

LEADING THE WAY 2023 WRAP UP



Illicit Fentanyl and the Border: Myths, Facts, and Solutions

Speakers focused on the scope of the illicit fentanyl crisis and its interplay with U.S. border policy, highlighting common myths and proposing policy solutions. The panel highlighted how fentanyl and border policy are often distinct issues, noting that fentanyl is mostly smuggled by U.S. citizens through ports of entry, but also acknowledging that border and migration challenges create complications for authorities attempting to combat drug smuggling. Panelists agreed on the need to improve screening and infrastructure at ports of entry to interdict fentanyl and other drugs while preserving the flow of trade and commerce across the U.S.-Mexico border.

Watch the full panel conversation [here](#).

This conversation included:

- **Vikrant Reddy**, Senior Fellow, Stand Together Trust (moderator)
- **Theresa Cardinal Brown**, Senior Advisor, Bipartisan Policy Center
- **Glenn Hamer**, President & CEO, Texas Association of Business
- **Mario Moreno**, Chief of Staff, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy
- **Dr. Jeffrey Singer**, Senior Fellow, Cato Institute

Forum Resources:

- [Illicit Fentanyl and Drug Smuggling at the U.S.-Mexico Border: An Overview](#)
- [Statement for the Record U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary Hearing on “The Biden Border Crisis: Part III” — May 23, 2023](#)

Answers at the Southern Border: Creating an Orderly and Humane Process



Panelists examined current challenges at the U.S. southern border, the interaction between federal and state actions on border security, and the urgent need for solutions from Congress to create a more efficient, secure and humane border process. They also discussed Texas' expanding border enforcement measures, recent border policy changes by the Biden administration, and the importance of humanitarian parole programs to help address the increase in asylum seekers at the border. Panelists agreed that the U.S. southern border requires practical and realistic solutions, such that the process at the border is orderly and protects the humanity of every person.

Watch the full panel conversation [here](#).

This conversation included:

- **John Salazar**, Spectrum News (moderator)
- **Doug Baker**, Founder, Baker Global Advisory
- **Tess Clarke**, Director, We Welcome
- **Laura Collins**, Director, Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative
- **Efrén Olivares**, Interim Director of Strategic Litigation, Southern Poverty Law Center

Forum Resources:

- [Interactive Journey to the U.S. Southern Border](#)
- [National Immigration Forum's Border Resources Directory](#)
- [Q&A: What to Know About the Biden Administration's New Asylum Restrictions](#)

Fireside Chat — Immigration and Economic Prosperity: Tackling Workforce and Inflation Challenges through Reforms



This conversation highlighted the importance of expanding legal migration pathways to tackle the labor shortage and reduce inflation. The difficulty of finding workers across multiple sectors has increased inflation, in addition to other negative impacts on businesses and the broader economy. Given demographic realities — an aging population and low U.S. fertility rates — labor shortages are expected to worsen in the coming decades. Speakers emphasized that expanding legal migration pathways would be an effective response to these challenges: It would address labor shortages, counter demographic trends, and improve the U.S. economy.

Watch the full panel conversation [here](#).

This conversation included:

- **Linda Lorelle**, Lorelle Media (moderator)
- **Stephanie Martz**, Chief Administrative Officer, National Retail Federation
- **Steve Stephens**, Chief Executive Officer, Amegy Bank

Forum Resources:

- [America's Labor Shortage: How Low Immigration Levels Accentuated the Problem and How Immigration Can Fix It](#)
- [Room to Grow: Setting Immigration Levels in a Changing America](#)
- [Room to Grow: One Year Later](#)

In the Absence of Immigration Reforms: How Temporary Protections Present Opportunities and Challenges



Without border and immigration solutions from Congress, presidential administrations increasingly have relied on temporary forms of protection so immigrants can work legally in the United States. Expert stakeholders and affected individuals discussed the realities of living under a system where temporary protections can allow for some relief but also subject people to a protracted legal limbo defined by uncertainty for immigrants, their employers, and their communities. Together, the panelists urged federal policymakers to move toward more permanent solutions for people who are already here and contributing.

Watch the full panel conversation [here](#).

This conversation included:

- **Michelle Hackman**, Wall Street Journal (moderator)
- **Farishta Afzaly**, Afghan Youth Advocate
- **Dr. J. Blair Blackburn**, President, East Texas Baptist University
- **Jesus Contreras**, DACA beneficiary
- **Luis Cova**, Venezuelan Temporary Protected Status holder
- **Dane Linn**, Senior Vice President, Business Roundtable

Forum Resources:

- [Fact Sheet: Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\)](#)
- [Explainer: Humanitarian Parole](#)
- [Explainer: What We Can Learn from Prior Adjustment Acts and What They Mean for Afghan Resettlement](#)
- [Explainer: U.S. District Court Judge Hanen Finds New DACA Rule Unlawful](#)