



Ted Cruz Says Dems Are Holding Immigrant Kids Ransom

In a rebuttal to a July 17 press release issued by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) — in which Reid charged that legislation introduced by Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) to end President Obama’s 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA) was being used as “ransom” — Cruz leveled a charge of his own during a July 20 Fox News interview: “I’ll tell you who’s holding these kids ransom is Harry Reid and the President, because their view is don’t do anything to fix the problem.”



The increase in the frequency and intensity of the exchanges between leading Republican and Democratic senators regarding the immigration crisis is an indication of how critical the situation has become and how important Americans have come to view the problem. (When a recent Gallup poll asked “What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?” 17 percent answered “Immigrations/Illegal Aliens”— the top choice.)

This latest exchange between Cruz and Reid started on July 17, when Cruz introduced S. 2631, “A bill to prevent the expansion of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program unlawfully created by Executive memorandum on August 15, 2012.” Cruz said in a press release explaining his reasons for introducing the bill: “We all recognize the terrible humanitarian crisis that is occurring at the border, and all of us should come together to end the policies that have caused it.”

Cruz noted that since Obama’s unilateral action in 2012 to implement DACA, the number of children arriving in the United States illegally has “predictably exploded.” The senator stated that the children from Central America were being “transported by dangerous criminals and drug cartels eager to exploit President Obama’s amnesty.”

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Cruz provided these statistics to document his charges:

- In 2011, approximately 6,000 unaccompanied minors came to the United States.
- In 2012, when President Obama issued DACA, the number of unaccompanied minors arriving in the United States rose to 14,000.
- In 2013, the number of unaccompanied minors arriving in the United States rose to 34,000.
- In 2014, Customs and Border Protection estimate 90,000 unaccompanied minors may be apprehended.
- In 2014, the Obama Administration has stated it expects 145,000 unaccompanied minors to enter the United States.

Cruz said that his bill, which has been cosponsored by Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) will “remove the current legal obstacles to humanely and expeditiously reuniting these minors with their families back



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home, and also to authorize governors to respond to crises like this by sending the National Guard to the border with arrest authority and at federal expense.”

Almost immediately after Cruz introduced his bill and made his explanatory statements, Reid jumped on the issue with a press release of his own, in which he faulted Cruz for insisting that any solution to ending the unaccompanied children crisis must also include a termination of Obama’s DACA program. “The Deferred Action plan is a positive step forward, and we should not go back. Especially not as a ransom for helping our Border Patrol care for desperate children,” asserted Reid.

It is not only Cruz and Republicans who want to expedite the processing of minors who have illegally crossed the border into the United States, however. A bipartisan pair of legislators from Texas, Republican Sen. John Cornyn and Democrat Rep. Henry Cuellar, introduced bills in their respective houses on July 15 that would accomplish this goal.

The bills, H.R. 5114, and S. 2611 — known as the Helping Unaccompanied Minors and Alleviating National Emergency (HUMANE) Act — would remedy some of the problems created by the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (S. 3061), signed into law by George W. Bush, which has made it nearly impossible to deport unaccompanied minors to Central America. The Obama administration has blamed that act for the current problem, so one would think that Democrats such as Reid would welcome both the Cornyn/Cuellar bills, and Cruz’s. But Reid was clear about his opposition to the HUMANE Act, calling it called it “too broad” and stating: “The answer from me is: No, I won’t support it.”

In his remarks aimed at Cruz’s new bill, Reid lambasted the Republicans, saying:

Before Republicans help our Border Patrol agents address this humanitarian crisis, they want President Obama to deport the DREAMers who are already living here. These are children, but instead of considering a thoughtful, compassionate solution to a real-life crisis, radical Republicans would rather hold these kids ransom. And so, once again, we see that there are no substantive solutions being offered by today’s Republican Party.

As we saw, a member of Reid’s own party, Rep. Cuellar (who has the advantage of representing a congressional district that borders the Rio Grande) joined with Republican Senator Cornyn (whose state of Texas shares the longest border with Mexico of any state) to introduce legislation that would expedite the processing of illegal minors and help address this crisis. But Reid will have none of it.

In his remarks countering Reid’s accusations, Cruz said of the Senate Majority Leader: “He mentions comprehensive immigration reform. The Gang of Eight bill is one of the causes of this problem. What the kids are saying is they are coming because they believe ... the part of the Gang of Eight bill promising amnesty.”

The “Gang of Eight” bill passed in the Senate on June 27, 2013, but the border crisis has reduced the chances of it even being voted on in the House.

“President Obama and Harry Reid are both engaging in debates divorced from the facts and reality,” Cruz also stated. “Harry Reid lives in the Ritz-Carlton in Washington, D.C. And I’m sure from his perspective the border seems secure.”

“I would invite Harry Reid to come with me down to Texas and see the border,” the senator continued. “On the border, we are seeing the opposite of following the law. The border is not secured; 90,000 children are expected to come into this country illegally this year and Harry Reid says the border is



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secure?”

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