



NEWS



NEW: SW BORDER SECTOR CHIEFS CONFIRM MANY ILLEGAL ALIENS NOW TURN THEMSELVES IN AMID MAYORKAS' CATCH-AND-RELEASE POLICIES

December 12, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, House Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Mark E. Green, MD (R-TN) issued the following statement after the Committee released more selections from transcribed interviews conducted with Border Patrol chief patrol agents responsible for the sectors along the Southwest border. In the interviews, [the agents confirm](#) that more illegal aliens are turning themselves in to Border Patrol agents between ports of entry than ever before, including in large groups, in the wake of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas' open-borders policies—including mass "catch and release."

"Secretary Mayorkas' non-enforcement of the immigration laws passed by Congress is simply unconscionable," Chairman Green said. "It is incredible to watch millions of illegal aliens turn themselves in to Border Patrol agents, knowing they will be sent on their way into the United States, almost certainly never to be removed. This is one of the perverse incentives of Secretary Mayorkas' open-borders policies on full display. Why would you turn yourself in voluntarily unless you thought you would get what you want—in this case, entry into the United States?"

"Even worse, cartels know they can sneak deadly drugs and dangerous criminals into our country by overwhelming our Border Patrol agents with large groups of illegal aliens. By doubling down on his refusal to enforce the law and ensure consequences for illegal entry, Secretary Mayorkas has made a mockery of our homeland security and turned our frontline federal law enforcement, who are tasked with a crucial mission, into little more than travel agents. We are going to hold him accountable for it."

Under Secretary Mayorkas' policies of mass release, would-be border crossers know they are likely to be released into the interior, even if they illegally cross between ports of entry. After being released from Customs and Border Protection (CBP) custody to local nongovernmental organizations, many will ultimately receive free services, including a bus or plane ticket to their destination of choice. Secretary Mayorkas' policies have thus created an incentive for illegal aliens to turn themselves in to agents rather than try to evade apprehension.

Moreover, during a [July 19, 2023 hearing](#) held by the Committee, Jaeson Jones, a former captain of intelligence and counter-terrorism at the Texas Department of Public Safety, described how the criminal cartels have taken advantage of Secretary Mayorkas' policies. These networks push hundreds of aliens to one location "by design," knowing DHS law enforcement will surge resources there to apprehend and process these groups, giving smugglers the opportunity to move drugs and illegal aliens across now-vulnerable sections of the border. In the transcripts below, the chief patrol agents describe these conditions on the frontlines of this historic crisis.

The House Committee on Homeland Security and the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability conducted interviews with eight chief patrol agents and one deputy chief patrol agent from April-September 2023, to acquire more information about operations in their sectors and how the crisis has impacted the safety and security of the United States. These interviews were part of the Committees' ongoing investigation into the causes, costs, and consequences of the unprecedented crisis at America's borders, and the role of Secretary Mayorkas in facilitating and maintaining this crisis.

Read previous selections of the transcripts in which these senior agents discussed this [unprecedented influx](#), the [lack of consequences enforced](#) by this administration for illegal entry, and how these [mass releases function as a pull factor](#) for millions of illegal aliens.



[Read more in the Daily Mail via Kelly Laco.](#)

Read sections of the transcripts below.

Chief Patrol Agent Anthony Good, El Paso Sector

Q: Did you see large groups that were giving themselves up like you do in El Paso today back when you served in Laredo in 2018 or in the Tucson Sector prior to that?

A: No.

Chief Patrol Agent Jason Owens, Del Rio Sector

Q: Would you say the majority of individuals encountered by Border Patrol agents in the Del Rio Sector are voluntarily turning themselves in to Border Patrol agents upon encounter or are they actively trying to evade apprehension?

A: So last year, I would say that predominantly they were turning themselves in. If you followed the news, you saw that we had a lot of what we call large groups. Large groups are at least a hundred individuals crossing the river at the same time. And sometimes those large groups got in excess of 500 people in the Del Rio Sector.

They would cross. They would find the nearest Border Patrol agent or they would just wait for us to arrive so that we could begin the intake and processing.

When that happens, that's a massive logistical lift to begin intake and actually transport those individuals to a processing center. It forces us to collapse our operations, our border security operations, down even further to address what's right there in front of us.

Remembering that everything is controlled by the transnational criminal organizations and the smugglers, who do you think is causing that? They are there causing those groups to cross. Why? Because they are going to take advantage of that where they can.

Chief Patrol Agent Jason Owens, Del Rio Sector

Q: It wasn't always, like—well, it wasn't always that people turned themselves in, right?

A: No. There's—for the majority of my career, I was chasing people that had crossed the border illegally. The phenomenon of having folks turn themselves in, it's happened, but not at the levels that I have been seeing in the last couple years.

Chief Patrol Agent Gloria Chavez, Rio Grande Valley Sector

Q: Of the trend you're currently seeing, do the majority of individuals turn themselves in to Border Patrol after illegally crossing, or are you seeing individuals attempt to evade apprehension?

A: Currently, we're seeing a lot of family units turning themselves in to our Border Patrol agents.

Chief Patrol Agent John Modlin, Tucson Sector

Q: Do you know the reason why the smuggling organizations would use less task saturation? Is it a function of more turn-ins? Or what would explain that trend?

A: So, yes. Because we're having such large give-up groups, it's not uncommon now to see a group of 200 to 300 people giving themselves up, and they're doing it in some of the most remote areas.

So just like task saturating our agents in the field, it pulls a lot of resources to that area, especially these populations that are in very remote areas, in the heat that they're in out there.

So, of course, the humanitarian side of the mission kicks in, and we go out there and sort of triage those groups, figure out who is most vulnerable, and get them out of those areas.

But this is, if you haven't seen, it's difficult sometimes I think to recognize, but it can be hours where they're at from the nearest road. So we have to go off road to get to them and take them out one van at a time or vanfuls at a time.

So it really pulls all the resources to those areas where the give-up groups are at.

Q: How frequently are you seeing these large groups of over a hundred people? Is that a daily occurrence? A weekly occurrence?

A: Daily and often multiple times a day.

Chief Patrol Agent Aaron Heitke, San Diego Sector

Q: What would you say is the proportion of individuals encountered by your agents in the San Diego Sector who are turning themselves in to Border Patrol agents as opposed to trying to evade arrest?

A: Right now, the vast majority are giv[ing] up in the desert.

Q: So they're not fleeing from agents. They're staying put and turning themselves in—

A: Correct.

Chief Patrol Agent Aaron Heitke, San Diego Sector

Q: And what limits their ability to do that work [the national security mission], again?

A: The enormous amount of people that they're dealing with. So the enormous amount of migrants, say, a group of 500 that give up. So 10 agents are going to be transporting them, processing them, making sure that they're fed and showered and all of that. And so they're not in the field patrolling the border.

Q: And it's accurate—is it accurate to say that the enormous amount of people that are doing the give-ups, that is a more recent phenomenon?

A: Yes.

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Homeland Security Committee | Republican

U.S. House of Representatives
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 226-8417

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