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Joint Subcommittee Hearing Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Examining CBP One: Functions, Features, Expansion, and Risks

March 21, 2024

I am pleased the subcommittees are examining the Biden-Harris Administration's efforts to address increased rates of migration to the U.S. Southwest border in a humane and effective way. We are currently seeing increased rates of migration across the world, with the U.S. and our neighbors being no exception.

However, the solution to this challenge is not to repeat the cruel policies of the Trump Administration, which oversaw the separation of families at the border and limited legal immigration pathways, leaving vulnerable populations in danger. Instead, President Biden has taken a proactive approach to combatting the root causes of migration in the Western Hemisphere while ensuring that there is an orderly and safe process for those who are making their case for admission under our laws.

The Administration has worked to foster cooperative agreements with regional partners in the Western Hemisphere to address the political, economic, security, and environmental conditions that lead to irregular migration. This increased collaboration with Mexico and other countries in Central and South America helps the U.S. provide accurate information for those considering making the dangerous journey north and instead encourage the use of legal immigration pathways.

One of the key components of the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to incentivize noncitizens to use lawful and safe pathways is the CBP One app. This app allows migrants to schedule an appointment to present themselves at a port of entry, preventing the kind of chaos and dysfunction at the border seen during the Trump Administration. Over the last year, more than 450,000 individuals have successfully used the app to schedule appointments at ports of entry, which creates an orderly and humane process for Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to address those who seek entry into the country.

The app has also been used to facilitate humanitarian parole programs for those fleeing emergency situations in their home countries of Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. These are the same types of parole programs prior Administrations have used, which have proven to be effective in reducing the number of migrants seeking to cross between ports of entry.

The CBP One app is not a rubber stamp to any noncitizen that seeks entry; it merely serves as a scheduling tool, providing logistical support for migrants and CBP alike. Those who use it are still subject to the same screening and vetting that CBP uses to evaluate anyone else seeking entry into the country. But the orderly processing helps ease the burden on often overworked CBP Officers and Border Patrol Agents and maximize CBP resources.

The success of the app demonstrates that most migrants will use safe, orderly, and humane pathways to make their case for admittance into the U.S. if given the option, rather than trying to cross illegally. CBP continues to work on improvements to the app, addressing any security vulnerabilities and ensuring that migrants who have been trying to obtain appointments for the longest time will be prioritized.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about how this Committee can support the Administration's efforts to address migration challenges with legal pathways, technological solutions, and international collaboration.

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