



**Opening Statement of Rep. Aaron Bean (R-FL), Chairman
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
Hearing: “The Consequences of Biden’s Border Chaos for K-12 Schools”
June 4, 2024**

(As prepared for delivery)

Thank you for gathering today to discuss how open border policies are impacting K-12 education across the United States.

Since President Joe Biden took office in 2021, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has encountered nearly half a million unaccompanied alien children. In Fiscal Year 2023 alone, the U.S. saw over three million illegal entries, the highest number in history.

President Biden has failed to secure the southern border, and the surge of migrants places an immense strain on cities, states, and local school districts.

K-12 schools—the subject of today’s hearing—are often the first to feel the impact of our open border. In 1982, the Supreme Court prohibited states from denying illegal immigrant children a public-school education. In the years since, tens of millions of illegal immigrants have flooded across the border, with countless filtering into the school system.

The financial impact is staggering. Educating illegal immigrant children requires substantial resources, altering the learning environment for all students. Overcrowded classrooms, the need for new facilities, and strained student-to-teacher ratios are just some of the challenges.

In just four states—California, New York, Texas, and Arizona—the cost of integrating illegal immigrant children into public schools reached nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars in one fiscal year. If we assume that every illegal immigrant child encountered by border patrol enters the school system, the cost nationwide would be over two billion dollars annually.

If you are playing Congressional Blame Game Bingo at home, get your dauber's ready and be prepared to hear the following bingo words: that it's President Trump's fault, Republicans are inhumane, we are demonizing immigrants, we are underfunding schools, we don't care about kids, we are xenophobic, and the Senate immigration bill is the answer.

All of which are simply untrue. We are a nation of immigrants, but the influx of illegal immigration is out of control.

Here are the real-world consequences of Biden's disastrous border policy:

In New York, students were switched to online learning because nearly 2,000 illegal immigrants were sheltered in a school gymnasium.

In Austin, Texas, teachers had to conduct classes in hallways and conference rooms to accommodate over 400 newly enrolled illegal immigrant children.

In Denver, an influx of over 40,000 illegal immigrants forced the state to spend an extra \$24 million to cover the cost.

In Chicago, the mayor says the city's resources are "tapped out," whereas a local teacher stated, "Over 40 percent of our students qualify for English learner services, and the numbers are continuing to grow."

In Massachusetts, public schools have absorbed 2,000 new illegal immigrant students, forcing districts to find emergency housing and adjust to new students, often with little notice.

And in New Mexico, there were incidents of adult-age illegal immigrants hiding in a middle school to avoid apprehension from Border Patrol, which led to the arrest of six illegal immigrants and prompted temporary lockdowns.

Additionally, Biden's open border policies are inhumane, particularly to children. Encouraging adults to use children in an attempt to come to this country illegally, and then dumping them in strange places ill-equipped to provide for them, is wrong. Now more than ever, every state is a border state.

The House passed the bipartisan *Schools Not Shelters Act* to stop housing unvetted illegal immigrants in schools, but the legislation has stalled at Senator Schumer's desk. More must be done, and we will continue to apply pressure until the well-being of our communities is secure.

In just a moment you'll hear firsthand from our all-star panel, which has some of the most impacted school districts in the nation.