

Republicans demand Mayorkas utilize border security equipment, technologies to mitigate illegal migrant surge

Republicans say technologies could help stem the wave of migration and drug trafficking.

EXCLUSIVE: House Republicans are demanding that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) immediately deploy already-procured security equipment and technologies at the southern border in order to mitigate the surge in illegal border crossings and the influx of drug and human smuggling.

In a letter, exclusively obtained by Fox News Digital, sent to DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, House Committee Homeland Security Ranking Member Rep. John Katko, R-N.Y., and Rep. Young Kim, R-Calif., led colleagues in expressing concern that the Biden administration is not deploying technologies at the border in order to address the migration crisis.

The lawmakers say that because the Biden administration canceled a series of border barrier contracts, already-procured technologies are being stored in warehouses, costing American taxpayers without any benefit. They site the fact that border agents encountered nearly 235,000 migrants at the southern border in April, while over 17,800 pounds of deadly fentanyl have been seized by agents since the start of fiscal year 2021.

4,000 ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS CROSSED BORDER OVER MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND IN RIO GRANDE VALLEY SECTOR ALONE

“We are troubled by claims that DHS is not fully deploying innovative ‘smart’ technologies along the border, such as AST towers and fiber optic sensors, that have been procured by the federal government through contracts previously granted for building border barrier infrastructure,” the lawmakers wrote.

“Instead of making use of these innovative technologies to improve security in our

southern border, decrease the influx of illegal drugs and human trafficking operations, we have been told the federal government has decided to store them at significant expense while also placing a large burden on contractors, some of whom have been ordered to remain in an indefinite holding process. These contractors continue to incur significant costs while not being able to sell and/or wind down investments.”

The Republicans issued the DHS secretary a list of demands, including a complete accounting of the procured technologies being stored in warehouses, a list of how much of the technology is still operational, and whether there are any proposals to use the equipment by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) or any other agencies.

“Failing to mount an adequate response to the upcoming surge in illegal crossings, especially when no contingencies are currently in place to make up for the rescinding of Title 42 policy, presents a major risk to CBP personnel while threatening their important efforts to interdict drug smuggling and illicit human trafficking at our border and its legal points of entry,” the congressmen wrote.

The Biden administration came under fire from both Republicans and Democrats for planning to end the Title 42 public health order, which has been used since March 2020 to expel a majority of migrants at the southern border due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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However, a federal judge on May 20 temporarily blocked the administration from ending Title 42, saying the end of the order would increase border crossings and would also violate the Administrative Procedures Act (APA), which requires a notice-and-comment period and also bars moves deemed “arbitrary and capricious.”

Mayorkas visited the Rio Grande Valley section of the southern border last month and met with CBP officers, who were concerned that the termination of Title 42 would be catastrophic due to an anticipated migrant surge.

DHS did not respond to a request for comment from Fox News Digital on the letter.

Fox News' Adam Shaw contributed to this report.

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