

BORDER VISIT & HARMFUL BIDEN POLICIES FLOOR SPEECH
U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.)
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Madam President, I started the new year by joining Senator Blackburn of Tennessee, and our new colleague, Senator Britt of Alabama, on a recent tour of the Del Rio Border Sector in Texas.

We traveled to the border to gain more first hand-knowledge of the ongoing mass migration of illegal immigrants into our nation, to hear from Border Patrol agents about how they are handling this crisis, and to, perhaps most powerfully, hear from young women and girls who are victims of President Biden's careless border and immigration policies.

We learned more about how states are taking action to protect their citizen and their borders when the administration won't. Few states are affected more than Texas, which instituted Operation Lone Star in March 2021 to counter illegal immigration and drug trafficking.

We looked on as a family, led by a coyote, crossed the Rio Grande in dangerously cold waters, and witnessed the family struggle to help their grandmother wade through rushing waters to enter our nation illegally. She made it safely across, but sadly, that is not always the case for many people, including children, who have drowned making the same trek under a misguided belief that our borders are open.

We visited a massive migrant processing center where illegal immigrants are taken upon arrival. An astonishing fact about this processing center is that it costs U.S. taxpayers \$16 million a month to operate. And that's just one of five on the southern border. Let me say that again—it is costing American taxpayers \$16 million per month to process illegal immigrants at just one of these five centers.

What was especially gut wrenching to me was hearing directly from human trafficking victims.

We heard from one young lady who was trafficked from the age of 12 to the age of 16. She told a tale I will never forget, and there are thousands of stories like hers.

Yes, we learned about the true severity of the crisis.

We learned how Border Patrol agents simply cannot carry out their jobs.

We learned how states are forced to use up resources on border security and migrants – resources meant for U.S. citizens.

We learned how ranchers and U.S. property owners are being overwhelmed and in constant fear of being robbed or assaulted by smugglers.

We learned how all of this affects our entire nation—not just the unbelievable price tag, but in the incidences of human trafficking across the country and tens of thousands of overdose deaths linked to fentanyl smuggled across the border.

And, heartbreakingly, we learned of the wickedness of the cartels, which are thriving thanks to President Biden’s apathetic attitude toward his own country’s border.

Madam President, this should not be a political debate.

People and children are *dying* in an attempt to enter our country illegally. Drug cartels are taking control of not just border towns on the Mexican side of the border, but on the American side, too. Human trafficking is now a \$13 billion industry.

How did we get here? Why do they come? Well, because our President basically invited them. Immediately after President Biden was sworn in he started dismantling vital policies like “Remain in Mexico” and restarted “Catch and Release,” halted construction on the border wall, and essentially set up a big neon sign on the southwest border that read, “VACANT.”

The rest is history: 4.5 million border apprehensions with an estimated 1.5 million undetected “gotaways.” A staggering increase in the number of women and children who are being subjected to assault and domestic violence. Fentanyl flowing into our communities and skyrocketing deaths.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to go and listen to Border Patrol agents. Hear the stories of the cartel’s victims. See for yourself the heart breaking scenarios the greatest country in the world is allowing to unfold.

I learned much from my visit to the border, but perhaps the worst thing I learned is this: The Biden administration is not lacking any resources or authority to address this crisis. No. It *can* support our Border Patrol and border states. It *can* secure our border. It *can* save children from drowning in the Rio Grande or 14-year-old girls from being sold. But it *won't*—either through incompetence, or worse, by design.

Thank you, Madam President. I yield the floor.