

Rural Migration News

Blog 319

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Mexico-US Border

President Biden visited El Paso in January 2023 en route to Mexico City, highlighting continued unauthorized migration over the Mexico-US border. Border Patrol agents encountered over 2,000 unauthorized migrants a day in the El Paso area in December 2022.

A record 2.2 million unauthorized foreigners were encountered by Border Patrol agents just inside the US border with Mexico in FY22, and another 172,500 were detected at ports of entry, bringing total encounters to 2.4 million, up 37 percent from 1.7 million encounters in FY21. Mexicans and Central Americans were 57 percent of those encountered. The number of Venezuelans, Cubans, and Nicaraguans, over 571,000, exceeded the number of unauthorized migrants from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

In response to the upsurge in migrant crossings, the Republican governors of Arizona, Florida, and Texas bussed or flew migrants to northern cities, highlighting what they called Democratic hypocrisy in establishing sanctuaries for unauthorized foreigners and then

complaining of being overwhelmed when migrants appeared.

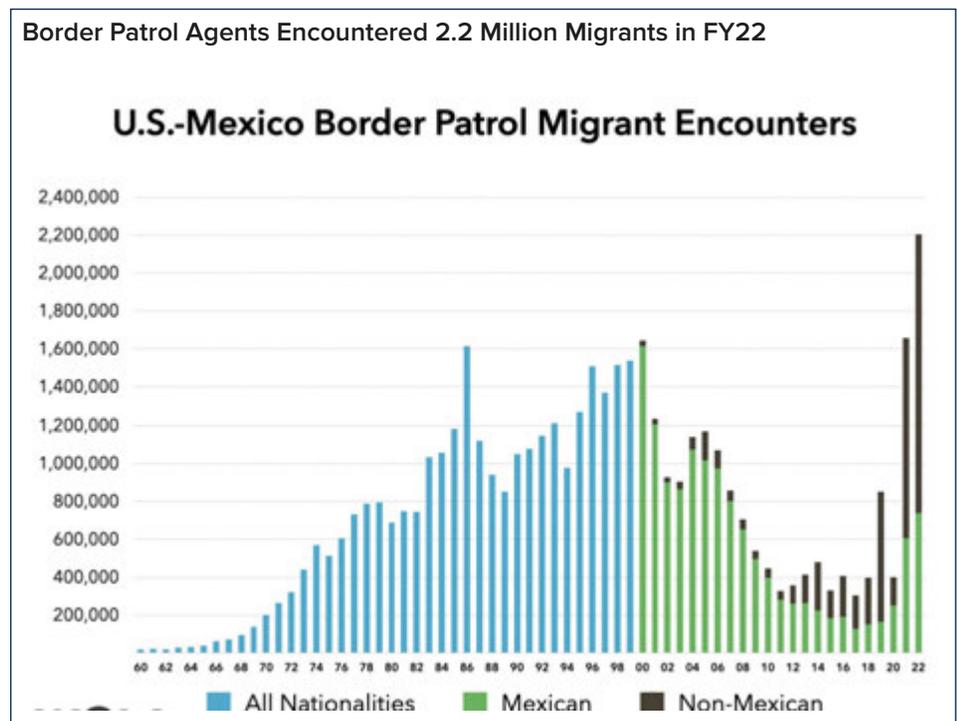
Title 42

Migrants encountered just inside the US border can be processed under Title 8, which involves fingerprinting and perhaps prosecuting unauthorized entrants, or under Title 42, a public health measure that was invoked in March 2020

to prevent the spread of covid by returning unauthorized foreigners back to Mexico quickly. Since Biden took office in January 2020, some 57 percent of the 4.4 million total encounters were handled under Title 8 and 43 percent were handled under Title 42.

Title 42 allows the Border Patrol to return foreigners to Mexico without allowing them to apply for asylum. Some of the foreigners who are returned to Mexico try to re-enter the US, since Title 42 returnees are not penalized for being apprehended again. One analysis found that 60 percent of those who were returned to Mexico under Title 42 were encountered at least once again in 2020-21.

Most of the foreigners encountered by Border Patrol agents, over 15,000 a month, were allowed to enter the US and file applications for asylum, a process that can take several years because of the backlog of 750,000 asylum cases in immigration courts. Asylum seekers can work after 150 days in the US and their children can attend K-12 schools.



Migrants in Mexico Waiting to Enter the U.S.



Title 42. In exchange, Biden offered two-year humanitarian parole for up to 24,000 qualifying Venezuelans who find a US financial sponsor, apply online, and arrive in the US at airports.

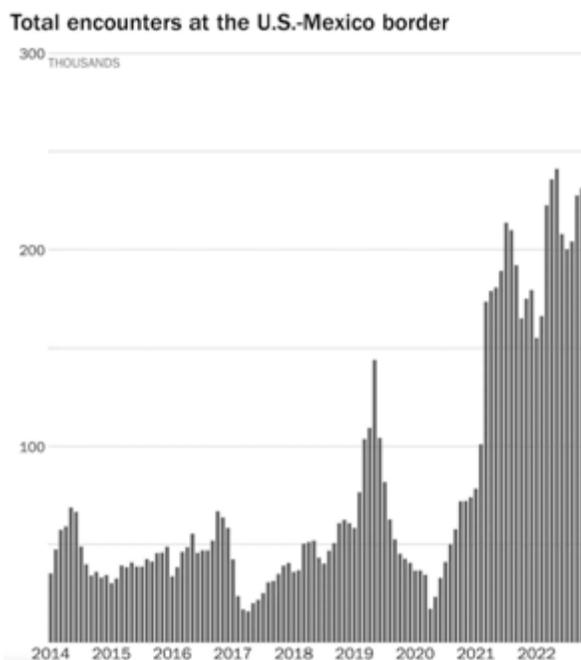
After this policy change, the number of Venezuelans encountered at the Mexico-US border fell sharply, from over 1,000 a day to less than 100 a day. Some 7.1 million Venezuelans left their country since 2015, and over 150,000 entered the US in 2022.

President Biden in January 2023 expanded the Venezuela parole program to migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, so that those apprehended inside the US will be returned to Mexico under Title 42. Meanwhile, 30,000 two-year work visas will be made available to migrants from Cuba, Haiti, and Nicaragua who are paroled into the US. Mexico in January 2023 agreed to accept the return of up to 30,000 migrants a month from Haiti, Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua if they entered the US illegally and their asylum applications are rejected.

In announcing the expanded use of Title 42 removals and the parole program, Biden said: “Do not just show up at the border. Stay where you are and apply legally from there.” Biden added: “I know that migration is putting a real strain on the border and border communities” and announced additional federal support for cities hosting migrants.

Reactions to Biden’s return-and-parole policy were mixed. Many migrant advocates criticized the inability of foreigners returned under Title 42 to apply for asylum in the US. Many Republicans said that the Biden Administration was unwilling to prevent foreigners from illegally entering the US.

Border Patrol Encounters with Unauthorized Foreigners Approached 250,000 a Month in FY22



President Biden’s immigration advisors are divided on how to respond to the upsurge in unauthorized migration. Biden promised to end Title 42. Republican states sued to keep the border-turnaround policy in place, and the US Supreme Court will consider the legality of Title 42 on March 1, 2023.

Migrant advocates in the Biden Administration held sway during Biden’s first two years, contributing to the sense that the US was

“open” to unauthorized migrants. Other Biden advisors argued that an out-of-control border is a political liability, and urged tougher actions to reduce unauthorized migration.

Parole

Over 187,000 Venezuelans were apprehended in FY22, including 33,000 in September 2022, prompting the Biden Administration to return Venezuelans seeking asylum in the US to Mexico under

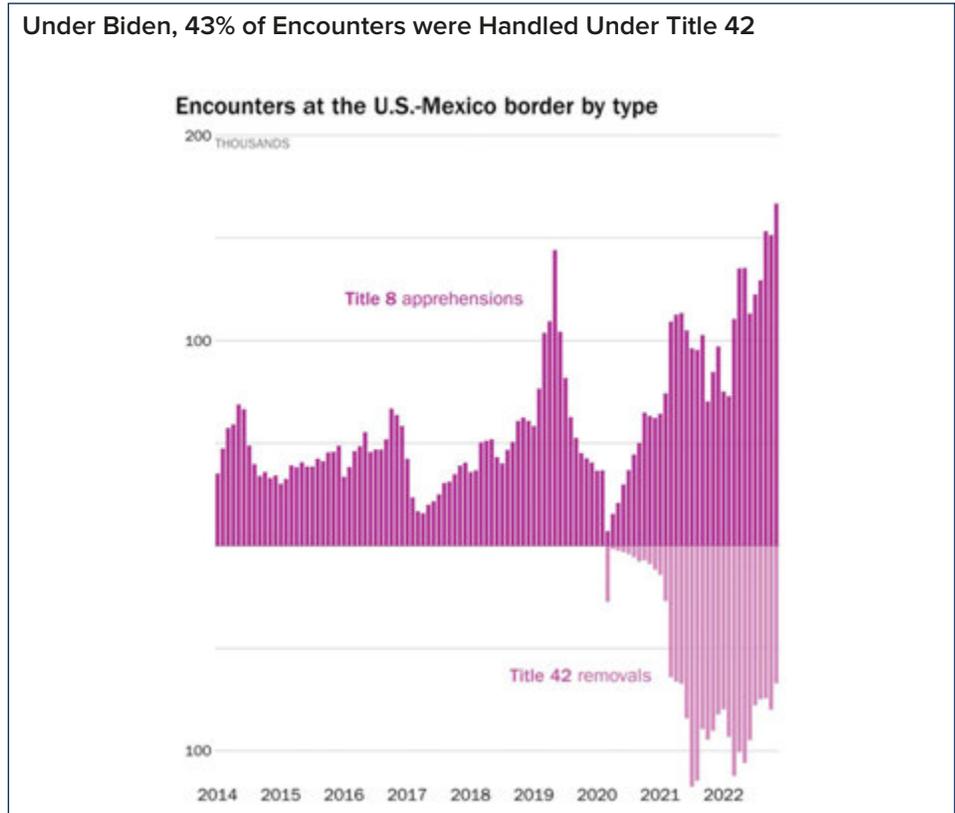
Some Biden advisors want to declare Mexico a safe third country for asylum seekers, so that foreigners who travel through Mexico would not be able to apply for asylum in the US. If migrants passing through Mexico illegally entered the US and applied for asylum and were rejected, they could be barred from legal entry for five years. The Mexican government opposed being declared a safe third country for foreigners who are seeking asylum in the US.

North America

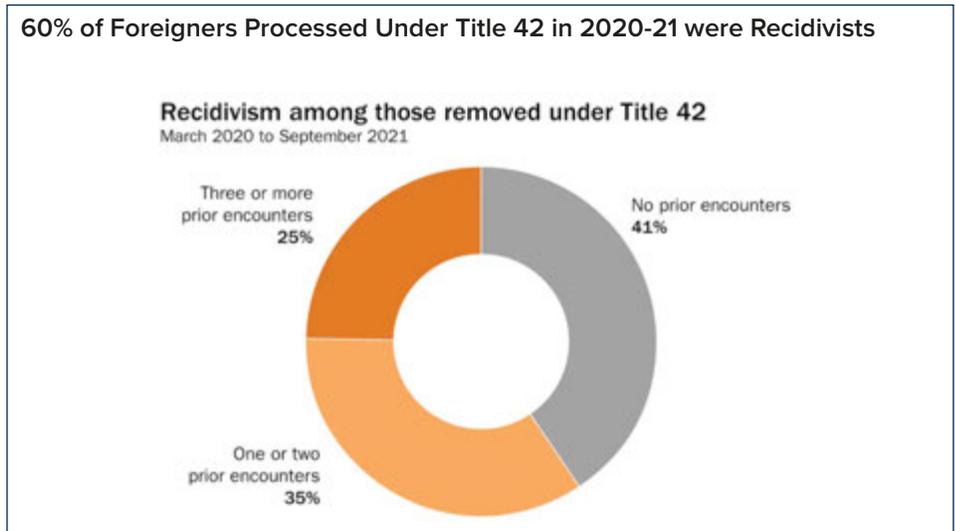
President Biden met with Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in January 2023. Migration via Mexico to the US loomed large, as did the flow of drugs through Mexico to the US and disputes over Mexican energy policies that favor state-owned firms and plans to ban the import of GMO corn.

An AMLO decree in 2020 bans the import of GMO corn by 2024, but is ambiguous about whether GMO corn can be imported and fed to livestock. Mexico imports about 17 million tons of US GMO yellow corn each year and produces about six million tons of the white corn that is often used to make tortillas. One compromise would be for Mexico to allow the import of GMO yellow corn to feed animals but not to be used to make tortillas.

Under Biden, 43% of Encounters were Handled Under Title 42



60% of Foreigners Processed Under Title 42 in 2020-21 were Recidivists



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