



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on April 8, 2022

Biden Admin Hands Smartphones to Illegal Immigrants

The White House confirmed Wednesday that it is giving smartphones to illegal immigrants who cross the southern border to “check in” with them, track them while they’re in the United States, and make sure they attend their immigration hearings.

Asked by Fox News reporter Peter Doocy at Wednesday’s press briefing how handing out the smartphones would deter more illegal immigrants from coming to America, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki [said](#) that “we need to take steps to ensure that we know where individuals are and we can track — and we can check in with them.”



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Psaki went on to describe that instead of keeping the border-crossers detained, the administration is using “three unique forms of technology to monitor participants enrolled in the program.”

The first of them is telephonic, which uses an immigrant’s voice “to create a biometric voice print during the enrollment process. And when the participant has a check-in call, their voice is compared to the voice print,” said Psaki.

Another tracking technology is an app called SmartLink, continued Psaki. That app enables monitoring of the participant via smartphone or tablet, using facial-recognition technology to establish and verify his or her identity.

According to a [gadget360.com](#) report from March 10, 2022, more than 125,000 border-crossers have SmartLink installed on their phones, up from around 5,000 less than three years ago.

The third tracking technology is the Global Positioning System (GPS), which utilizes an ankle bracelet to monitor the location and movement history of illegal immigrants awaiting trial.

The secretary concluded that providing illegal immigrants with smartphones at the taxpayers’ expense is a “part of our effort, as individuals [coming] into the United States and individuals who are entering who will proceed to immigration proceedings, to monitor and track where they are.”

Asked if the administration was concerned about people simply throwing the tracking smartphones away, Psaki deflected, asking if there were any reports on such activities.

Psaki said, however, that the administration’s concern was to ensure that individuals who “irregularly” migrate to the United States are monitored and then appear at the court hearings to determine whether or not they will be allowed to stay in the country.

She touted the effort as successful, and said that 80 percent of “non-citizens” released at the border from DHS custody under prosecutorial discretion “have either received a notice to appear or are still within their window to report.” That, Psaki implied, was achieved thanks to the tracking system put in place.

The statement contradicts data from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). According to



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numbers [disclosed](#) to Senator Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), 47,705 of the more than 100,000 illegals who were released from Border Patrol custody at the southern border in 2021 between March 21 and August 31 and instructed to self-report to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) within 60 days have failed to check in.

In a Wednesday letter ([pdf](#)) sent to Department of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, Senator Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) inquired, among other things, about the DHS's plans to provide migrants with free phones. Hawley asked, "Does DHS plan to provide illegal aliens with free phones? What is the justification for doing so?" Also, "If cell phones are being provided to illegal aliens, what controls are in place to ensure taxpayer dollars do not go to waste?"

Breitbart reported in July 2021 that a CBP official told them that since the stock of ankle monitors was running out amid an unprecedented surge of illegal immigration, the ICE's Office of Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) officers were giving migrants cellphones with tracking apps instead as part of their "Alternatives to Detention" (ATD) program.

The monitoring of illegal aliens entering the United States does not come cheap. The Breitbart report noted that in 2021, \$440 million was allocated to conduct the ATD program, which was a steep increase from the \$149 million in 2020.

Besides consuming taxpayers' money, the program has so far resulted in an expanded number of illegals being released into the country.

According to the latest data by the nonprofit Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) of Syracuse University, the program has resulted in the release of more illegal aliens into America.

Austin Kocher, a TRAC researcher, said that a significantly smaller number of border-crossers are being detained, partly thanks to their being paroled into the United States to await asylum proceedings under the ATD program.

In addition to SmartLink, the administration uses an app called "[CBP One](#)," which uses facial-recognition technology to compare photos of migrants with various refugee databases.

As [reported](#) by *The New American*, the DHS officials called the technology a "smart border" innovation, which they believed was more effective than the Trump administration's crude walls and bans. "In other words, putting electronic leashes on the newly arrived is 'more humane' and somehow 'smarter' than simply keeping them out," according to the report.

According to TRAC, up to 190,000 migrants are currently enrolled in ATD.

As [reported](#) by Fox News, conservative politicians and observers harshly criticized the administration on social media for giving out smartphones to illegal border-crossers, "saying that the administration should be 'securing the border' rather than accommodating people who migrate into the United States illegally."



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