



Written by [William P. Hoar](#) on July 8, 2019

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Correction, Please!

Immigration System Hits Breaking Point, Goes Beyond

Item: While many were relieved to learn on June 7 that a deal about illegal immigration had been reached between the Trump administration and Mexico, thus suspending threatened tariffs, the Washington Post emphasized that the agreement, which included the expansion of the Migrant Protection Protocols — “which allows the United States to return Central American migrants to Mexico while they await the adjudication of their asylum hearings in U.S. immigration court”— might result in “tens of thousands of [illegal] migrants waiting in limbo in potentially unsafe conditions in Mexico.”



Item: Seeking to minimize the achievements of the Trump administration’s immigration negotiations with Mexico, the New York Times for June 9, in the first paragraph of its leading front-page story, stressed that the deal that had been announced “with great fanfare ... consists largely of actions that Mexico had already promised to take in previous discussions.” (Much further down, on page 11, that article admitted that Mexico’s promise to deploy troops to its southern border was indeed “larger” than previously pledged and that the timing of the Migrant Protection Protocols had been “accelerate[d].”) So, apparently, everything was the same except for the things that changed — to the advantage of the United States.

Item: The Washington Post in the front page of its June 6 edition, accompanied by a color photo of migrant youths playing soccer in a federal facility in Florida, bemoaned that the Trump administration was considering cutting such recreation programs. (If you read very closely, down into the piece, you might discover that these centers are overwhelmed with the numbers of the illegals and short of the emergency funding that had been sought by the administration, but not supplied by Congress.)

The Post, to buttress its bias, quoted a lawyer who represents minor illegal migrants, who complained about the potential curtailing of services, “We’ll see them in court if they go through with this,” he said. “What next? Drinking water? Food?... Where are they going to stop?”

Item: An Associated Press dispatch in the Los Angeles Times for June 5 took note of those apprehended after they crossed illegally into the United States from Mexico: “Most families are from Central America and expected to request asylum. Photos of families waiting in jam-packed cells and in outdoor enclosures have sparked outrage.”



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Item: *An article in Politico for June 4 reported that the House had just passed legislation (a bill dubbed the American Dream and Promise Act) that is aimed at providing “a path to citizenship for Dreamers brought to the United States as children.” The approval came “along largely partisan lines,” with “nearly all Democrats” in favor.*

The bill is the House Democratic majority’s answer to President Donald Trump’s hard-line immigration agenda.

Correction: The spinning of left-wing narratives requires good guys and villains. When it comes to the rather complicated topic of illegal immigration, innocent children play the former part; President Trump, of course, is the heavy.

To his political foes, Trump is always wrong — being either painted as overly cruel for trying to enforce the law or as woefully ineffective when his efforts are sabotaged and blocked.

Here is the actual setting, as has been noted by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP) chief operating officer, John Sanders: “We are in a full-blown emergency, and I cannot say this stronger: the system is broken.” He noted in early June that his agency had detained more than 680,000 border crossers in the previous eight months, observing that the total is “more than the population of Miami.”

So, who or what is to blame? Well, the *New York Times* has its predictable suspect — the guy in the White House. Here is the *Times*’ take from this spring:

The president’s own anti-immigrant rhetoric has helped supercharge the pipeline of migrants from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. Smugglers lately have been buying radio ads in Central America, warning that Mr. Trump is about to shut down all immigration. If you ever want to go to the United States, they say, go now!

The situation on the border is truly dire. Acting CBP Commissioner John Sanders said: “We are experiencing a system-wide emergency that is severely impacting our workforce, facilities and resources.”

The percentage of unaccompanied alien children (UAC) and family units (FMUA) “continues to rise,” noted CBP. The release explained: “The migrants are mainly coming from the Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) and Mexico. 78 percent of the Southwest border apprehensions in May came from the Northern Triangle. If Mexico is added, the Northern Triangle and Mexico account for 91 percent of all apprehensions on the Southwest border.” And in an unusual development, at the end of May and in the first week of June, more than 500 migrants from Africa were apprehended by Del Rio Sector Border Patrol agents in Texas; according to CBP, these groups were “primarily made up of family units from the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola.”

Matters have been getting worse, with little or no help from the leaders of the Democratic Party in Congress. Indeed, at the beginning of this year, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (Calif.) and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (N.Y.) held a joint press conference based on the central theme that there was no real border crisis, no national emergency, and no security threat. Schumer asserted that Trump had “used the backdrop of the Oval Office to manufacture a crisis, stoke fear, and divert attention.” By May, even Pelosi was admitting that the border situation “is a crisis,” though she qualified it as a “humanitarian crisis” that she blamed on Trump.

To try to change the subject from the surge of border crossers, the House Democrats, led by Pelosi,



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recently passed another “Dreamer” bill that was clearly not going anywhere in the Senate. Meanwhile, the Office of Management and Budget concluded that the Democrats’ bill “would only exacerbate illegal immigration and the exploitation of our immigration laws by incentivizing more illegal behavior.”

House Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) could see little good in the Democrats’ bill, listing the five below as its “worst aspects.” The American Dream and Promise Act, as he put it:

- Makes millions of illegal immigrants eligible for amnesty, far exceeding the roughly 700,000 DACA [Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program] recipients.
- Would cost an estimated \$34.6 billion, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Democrats have not found a way to pay for this.
- Provides zero enforcement. H.R. 6 does not include a dime for border security. It does not close loopholes or reform asylum laws.
- Provides a path to citizenship for criminals.
- Gives illegal immigrants a special pathway to citizenship that is unavailable to legal immigrants.

Meanwhile, the Democrats even blocked an amendment that would have authorized \$4.5 billion in crisis relief and border security funding.

On the other hand, the Left does seem angrily exercised over potential cuts in subsidized recreation for migrant youths. And just imagine the lachrymal outpouring if funding falls for poetry writing.

(Immigration personnel face a difficult, if not impossible, job — dealing with too many migrants with insufficient money. One federal law directs them not to go over budget, which has led to potential cuts in services that are “not directly linked to the safety of human life,” at the same time that another federal judicial decree requires the provision of school classes and hours of outdoor activity weekly for young illegal migrants.)

Meanwhile, in one dramatic incident in late May, Border Patrol agents from El Paso Sector in Texas apprehended the largest group of illegal aliens ever encountered. The agents took custody of 1,036 people after they crossed the border in El Paso, according to CBP.

It was no exaggeration when one Guatemalan told Kevin McAleenan, the acting secretary of Homeland Security, that “a child is like a passport for migration.” The utilization of children is one significant way that the system is being gamed of late. Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, has explained: “Word is out on the streets in Central America that if you bring a child with you — regardless of whether or not it is actually your child — America’s laws can be manipulated to allow you to stay in the United States.”

“Under current law,” noted Graham — who has authored the Secure and Protect Act of 2019, which is intended to strengthen border security — “immigrants traveling with children can only be detained for 20 days before they must be released.” “By turning themselves in to authorities, immigrants start the clock ticking on their detainment. And with a massive backlog of asylum cases overloading the system, the majority of asylum petitions cannot be processed in time. In turn, immigrants are released into the United States free and clear.” This is just part of the reason why this country is on pace for more than one million apprehensions of illegal aliens during this fiscal year.

The cost of illegal immigration affects us in multiple ways. Take the likely price tag of your healthcare.



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Your burden isn't helped by the fact that you are also picking up much of the bill for people who are in this country illegally. As Chris Conover, an adjunct scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, has described in some detail in *Forbes* posts: "All told, Americans cross-subsidize health care for unauthorized immigrants to the tune of \$18.5 billion a year." Of this total, federal taxpayers (in 2016) "provided \$11.2 billion in subsidized care to unauthorized immigrants."

That's hardly the whole bill for taxpayers. The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) estimated (in a 2016 study) that it costs public schools \$59.8 billion for millions of illegal aliens, school-age children of illegal aliens, refugees, and legal immigrant students. And the president has said, though some dispute his figures, that illegal immigration costs the United States \$200 billion or more. If it makes you feel better, FAIR (in 2017) put the total cost of illegal immigration for the country (at the federal, state, and local levels) at \$116 billion.

Then consider the deleterious effects of the actions of left-wing judges and attorneys. Asylum claimants, as the *Wall Street Journal* reported in April, "may avoid immediate deportation simply by convincing an immigration officer that they have a 'credible fear' that they will be persecuted if they return to their home country." As you can imagine, those looking for a pass have figured that out, often with the assistance of activist lawyers. The low bar of claimed "credible fear" is attained easily by most asylum-seekers.

The *Journal* — which is *not* an immigration opponent — also points out that, because of a shortage of detention beds, asylum claimants "are usually released and allowed to work in the U.S. while awaiting another hearing to determine if they qualify for asylum." Most, as noted, make it through the initial review. Then the average wait is two years.

A substantial percentage of illegal aliens, not surprisingly, "disappear" and do not show up for their next hearing. As of early this year, the nationwide backlog in immigration courts was almost 800,000 cases. "Of those caught entering the country illegally in FY 2017, either as family units or unaccompanied minors," reports James Jay Carafano of the Heritage Foundation, "98 percent remain in the U.S. today. Of those who pass a credible fear hearing and are released, 40 percent never file for asylum."

Kevin McAleenan, who now serves as commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, previously testified to Congress that our immigration system was "at the breaking point." Now, he insists, that "breaking point has arrived."

Among his suggested fixes is changing the law so the federal government could detain illegal migrant families while they are waiting for their hearings — rather than releasing them into the United States after 20 days in custody. In addition, he calls on Congress to change the "credible-fear" standard that allows migrants to be initially allowed in — pointing out that "89 percent of people get that while only 10 percent get asylum at the end of the court proceedings."

Good luck with getting "progressives" in Congress to agree on such matters — when you consider how Speaker Pelosi responded to the president's deal to get more cooperation with Mexico. She complained and said her party was "deeply disappointed" with the pledged expansion of what has been called "Remain-in-Mexico," maintaining that action violates the "rights" of illegals seeking asylum.

She also bemoaned the failure to address the "root causes" driving migrants from Central America. You don't need to read too deep between the lines to see what that means: More foreign aid. Yep, sending



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tax monies to other countries has such a wondrous track record. It often amounts to transferring monies from poor people in rich countries to rich people in poor countries.

— William P. Hoar

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