



## San Diego County Mayors Urge State, Feds to End Border Crisis

### Description

**US : Some San Diego County leaders are calling on the state and federal governments to crack down on illegal immigration, abolish sanctuary city policies, and end the border crisis.**

Several mayors held a press conference April 15 near Carlsbad State Beach where a boatload of illegal migrants landed over the weekend, narrowly missing a surfer and swimmers as it sped to the shore.

The incident was captured in a video showing the boat, at full speed coming to shore, followed by 10 illegal immigrants jumping out of it and running into a neighborhood where an SUV was waiting to pick them up.

Such illegal maritime border crossings have become more frequent in recent months, according to U.S. Border Patrol sources.

“It was a very coordinated effort, and it happened right here,” San Diego County Supervisor Jim Desmond said at the press conference. “It has been happening quite a bit more often than we’d like to see here in San Diego County.”

Authorities have no idea who or where the migrants are now, Mr. Desmond said. “These people were not vetted at all,” he said. According to Mr. Desmond, the county has seen a nearly 140 percent increase in maritime human smuggling since 2020.

Since September, more 125,000 illegal immigrants have entered the county with more than 25,000 being released on area streets in the last two months, he said. The numbers do not include known “gotaways” such as those who evade Border Patrol.

Thousands of migrants have been released on the streets at Iris Station, a transit hub in San Ysidro, Mr. Desmond said, and hundreds more have been dropped in Oceanside and El Cajon.

Because California’s sanctuary city policies prohibit other law enforcement agencies from working with

Immigration Customs and Enforcement—better known as ICE—and the U.S. Border Patrol, even if illegal immigrants commit another crime aside from entering the U.S. illegally are arrested, jailed and released, police aren't allowed to turn them over, he said.

"I want to underscore that point because most people don't realize that," Mr. Desmond said. "The state of California gives free health care to illegal immigrants. The County of San Diego gives free legal defense to those here illegally seeking asylum ...no matter what crime they commit."

While other states such as Arizona and Texas have stepped up border security, the San Diego Border Patrol saw nearly 7,000 encounters last week, the most of any sector in the country.

"We stand here today to call upon the state of California and the federal government. We cannot have people just rushing in on boats onto our shores and going into neighborhoods. We need harsher penalties on human smugglers," Mr. Desmond said.

Illegal immigrants are coming to San Diego because the state and federal governments have rolled out a "red carpet" for them, and they know there is little risk of repercussions or deportation, he said.

"We need to make major changes for the safety of our people, the safety of all of San Diego County," Mr. Desmond said. "We need the state and federal officials to bring more resources, whether it's more Coast Guard or National Guard. ...We've got to come together and allow law enforcement to communicate with ICE. We need to be able to deport criminals out of the country."

Carlsbad Mayor Keith Blackburn blamed the border crisis on Senate Bill 54, which was enacted in 2018 prohibiting state and local authorities from investigating, detaining or arresting migrants to assist federal immigration enforcement.

"SB 54 prohibits city police from taking any immigration enforcement action," he said. "Please don't blame our police. Carlsbad supports legislation to combat this."

He said if residents aren't happy with the current situation, they should make their feelings known.

"I strongly encourage you to contact your state and federal lawmakers and tell them that you're not happy," he said.

Vista Mayor John Franklin, who has visited the southern border about seven times in the last three years, said that unlike illegal immigrants who surrender to Border Patrol agents at illegal land crossings, those who land at beaches are doing so to hide criminal activity.

"These are individuals that are smuggling drugs like fentanyl into our communities that are killing our children," he said.

He said, as such, leaders are calling on President Biden and the U.S. Congress to increase security at

the county's ports and beaches.

"We need border security for the safety of our residents, and we need it now," Mr. Franklin said.

Oceanside Deputy Mayor Ryan Keim, a former city police officer, also urged all elected local leaders to pressure the federal government "to do something" to protect beach communities.

"When I see a video of a highspeed boat coming through the surf line [and] narrowly missing surfers on a busy Saturday, that's unacceptable," he said.

He said similar incidents of migrants coming ashore in boats have occurred at night on secluded beaches. But last weekend's incident was different.

"This is one of our most popular beaches. It's one my family has been to many times," he said.

The "chaos at the border" is "extremely frustrating" for local leaders, he added.

"The fact that many of these crossers know there will be no consequences here encourages this and it makes our cities less safe," he said. San Marcos Mayor Rebecca Jones called for increased U.S. Coast Guard presence.

"We must protect our borders and our communities," she said. "Strengthening Coast Guard patrols is crucial not only for combating illegal immigration but also for safeguarding our communities [from] potential threats and criminal activities."

The mayors called for better border security, increased penalties for human smugglers, an end to sanctuary city policies.

The San Diego Board of Supervisors declared a "humanitarian crisis" at the southern border in late September, which Mr. Desmond said was in response to the Biden administration's failure to provide enough resources to handle the influx of illegal immigrants.

Tom Homan, former acting ICE director during the Trump administration, has long blamed the border crisis on Biden-era policies which he says are "by design."

Meanwhile, California Gov. Gavin has defended the Biden administration and blamed congressional Republicans for the border crisis.

"Let's be clear: President Biden is doing all he can to fund border security and humanitarian efforts while Republicans in Congress are choosing border chaos for political gain," he said in an April 12 statement.

Touting \$650 million in federal grants to address "humanitarian and security efforts at the southern border" did not say what, if anything, the Biden administration is doing, to stem the flow of illegal migrants into the United States.

The state has also funded more than \$1.3 billion for "humanitarian assistance and related assistance," since 2019, and has awarded grants to non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, that have provided

temporary shelter and support services for more than 500,000 individuals since 2021, according to the governor's office.

“Congressional Republicans also continue to undermine opportunities to advance border security, modernize our immigration system to support our economy and American workers, and pass a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers and other long-term undocumented people who have contributed to our economy for decades,” according to the statement.

**BY Brad Jones**

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