

# [***Dem Senator Says It's 'Unfortunate' Biden Called Laken Riley's Alleged Murderer An 'Illegal'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BH9-6Y81-DXXD-7531-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** Harold Hutchison, Reporter, [*harold@dailycallernewsfoundation.org*](mailto:harold@dailycallernewsfoundation.org)

**Body**

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/DCNF-CNN-Butler-Biden-Riley-Featured.jpg)

Democratic Sen. Laphonza Butler of California said Friday that President Joe Biden's description of the alleged killer of nursing student Laken Riley as an “illegal” was “unfortunate.”

Riley's alleged killer, Jose Antonio Ibarra, an [*immigrant*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/02/24/migrant-accused-killing-us-nursing-student-entered-country-illegally-released-authorities/) from Venezuela who crossed the U.S.-Mexico border illegally, was [*arrested*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/02/23/suspect-arrested-university-georgia-laken-riley-murder/) by University of Georgia police and charged with murdering the 22-year-old nursing student Feb. 23. Biden [*addressed*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/03/07/joe-biden-laken-riley-lincoln-state-of-the-union-name/) the incident in Thursday's State of the Union address after he was confronted by Republican Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, and ended up butchering Riley's name. [***(RELATED: Dem Rep Says 'One Instance' Of Murder 'Shouldn't Shape' US Immigration Policy After Nursing Student Killed)***](https://dailycaller.com/2024/02/26/katie-porter-says-one-instance-murder-shouldnt-shape-us-immigration-policy-nursing-student-killed/)

“It was clear, being in the chamber last night, that there were those extreme in the Republican Party who were trying to bait the president into responding to whatever heckle they were offering,” Butler told “Inside ***Politics***” host Dana- Bash. “It's unfortunate that the president used that language. I don't believe that is the language that he believes in his heart about immigrant people who find their way to this country to make a better life for themselves and their families.”

**WATCH:**

Many Democrats [*criticized*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/03/08/liberals-slam-biden-sotu-comment-laken-riley-alleged-murderer-illegal/) Biden for using the term “illegal,” with some left-wing Democrats accusing the president of echoing Trump.

“There was a lot of good in President Biden's speech tonight, but his rhetoric about immigrants was incendiary and wrong,” Texas Rep. Joaquin Castro [*posted*](https://twitter.com/JoaquinCastrotx/status/1765969678956961875) on X, adding in a second [*post*](https://twitter.com/JoaquinCastrotx/status/1765969679971983427), “My guest for this year's State of the Union was the widow of a North Texas rancher who was murdered by a neighbor who didn't want Latinos living next door. Across Texas, many families can tell similar stories of hate and harassment inspired by the rhetoric of Donald Trump.”

“The rhetoric President Biden used tonight was dangerously close to language from Donald Trump that puts a target on the backs of Latinos everywhere,” Castro continued in a third [*post*](https://twitter.com/JoaquinCastrotx/status/1765969681075130836). “Democrats shouldn't be taking our cues from MAGA extremism.”

Butler took a less confrontational tone about Biden's comments.

“If you recall, it's just after that he gave us true Joe Biden, he gave us exactly that empathy and warmth that we know to be true and so I think it's unfortunate again that he fell into the trap of the language, but I think he pivoted really well and gave us exactly what he believes and what he's offering the country, which is a very different position than his predecessor,” she said.

Biden [*reversed*](https://dailycaller.com/2021/10/29/biden-admin-rescinds-remain-in-mexico-again-despite-court-ruling/) multiple border [*policies*](https://dailycaller.com/2021/03/17/gop-joe-biden-senate-border-wall/) initiated by his predecessor, former President Donald Trump, on his first days in office.

United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has [*reported*](https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters) more than 6.6 million encounters with illegal immigrants since the start of fiscal year 2021, including over 2.2 million in fiscal year 2022.

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**Graphic**

Laphonza Butler

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