



COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION & LABOR  
REPUBLICANS

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STATEMENT

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**Opening Statement of Rep. Fred Keller (R-PA), Republican Leader**  
**Subcommittee on Workforce Protections**  
**“Second Class Workers: Assessing H2 Visa Programs Impact on Workers”**  
**July 20, 2022**

(As prepared for delivery)

“Hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens are pouring across the border every month because of President Biden’s open border policies, yet Democrats are holding a hearing about the nuances of legal temporary guest worker programs. This is a case of missing the forest for the trees.

“Discussing reforms to the H2 programs makes little sense when the border is open and immigration laws aren’t enforced. H2 employers following the rules cannot compete with bad actors hiring illegal aliens who are coming into the country in record numbers.

“Employers need the ability to bring in temporary guest workers when no U.S. workers are available, although the H2 programs should be more efficient and easier for employers to use. These programs are certainly in need of reforms. But these programs are far from our primary concern.

“In 2021, Border Patrol Agents arrested almost two million aliens trying to cross the border illegally. This does not count the 700,000 aliens who entered the country without being apprehended since President Biden took office. In May alone, almost 240,000 aliens were encountered at the southern border—an historic high.

“What caused the massive influx of illegal crossings and dangerous conditions? President Biden’s open border policies. Ending the Trump-era Remain in Mexico policy, suspending asylum agreements with the Northern Triangle countries, and stopping construction of the border wall—Biden has done everything in his power to make our border less secure and Americans less safe.

“Under the catch-and-release policy, over a million aliens have been allowed into the country with little hope that they will show up for their asylum hearing—asylum hearings that won’t be scheduled for two to three years because of a massive backlog. We also recently discovered that sponsors of Unaccompanied Alien Children—who sometimes house and care for these children—do not need to be in the United States lawfully themselves, raising serious questions about our vetting processes.

“Both the Biden administration’s rhetoric and policies are creating incentives for more aliens to flood the border. For example, instead of trying to secure the border, the Biden administration is fighting to

end Title 42, which could increase border encounters from approximately 7,700 a day to 18,000 per day.

“The Biden administration’s policies are enriching human traffickers and drug cartels. The Sinaloa Cartel, for example, is making a fortune smuggling drugs that are killing Americans. Ninety percent of fentanyl enters the U.S. from the southern border, and it is now the leading cause of death among Americans ages 18 to 45. These ruthless smugglers have also been known to abandon children in the desert, place aliens in unsafe conditions, and abuse women and children in the process.

“The Biden administration’s decision to ignore immigration laws, bolstered by Congressional Democrats’ endorsement of this behavior, makes the topic of this hearing misguided at best. President Biden’s willful decision to ignore immigration laws makes every American less safe.

“Until the border is secure, the wall is built, and our immigration laws are being enforced, we will not be able to have a meaningful discussion about reforming the H2 work visa programs.”

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