

Former ICE chief suggests Democrats are to blame for migrant children dying

Former U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency chief Tom Homan struck at out Democrats over their “open border attitude” on Monday, blaming Democratic lawmakers for the recent deaths of migrant children held under federal custody.

In an interview with Fox News host Tucker Carlson, Homan took specific aim at New York Senator and 2020 Democratic hopeful Kirsten Gillibrand over her recent promise that, if elected as president, she would do away with the immigration detention system entirely.

“It’s ludicrous,” said Homan, who played a key role in enforcing the Trump administration’s hardline immigration agenda while serving as acting ICE director between January 2017 and June 2018. “I mean, she obviously didn’t do her homework, she didn’t study the data, she certainly didn’t study the history of immigration.”

“The reason that family units and the children are coming right now in record numbers, unprecedented numbers, is because they know we can’t detain them all,” the former ICE chief claimed.

“She’s just not that smart or she’s not doing her homework,” he said of Gillibrand.

Noting that, on Monday, U.S. immigration officials had seen a fifth child held in their custody die on their watch within the span of six months, Homan appeared to lay blame on Gillibrand and other Democrats.

“We just had another child die in custody today, right?” Homan said, referring to the death of 16-year-old Carlos Gregorio Hernandez Vasquez, who died in federal custody after showing symptoms of influenza.

“This isn’t just about enforcing law,” Homan said. “This is about blame [Gillibrand] uses and thing she says and other Democrats that entice people to put themselves in the hands of criminal organisations.”

“So, if they want to blame, who’s to blame for this child dying in custody today? They need to look in the mirror,” Homan said. “Because, when you start preaching ‘open borders,’ ‘we won’t detain you,’ that’s when more people come and that’s when we’re going to lose the border for all.”

The former ICE chief said that Gillibrand’s plan to bring the practice of detaining immigrants to an end would only “cause a surge” in arrivals at the U.S.-Mexico border.

“Look, the reason that family units and the children are coming right now in record numbers, unprecedented numbers, is because they know we can’t detain them all,” Homan asserted.

“So, her answer to that is detain less? That will cause a surge like you’d never believe. You think the numbers are bad now?” he said. “That’s what the problem is, when politicians like [Gillibrand] say things like, ‘we won’t detain anybody’ and she supports sanctuary cities, she wants to abolish ICE... When you have the open border attitude more people are enticed to come to this country.”

In recent months, the U.S. has seen a surge in Central American asylum seekers arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border, including many families. Officials recorded a total of 98,977 people stopping at the Southwest border in April alone, with 58,474 being in family units and 8,897 being unaccompanied minors.



Thomas Homan, then-acting director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, testifies before the House Homeland Security Committee's Border and Marine Security subcommittee on Capitol Hill on May 22, 2018 in Washington, D.C. Homan appeared to blame Democrats for a recent series of deaths of migrant children held under federal custody. -AARON P. BERNSTEIN/GETTY

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