

Decline in Migrant Crossings at U.S.-Mexico Border Following Expiration of Title 42



The Biden administration announced on Sunday that there has been an unexpected decrease in migrant crossings at the U.S.-Mexico border since the expiration of Title 42 curbs and the reinstatement of criminal penalties for illegal entry. U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas stated that border patrol agents have observed a 50% drop in the number of migrants crossing the border since Thursday, coinciding with implementing a new asylum regulation aimed at deterring illegal crossings.

Mayorkas highlighted the role of criminal penalties for migrants who illegally enter the country, which resumed under existing law after the expiration of Title 42. The COVID-era rule, implemented during former President Donald Trump's administration, allowed for the swift expulsion of migrants without an asylum process but did not impose penalties. The reintroduction of criminal penalties seems to have contributed to the decrease in border crossings.

When asked about the border situation during a bike ride near his vacation home in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, President Joe Biden responded that it was "much better than you all expected." However, he mentioned that he did not have immediate plans to visit the border.

Under the Biden administration's plan, migrants are required to schedule an immigration appointment through an app or seek protection from countries they passed through on their way to the U.S. border. If they enter the U.S. illegally and are apprehended, they are not allowed to attempt entry again for five years, even through legal means. The plan also includes prison terms for other violations.

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Local officials along the border agreed that they had not witnessed the large numbers of migrants that had been anticipated, alleviating concerns about potential strain on U.S. border facilities and towns. Victor Trevino, the mayor of Laredo, Texas, stated that the anticipated influx of migrants had not materialized.

However, Republican representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives expressed concerns that a surge in border crossings could still occur. Representative Michael McCaul warned of caravans heading towards the border, indicating that there was still a desire to enter the country. Representative Mark Green, the Republican chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, claimed that this week had witnessed more crossings than any other week in U.S. history.

Mayorkas defended the Biden administration's policy against a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which argues that the restrictions violate U.S. laws and international agreements. He clarified that the policy was not an asylum ban and emphasized the administration's commitment to addressing both humanitarian concerns and security issues by targeting smugglers.

The Biden administration has reported a significant decrease in migrant crossings at the U.S.-Mexico border since the expiration of Title 42 curbs and the reintroduction of criminal penalties for illegal entry. The administration credits the decline to imposition of criminal penalties, which were absent during the previous policy. While concerns about potential surges remain, local officials along the border have reported fewer than expected migrant arrivals. The Biden administration defends its policy against a lawsuit, emphasizing the need to combat smugglers while fulfilling humanitarian obligations and maintaining security.