

# Committee on Homeland Security

## Patty Morin's Written Testimony

Chairman, Ranking Members, and Members of Congress: Good morning!

My name is Patricia Morin. Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of my family and my daughter Rachel Morin, who was brutally raped and murdered at the hands of an illegal immigrant. This is her story.

The American people need to hear, know, and understand the truth of the horrendous war zone we call the southern border.

President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris's open border policy is having a devastating impact across our great nation. I live 1,800 miles from the southern border in a small town in northern Maryland. Yet a man who was wanted for murder in El Salvador made his way to my community... and ambushed my daughter on a quaint walking trail in broad daylight.

I'm here today to make sure that my daughter is remembered as more than a victim. I hope that her story will be the wake-up call that this country needs to secure its borders and protect American citizens.

As a child, Rachel was imaginative, kind, and upbeat - qualities she brought with her into adulthood. She was a loving daughter and formed strong bonds with her siblings. She was funny and exuberant, with an infectious laugh.

Life wasn't always easy for Rachel. She had a speech impediment growing up, which led to a lot of bullying. She did not let that challenge slow her down or define her worth. It made her even more sensitive and loving towards others who felt unloved.

As a mother, Rachel was playful and silly. She often laughed, joked, and played with her kids like she was a kid, too. This is pretty remarkable when you consider that Rachel was a mother of five, which is a tremendous responsibility.

Holidays and celebrations were very important to Rachel. She went all out to decorate and create memorable and magical moments for her children. Those efforts are

especially meaningful now since memories are all that her children have left of their mother.

Rachel created meaningful connections with her kids through everyday activities as well. She believed in health and movement. Walks, swimming, working out, and bike rides were always part of Rachel's routine.

She grew up walking the quaint "Ma & Pa" trail near our house. We always thought of the trail as a safe haven to get outside and find peace in nature. It never occurred to us that a predator would target Rachel while she was jogging on that bright, sunny day in August 2023.

The circumstances of Rachel's death triggered extreme shock and denial for our family.

We felt heartbroken at the severity and cruelty of the crime.

We experienced extreme terror and nightmares for months. To this day, we still do not feel completely safe in our own homes and community.

We are grieving the loss of Rachel's life and the future that was taken from her. That trauma is different for every member of the family. I lost my daughter, and I am heartbroken for her children. Rachel's siblings are mourning the bright light that Rachel brought to our family. The most traumatic impact is on Rachel's five children, each of whom is struggling to figure out how to cope without their mom.

Rachel's eldest daughter is pregnant and will soon have a daughter of her own. She is navigating that path into womanhood and motherhood without her own mother. Her baby's birth is another milestone Rachel can't share with us, and that sadness underscores every life event now.

The circumstances of Rachel's death compounded our grief. It took months for investigators to find Rachel's killer. While that process played out, our family endured false accusations and assaults on our character. Instead of lifting us up, some community members froze us out. Relatives lost jobs because some community members thought it was bad business to mix with a family amid a murder investigation.

We felt helpless and defeated as the months passed without an arrest. Finally, police released a sketch of the suspect, which renewed our hope. We made commercials, distributed flyers, and did countless interviews to bring attention to the case. The

nationwide manhunt ultimately led police to an El Salvadoran national. This suspected gang member was arrested at a bar in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and extradited to Maryland.

We felt relieved when the suspect was finally caught. But that relief quickly turned to horror and outrage when we learned that the suspect was an illegal immigrant. This man was wanted for killing a woman in his home country when he walked into ours.

What's worse is that border patrol would have known that if they had followed the law and swabbed him for DNA the first three times he tried to get into this country. They just turned him around and allowed him to come back again and again until he finally got through the border.

Border patrol let a man with an open interpol warrant for murder walk right into our country to continue his crime spree. The open border policy of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris caused my daughter's death. It allowed a dangerous man to flee his home country to avoid capture and bring his reign of terror to American citizens. Not only did this man brutalize my daughter. He's also accused of attacking a nine-year-old girl in California. Who knows what else he did while traveling from coast to coast?

American citizens are not safe because Joe Biden and Kamala Harris removed the policies and safeguards that keep criminals out of our country. Their failed open border policies have led to two murders by illegal immigrants in my small town alone.

I really want you to hear my words and take to heart what I and other families across America are saying. Please hear our cries for help! You each have taken an oath...an oath to serve our nation and the citizens who make it great. Protect Americans by securing our borders.

We are losing American mothers, daughters, and children to criminals. These deaths are 100 percent preventable. Let's use our resources to protect Americans and welcome immigrants who choose to enter our country legally. This makes much more sense than spending taxpayer money to feed, house, and provide medical care to illegal immigrants.

The Biden /Harris administration has turned a deaf ear to the people they swore to protect. Please don't do the same. It's common sense to screen the people entering our country to ensure that they are here to contribute to our society rather than debase it and harm our citizens.

Do this for Rachel. Please.

**Aaron Heitke**  
**Chief Patrol Agent (Retired)**  
**United States Border Patrol**  
**U.S. Customs and Border Protection**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members, thank you for this opportunity.

The only true consequence we have to slow down and discourage people from coming to the United States illegally is sending them back to their country of origin.

Throughout the first three plus years of this administration, I saw a steady decrease in countries we could send people back to. For the first time in my 25 years and under five different administrations, whether through neglect or on purpose, I saw a large-scale lapse in our ability to return people to their country of origin.

The inability to send people home meant that most people being arrested for illegal entry would either have to be detained or released. The current administration, however, from day one, made a point of decreasing the amount of detention space available nationwide. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's funding for detention space has steadily been cut and private detention eliminated.

The fact that so many illegal aliens were being released into the United States spread worldwide very quickly. As this happened the numbers the Border Patrol encountered illegally crossing the border increased exponentially.

The impacts to me and my agents were significant. Sectors were ordered to take in and process all the illegal aliens encountered on the border. The Border Patrol saw groups of hundreds and thousands

coming into the United States and turning themselves in. These numbers pulled 80-90%, sometimes 100% of the agents on duty away from the border. Border Patrol zones across Texas, Arizona and California had no agent presence for weeks and months at a time. Those who did not want to be caught could simply walk in. We have no idea who and what entered our country over this time. Throughout 2022 and 2023 I sent agents to Texas and Arizona to count gotaways. Those sectors could not even put enough agents in the field to see what they had missed.

Simultaneously, in San Diego we had an exponential increase in Significant Interest Aliens. These are aliens with significant ties to terrorism. Prior to this administration, the San Diego sector averaged 10-15 SIAs per year. Once word was out that the border was far easier to cross, San Diego went to over 100 SIAs in 2022, way over 100 SIAs in 2023 and more than that this year. These are only the ones we caught. At the time, I was told I could not release any information on this increase in SIA's or mention any of the arrests. The administration was trying to convince the public that there was no threat at the border.

Fentanyl is another issue. The San Diego area sees between 80-90% of the methamphetamine and fentanyl seizures annually for our entire country. With little enforcement at the border these drugs were coming through in mass. During my last year in San Diego the price for a single fentanyl pill, for example, went from \$10 to twenty-five cents.

To make matters worse, during 2022 and 2023 I had to shut down the San Diego traffic checkpoints, which are critical for drug interdiction, because resources had been diverted to the process and release mission.

The large numbers also had and still have a negative impact on the San Diego community. I had to release illegal aliens by the hundreds each day into communities who couldn't support them. To quiet the problem two flights a week were provided from San Diego to Texas. These flights simply brought aliens that would have been released in San Diego over to Texas. Each flight cost approximately \$150,000. This was the administration's way of trying to quiet the border-wide crisis. Once these flights stopped and releases continued, California saw the true economic impact. I received calls from the governor's office, local mayors, and hospital administrators asking if we could keep injured aliens in our custody so the federal government would pay the bills. Through pressure from the administration, my headquarters became more interested in the fiction being portrayed in the media and not at all concerned with reality. Each time we asked for help in dealing with a new issue it fell on deaf ears. At times in San Diego, we had 2,000 or more aliens sitting in between the fences asking to turn themselves in. I was told to move them out of sight of the media.

Meanwhile, Border Patrol agents are continually forgotten and neglected by the media and this administration. These agents deal

with death, women and children that have been raped, abused, trafficked, bought and sold, families that have spent months in terrible conditions, sickness, and despair. If you look at the dramatic rise in the number of suicides within the Border Patrol it is directly correlated with the migrant surge. The agents have been pushed beyond their limit and this has greatly impacted their physical and mental health.

While current numbers of aliens crossing our border are lower in comparison to recent months and years, there is a reason for this. After nearly four years this administration finally started to ask Mexico for help in slowing down traffic through their country. This and other actions make a difference but why has it taken so long? All of these tactics were being used before this administration took office, but this administration stopped or greatly limited them. I am also concerned they will not be maintained.

The problems we are facing at the border have solutions. These solutions can be quite simple and cost far less than the mess currently occupying so much time and money. The return to a policy of enforcing the law and returning illegal aliens to their home countries is required.

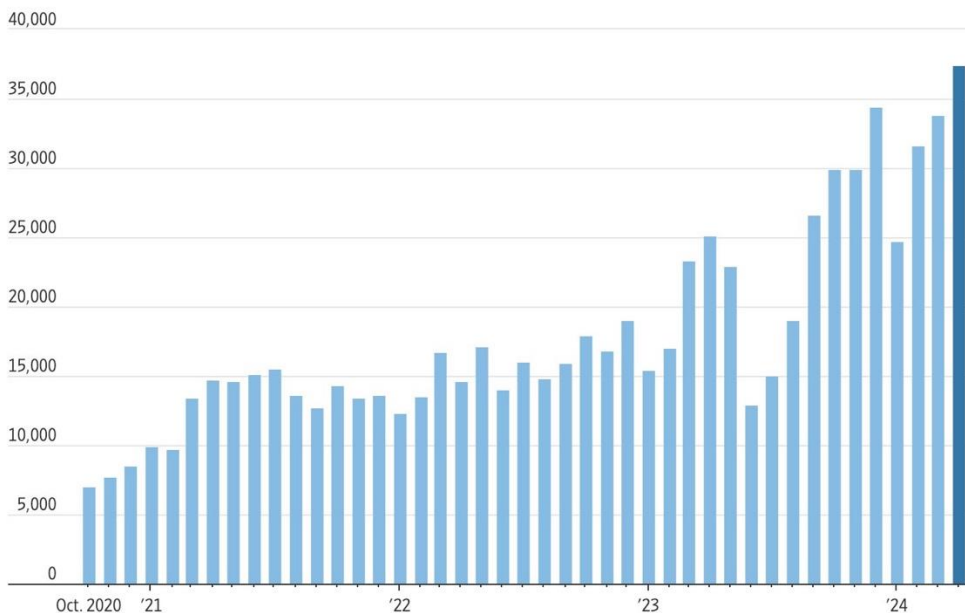
# Testimony: “A Country Without Borders: How the Biden-Harris Open Borders Policies Have Undermined Our Safety and Security”

September 18, 2024

Jim Desmond, San Diego County Supervisor

On December 24, 2022, San Diego was caught off guard by the news that Border Patrol, overwhelmed by the surge of migrants, would begin releasing them at transit stops across the County. This unexpected decision required an immediate response to prevent our transit hubs and homeless shelters from being overwhelmed by the influx of people seeking refuge.

U.S. Border Patrol apprehensions along the San Diego sector of the southwest border, monthly



Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection

This marked the beginning of a broken immigration system playing out in San Diego County. From September 2023 to June 2024, more than 155,000 adults, predominantly males between the ages of 18 to 35, illegally crossed our border and were bused into the streets of San Diego County. That averages 17,000 per month—almost 600 per day. No community, county, or country can sustain this kind of ongoing influx.





I witnessed, firsthand, large vans and buses, driven by Border Patrol agents, pulling up to San Diego transit stops and unloading hundreds of migrants at a time. Many of these individuals, with nothing more than a small backpack, had no idea where they were or what to do next. The first question many asked me when I approached them was, “Where am I?” This level of disorganization exemplifies the lack of competence and control at our border.



*Watch video of mass street releases happening in San Diego County:*  
[Mass Street Releases in San Diego](#)

The process essentially goes like this: “Welcome to America. Here are papers that allow you to stay. Show up to your court hearing—scheduled for 2030—in whichever city you claim you are headed to. In the meantime, we’re dropping you at a trolley stop.”

*A man released onto the streets in San Diego, looking to go to Virginia:*  
[Street Release Testimony](#)

The situation extends beyond the city limits. In Jacumba, CA, a small border community 50 miles east of downtown San Diego, I encountered an early morning encampment of around 50 migrants who had crossed the border the previous night. They were waiting for Border Patrol to pick them up, process them, and then release them onto our streets. One man from India told me he paid \$8,000, in his home country, for passage across our southern border.

That same morning, a Border Patrol agent informed me that another group was crossing the border within the next 30 minutes. Soon enough, a black SUV sped down a dirt road on the Mexican side, dropped off a dozen migrants, and sped away. These men, women, and children, carrying backpacks and luggage, walked through the gaping hole in the fence, approached Border Patrol, and asked for asylum.



*Watch a human smuggler drop people off as they walk into the U.S.:*

[Human Smuggler Drops Migrants](#)

Even more alarming was what my team witnessed later: dozens of Chinese nationals, dragging luggage down dirt roads at night. This isn't a one-off occurrence; this is a daily reality for San Diego County. Border Patrol has essentially become an Uber service for migrants, and San Diego County has become their travel agent.

*Footage of migrants entering at night:*

[Late Night Migrant Entry](#)

Our Border Patrol agents have been reduced to mere processing agents, standing by as our laws are broken. One officer, speaking with deep frustration, shared that their orders from the Federal Government were explicit: "Stand down."

San Diego County spent \$6 million in local funds to establish a migrant receiving center to assist in quickly relocating these individuals to other parts of the country. That's \$6 million that could have been used for roads, infrastructure, and parks.

Migrants now sleep in the San Diego Airport and occupy homeless shelters, while our hospital and healthcare systems are stretched to their limits. Dr. Jay Doucet, Division Chief of Trauma and Surgical Care at UC San Diego Health, described the situation as a public health crisis. “People are being severely injured or dying at the border, and this is impacting trauma care availability for San Diegans.”



The local financial toll is staggering, but the national security threat is even more concerning. Our Border Patrol agents don't have the time or resources to properly vet the individuals crossing. Many countries don't share criminal databases with the United States, leaving us in the dark about who we are admitting.

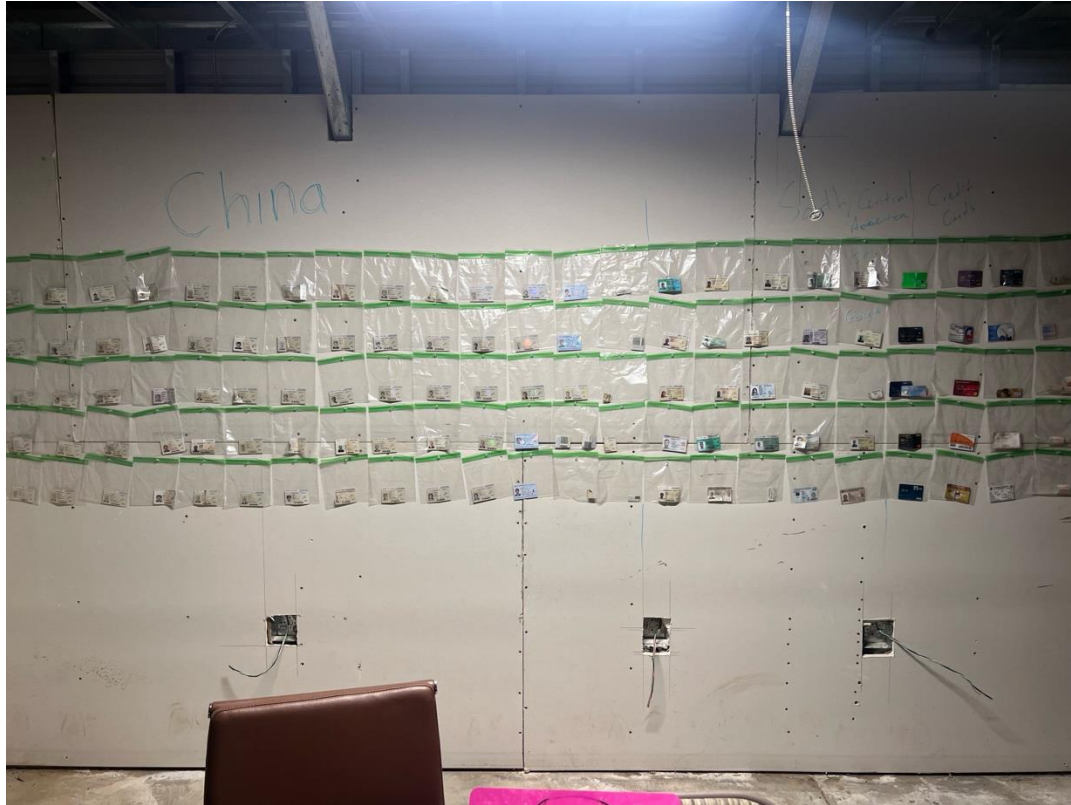
This is not just a broken system—it's a threat to our national security.

San Diego now accounts for 85% of all "Special Interest Aliens"—individuals with known ties to terrorism. And over the past year, we've seen an unprecedented number of 30,000 Chinese nationals enter our region.

California has become a magnet for illegal immigration, incentivized by free healthcare, in-state tuition, and now efforts to provide home loans and taxpayer funded legal services for deportation cases. But make no mistake—San Diego County is just the doorstep.

In fact, local law enforcement cannot cooperate with Federal officials in California. California maintains Sanctuary State laws that, for example, forbid local law enforcement from communicating and cooperating with Federal Immigration agents.

I have witnessed and brought samples of torn and ripped legal documents, that Mexico requires, but the US does not, left on the ground as they cross our borders. With no documentation, our agents can't be sure of countries of origin, and certainly can't do proper background checks.



*Video of a jet ski smuggling event:*  
[Jet Ski Smuggling Event](#)

What's worse are the "got-aways"—those who bypass Border Patrol entirely. Whether they come ashore by boat or cross the border by other means, they vanish without a trace. On April 13, 2024, in broad daylight, a boat carrying a dozen migrants washed ashore in Carlsbad, North County San Diego. They ran into affluent beach neighborhoods, where black SUVs waited to take them further into the country. These individuals chose to evade Border Patrol altogether, leaving us with no information about their identities or intentions.



Footage of the Carlsbad boat landing:  
[Boat Coming Ashore in Carlsbad](#)



Even though the street releases have stopped, the chaos at the border continues. Border Patrol facilities remain over capacity, forcing the Federal Government to fly illegal immigrants from San Diego to McAllen, Texas.



For decades, the focus has been on Arizona and Texas, but San Diego has now become the epicenter of illegal immigration, placing an unsustainable burden on our local communities and endangering neighborhoods. However, this is not just a San Diego

problem. Most illegal immigrants don't stay in border towns; they disperse across the country. This is a national crisis.

The Biden-Harris Administration created this mess, and now they refuse to acknowledge it. In the end, it's counties like San Diego, and the entire nation, that are left dealing with the fallout.







## Testimony for Sheriff David Hathaway

(David Hathaway is the elected Sheriff of Santa Cruz County, Arizona)

---

Both political parties share the blame for the lack of coherent policies when the U.S. interacts with visitors or immigrants from foreign countries. The resultant chaos can then be packaged and described as a crisis for the benefit of political actors. The blame lies with Congress as the branch of government tasked with making laws. This is not an area that should be left to the Executive Branch which then tries to fabricate solutions through ad hoc executive action. The reality is simple. Border areas are safe and we, the residents of border areas, don't want to turn them into a police state or a war zone. My wife and I live near the border and we walk every night along the border. My county has the largest ports-of-entry with Mexico of all Arizona border counties. It is peaceful and safe. The vast majority of people coming to the U.S. are coming to work. It is disingenuous to conflate people coming to work with drug dealers or criminals. They come to improve their lives. Statistically, it has been shown that migrants are less likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans. They are also less likely to go on welfare or to receive public assistance than native-born Americans. They often pay in to systems like Social Security and never take out benefits. They contribute productivity to the economy which reduces price inflation. We have an aging population in the U.S. and we need younger workers. It makes me laugh when people talk about "fighting-age-males" coming to the U.S. as if they are staging an army here. Throughout time, men have gone to where the jobs are and have sent money back to their families. There are "help wanted" signs everywhere. There needs to be an easier way for people to come here to work.

Asylum seekers that are granted entry while awaiting a future hearing are not allowed to work for six months. We need to stop looking to the asylum process as a solution for the lack of workers. And many countries, such as our neighboring Mexico, are largely ineligible for asylum claims since the U.S. does not recognize political persecution as a factor in certain countries, like Mexico. Yet, Mexico is a very important trading partner with 80% of its external GDP involving trade with the U.S. and its geographically-accessible work force. It is ridiculous to make a requirement for a migrant to express "credible fear" before they can come to the U.S. to work. But, that is the system we have created, so migrants learn that they must articulate fear in order to come to the U.S. to work. We need to re-establish a robust guest worker program as existed in the past. My family has lived for five generations on the U.S. / Mexico border in Arizona coming in the 1800's before Arizona became a state. It used to be much easier for my grandfather to hire workers from Mexico if needed. Ranchers and farmers have been clamoring for years for the passage of The Farm Workforce Modernization Act which would allow American employers to hire needed agricultural workers via H-2A visas, but that Act has languished despite pressures on Congress from the business community.

If anyone from Washington ever asks me what we need on the border... First of all, I say we don't need more "photo ops" from politicians who want to get their "street cred" by posing

next to the wall so they can say, "been there, done that." What we really need is something that was in the Border Bill that was killed for obvious political reasons. There was a provision in there for immigration judges and staff to be placed right on the border where decisions need to be made. We need the judges that can make those decisions at the border. Then, people wanting to come into the U.S. can present their documents and if the answer is yes, it's yes. If it's no, it's no. It is not working to avoid these issues and to kick the can down the road forever. Congress needs to make decisions to update Title 8 to allow decisions to be made at the border that benefit our country with workers and foreign trade that we need.

This is not a Democrat versus Republican thing. Southwest border numbers were high under both Democrats and Republicans for a 24-year period in the 80s, 90s, and 2000s including the Administrations of Reagan, Bush Sr., Clinton, and Bush Jr. Then, there was a 14-year lull in Southwest Border encounters under both Democrats and Republicans that included all eight years of Obama, the Trump years, and the last two years of Bush, Jr. with none of those years approaching a million and most of them under half a million.

And certain policies smack of racism. For example, a wall was never suggested for the Canadian / U.S. border. Title 42, a COVID policy, was never implemented aggressively at the Northern border to keep foreigners from making claims. And it is odd to me that it has become fashionable to talk of walls, tariffs, and isolationism. Reagan was not a fan of walls. When the Soviet Union suggested that they were embracing freedom in the late 1980's and early 1990's, Reagan told them to prove it by tearing down the Berlin Wall. Reagan was also not a fan of tariffs. And yet now, we have outbound inspections of Americans by U.S. officials at our borders as Americans leave the country. This is happening in my town now as standard policy. Americans are now being searched and having their money seized as they leave the U.S.! This really smacks of totalitarianism and is reminiscent of East Germany. I don't think Ronald Reagan would have ever anticipated that we would reach a point in time when we would be in a wall-building frenzy and a tariff frenzy and when we would search and interrogate our own citizens at internal checkpoints and as they leave the country. When I grew up, I was told that we don't do that in America. Well, we do now. We might as well tear down the Statue of Liberty and throw it into the ocean.