022 (the month before the parole programs started) and November 2023 compared to an 18% increase for nationals of non-parole countries," according to the analysis.²⁴ In August 2024, the Biden administration suspended processing of the humanitarian parole programs while investigating cases of multiple sponsors for applicants.²⁵ Some analysts have questioned the decision to suspend the program.²⁶

Border Patrol encounters dropped in April, May, June and July 2024 after the Biden administration introduced a new asylum policy and gained greater cooperation from Mexico in preventing migrants from reaching the Southwest border.

Illegal entry, based on border arrests, was lower in July 2024 than during Donald Trump's last month in office: 56,408 Border Patrol encounters in July 2024 vs. 75,316 in January 2021.²⁷

After Joe Biden announced he would not run for reelection, Republicans criticized Kamala Harris for an increase in migrants at the border while she was "border czar," a title she was not given. (The secretary of Homeland Security has operational control over border issues.) In March 2021, President Biden tasked Vice President Harris with "coordinating diplomatic relationships to address the 'root causes' of migration into the United States," reported Vox. Biden said, "I've asked her, the VP, today — because she's the most qualified person to do it — to lead our efforts with Mexico and the Northern Triangle and the countries that help — are going to need help in stemming the movement of so many folks, stemming the migration to our southern border."²⁸

Republicans have denounced Harris, but the data show a significant decline in Border Patrol encounters at the Southwest border for the four countries she was asked to work with—Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador and

²³ Dany Bahar, *The Often Overlooked "Pull" Factor: Border Crossings and Labor Market Tightness in the U.S.*, Center for Global Development, May 2024.

²⁴ *Legal Pathways: A Human and Effective Option*, NFAP Policy Brief, National Foundation for American Policy, January 2024.

²⁵ Maria Sacchetti, "Homeland Security Dept. pauses Biden parole program for four countries," *Washington Post*, August 2, 2024.

²⁶ David Bier and Alex Nowrasteh, "Biden's DHS Halting Migrant Program Raises Border Security Concerns," *Reason*, August 9, 2024.

²⁷ <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/nationwide-encounters>.

²⁸ Christian Paz, "Kamala Harris and the border: The myth and the facts," *Vox*, July 18, 2024.

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Guatemala. Border Patrol encounters as a group declined by 64% for the four countries between March 2021 and June 2024 (from 144,680 in March 2021 to 52,023 in June 2024). The number also dropped significantly for each of the countries between March 2021 and June 2024: Encounters from Mexico declined by 46% (from 59,347 to 31,966), Honduras 85% (41,989 to 6,382), El Salvador 68% (9,423 to 3,040) and Guatemala 69% (33,921 to 10,635).²⁹

CONCLUSION

The immigration policies the Trump administration enacted signal the types of policies one can expect should Donald Trump be elected president in November 2024. That means a potential return to family separations and other policies focused solely on deterrence. It is unlikely a future Trump administration will establish new legal pathways. A Democratic administration will likely continue policies similar to those of the past four years. A new Trump administration may enact harsher immigration policies than during its first term, including an effort at mass deportation, pursuing undocumented immigrants in schools and using the military in immigration enforcement.³⁰

²⁹ Border Patrol, National Foundation for American Policy analysis.

³⁰ Stuart Anderson, "Revelations Show Trump Immigration Policy Was Supposed To Be Harsher," *Forbes*, June 23, 2022.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN POLICY

Established in 2003, the National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization based in Arlington, Virginia, focusing on trade, immigration and related issues. Advisory Board members include Columbia University economist Jagdish Bhagwati, Cornell Law School professor Stephen W. Yale-Loehr, Ohio University economist Richard Vedder and former INS Commissioner James Ziglar. Over the past 24 months, NFAP's research has been written about in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and other major media outlets. The organization's reports can be found at www.nfap.com.
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