

MEMO

RE: White House Recycling Debunked Claims Regarding DHS Funding
FROM: Raj Shah, Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications, Speaker Mike Johnson
TO: Interested Parties
DATE: January 5, 2024

Overview

As Speaker Mike Johnson led the largest congressional delegation in history to the southwest border to witness firsthand the Biden Administration's border crisis, the White House began citing a portion of the President's supplemental funding request and previously debunked talking points to mislead the public about Republicans' record and position on border security funding.

Let's correct the record.

White House Using Phony Numbers In Already Debunked Talking Point

The White House has begun to spin its disastrous record on the southwest border by falsely claiming Republicans had an "anti-border security record" and "attempt[ed] to cut Customs and Border Protection personnel." Specifically, they claimed the House voted "to eliminate over 2,000 Border Patrol agents and erode our capacity to seize fentanyl earlier in 2023."

But this is a debunked talking point recycled from last year that was already rated "[FALSE](#)" by Newsweek and "[Mostly False](#)" by PolitiFact. As one analyst told PolitiFact, "[*the White House is using fake numbers to analyze an appropriations bill that does not exist.*](#)" To be clear, the House never voted on any appropriations bill that would have cut thousands of agents from southwest border operations.

In fact, the Republican House-passed [FY24](#) Homeland Security appropriations bill increased border security funding above the President's Budget Request, including Border Patrol agents at the highest level ever funded, and ICE custody operations at a level more than ever previously appropriated. All but 2 House Democrats voted against that bill, and the President threatened to veto it.

Congress Has Appropriated More Funds, Always Beyond President Biden's Budget Requests, And Seen Record Crossings At The Border

Despite inadequate budget requests under President Biden, from FY22 to FY23 Congress has appropriated billions more in funds for the U.S. Border Patrol and ICE along the southwest border.

Funding for Border Patrol operations and related Southwest border requirements has increased by over \$2.28B, or 47%, since FY21. Similar ICE operations funding has increased by \$860M, and in FY23, Congress rejected cuts the President requested to ICE funding that would have significantly cut detention capacity and overall immigration enforcement operations.

\$ in Millions	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	% Increase Since Biden Took Office
U.S. Border Patrol Operations and Southwest Border Surge Funding	\$ 4,869	\$ 6,235	\$ 7,153	47%
ICE operations and Southwest Border Surge Funding	\$ 7,876	\$ 8,447	\$ 8,736	11%

Funding in millions.

During the same FY21 to FY23 timeframe, we have seen the average monthly encounters at our southwest border surge by over 63% annually. And the problem is only getting worse.

	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	Since FY2021	FY2024 (YTD Avg)
Avg. Monthly Encounters at SW Border	163,043	230,549	266,762	63.6%	308,933

White House’s \$14 Billion Supplemental Request Is More Smoke & Mirrors

The President’s supplemental request is little more than misdirection and false advertising that would do little to secure the border.

Of the \$14 billion request, just over \$2.3 billion, or less than 17%, would actually go to Border Patrol operations. Of that funding, much of it falls within the parameters of managing the crisis – processing tents, medical services, consumables, etc. – that have little to do with actual border security and interior enforcement and more to do with processing illegal immigration into the interior as fast as possible, arguably to hide the humanitarian crisis from public view.

If a 47% increase in similar funding over the last 2 years has only led to more illegal crossings, it’s clear the latest unserious request will do little to stem the flow of illegal immigration.

In fact, a larger share of the Administration’s request, over \$3 billion, would actually go to providing direct and indirect assistance to people coming here illegally, through NGOs or even direct cash assistance.

In addition, over \$1.3 billion is requested for State Department and foreign aid programs, despite this Administration’s unwillingness to address foreign countries facilitating the crisis from within their own borders.

Finally, much of the remaining request is a shameless effort by this Administration to boost annual discretionary budget accounts, outside of the normal appropriations process, that have zero or little to do with border security.

Conclusion

From the start of President Biden's term, House Republicans have voted for significant year over year funding increases for Border Patrol and ICE beyond what his administration has requested. And from the start of President Biden's term, his Administration has implemented policies that have undermined security and created a humanitarian crisis at the Southern border.

Now, in a desperate attempt to shift blame for a crisis their policies have induced, they have argued it's a funding problem. Clearly, they have no facts to back up their claim.