



Written by [James Murphy](#) on February 7, 2019

As New Migrant Caravan Arrives at the Border, Trump Takes His Case to the People

Eagle Pass, Texas, a small city on the Rio Grande River just across from the Mexican city of Piedras Negras Coahuila, has found itself smack-dab in the middle of the raging debate on illegal immigration into the United States.

The latest caravan of potential illegal immigrants has arrived across from the border city, looking to get into America. There to meet them in Eagle Pass are at least 500 Texas State Troopers, numerous sheriff deputies and 250 federal troops brought in from other spots along the southern border. The Border Patrol is also there to meet approximately 2,000 migrants, who are mostly from Honduras.



According to state officials, the caravan includes 46 unaccompanied minors, aged 15-17.

"If anyone tries to cross the border illegally, they'll be arrested," said Maverick County Sheriff Tom Schmerber.

"One group of migrants is hoping to make it into Arizona and another group to Minnesota," Schmerber said.

Border Patrol agents have reportedly already arrested some migrants who illegally crossed the border overnight.

In a [statement](#), Department of Homeland Security Kristjen Nielsen declared that illegal immigrants would not be allowed in to the United States. "Approximately 2,000 aliens have arrived in Northern Mexico as part of a 'caravan' seeking to cross the border into Texas. Illegal entry will not be tolerated and we stand ready to prevent it."

Nielsen added, "DHS will take all steps to ensure the safety and security of law enforcement personnel on the front lines."

The main obstacle to migrants looking to cross into Eagle Pass illegally is the Rio Grande River. A [14-ft-high border fence](#) does exist in Eagle Pass, but it is poorly maintained, with several gaps and even open gates along its two-mile span.

As Congress continues negotiations on President Trump's proposed wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, the Trump campaign has announced that the president will hold his first rally of 2019 on Monday in El Paso, Texas, another border community.

In his State of the Union address on Tuesday night, Trump pointed to El Paso as a border-wall success story. "The border city of El Paso, Texas used to have extremely high rates of violent crime — one of the



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highest in the country, and [was] considered one of our nation's most dangerous cities," the president said. "Now, with a powerful barrier in place, El Paso is one of our safest cities."

In January, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton agreed with the president. "El Paso used to have one of the highest crime rates in America," Paxton said. "After that fence went up and separated Juarez, which still has an extremely high crime rate, the crime rates in El Paso are some of the lowest in the country. So, we know it works."

Fact checkers have pointed to statistics which show that El Paso's crime rate began to drop before the section of border fence, which was part of the 2006 Secure Fence Act, signed by George W. Bush in the wake of the September 11th attacks, was completed in 2009.

But it's also useful to look across the Rio Grande to Juarez in Mexico. Prior to the wall, crime rates in El Paso and Juarez were closely related to one another. Now, in 2019, [Juarez is one of the most dangerous cities in the world](#) with nearly 200 homicides per month reported in the city of 1.3 million. Much of the violence is due to ongoing drug wars between cartels in the region.

In El Paso, home to nearly 700,000, 38 homicides occurred in all of 2018; 49 if you count the entire county. Absent the border barrier, is there any doubt that some of Juarez's drug war violence would spill into El Paso?

So, Trump's selection of El Paso to hold his first rally of 2019 is significant, both in the border-wall fight and for the upcoming 2020 election. Trump is looking to point to the Texas city as an example that walls do, indeed, work.

Trump may also be doing what comes naturally to him. He might just be taking his fight for a border wall to the people. The president's rallies have been good to him in the past. The large rallies propelled him to his unlikely 2016 election victory, and he can still draw large crowds. Using these rallies to get the American people to clamor for a border wall might not be the worst strategy in the world.



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