

# [***Interview with Rep. Mike Johnson (R-LA)***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C3C-21N1-F072-X4V2-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

HARRIS FAULKNER, FOX NEWS HOST: In "Focus" with me now in Washington, D.C., Republican of Louisiana and speaker of the House, Mike Johnson is here.

So, first of all, let's start with what the president is feckless on right now. First he says he doesn't have the power, then he says he does, to secure the border. What is the truth and why won't he carry out action?

REP. MIKE JOHNSON (R-LA): Well, the truth is very clear and he knows that. I have presented to him myself, Harris, a list of at least eight statutory authorities that he has had since the day he walked in the Oval Office.

Now, remember, we documented 64 specific executive actions that President Biden and his administrators, including Mayorkas, who we had to impeach in the House because of this, they intentionally took these actions to open the border wide. They did this by design. And that's what's so terrible about it. He's had executive authority every day to reverse what he's done, but he refuses to use it.

FAULKNER: So, talk to me about the ***politics*** of the moment. You no doubt - I - I know you had your meeting at the White House. Does the president seem to you to be up to speed on exactly what's happening at the border?

JOHNSON: I think he's in denial. And - and I think that many in his party have demanded - there is an open borders sort of caucus, informal caucus, in the Democratic Party. And they pushed this. They pushed this agenda.

FAULKNER: Really?

JOHNSON: Yes. And the reason is, Harris, everybody asks me, I've been in 110 cities and 29 states now in the last five and a half months, moving around the country campaigning with our incumbents and candidates. Everywhere I am, no matter where I am in the country, everybody says, why? Why would they do this? There's such a catastrophe for the country. Why would the president knowingly allow this? Because they wanted to turn these people into voters. That's plain. And they want to change the outcome of the census is six years. It sounds sinister, and it is, and they've - they've exacted untold damage on the country.

FAULKNER: What about the HR2 bill that was, you know, put in the Senate last May?

JOHNSON: Yes.

FAULKNER: So, it's been there for more than a year now. What about that bill kept Democrats from even taking a peek, yet they want Republicans now to come to the table with them in the Senate? What - what is - what's the truth about that?

JOHNSON: Well, the truth is, HR2, the Secure the Border Act, was the most stringent border security measure ever passed by Congress. We passed that through the House over a year ago, to your point. It's been sitting on Chuck Schumer's desk collecting dust.

The reason they won't touch it is because it would actually solve the problem. It would reinstate remain in Mexico, which was the policy that President Trump used to get control of this border. It would end the catch and release program. You know, they're - they're - they're - they're accompanied - or they've seen these people at the border and they're turning them loose into the homeland, distributing them around the country and putting them on public assistance, by the way, as they do that. It would fix the asylum - the broken asylum process and fix the parole process. You do those things, you solve the crisis. And the White House has no interest in doing that.

FAULKNER: And this bill that potentially will fail for a second time doesn't do any of that?

JOHNSON: No, it's - it's not a border security bill, it's an immigration bill. And it would actually codify some of the terrible decisions and policies that President Biden has enacted. And that's why all the Republicans are united against it.

FAULKNER: One last one on this topic. And I don't know when - when was the last time you were at the border?

JOHNSON: We went January 3rd.

FAULKNER: OK.

JOHNSON: Took 64 House Republicans down there.

FAULKNER: And you just said you've been to 110 cities.

JOHNSON: Uh-huh.

FAULKNER: How important is this issue for the November election?

JOHNSON: It's the number one issue. In fact, I don't think there's ever been an issue that polled as high as border. This concern that every American has about it.

People are fed up. They've had enough. They see what this is doing to our country.

Harris, by our estimates it may be close to 17 million illegals coming across the border since Joe Biden took office.

FAULKNER: Now, your numbers seem to be a lot more aligned with what I've seen at the border. Why is the administration's not there?

JOHNSON: We don't trust the numbers. I mean they - they count encounters at the border. But that doesn't account for the -- all the got-a-ways. They have a number for that. I think it's underestimated. What it - what no one ever talks about is the people that got through completely undetected, without any evasion at all.

FAULKNER: Wow.

All right, let's move to this. Another politically charged showdown on immigration today. And, Speaker, you're making some moves on election integrity. And there's a vote today on a House Republican bill to roll back a voting law here in D.C. and it lets non-citizens vote in local elections. "Axios" is reporting that House Democrat leadership is working hard to try to crush your efforts.

So, it starts in D.C. What - overarching, what are you trying to do with this bill?

JOHNSON: Well, this is the example a, right? The - the D.C. city council has decided they want illegals to vote in local elections. And that's a real problem because all you have to do is reside in the District of Columbia for 30 days and you can participate in the election. That means Russian spies, it means Chinese officials, it means, you know, enemies of freedom could help decide who the mayor is in D.C. and who the council is and -

FAULKNER: Wait a minute.

JOHNSON: Yes, that's right.

FAULKNER: Thirty days, yet when you come across the border, you can't get a court date, even if you qualify for one, as an asylum seeker for years.

JOHNSON: Years. Years. They give them a little piece of paper and say, please, show up in - you know, in New Jersey in, you know, the year 2031. It's a joke.

FAULKNER: Would this change anything in this country if suddenly non- citizens like that could vote across -

JOHNSON: Absolutely.

FAULKNER: Across the board?

JOHNSON: I mean if - if - if the numbers are - are accurate - let's just take the DHS numbers, department of Homeland Security. If there's 10 million illegals in the country, let's just say one out of 100 decide to sign up to vote. I mean you can change the outcome of a presidential election, congressional races for certain. It's a real serious problems.

FAULKNER: A couple of things. So, you're starting in Washington, D.C., but there are other states where there are municipalities, California, Maryland, Vermont, where you can vote in local elections. It's my understanding that there's a federal law that non-citizens cannot vote at the federal level. What is your concern? Because that's been some of the pushback on your bill.

JOHNSON: This is a - a huge problem. We're - we're going to handle the D.C. issue because Congress has jurisdiction over that. But we also have jurisdiction over federal elections across the country. The problem is, right now, if you show up at a welfare office, where the administration, by the way, is telling all the illegals to go, to go sign up for taxpayer benefits, of course. When you're there in these local offices, because of the Motor Voter Law that passed in the early 90s, they also give you another form, hey, would you like to register to vote, right? There's a - one box that someone checks and says, I'm a U.S. citizen, yes. In every state right now, virtually every state, you can sign up to vote by just checking that box. There's no way to prove citizenship because the law currently prohibits the states from requesting it.

We have the Save Act (ph) we'll be introducing right after the Memorial Day holiday. We'll get that passed. And that will solve that problem on the federal election basis. We've got to do that. We have an absolute responsibility.

FAULKNER: All right, before I let you go, again, a big day in Washington, particularly for you, Speaker. Four of your top aides announced within a 24-hour period of each other that they are leaving your office, they're quitting, and you've had the speakership for about seven months now. There are 166 days, yes, we're counting, until the November elections, and your party is fighting to keep its now shrinking majority in the House, just four members. Earlier this month you survived an effort to vacate the seat. Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene came for you. How do you hang on?

JOHNSON: We hang on. We do the job every single day. We have the smallest margin in U.S. history. Newt Gingrich posted an op-ed two weeks ago, said, Johnson has the toughest speakership since the Civil War 160 years ago. I don't know if that's true, but it's - it's not easy. A one-vote margin right now is what we have.

But the four staffers that left are out of 100. We have over 100 employees in the speaker's office. They're - they're great folks and they committed to stay with us for six months to go through that transition. We changed speakers in the middle of a Congress. That hadn't been done before.

FAULKNER: Right.

JOHNSON: And so they - they did their valiant duty to the country and they go with my blessing. They're - they're great guys. They've got great opportunities in the private sector. We'll be announcing their replacements in the next week, and - and we move forward. This is - this is a revolving door in Congress. Young staffers come in, serve for a while and go forward. I'm really happy for them and - and we're - we're happy about here we are. We're going to have a great November, grow the majority, win the Senate and win the White House as well.

FAULKNER: Do you think you'll be challenged again by Marjorie Taylor Greene?

JOHNSON: I don't - I don't expect so. The stakes are too high. We've got to govern and we've got to keep the train on the tracks so to speak. And I think we'll continue to do that.

FAULKNER: I like how you broke a smile when - when they tell you how the - how the odds are not since the Civil War, and you take that challenge. Last quick word.

JOHNSON: Well, we have to. Look, the - this is a fateful moment for the country and we're going to provide principled leadership and show the American people what we're for. I think that's really important.

FAULKNER: House Speaker Johnson, thank you so much for being with me today. Appreciate your time.

JOHNSON: Thank you.

FAULKNER: All right.

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