

are going to have extradited removal when they get there. Except, when we ran the numbers to be able to look at it, at how many people are actually removed who get expedited removal, the number came back 7 percent.

So expedited removal doesn't actually mean removal. It is just a title that is being placed on individuals. So nothing is really changing there.

And as I mentioned before, these are not just individuals from Central America or from Mexico. These are individuals coming from all over the world.

When our bipartisan codel was down on the border a few weeks ago, we watched two individuals who had just been picked up by mounted patrol as they were running across the border. But they were not running faster than the mounted patrol, which was able to catch up with them, and they were able to arrest them. Those two individuals were Chinese nationals who were making their way across the border illegally at night, running from the Border Patrol.

People from all over the world are coming because there is an invitation to illegally cross the border. People are coming right now because it is actually easier to get a job in America. If you are living in another country and you want to work in America, it is easier to get a job in America if you illegally cross.

That is not just me saying that. That is the data saying that. If you are outside the United States and you apply for a work visa and want to be able to come in in a legal, normal process, to be able to go through, currently it is 6½ months to be able to get that work visa—6½ months. But if you illegally cross our border and you are labeled with "parole"—and the mass number of people are labeled with "parole" when they illegally cross our border—you get a work permit within 3 to 4 weeks. So you could legally do this and wait 6½ months or you could illegally do this and you get it in 3 to 4 weeks. Literally, this administration is incentivizing illegal activity with how they are setting up the work permits.

Listen, there are a lot of things this Congress needs to do to be able to deal with illegal immigration. I have stated over and over and over again that the asylum laws need to change. We have got to do a real fix. This is the issue, and it has been multiple administrations that have said that this is the problem. In fact, this administration, just in the last month, has floated the idea of changing the regulation on how they actually handle asylum, and I have affirmed them for that. That has got to change in the way it is being implemented. It also needs to change in law in the way we handle it here.

But there is also the legal process of actually enforcing our laws on the southern border that will make a significant difference not incentivizing individuals to be able to illegally cross our border. There are things the ad-

ministration can do, and they are not doing currently. There are things that this body needs to do that we have not taken up.

Two hundred and fifty thousand people illegally crossed our southwest border last month. When are we going to act on this problem? It needs to be now.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Madam President, I started the new year by joining Senator BLACKBURN of Tennessee and our new colleague Senator BRITT of Alabama on a recent tour of the Del Rio Border Sector in Texas.

We traveled to the border to gain more firsthand knowledge of the ongoing mass migration of illegal immigrants into our Nation, to hear from Border Patrol agents about how they are handling this crisis, and to, perhaps more powerfully, hear from young women and girls who are victims of President Biden's careless border and immigration policies.

We learned more how States are taking action to protect their citizens and their borders when the administration won't. Few States are affected more than Texas, which instituted Operation Lone Star in March of 2021 to counter illegal immigration and drug trafficking.

We looked on as a family led by a coyote crossed the Rio Grande in dangerously cold waters and witnessed the family's struggle to help their grandmother wade through rushing waters to enter our Nation illegally. She made it safely across, but, sadly, that is not always the case for many people, including children who have drowned making the same trek under the misguided belief that our borders are open.

We visited a massive migrant processing center where illegal immigrants were taken upon arrival. An astonishing fact about this processing center is that it costs U.S. taxpayers \$16 million a month to operate, and that is just one of five on the southern border. Let me say that again. It is costing American taxpayers \$16 million per month to process illegal immigrants at just one of these five centers.

What was especially gut-wrenching to me was hearing directly from human trafficking victims. We heard from one young lady who was trafficked from the age of 12 to the age of 16. She told a story I will never forget, and there are thousands of stories just like hers.

Yes, we learned about the true severity of the crisis. We learned how Border Patrol agents simply cannot carry out their jobs. We learned how States are forced to use up resources on border security and migrants—resources meant for U.S. citizens. We learned how ranchers and U.S. property owners are being overwhelmed and in constant fear of being robbed and assaulted by

smugglers. We learned how all of this affects our entire Nation—not just the unbelievable pricetag, but in the incidences of human trafficking across the country and tens of thousands of overdose deaths linked to fentanyl smuggled across our border.

And, heartbreakingly, we learned of the wickedness of the cartels. They are thriving, thanks to President Biden's apathetic attitude toward his own country's border.

This should not be a political debate. People and children are dying in an attempt to enter our country illegally. Drug cartels are taking control of not just the border towns on the Mexican side of the border but on the American side too. Human trafficking is now a \$13 billion industry.

How did we get here? Why do they come? Well, because our President basically invited them. Immediately after President Biden was sworn in, he started dismantling vital policies like "Remain in Mexico" and restarted catch-and-release, halted construction on the border, and, essentially, set up a big neon sign on the southwest border that read "Vacant."

The rest is history: 4.5 million border apprehensions with an estimated 1.5 million undetected got-aways, a staggering increase in the number of women and children who are being subject to assault and domestic violence, fentanyl flowing into our communities and skyrocketing deaths.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to go and listen to Border Patrol agents. Hear the stories of the cartel victims. See for yourself the heartbreaking scenarios the greatest country in the world is allowing to unfold.

I learned much from my visit to the border, but perhaps the worst thing I learned is this: The Biden administration is not lacking any resources or authority to address this crisis. No, it can support our Border Patrol and border States. It can secure our border. It can save children from dying and drowning in the Rio Grande or 14-year-old girls from being sold. But it won't, either through incompetence or, worse, by design.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I want to thank my friend and colleague from Mississippi for her comments on this subject.

I am down here on the floor to also talk about the crisis at the border—the humanitarian crisis, the Homeland Security crisis, and a crisis that is resulting in cartels making \$800 million a year in human trafficking.

I joined a bipartisan delegation 2 weeks ago. We visited the border. It was very productive. It was one of the first bipartisan delegations in quite some time. The reason that was important is, if you go down there with a