

House Republicans say Biden immigration bill will cause ‘catastrophe’ on Mexico border



Led by Rep. James Comer, 19 Republicans asked the Biden administration to take a tougher stance on the US-Mexico border. Greg Nash/Pool via AP

House Republicans on Friday asked Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas to take a tougher approach on the US-Mexico border to “prevent the impending catastrophe” they say is coming due to President Biden’s new immigration bill and related policy changes.

Democrats on Thursday unveiled a Biden-supported bill that would offer the more than 11 million estimated illegal immigrants a path to US citizenship, which Republicans say could become a new “pull” factor.

The White House said Tuesday it also will begin an end to the “Remain in Mexico”

policy for asylum seekers from Central America. About 71,000 applicants will be allowed into the US to await decisions, the White House said.

“The Biden Administration’s policies limiting immigration enforcement and weakening border security, coupled with its proposal to grant amnesty to illegal immigrants, are signaling to the world that our immigration laws can be violated with little, if any, consequence,” Republicans on the House Oversight Committee wrote to Mayorkas.

“We are particularly concerned that the Biden Administration’s actions could soon lead to a health crisis at the border and surrounding communities, causing widespread COVID-19 infections and fatalities.”

The 19 Republicans, led by Rep. James Comer (R-Ky.), ask Mayorkas to outline “the administration’s plan to prevent the impending catastrophe on the border.”

In January, President Biden signed an executive order to halt construction on the US-Mexico border wall.AP

The GOP group contended, “The increasing number of [unaccompanied children] and family units illegally crossing the border will soon overwhelm border facilities in the middle of a global pandemic, forcing CBP officials to resort to widespread, rapid catch and release of unlawfully present individuals and families into the interior of the country.”

In his first month as president, Biden ended construction of former President Donald Trump’s US-Mexico border wall and vowed to relax a wide range of policies that sought to limit immigration, including a rule that the US cannot admit immigrants likely to require public assistance. Trump cast the restrictions as necessary protection for low-wage US workers and taxpayers, but Biden has described the policies as “inhumane.”

Biden also ended a “zero tolerance” Trump-era policy for prosecuting illegal border crossings.

Former Trump White House adviser Stephen Miller, who orchestrated many of Trump’s immigration policies, said Thursday on Fox News that the new

immigration bill is poorly timed given high unemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“You have 20 million Americans who want full-time jobs right now, but because of the pandemic they can’t find them,” Miller said.

The former senior adviser lambasted the bill as a “full-scale attack on the very idea of nationhood.”

“If you were trying to write a bill to eliminate the concept of having a nation, this is the bill you would write,” Miller added.

In December, then-President-elect Biden said he was concerned about abruptly relaxing Trump’s immigration policies because he feared that if he acted too quickly, he would trigger “2 million people on our border.”

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