

**Statement of Brandon Judd  
On Behalf of the National Border Patrol Council  
Before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security  
Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability  
Hearing Entitled: “Biden’s Growing Border Crisis:  
Death, Drugs, and Disorder on the Northern Border”  
March 28, 2023**

Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Ivey and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, I would like to thank you for inviting me to testify before you today in order to communicate the resource gaps and vulnerabilities that currently exist along our northern border with Canada.

My name is Brandon Judd and I currently serve as the President of the National Border Patrol Council, where I represent approximately 16,000 Border Patrol field agents and support staff. I have more than 25 years of experience as a Border Patrol Agent and a thorough understanding of the issues and policies affecting border security. During my career as a Border Patrol Agent, I have been assigned to two Northern Border Sectors – Houlton, Maine and Havre, Montana.

While nearly all of the focus in recent years has been on our southern border with Mexico, I applaud the Committee for holding this hearing and conducting much needed, and timely oversight of the lack of resources and the very real vulnerabilities that exist along our northern border.

Our 5,500-mile land and water border with Canada is well over twice the length of our border with Mexico. Even with such a vast amount of territory to patrol, we have only about 2,000 Border Patrol Agents assigned to the northern border. Given the 24/7 nature of our work, which is spread across three shifts per day, this leaves us with only about 450 Agents on duty at any one time. That is all.

Our northern border has some of the most rugged conditions you can imagine, both in terms of topography as well as weather, and we have to patrol it without the infrastructure we have along the southern border. We have many Agents who lack the ability to simply communicate with one another in the field. Even when they can talk, backup might be more than an hour away if they request assistance.

To help the Subcommittee better understand the threat landscape, last year about 107,000 individuals were denied entry into the U.S. from Canada. About 40,000 of these individuals were Canadians and were most likely denied entry because of a criminal record. The other 60,000 were not from Canada and tried to enter our country through the front door but were denied. Many of them will now try to enter the U.S. between the ports of entry where are limited personnel resources are spread razor thin.

Furthermore, Canada has a more permissive visa system than we have in the U.S. Let me give you two examples. First, Mexican citizens can travel to Canada without a visa. Mexican

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citizens can land in Toronto and illegally cross into New York in just a couple of hours. They don't have to contend with security measures such as fencing, aerostats, or drones, like we have on the southern border. Individuals crossing illegally can cross either on land or even more easily by boat on one of the Great Lakes if the weather is good.

Second, Chinese tourists or students seeking entry to the U.S. are required to provide extensive documentation including being interviewed at a U.S. consulate. However, the bar for a visa to Canada is lower. They can land in Vancouver and, in a matter of hours, illegally cross our border by land or by boat into Washington State.

Canada is a sovereign country and they are free to determine who is eligible to enter their country, be granted asylum, or resettled as a refugee. Last year Canada processed over 4.8 million visa applications. This is for a country of 38 million people. In contrast, we processed 6.8 million visa applications, and we have a population of 330 million. So the number of travelers to Canada is significant.

The reality is that while the vast majority of those visa applicants to Canada are likely law abiding individuals, there are many that see entry to Canada as a gateway to the U.S. given our more stringent visa standards.

Last year, Border Patrol apprehended over 2,000 people along the northern border. However, because we lack the personnel and situational awareness on the northern border, and due to the forced deployment of Agents stationed on the northern border down to the southern border – in response to President Biden's border crisis – we are apprehending only a small fraction of illegal crossings.

While I have described a number of vulnerabilities and challenges we're contending with along the northern border, Congress does have the ability to dramatically improve border security, situational awareness and Agent safety along both the northern and southern borders.

Border Patrol staffing currently hovers around 19,300 Agents nationwide. In February, Tucson Sector Chief John Modlin testified before the House Oversight and Accountability Committee that Border Patrol needs at least 22,000 Agents to deal with the current crisis.

Increasing net personnel by 2,700 agents is going to take a tremendous effort that will require us to do two things simultaneously. First, we need to keep the Agents we already have and recruit more Agents. Sounds simple, but we have a problem. Border Patrol's attrition rate is currently 6.9 percent which is 72 percent higher than the Office of Field Operations. Furthermore, our attrition rate is expected to climb to over 9 percent by 2028.

The primary reason we cannot adequately recruit and retain Agents is that we lack pay parity with other federal law enforcement agencies.

If we continue to hemorrhage personnel, there is no way we will secure the border. We have spent billions on fencing, aircraft, and technology over the course of my career. All of these

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investments are important - and I want to thank you for it. However, we have not sufficiently invested in our agents, which are the most important element in border security.

Last Congress, Senators Portman, Sinema, Lankford and Kelly introduced S. 4775 which has a provision, section 4, to address our recruitment and retention issues. I know the Committee is working on significant reform legislation to address the border crisis and we greatly appreciate your efforts. I respectfully ask that you take action and that action must include addressing our recruitment and retention issues.

I thank the Subcommittee for inviting me here today and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.