

Testimony of Sheriff Roy Boyd

Goliad County, Texas

To the

Committee on the Judiciary

United States Senate

Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration

For A Hearing Titled:

“Biden’s Border Betrayal: Criminal Aliens in America”

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U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Border Security and Immigration
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

To the Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Border Security and Immigration,

My name is Roy Boyd and I am the Sheriff of Goliad County, Texas. Goliad is a rural south Texas county of around seven thousand souls, situated about halfway between Houston and Laredo, along U.S. Highway 59. This puts us about one-hundred and sixty miles from Mexico, and along a main travel corridor for legitimate and illegitimate product shipment to and from the border.

I have been a Peace Officer for thirty-one years, and retired from the Victoria Police Department and Victoria County Sheriff's Office prior to becoming the Sheriff of Goliad County.

I am here to speak about the impacts of the open border practices of the previous administration and how it affected the citizens of the community I serve. Throughout my career I have had many occasions to come into contact with those illegally in our country and have witnessed how the criminal activity of the Mexican cartels and their associates in the United States directly impact and victimize the citizens of America. However, beginning in 2021, the frequency of these activities exploded in our communities impacting our citizens far more frequently than at any point in my life.

Goliad is a rural county that has enjoyed relative safety and peace in the past several decades. During the five years prior to 2021, the Goliad County Sheriff's Office averaged 77 arrests per year. In contrast, it averaged 413 arrests per year from 2021 through 2024. I have found no previous cases for Smuggling of Persons or Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity in our records prior to 2021. This increase in criminal activity has been a challenge for our resources and has only been able to be met thanks to grant funding from the Office of Governor Abbott and the Stonegarden initiative through Border Patrol.

After taking Office, our first pursuit and bailout was on February 1, 2021. I was conducting traffic enforcement after receiving complaints about motorists running a particular stop sign. During my second stop of the morning, the driver of a Camaro fled, turned down a side street, and drove into a resident's back yard where he crashed into a parked truck. Approximately fourteen people exited the vehicle and fled into the brush. We apprehended four of the occupants, all of which were illegally in the U.S. For the next year and a half, the Goliad County Sheriff's Office was involved in pursuits and bailouts with smugglers transporting illegal aliens on behalf of Mexican cartels almost weekly.

As the evidence of mass cartel activities continued to increase in the spring of 2021, we began to uncover cartel stash sites throughout the county. These locations are where cartel operatives will trespass on private property and set up waypoints where they store stolen trucks used to transport illegal aliens, conduct logistical resupplies for their personnel, stash illegal aliens while in transit from the border to Houston, and to hide from law enforcement when they have successfully evaded apprehension. The presence of cartel activity in rural areas led many residents to fear being alone on their property at night, as citizens could often hear activity and voices in remote areas of the county after dark. Our investigations eventually revealed sixteen cartel stash sites in Goliad County.

Our first large scale investigation related to the Mexican cartels began in early 2021, with the discovery of a group of smugglers working under Jalisco New Generation Cartel from Michoacan, Mexico that was conducting a human smuggling operation out of Miguel Aleman, Mexico, directly across from Roma, Texas. This group was working with numerous criminal organizations within the United States to steal trucks, steal license plates, identify and set up stash sites, provide logistical support, and transport people illegally brought into our country. According to our federal partners on the case, it was estimated that this contract organization was moving about 100,000 people from the border region to Houston per year. After numerous pursuits and an exhaustive effort by local, state, and federal law enforcement working together, we were able to identify the primary participants on the Texas side of the border and make the necessary apprehensions to dismantle the organization. The primary persons overseeing the organization in Texas were all illegally in the United States and were all armed with numerous weapons.

The above organization is but one of the numerous groups of various sizes we discovered during the past four years working under the direction of cartels in Mexico. Between 2021 and 2025 the Goliad County Sheriff's Office has arrested ninety-six people for Smuggling of Persons and one-hundred and twenty-six for Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity. During that same time, we arrested one-hundred and fifteen illegal aliens on two-hundred and sixty-six criminal charges. We also turned over an additional one-hundred and forty-five illegal aliens to Border Patrol from other contacts made in the course of conducting daily business.

The real cost of the open border has not been realized nor calculated in totality. Unlike what people often hear, cartels are highly compartmentalized organizations. They primarily operate in Mexico and utilize liaisons, contractors, sub-contractors, and affiliates to conduct business inside the United States. As an example, the business of human smuggling is a complex model that requires numerous isolated cells creating numerous victims for each step of the process. There are guides who take new arrivals from the Rio Grande illegally through private property to pick-up points in border communities. From there illegal aliens are moved to stash houses or hotels where they await transportation north where they will be dropped off south of a checkpoint. Once dropped off, a "coyote" will guide them on a trail circumventing the Border Patrol checkpoint where they will trespass on numerous ranches while moving north. This is where many will die in the harsh brush country of south Texas. There are groups who are responsible for stealing trucks for transporting illegal aliens from north of the checkpoints.

Other organizations steal front license plates from vehicles that match the year, make, model, and color of the various stolen trucks in use at that time. Throughout the small towns between the pickup point and Houston, the organizations have scouts to drive along the roadways and let smugglers know about any law enforcement on the roadways. They also act as interference occupying law enforcement by committing minor violations to distract officers and pick up illegal aliens and smugglers after they bail out after a pursuit. Other scouts look for remote private properties where stash sites can be set up without the knowledge and consent of the owners.

Other uncalculated costs are the damages done by smugglers and illegal alien groups. In south Texas, the McAllen ranch has recently sustained more than \$100,000 per year in fence repairs alone. Many other ranches across south Texas have damage amounts that are similar. The vast amount of trash left on ranches is staggering, with ranchers being forced to rent industrial size dumpsters and hiring full-time staff just to pick up trash and prevent their cattle from ingesting it and becoming ill and dying. All throughout Texas fences have been damaged by thousands of events in which smugglers have left roadways and driven through fences. Agricultural buildings have been ruined by smugglers and illegal aliens. Rural houses have been burglarized, squatted in, and made uninhabitable as a result of the volume of people being brought through who have no care for the personal property of others.

While the above examples touch on the damage to property we have witnessed, it is the human tragedy that is most difficult to count. Psychological and physical damage has been done to our citizens and to many of the illegal aliens who have found themselves in indentured servitude throughout the United States.

On April 24, 2021, the Goliad County Sheriff's Office stopped Brisa Santana of Irving, Texas. Santana had three females in her vehicle. Questioning revealed that the girls were being smuggled from the border to Houston. Santana was arrested. Upon arrival at the Goliad County Jail, it was discovered that she possessed fictitious social security cards in the panties she was wearing for each of the three illegal aliens. It was determined that the three girls already had family members in the United States illegally and thought they were coming to America where they would reunite with family members smuggled in previously. The investigation revealed that the girls were unaware that they were actually being taken to the "Chinatown" area of Houston where they were intended to be placed into forced prostitution by the organization that brought them into the U.S. The girls were considered "especials" due to their youth and beauty and were determined to be too valuable in the sex slave market to be taken to their intended destinations. Santana said that she had been recruited to smuggle the girls by a man from Mexico while at a bar in Dallas.

On July 3, 2025, the Goliad County Sheriff's Office arrested Jovani Rodriguez-Aboytes when we discovered him trespassing in an agricultural field. Aboytes was wanted for a murder he was seen on video committing earlier that same date in Galveston, Texas. He was also wanted out of Indianapolis, Indiana for Aggravated Robbery for breaking into a house and committing an assault. Aboytes had been previously deported as a violent felon and had illegally reentered the

U.S. At the time of his apprehension, Aboytes was found to be in possession of the clothes he was wearing on video at the time of the murder, as well as the handgun he was suspected of using. At the time of apprehension, Aboytes claimed to be from Mexico. However, previous government documents indicate that his hometown is Isfahan, Iran. As of this time, we have not received verification of his true origin.

While some may wish you to believe that there is no violence associated with what they claim as an immigration issue, I am here to state that the victimization of citizens and non-citizens alike have drastically increased as a result of the previous administration ceding control of our border to the Mexican cartels. To be fair, the border has always been a location of criminal activity, however, I have never witnessed such a sudden increase in blatantly open criminal activity as I did between 2021 and 2024.

I have lived in south Texas my entire life. My family has been here since Texas was part of Mexico. I have interviewed smugglers, sicarios, victims of smugglers and cartels, and have been to more dead bodies of illegal aliens unceremoniously dumped in ditches than I can recall. We now have millions of people in our nation who are part of a peon class of slaves who were brought here on a promise of a better life but have found themselves in a never-ending cycle of work and debt to their masters. They live ten to fifteen together in one bedroom apartments where their owners charge them rent and utilities while they work in kitchens, on farms, in hotels, or in other jobs where they are not paid directly for their labor. And these are the lucky ones who are not placed into forced prostitution.

For any who do not believe that these things are happening in America, I leave you with the words from the opening of a letter I found in a backpack in a house where sex slaves were being kept in Rockport, Texas.

“In USA we sometimes have something like a slave boy and slave girl. We call it indentured servant...”

This letter goes on to articulate that it takes five to thirteen years for these slaves to buy their freedom. That is, unless they are sold to a new master before the debt is paid off.

Thank you for your time and consideration to this most important matter.

I yield for any questions you may have.

Humbly Submitted,

Roy Boyd
Sheriff – Goliad County, TX