

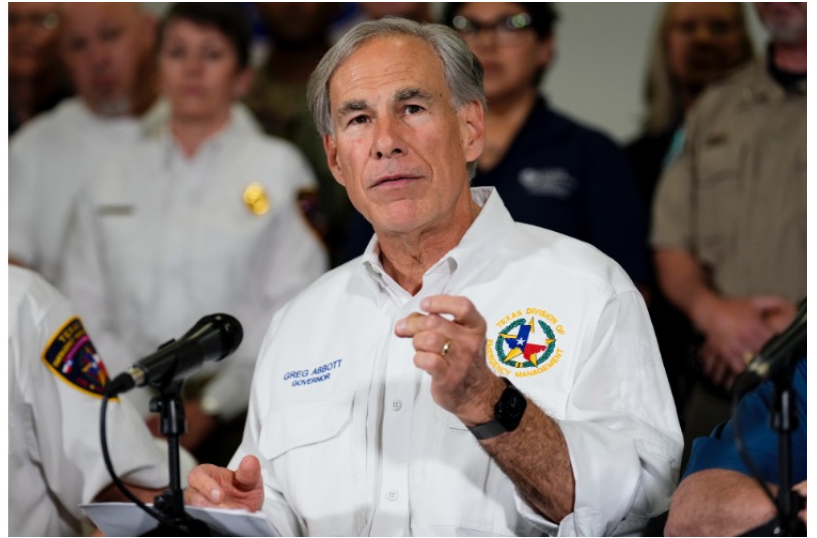


Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on June 20, 2024

Gov. Abbott: Operation Lone Star Decreases Illegal Crossings by 74%

Operation Lone Star has made significant strides in curbing illegal crossings and criminal activities at the Texas border, according to the latest update from Texas governor Greg Abbott.

According to the [press release](#) from June 14, since its inception on March 6, 2021, Operation Lone Star has resulted in more than 513,700 illegal-immigrant apprehensions and more than 44,000 criminal arrests, including more than 38,600 felony charges. As part of its ongoing battle against the fentanyl crisis, Texas law enforcement has seized more than 489 million lethal doses of fentanyl, a quantity that would be “enough to kill every man, woman, and child in the United States and Mexico combined.”



AP Images
Greg Abbott

Additionally, Texas has transported a total of more than 119,200 migrants to various cities across the United States. Those included Washington, D.C., New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Denver, and Los Angeles, all of which are sanctuary cities that have policies in place to limit cooperation with federal immigration enforcement, often providing an accommodating environment for illegal migrants.

Governor Abbott has consistently highlighted the failures of the federal government in addressing border security. He asserted in a press release,

Operation Lone Star continues to fill the dangerous gaps created by the Biden Administration’s refusal to secure the border. Every individual who is apprehended or arrested and every ounce of drugs seized would have otherwise made their way into communities across Texas and the nation due to President Joe Biden’s open border policies.

Abbott took to X to celebrate the success of Operation Lone Star, emphasizing that while Texas experienced a significant decrease in illegal border crossings, these numbers “skyrocketed” in states such as Arizona and California, which have taken a radically lenient approach to immigration enforcement.

“Operation Lone Star is working,” wrote Abbott. He added, “Texas will not back down from our fight against Joe Biden’s dangerous open border policies.”

The release also highlights Abbott’s recent appearance on Fox News with Maria Bartiromo to discuss President Biden’s [executive order](#) ostensibly aimed at barring illegal migrants who cross our Southern



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border from receiving asylum.

Abbott criticized the policy, claiming it fails to address the core issues and instead encourages more illegal immigration,

“The people need to understand that what Biden has done is not do anything to actually secure the border,” said Governor Abbott. “In fact, it’s the opposite because [President Biden] is actually authorizing more people to cross the border illegally. As long as the Biden Administration refuses to provide any type of enforcement, any type of blockage, of people crossing illegally, all that this new Biden policy is going to do is to actually attract and invite even more people to cross the border illegally. Ever since the Biden order went into place, there’s no slowing down of people crossing the border. In fact, it’s just accelerating.”

On June 15, Abbott posted on X that Texas continues to reinforce its borders with razor wire. “Texas National Guard soldiers install more anti-climb barriers along the Texas-Mexico border,” he wrote.

In addition to that, Texas is currently putting in place “new, innovative barriers,” said the governor, reiterating his commitment to “holding the line” against Joe Biden’s “inviting millions of people to illegally enter our country.”

On June 18, Abbott shared that Texas continues building its own border wall, which started in June 2021.

“Construction at the southern border continues in Val Verde County. Texas will use every available tool and strategy — including building our own border wall — to deter and repel illegal immigrants,” reads the post.

Operation Lone Star [was launched](#) in response to the record-high border crossings attributed to the Biden administration’s border policies. In May 2021, Governor Abbott issued a [disaster declaration](#), which now covers 53 counties primarily located along or near the border. This declaration granted him the authority to deploy the Texas National Guard to the border. Since its initial issuance, the declaration has been renewed multiple times. The Texas Department of Public Safety and the Texas Military Department are the state agencies responsible for executing Operation Lone Star.

Texas’s Legal Battles Over Immigration

Efforts by Texas to stem the record number of migrants illegally crossing the U.S.-Mexico border have set off a series of legal battles with the Biden administration. In early June, a U.S. appeals court heard arguments over the future of one key initiative — the placement of razor-wire fencing along a 29-mile stretch of the Rio Grande. Texas is appealing a ruling allowing federal Border Patrol agents to cut or remove the fencing. The outcome of the legal tussle could ultimately determine a seemingly obvious matter: how much power, if any, states possess to police international borders when they disagree with federal immigration policies.

As a part of Operation Lone Star, one of the most sweeping legislative efforts made by Texas to address illegal migration is a law known as [S.B. 4](#) that Abbott signed on December 18, 2023. The law makes it a



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state crime (class B Misdemeanor) to illegally enter or re-enter Texas from a foreign country. On February 29, a federal judge blocked the law from taking effect on March 18, 2024, agreeing with the Biden administration and civil-rights groups that it would interfere with the federal government's enforcement of immigration laws. The New Orleans-based 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in March upheld the judge's decision, pending an appeal by Texas. On March 12, the U.S. Supreme Court extended the stay on S.B. 4. On March 19, SCOTUS issued an order permitting the enforcement of S.B. 4 while challenges to the law proceed in federal court. The law would give state law enforcement the power to arrest and prosecute violators and allows judges to order migrants to leave the United States, with up to 20-year prison sentences for migrants who refuse to comply.



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