



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

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Joint Hearing Statement of Border Security & Enforcement Subcommittee Ranking Member Lou Correa (D-CA)

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

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While I am encouraged by innovations like CBP One, we must recognize that these challenges extend well beyond our borders. It is not enough to look at how we are processing people who lawfully travel to ports of entry and request protection. We need to look at how the Administration is addressing migration in the region before people ever reach our borders. That's why I'm glad that the State Department could join us today.

We are witnessing a worldwide migration challenge coupled with an outdated and under-resourced immigration system. Only Congress can truly fix this for good by expanding legal pathways, investing in the asylum system, and providing the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State, and the Department of Justice with adequate funding and resources. Sadly, we have not gotten to that point. Instead, the Administration is being innovative with the resources and authorities they already have.

There's more Congress can and must do to support border security efforts. For example, next week, Congressman Luttrell and I will be introducing the Emerging Innovative Border Technologies Act, which would require DHS to identify, integrate and deploy cutting-edge commercial technologies to improve border security operations and better respond to life-threatening situations.

I'm proud that we've been able to work across the aisle to improve border security in this way. And I am happy to speak with any of my colleagues about this bipartisan piece of legislation. But we should also support the Administration when it innovates with the tools it already has to improve operations at the border. CBP One is a great example of this.

For years, both Democratic and Republican administrations have encouraged migrants go to ports of entry to ask for protection. This is allowed under our immigration laws. CBP One encourages migrants to not only go to ports of entry, but also to wait for appointments when CBP is prepared to process them. While there aren't enough appointments available to meet the demand, people prefer using a lawful avenue to request protection when it is a realistic option.

CBP One isn't perfect. It's just a scheduling tool that helps CBP facilitate more efficient, safe, and fair migrant processing at ports of entry. CBP One simply allows someone to request an appointment at a port of entry. CBP One is not a waiver to walk into the U.S. without vetting. The app does not grant legal status or adjudicate asylum claims.

And to be clear – under our laws, migrants have always been able to approach ports of entry to ask for protection. The CBP One app just makes this more efficient and allows CBP to collect advance information on the people presenting for an appointment. But CBP One addresses such a small part of the challenge before us. We should look broader.

As I have said before, we need to continue partnering with our friends to the south, north, and across the globe to address the historic displacement of people worldwide. Shared challenges require shared solutions – this migration crisis affects more than just the United States.

That’s why, last summer, Chairman Higgins and I introduced the Cooperation on Combatting Human Smuggling and Trafficking Act to enhance partnerships with Mexican, Central American, and South American law enforcement to disrupt human smuggling and human trafficking in the region. The Biden administration has also taken significant steps to develop comprehensive relationships with other countries through multilateral agreements and cooperative action.

The Department of State has developed Safe Mobility Offices, also known as regional processing centers, to share information with refugees and vulnerable migrants about safe and lawful pathways for immigration to the United States, Canada, and Spain. The administration has strategically located the safe mobility offices in partner countries in Latin America along migration routes—such as in Colombia, which has received millions of asylum seekers fleeing totalitarianism in Venezuela.

When people have a lawful pathway to the United States, they don’t need to pay smugglers for their journey. But even these positive steps are not enough. It is up to Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform and approve necessary border security funding. If my colleagues genuinely believe that what is happening at the border is a national security challenge and humanitarian crisis, they should work with us to provide DHS with the necessary resources.

Lastly, I want to thank our witnesses for their public service. I look forward to hearing your testimony about the work your respective agencies are doing to manage the challenges at the border in a humane and orderly way.

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