

Illegal Immigration is Breaking America. It's Time for Consequences.

By: Ken Cuccinelli

This op-ed originally appeared in the Washington Examiner on December 23, 2024.

Read the original <u>here</u>.

Last month, voters rendered their verdict on the failures of the <u>Biden-Harris administration</u> and chose a return to law and order. Among the central campaign promises of President-elect <u>Donald Trump</u> is a mass <u>deportation</u> effort unlike any that has been seen in the United States. Preparations are already underway to turn this promise into a reality, and as the most recent public survey <u>shows</u>, almost 6-in-10 people support mass deportations of illegal immigrants.

While such popular sentiment may shock the insular and hyperprogressive corporate media complex, the willful negligence of the Biden-Harris administration to secure America's borders has directly led to record fentanyl deaths, spikes in violent crime, and overwhelmed both healthcare and school systems.

Indeed, the flagrant open-border policies of the last four years have resulted in over 10 million illegal immigrant encounters at the southern border and allowed violent criminal illegal aliens to proliferate across the U.S., resulting in the horrific and entirely preventable murders of Americans such as <u>Laken Riley</u> in Georgia, <u>Lizbeth Medina</u> in Texas, and <u>Rachel Morin</u> in Maryland.

Small towns such as Springfield, Ohio, and Sylacauga, Alabama, have been forced to scramble to deal with thousands of Haitians arriving on their doorstep. Larger cities such as Aurora, Colorado, have been subjected to building seizures by violent Venezuelan gang members belonging to Tren de Aragua, a group that poses a growing security threat and is operating in at least sixteen states. Mexican drug cartels have wantonly murdered Americans abroad and marked American police officers for death in places like Centralia, Washington, even as they move record amounts of drugs, traffic record amounts of people, and insert violent operatives inside the United States with impunity.

A <u>recent report</u> revealed that more than 660,000 criminal illegal aliens are currently residing in the United States including nearly 60,000 criminal illegal aliens in New York City alone. These are all individuals who either have a criminal conviction or pending charges. Most disturbing is the fact that these figures are a lowball estimate as they do not include information on the estimated 2 million "got-aways" who evaded U.S. Customs and Border Protection and slipped inside the interior of the United States during the Biden administration.

And yet, in the aftermath of last month's election, some Democratic elected officials seem perfectly content to not only double down on these policies but effectively aid and abet the violent drug cartels, criminal illegal gangs, and human trafficking networks profiting off such human misery.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker (D-IL) threatened Trump's effort, saying if "you come for my people, you come through me." Tucson Mayor Regina Romero promised to protect illegal immigrants from Trump's deportation efforts. Denver Mayor Mike Johnston fantasized about a "Tiananmen Square moment" with local police and citizens fighting off federal law enforcement officials seeking to remove non-citizen lawbreakers from his city — going so far as to say he's willing to go to jail.

As incoming border czar Tom Homan <u>bluntly stated</u> in response to Johnston, "He's willing to go to jail; I'm willing to put him in jail." These terms are acceptable.

Jail is precisely what state officials will face if they choose to actively violate federal immigration law by harboring illegal aliens in their jurisdictions. Specifically, if Pritzker wants to make federal officials "go through him" to enforce the law, or if Johnston wants his Tiananmen Square moment, then along the way those federal officers can arrest them for violating 8 U.S.C. § 1324. Under this provision of the U.S. Code, individuals face federal prison time for knowingly concealing, harboring, shielding, or attempting to conceal illegal aliens from federal authorities.

Additionally, their big talk suggests that they will physically bar the way of federal law enforcement, which of course will be either assault or resisting of a federal officer, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 111. And given that they intend to work with others to accomplish their heroism on behalf of the invaders of America, there will also be conspiracy charges under 18 U.S.C. § 371.

Every open borders, lawless progressive governor and mayor in America should understand that if they choose to harbor criminal illegal aliens and illegal immigrants, then they will indeed face prosecution and prison time. The Trump administration should prioritize enforcing 8 U.S.C. § 1324 against these radical open-borders officials. Perhaps if one or two law-breaking mayors are prosecuted, then the rest of their radical left-wing friends will get the message that people are serious about taking their country back.

The Trump administration has an opportunity to end these destructive "sanctuary city" policies forever simply by enforcing existing statutory provisions and applying them to officials who arrogantly believe they are above the law. That is what people voted for on Nov. 5, and there is every reason to expect that Trump will follow through on that promise.