

# [***Interview With Gov. Jeff Landry (R-LA); Border Battle; Interview With Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-TX); Biden, Congressional Leaders Meet Over Ukraine Funding, Border Crisis; Ron DeSantis Focusing on South Carolina; Interview With Rep. Chip Roy (R-TX)***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B49-WTR1-F072-X17T-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

NEIL CAVUTO, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: Is Ron pulling a Rudy? Remember when Rudy Giuliani pretty much skipped New Hampshire to focus on Florida? That was back in 2008. It appears a certain Florida governor is doing the same thing in 2024.

Now, it didn't work out too well for Rudy back then. Fears things won't go much better for Ron now. But perhaps a new poll in the Granite State hints as to why DeSantis is doing this now. He's down to just 5 percent support in New Hampshire, a state where he was once within striking distance of Donald Trump, more like striking out today, hence his new strategy to focus on a Southern state of his own, not Florida.

Try South Carolina. Why one of DeSantis' biggest backers say it's a shrewd move? He's Texas Republican Chip Roy, and he's here to say, Ron is no Rudy.

Welcome, everybody. I'm Neil Cavuto. Glad to have you.

Let's get right to it with Bryan Llenas in Hampton, New Hampshire. He's keeping up with these very fast-moving developments.

Bryan, to you, my friend.

BRYAN LLENAS, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Neil, good afternoon.

Well, FOX News can confirm that Florida Governor Ron DeSantis is moving most of his staff out of New Hampshire and instead moving them south to South Carolina, former Governor Nikki Haley's home state, now, the campaign effectively conceding a loss here in the Granite State, hoping to deliver what they think will be a fatal blow to Haley's campaign in South Carolina.

A senior official with the Ron DeSantis campaign saying this to FOX -- quote -- "When Nikki Haley fails to win her home state, she will be finished, and this will be a two-person race. We're wasting no time in taking the fight directly to Haley on her home turf."

Today, DeSantis spoke at a bar in Hampton, New Hampshire, and is set to speak at a town hall in less than two hours. He then heads to Florida before going to campaign events in South Carolina this weekend. The latest poll released this morning shows DeSantis in dead last in New Hampshire with just 5 percent support from likely Republican voters.

Trump is at 50 percent and Haley is second with 34 percent. Now, the same poll shows Haley doing best with independent voters, beating Trump 44 percent to 38 percent. A majority of the voters eligible to participate in the primary here in New Hampshire are registered undeclared or independent.

But two Republican primary debates in New Hampshire were canceled this week following Haley's decision not to debate anymore unless former President Donald Trump or President Joe Biden is on that stage, a decision that could cost her here in the Granite State.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

NEIL LEVESQUE, NEW HAMPSHIRE INSTITUTE OF ***POLITICS***: I think it was the biggest mistake she's made so far. New Hampshire has one local statewide television station. They conduct the New Hampshire debate every four years.

She had a chance to be on the stage for 90 minutes and make a case to a lot of those undeclared and undecided voters.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

LLENAS: Haley is holding an event here in Rochester, New Hampshire, tonight.

And, Neil, while there are questions about Haley and whether or not she has made a mistake, there are also now questions about whether or not DeSantis' campaign can survive a fatal blow here in New Hampshire and make it to South Carolina more than a month away -- Neil.

CAVUTO: Bryan, how's the weather there?

LLENAS: Balmy compared to Iowa. I'm happy with it. It's OK. Could be a lot worse. It's about -- it's in the teens, high 20s.

CAVUTO: All right, because that's a very low bar as far as temperatures are concerned.

(LAUGHTER)

LLENAS: That's right.

CAVUTO: Actually, the other anchors asked me to ask you, because they were all afraid of the cold and make a big deal of the cold.

I just wanted to check with you.

(LAUGHTER)

CAVUTO: Bryan, always good seeing you, my friend.

Bryan Llenas.

All right, David Paleologos joins us right now, the Suffolk University Political Research Center director. It is his poll to which everyone is alluding and watching and examining and breaking apart.

David, great to see you.

We were talking in the beginning about Ron DeSantis now focusing on South Carolina, rather than New Hampshire. There was a time when he was competitive here. Now Nikki Haley has emerged as the closest and real -- maybe most real threat to Donald Trump.

But, even there, even if she were to garner, at least as polls stand now, all of the Chris Christie votes, I'm not so sure she would capture many of the Vivek Ramaswamy votes. It's still Donald Trump's state to lose, right?

DAVID PALEOLOGOS, SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY: It is.

He's at 50 percent, and it's the first night of tracking. We will have new numbers tomorrow. But from what we can see, you have got a big lead. It's a double-digit lead. I think DeSantis probably made the wise move, next to just getting out of the race totally, by moving to another state, so he doesn't have to answer questions about why he's in low single digits after finishing second in Iowa.

CAVUTO: But people are still raising those questions, as are we right now.

And I'm wondering, focusing on South Carolina, a state that Donald Trump enjoys, I think in most of these polls, at least a 20-point lead. Now, that could change. But you're not going to win it. Maybe you will deny Nikki Haley a chance to win it, maybe. But what's the strategy there? I'm getting probably beyond what you might feel comfortable answering, but what do you think?

PALEOLOGOS: No, I mean, I think what we're seeing is -- are examples that are going to be second-guessed, for sure.

His all-in strategy in Iowa, hitting 99 counties, and finishing a distant second. Nikki Haley not debating, I would agree with your guest, not debating, missing an opportunity to appeal to the all-important independents.

And you have to wonder, if candidates are going to make major mistakes in the campaign process, what happens when and if they're elected? And I mean, Ron DeSantis is pointing to 100 percent achieving of the promises that he made, and yet it seems like poor judgment in terms of the campaign operations of both candidates Nikki Haley and Ron DeSantis.

CAVUTO: Sometimes, there's a risk, David, when candidates either bypass or don't focus or dismiss a poor performance in Iowa. Many of them do come back to fight another day and do quite well in New Hampshire, but far riskier, it seems to me, the candidates who decide New Hampshire isn't worth it.

And the president of the United States is in that group as well. So I'm wondering how that sort of falls out.

PALEOLOGOS: So you can't ignore New Hampshire. I mean, this is -- Iowa, you have three tickets out of Iowa. In New Hampshire, voters want to look in the eye of the candidates many, many times and thoroughly vet them for the office of president of the United States.

They didn't get that chance with Ron DeSantis, and he's got what he's got, 5 percent right now.

CAVUTO: I also focus on the donors, David, and they follow polls like your own to sort of say, should I give more money, or is this a case of giving good money after bad?

I'm just wondering what the fallout -- we don't know so soon. We do know, from the Rudy Giuliani example I mentioned from his campaign in 2008, when he put all his marbles essentially in the Sunshine State of Florida, didn't work for him then. I'm just wondering the strategy now.

PALEOLOGOS: Yes, I mean, it's going to be -- they're going to scrutinize all the polling, not just our tracking, over the next seven days.

You're absolutely right about that. But the problem really is that the non- Trump voters split evenly. You have got the conservative Republicans who would rotate to DeSantis if Trump were to fall, and you have got the more moderate voters who would rotate to Nikki Haley.

And unless they were both on a ticket two months ago, you're not going to get one candidate getting both groups. And so Donald Trump is powering through the primaries right now. And if -- unless he loses New Hampshire or vastly underperforms the polling, he's poised to go into South Carolina with a head of steam.

CAVUTO: We will watch closely.

David, great catching up with you. It's been a while. I appreciate it.

PALEOLOGOS: Of course. Any time, Neil.

CAVUTO: All right, sometimes, putting this in perspective, as I like to do, we in the media can get ahead of ourselves too.

Remember, to get the Republican nomination, you need 1,215 delegates. At this stage after Iowa, Donald Trump has 20 delegates, to his credit, after the victory there. And we have Ron DeSantis at nine delegates, and we have Nikki Haley at eight. So you do the math. It's a long way to 1,215 delegates, isn't it? But, again, so far.

All right, in the meantime, we're going to be hearing from Texas Republican Chip Roy, who thinks, as I said at the outset, it still looks good for Ron and that he is not a Rudy pulling what he's doing now, a focus on a different state, not New Hampshire.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

CAVUTO: Oh, to be a fly on the wall. Have you ever heard that expression? As if the fly would be able to understand English.

But, anyway, we have got this tension convention at the White House right now, as the president meets with congressional leadership from both parties. It's all about the supplemental military spending plan. That includes Ukraine funding, border security. A lot of committee heads are there, both sides. It could be a tension convention.

Jacqui Heinrich on what is likely going on -- Jacqui.

JACQUI HEINRICH, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Well, I wish I could tell you with some certainty what is going on, Neil, but we really don't have any clear idea what progress could even be made in this meeting, because the White House keeps saying the president wants to focus this conversation Ukraine and the need to get U.S. aid for Ukraine back up and running.

This is a conversation that they have wanted to have for some time, but House Republicans have said, look, we will not support this broader funding package until we get the border policy reforms hammered out. And they're refusing to talk here at the White House about what reforms are being negotiated in the Senate.

They're talking to Republicans in the Senate right now about a swathe of border reforms that could unlock this deal, but they have not given us any insight into what that conversation is or what might be on the table.

And officials here reiterated today that Republicans in the House have only gotten in the way of border policy reform. So, when we asked, how can this meeting really be productive if the president doesn't want to talk about the very issue that House Republicans need to talk about in order to do this thing for Ukraine, how can this meeting be productive, and they seemed to suggest that the president would just lean into conversation with the other congressional leaders in the room.

Take a listen.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KARINE JEAN-PIERRE, WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY: He's not the only congressperson in the room today. He's not the only person that's going to be in the room. There will be other congressional members. The president has been really clear he wants to talk about Ukraine, the urgency of making sure we continue that assistance to Ukraine, what that means not just for the broader world, national security, but also for us.

And so Speaker Johnson is not going to be the only person in the room.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HEINRICH: So, clearly not a lot of love lost between the White House and House Republicans.

In fact, today, the White House repeated its claim that House Republicans voted to eliminate 2,000 Border Patrol agents, even though The Washington Post gave them three Pinocchios for that claim, because the bill they're talking about actually had no specific cuts in it.

And, moreover, the House has passed more recent bills that would have increased Border Patrol agents, but the White House is not backing down from that claim, despite the fact-checks. They also wouldn't amend their separate statement that seemed to blame Texas officials for the deaths of three migrants who tried to cross the border, when, in fact, that was not true.

Those migrants had been dead for an hour before anyone on the U.S. side was even notified about it. So, the White House is sticking with their positions and especially with their language as they talk about this issue and all the obstacles that it presents.

So we will hopefully get more from the congressional leaders when they come out of the meeting, because we didn't get a whole lot from the White House as they were heading in, Neil.

CAVUTO: All right, I know you keep trying. Thank you very much, though, for that, Jacqui.

By the way, she was mentioning this incident where there were three people who drowned. We're going to talk to Democratic Congressman Henry Cuellar, who points the blame right now at the governor's office there, and says that this could have been better handled by Governor Abbott.

In the meantime, we are waiting for some of these delegations and groups to come out from various committees and the congressional leadership on both sides. When they speak, we are there.

Congressman Chip Roy of Texas kind enough to join us right now.

Congressman, a lot hangs in the balance in that meeting, and I do want to get to ***politics*** in New Hampshire and your fondness for Ron DeSantis.

REP. CHIP ROY (R-TX): Yes.

CAVUTO: But this meeting and whether it will help avoid a shutdown, what do you think?

ROY: Well, first of all, let me be very clear. Bill Melugin has done great reporting, and I really appreciate you all clarifying that that was 100 percent not true.

With all due respect to my colleague Henry Cuellar, it's just not true that it was because Texas governor's office has been trying to establish their strength there in that particular spot in Eagle Pass that somehow that blocked out Border Patrol from getting to those migrants.

We had 1,000 migrants die along the border last year. We had 53 who got cooked in a tractor trailer in San Antonio. And listening to Democrats try to blame us in Texas for what's happening to migrants, it's absolutely appalling.

What's happening right now, this conversation, we need to secure the border of the United States absolutely first before we even have a conversation about funding for Ukraine. And I hope Mike Johnson will stick to his guns on that. I have disagreed with him on the spending front. I think we need to cut spending, but he's been pretty strong on this.

But he better stay strong, because this is a nonnegotiable position for the House conference, in my opinion.

CAVUTO: Well, you have been very clear on that, Congressman, and some of your colleagues are being even clearer, that they fear that he will cave, he will make allowances for the other side. And they might want his head.

What do you think of that?

ROY: Well, look, Mike has been pretty strong about saying we need to secure the border before we even have a conversation about Ukraine. So I'm going to trust him to continue to do that.

But there's going to be an accountability on this. We don't like what we're doing with the C.R.s. We don't like the spending levels. We don't like what happened with the NDAA. It's not been the right direction. I know it's a thin majority. But what we're dealing with in Texas, Governor Abbott is 100 percent right to be aggressive.

We spent $12.5 billion. Our state is under siege. We're the ones taking it on the chin. And then to watch these guys get all twisted knots, like Martha's Vineyard, when they got a planeload of 50 when they were sent there by Governor Ron DeSantis to shake things up, or New York or Chicago mayors complaining about getting a few thousands sent to their cities, we have millions pouring across Texas.

So, look, I'm all on board. Governor Abbott can be as aggressive as he wants, and he will have my full support.

CAVUTO: So, a couple of your colleagues that I was chatting and many on FOX Business, Congressman, which, if you don't get, you should demand -- fortunately, you're on FOX Business enough, you know it already and you demand it and got it, and that's the way it is.

ROY: Yes.

CAVUTO: Having said that, though, Congressman, one of the first things I first heard from many of them is that, no, no, no, if it's a choice between shutting the government down and just taking a pass on the border again, it isn't going to work, shut the government down.

Do you agree with that?

ROY: Look, I will tell you this. I'm on the phone constantly with ranchers, with law enforcement, sheriffs in South Texas. Right before Speaker Johnson took folks down to the border, I called them and I said, guys, what are you doing?

Because I wasn't going to make that trip. And they said, you have got -- and they told Speaker Johnson the same thing. You have got to shut the border down or shut the government down. They get it. They understand that it's tax money that we take and borrowed money to fund a government that is at odds with the people of Texas.

I mean, nobody's jonesing for a government shutdown.

CAVUTO: Yes.

ROY: But we're really sick and tired of funding the very bureaucracy that's undermining our freedom. We are not following the Constitution. We are not providing the service the federal government is supposed to provide to secure the border of the United States.

So we're going to stick to our guns on this. And I fully back Texas taking whatever efforts we need to do it, if the federal government won't, and fully supportive of Governor Abbott doing that. He can be as aggressive as he wants to be, like I said.

CAVUTO: Congressman, you have been early and a strong supporter, even getting the wrath of Donald Trump and a lot of his backers, of Ron DeSantis.

He's not polling well in New Hampshire. He seems to be putting his focus elsewhere. He's looking like he's in a world of political hurt. Do you think you hooked up with the wrong horse?

ROY: Absolutely not.

You never regret saddling up with someone who is a good human being, a good man, a good husband, a good father, someone with a track record of what he's accomplished in Florida. This nation would be so blessed to have Ron DeSantis in the White House. I'm going to ride along with him as long as he wants to go. And I think he's got a message that's resonating.

We're in New Hampshire right now. Everybody said, oh, he's taking out. He's going to South Carolina. I'm talking to you from a hotel in Manchester. We just had an event that was filled with a bunch of people who love the message that Governor DeSantis is delivering.

Look, we're realists. I can look at numbers. But, look, let's also peel back what happened in Iowa. President Trump, the incumbent, if you will, only got half the vote of a very depressed turnout of 110,000. Of the people who showed up, 7,000 were Democrats, and almost all of those went to Nikki Haley.

Nikki Haley's support in New Hampshire is pretty much fake. It is a mix of independents, soft R's. The support in Iowa was Democrats pumping her up. She dumped $26 million against Governor DeSantis, only to come in third. I mean, talking about not having a date for the prom.

She's coming to New Hampshire. She's going to lose. If she goes to South Carolina, she's going to lose. She's playing for I don't even know what. Meanwhile, she's taking away from the American people currently the ability of having a head-to-head race between two heavyweights, Governor DeSantis, who's delivered for the people of Florida, and former President Trump.

I think, with that choice head to head, we'd have a real debate. And you know what? Maybe President Trump would actually show up to a debate. Nikki Haley's not showing up to debates. President Trump has showed up to no debates. So, Governor DeSantis is showing up answering questions.

(CROSSTALK)

CAVUTO: I know polls are just polls, Congressman. I apologize for that.

But she is swamping him right now in New Hampshire. That might change. I would imagine she has a better chance of doing better than him at least in South Carolina. You're quite right. Right now, that could be Donald Trump's to lose, but she's not doing too poorly.

ROY: Well, again, she spent $26 million and used 7,000 Democrats to come in third in Iowa.

She is going to try to monopolize the more moderate flank of the voters in New Hampshire, and she's still going to lose. She's going to go to South Carolina, and she's going to lose her...

CAVUTO: Well, he spent a lot more money collectively in Iowa from the very beginning, among the earliest candidates.

And, like I say, he did come in second, but he didn't win one single county in Iowa.

ROY: Well, he worked it really hard and got 21 percent of the vote...

CAVUTO: OK.

ROY: ... despite the fact that the polls said he was going to be at 13 or 14. And he did it because he did do all that hard work.

And let's be very clear. With all due respect to FOX -- and I'm happy to be on with you -- but the earned media advantage, President Trump, it's like 20 to 1. And you go look at the spread and the charts since last March after the Bragg indictments, the massive amount of news that has been going on since last March. That earned media advantage is really difficult to go up against.

And so, look, Governor DeSantis did the hard workout in Iowa, and that's how he earned that 21 percent and that second-place finish.

CAVUTO: All right.

ROY: So, we will see what happens going forward.

CAVUTO: OK.

ROY: But, look, we're in New Hampshire. He's going to be in New Hampshire and South Carolina this weekend, and he's working it hard.

CAVUTO: All right, well, if I'm an earned media advantage, boy, that's a - - that would be an advantage change for me.

(LAUGHTER)

CAVUTO: It's always good having you on, Congressman. Thank you very much for taking the time.

ROY: Thanks, Neil. God bless you.

CAVUTO: All right, Chip Roy, who was very critical of Henry Cuellar pointing the finger at the governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, and a certain handling of a certain tragedy.

We thought it'd be a good idea to hear from Mr. Cuellar himself. We will. He's next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

CAVUTO: The microphones are set up. The stand is set up. We're waiting for people to come out of that meeting with President Biden and whether they have come to some sort of agreement, not only to avoid a shutdown, but, to hear the president tell it, a military crisis -- after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

CAVUTO: All right, the battle over reopening at least part of the border, and it's the feds who are making the issue with the state.

Matt Finn has more from Eagle Pass -- Matt.

MATT FINN, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Hi, Neil.

Over the weekend, Democratic Congressman Henry Cuellar tweeted in part that Texas is to blame for the drowning death of a migrant and her two children in the river not far from where I'm standing. However, the Texas Military Department strongly refutes that claim, saying it's wholly inaccurate.

However, despite the unconfirmed allegation floating around, over the weekend, the White House released a controversial statement insinuating Texas is to blame, writing in the very first line: "On Friday night, a woman and two children drowned near Eagle Pass, and Texas officials blocked U.S. Border Patrol from attempting to provide emergency assistance."

A short while ago, our Jacqui Heinrich asked the White House if it wanted to clarify that statement, and the White House pointed to a Department of Justice filing which actually seems to confirm that Texas responded -- or Texas did not need to respond to the drowning because Mexican authorities were.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

HEINRICH: The White House statement says that Texas officials blocked U.S. Border Patrol from attempting to provide emergency assistance to..

JEAN-PIERRE: There were other migrants in the water.

HEINRICH: Then why wasn't that included in the statement?

JEAN-PIERRE: There were other migrants in the water.

(CROSSTALK)

JEAN-PIERRE: Our statement is -- is very much consistent with the DOJ filing.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

FINN: That controversy aside, a federal attorney has warned Texas that today is the last day the state has to allow Border Patrol agents back into this park, or, the attorney writes, the U.S. government will consider all options on the table.

I spoke exclusively with the Texas attorney general, Ken Paxton. He says Texas is not backing down today. Paxton says they have the obligation to control public lands here in Texas. Believe it or not, the razor wire here in this park is at the center of the controversy here. Texas wants it kept in place, because it says it deters migrants. And Texas is fighting to keep it here. It doesn't want the federal government touching it -- Neil.

CAVUTO: All right, Matt, thank you very much.

To Henry Cuellar right now, the Texas Democratic congressman who faults the governor for those tragic deaths of those three drowns -- drowning -- who drowned, I should say, a couple of weeks back there.

You heard maybe what Chip Roy, your colleague, was saying, sir, that that was unfair, the governor had nothing to do with it, there was no heads-up that U.S. officials had of this plight that supposedly came from Mexican officials. What do you say?

REP. HENRY CUELLAR (D-TX): Well, first of all, to my friend Chip Roy, I don't know if he knows this, but we're voting today, and he should be here with us, so we can talk about border security, instead of being in New Hampshire, with all due respect to my good friend Chip Roy.

But I would say this. Listen, the moment that the state kicked out Border Patrol, the men and women that have the authority under federal law to detain, to arrest people, provide assistance, and the moment they took out the scope trucks and the monitoring equipment, they took the eyes away.

And those scope trucks can see what's happening on the Mexican side, on the river, and on the U.S. side. They took those eyes away. So, basically, the military took over. And you can ask any military commander, when you take control and command, you don't make any excuses. You take control and command of that particular area.

I don't blame the men and women in the military. I think it's just the governor should be working with us. I want him to be as aggressive as he wants to be, but to coordinate and communicate with the federal government, instead of doing Lone Ranger ***politics***.

CAVUTO: All right, it might be Lone Ranger ***politics***, as you see it.

The fact of the matter is, there is, as you yourself have said, Congressman, a migrant surge, the likes of which we have never seen, and whether it applies to a patch of area that used to be under the feds' control and the governor wants under the state control, that's the real core of this, right? And that's what's out of control.

And if they were doing such a great job handling this, he wouldn't be having to do this in the first place.

CUELLAR: Well, listen, it's basically -- it's like during those -- remember when he talked about the buoys? The buoys were less than a quarter-of-a-mile-long for a river that's 1,200 miles' long.

So it's little things that he's doing. He ought to be working with us, coordinating, communicating with us. I want the state and the local government and the federal government working together, so we can go ahead and address this issue.

CAVUTO: But they don't. They can't work together. Everything he does, he's sued for.

If he wants his own sheriffs and deputies handling a lot of this migrant mess, he gets sued. I'm sure, in just a matter of time, he's going to get sued over this. So he's trying to do what he can because he's at wit's end. I'm not an apologist for the governor, but it seems like every measure he takes to try to get a control of this, he's sued.

(CROSSTALK)

CUELLAR: I haven't seen the coordination or the communication of working together. I want them to work together.

Look, do we need to get rid of the pull factor that the administration has? Yes, I agree with that. Do we need to get Mexico to do more? Of course they do. Do we need to tell the migrants not to make this very dangerous route, where people drown or die of thirst? Of course they need to take responsibility.

But, at the same time, if the state is going to take control and command, they can't say, well, we're in control and command, but we're not going to take charge of anything else except the good things. So, again, I want them to work together.

CAVUTO: But there's no good -- there are no good things here, right, Congressman? You talk about he's taking matters into his own hands.

If things were working, he probably wouldn't see the need to do that. And, of course, if it was promising that he could control the migrant surge at the border using just the federal officials assigned to deal with that, he probably has stuck with that, which is why he urged deputies and sheriffs and all to take this matter into their hands too, to deal with this and help with this.

(CROSSTALK)

CAVUTO: Now, that might have been a Hail Mary pass, you're quite right. But when you're stuck with a crisis, you're oftentimes left with some very few options, and you consider stuff like that because you have got a crisis.

CUELLAR: Yes.

And I agree. It is a crisis, and we need to do more. But keep in mind that, for example, the Lone Ranger of ***politics*** -- and I wish we could work together. When he said he was going to stop the trucks and the trailers coming in to stop drugs and migrants, he stopped fewer drugs and migrants because they can't even stop or open up the trailers.

So those are things that you ought to be working with CBP. We ought to be working together. I want to work with the governor. I want us to work together, because I think we can do a lot more. But this Lone Ranger ***politics*** doesn't work.

CAVUTO: Something happened, though. Congressman, I don't know. And you're closer to this than I will ever be, so forgive me, and I will defer to your expertise.

But something seems to have happened between you and the governor, because you were in sync on a lot of things, and you're not now. I'd like to think it's just based on this issue, but I'm wondering.

CUELLAR: Yes, I want to work with the governor. I encourage the governor. I'd be happy to work with him. If he calls me, I'd be happy to work with him, the DPS commander.

But, again, I think we need to work together, instead of doing things separately, and...

CAVUTO: No, no, no offense, Congressman, you went a step further here. You're essentially blaming him for these -- the three -- these women and these two kids' deaths.

That's a step too far, aren't you?

CUELLAR: No. No.

No, listen, control and command under Title 32 -- and, remember, the military is operating right now. They have two bosses. They have the governor under Title 32. And if the president calls them under Title 10, then the president becomes the boss.

(CROSSTALK)

CAVUTO: I know all of that. And I know the titles and the 10s and everything else.

(CROSSTALK)

CUELLAR: What I just want to say, work together. Work together. Work together.

(CROSSTALK)

CAVUTO: What you're saying in the end is, it's his fault. It's his fault.

(CROSSTALK)

CAVUTO: No, no, no. No, no, no. No, you're saying far more powerful, sir.

CUELLAR: Work together.

CAVUTO: You're blaming him for these deaths. That's very clear.

CUELLAR: No, it's -- let's be very clear about it.

When you take control and command -- you ask any military officer, when you take control and command you're in charge of that area. You can't say, I'm not in charge of the bad things, but I'm in charge of this. If you take control and command, military law will tell you that you take control and command.

You just can't say, I'm not at fault for this. Control and command. If the state would have never done this, we would not even be talking about this. That's the thing is. Excluding the Border Patrol from the right that they have or the authority they have to secure the border, stop people, deport, and do their job, that's what I want to see.

CAVUTO: What you're saying, though, is that this would not have happened without this policy, these three people would not be dead without this policy, that Guardsmen were informed, the Texas National Guard stationed there. Apparently, they were not.

And drowned migrants and migrants in distress was the result.

CUELLAR: Control and command.

CAVUTO: OK. Congressman, very good having you.

CUELLAR: Neil, good seeing you again.

CAVUTO: Congressman Henry Cuellar.

All right, the take on this and to fallout from this -- after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

CAVUTO: All right, back to the migrant issue, which was the number one issue for Iowans. I don't know where that stands in New Hampshire in some of these early polls, but Jeff Landry probably has no doubts that it's right up there.

The Louisiana governor kind enough to join us out of Baton Rouge.

Governor, you have been trying to crunch the numbers just what your state is doing dealing with all of this and paying for. What have you discovered?

GOV. JEFF LANDRY (R-LA): That's correct.

No, we actually just put out an executive order now that we have gained full control of the governorship here in Louisiana, so that we can calculate actually the number of people the cost of an open border policy by Joe Biden and them on our state taxpayers, all so that we can calculate it and send him a bill.

Because if you take just in our prison system how many illegal and undocumented aliens have crossed the border, then committed a crime in Louisiana, under which we have to send them through our penal system, and then we have to house them in our prison, and that's prison space that we should be using for the citizens that break our laws anyhow.

And we want to send the federal government a bill. We want to be able to collect that data. And so we put out an executive order this week so that our agencies can start to collect that data.

CAVUTO: All right, now, would you say that Republicans, who have supposedly been working with him or trying to work with him, and he with them, that nothing came of that, is in it on them as well?

LANDRY: Yes, look, I mean, this border policy is completely out of control.

Just, again, for the American people out there, think about this. Our federal government right now has basically blown the front door off of our home and said anybody can come in. However, if you come in, you can't work, you don't have any other particular rights. You are going -- but we're -- but the taxpayers are going to absolutely fund your living in our country free of charge.

And so the taxpayers right now are bearing all of the burden for this border policy. Look, there's a process under which America welcomes migrants in, right?

CAVUTO: Right.

LANDRY: And there's a process under which they can become citizens, and then they can go to work, and then they can pay taxes, and those taxes support the services that we all enjoy.

But, right now, they are letting thousands upon thousands, hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of people in and telling them, you come in, don't worry, the American citizens are going to foot your way of life. And then, by the way, let's think about who they're letting in. Think about the criminals. Think about the people that are trafficking women, children, the drugs, the arms, all of that, to wreak havoc on our states.

CAVUTO: No, no, all your points are well taken, Governor.

But let me ask you about what the governor of Texas has to deal with right now and whether you agree he's going to do far or not doing enough. The feds are angry that he is essentially saying, look, I'm going to try to have my deputies, my sheriffs handle a lot of these arrest and process these people, send them back.

Then there's this separate effort where he takes responsibility from the federal government in some areas of the border to sort of regroup some of the same migrants, so that they can go back south. Now, a lawsuit probably waiting on the latter. He's already facing several lawsuits for the former.

You're coming in as a new governor. You're dealing with these sort of things. Would you ever entertain the kind of things that he's entertaining if it got that out of control for you?

LANDRY: Well, look, I think what Greg Abbott is doing, Governor Abbott is doing is absolutely correct.

I mean, think about it, Neil. At what point do states, if the federal government is going to be absent of it, if they're going to just say we're going to just let these people in and they're going to walk right into that particular state, and then commit all kinds of crimes?

And then, look, there's a federal statute that says that, if you are found in this country illegally, and you commit a certain list of crimes, the law says you should automatically be deported. And yet the federal government that Joe Biden refused to even do that.

What are these governors supposed to do?

CAVUTO: So, in your case, just so I can understand, if it came push to shove, and the feds weren't helping you out dealing with a surge of migrants -- you have had them in your state as well -- what kind of action could you entertain?

Would you ever use your own law enforcement, for example, to round them up?

LANDRY: Absolutely.

Look, in order to keep the peace, in order to stabilize the laws here in this state, we would absolutely do that.

CAVUTO: OK.

LANDRY: I mean, we're not an exact border state. We border Texas.

But I tell you what. If the federal government just keeps piling those people on, we will send them over to New York.

CAVUTO: Yes, well, they have been going all over the country, so it just might be a matter of time.

Governor, thank you very much. Keep us posted on this.

LANDRY: Thank you.

CAVUTO: All right, Governor Landry on that.

In the meantime, taking a look at the White House right now, where a bipartisan delegation of the powers that be who run Congress are meeting with the president of the United States.

We're waiting for some of them, maybe a good many of them, to make statements afterwards. This is all to deal with the military supplemental measure that the president says has got to be done, and done soon, marrying it with the security at the border and a lot of other stuff that Speaker Mike Johnson, who is also in that very crowded room, says has to be done.

But time is a wasting, isn't it?

Well, let's see here. It looks like they're coming out. We will see if -- it looks like Speaker Johnson leading -- leading that group.

Guys, can we go to this?

REP. MIKE JOHNSON (R-LA): Thank you all for being here.

We had a productive meeting, I think, House and Senate leaders. The president was very forthright. I told the president what I have been saying for many months, and that is that we must have change at the border, substantive policy change.

We documented 64 instances where the president took executive action or his agencies took action to create the current catastrophe that we have at the border. It is a national security and a humanitarian catastrophe. And I articulated that to the president in the meeting now.

We understand that there is concern about the safety, security, sovereignty of Ukraine, but the American people have those same concerns about our own domestic sovereignty and our safety and our security. We have talked about the necessary elements to solve this problem.

We passed our bill, and it has critical elements. It's a restoration of the remain-in-Mexico policy. It is the end of catch-and-release. It is reform to the broken asylum and parole systems. We're not insistent upon a particular name of a piece of legislation, but we are insistent that the elements have to be meaningful.

The House is ready to act, but the legislation has to solve the problem, and that's the critical point. We understand the necessity about Ukraine funding, and we want to say that the status quo is unacceptable. We need the commander in chief of this country, the president of the United States, to show strength on the world stage, and not weakness.

We cannot continue with the current status quo. We understand the importance of what's been needed. But when I met with President Zelenskyy just last month, right before Christmas, he said that the necessary ingredient is the proper weapons systems that they need. There are certain things that are needed to ensure that they can prevail.

We need the questions answered about the strategy about the endgame and about the accountability for the precious treasure of the American people. We understand that all these things are important, but we must insist, we must insist that the border be the top priority.

I think we have some consensus around that table. Everyone understands the urgency of that, and we're going to continue to press for it. I want to thank my colleagues here, the chairman of our committees of jurisdiction, for being here, and thank everyone for the time today.

Thank you.

(CROSSTALK)

CAVUTO: All right, that was Speaker Mike Johnson.

Of course, what's crucial for Republicans in this powwow that's really about a military supplemental measure, but it grew to be much bigger and more involved in that, is security at the border and how to deal with the immigration mess. There's a lot in that cookbook there, and very few recipes as to really ultimately pick and choose the one that will work.

We're a long way from that.

I want to go to Griff Jenkins at the Pentagon right now, get his take on the reverberations of this, because it comes on the same day that the administration has gone back to classifying the Houthi rebels that have been responsible for all of these attacks on American positions and ships and Western ships, even business-related, in the Red Sea.

He can tell us there that they're back in the terrorist camp, I guess, right, Griff?

GRIFF JENKINS, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Well, they are.

And the history matters here, Neil. If you remember, late in the Trump administration, they labeled them as this foreign terrorist organization, the Iran-backed Houthi rebels, that is. And, of course, now you have them labeled with this lesser designation as this specially designated global terrorist.

It has a bit -- differences I'm going to explain in a minute, but John Kirby explaining about the designation and what the FTO was doing differently. Listen here.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOHN KIRBY, NSC COORDINATOR FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS: The previous designation was FTO, foreign terrorist organization, which doesn't have quite the measure of flexibility in terms of humanitarian assistance.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CAVUTO: All right, sorry about that, Griff. I do want to go right now.

Chuck Schumer is responding to these developments, Hakeem Jeffries as well, the House Democratic leaders.

(JOINED IN PROGRESS)

SEN. CHUCK SCHUMER (D-NY): Within a year, we would be on our back foot doing all kinds of things that we wouldn't want to do, that it was essential, essential -- and there was Democratic and Republican agreement that was essential we help Ukraine.

We also talked about the border and how it's so important to deal with the border. The president himself said over and over again that he is willing to make -- to move forward on border. And so we said we have to do both. There were a couple of people in the room who said, let's do border first. We said we have to do both together.

In the Senate -- and let me make one more point. The only way we will do border and Ukraine or even either of them is bipartisan. You cannot, cannot do things with one party in a divided Congress. And so anyone who says -- any party that says do it my way or no way, we're not going to get anything done.

And I think there was broad agreement in the room that we had to drew this in a bipartisan way. Speaking in the Senate, we are making really good progress. I am more optimistic now that we can come to an agreement on border and Ukraine in one package, along with aid to Israel, along with humanitarian aid for the Palestinians in Gaza, and along with helping us Indochina.

I am more optimistic than ever before that we'd come to an agreement. I put the chances a little bit greater than half now, and that's the first time I can say that. And so we hope to fund the government this week, and then, if we can come to an agreement -- we haven't come to an agreement yet in the Senate -- move very quickly on the supplemental very shortly thereafter.

QUESTION: What was the president's response?

SCHUMER: No.

REP. HAKEEM JEFFRIES (D-NY): Thank you, Leader Schumer.

I'm thankful to President Biden for convening the legislative leadership from both the House and the Senate. It was a very positive, forward- looking, candid discussion about the issues of importance to the American people, first and foremost, that funding the Ukrainian war effort is in America's national security interests.

And it's important that we sustain the effort, not simply just for the good of the Ukrainian people, though they are allies of the United States, and that's incredibly important, but it is urgently necessary that we continue to support the Ukrainian effort for the good of the free world, for the good of democracy, and for the good of America's national security interests.

And there was broad agreement on that point. As Leader Schumer has indicated, there was also an openness to, in a bipartisan way, addressing the situation at the border. It has to be bipartisan. It has to be reasonable. It has to be effective. It has to be consistent with American values.

SCHUMER: Thank you, everybody.

CAVUTO: Well, there you go. They're not going anywhere for the time being, although this is the first time I have heard Chuck Schumer or anyone of import in either the House or the Senate saying that this idea that we're going to have an automatic government shutdown, this will take effect next month, he thinks the odds are better than 50 percent we can avoid that.

But the problem is here they have got all these trains that are running oftentimes on the same track at the same time, they just don't hope in the same direction, because you're dealing with the border stuff. You're dealing, obviously, with some efforts to secure a military measure that protects Ukraine and funds and helps the Israelis in their battle with Hamas.

But the back-and-forth on this is such, especially when it comes to the border, that Republicans want to be front and center and foremost that they are still far apart. We're going to be picking that -- all right, I'm sorry.

We're going to go to Meridith McGraw, I think is -- all right, let's go to Meridith right now, taking a look at this and the significance of what both sides were saying.

What did you make of what you heard out of both sides? And Chuck Schumer was the first to actually talk about the possibility that we do get a deal and we do avoid a shutdown. That was sort of tucked into all of that. But what did you make of it?

MERIDITH MCGRAW, SENIOR NATIONAL POLITICAL REPORTER, POLITICO: I mean, there's no doubt here that both sides are wanting to get an agreement here and see that finding a solution at the border is of utmost importance.

But what continues to be the issue is how we're going to get there and if they can find something that will get them to some sort of common ground in agreement.

CAVUTO: I'm just wondering, though, the fallout for Michael Johnson, right?

I mean, now he's got some rebellious conservative members with a razor-thin majority to deal with who don't like the way he's been handling a lot of these negotiations. I don't know how they feel about this one, but, certainly, they think the border and border security is first and foremost and should be the biggest issue for him.

The others pale by comparison. So he's under special pressure just to keep his membership happy, right?

MCGRAW: I mean, he continues to be under pressure from them.

CAVUTO: Yes.

MCGRAW: We keep hearing from the right wing of the party who have balked at some of the measures that have been put forward and continue to have concerns about spending in Ukraine and other places.

And so, of course, being able to satisfy them is going to continue to be a big problem for the speaker.

CAVUTO: Meridith, while I have got you here, and on that, because I have talked to a couple of very angry, largely Freedom Caucus members, to your point, the conservative wing of that wing, that say, no, we're not going to have the possibility of a Kevin McCarthy bow to the moderates and the business-as-usual crowd.

That's how one of them described it. When I pressed them on it, whether they would actually use that right where a single member can move to get rid of the speaker, they didn't go that far, but they certainly hinted about it. How likely is that?

MCGRAW: I'm not sure how likely that would be.

I think a lot of members still have, for lack of a better word, PTSD, about the constant musical chairs of a speakership here. And yet they continue, some of them continue to dangle that over his head as a possibility that, if they don't get the -- get what they want, that that still looms out there.

But I really don't know how -- frankly, how possible that would be.

CAVUTO: It does make you wonder, if either side had a bigger majority, and that's what, of course, Republicans are hoping for to get in the House, with an effective and popular enough presidential candidate, in Republicans' case, maybe retake the Senate, but it's very hard to do in this present environment.

In fact, I was thinking of it just stepping back, Meridith, that cobbling together any deal when both sides have these narrowest of margins to deal with is next to impossible, isn't it?

MCGRAW: Next to impossible, and just the reality that we have seen in Congress now, where we have we have seen just this constant push and pull that really doesn't get us anywhere on so many issues.

And, like you said, it's so much just because of the razor-thin majority that the Republicans have at the moment.

CAVUTO: Lately, Meridith, the Brits have promised and gotten more aid to Ukraine. I think the Germans just did so, albeit in smaller amounts.

But everyone's waiting to see what happens with the United States, including President Zelenskyy, who's growing testy and impatient, we're told. But that hangs in the balance here. And -- but it's falling as a low priority for many Republicans. Where do you see the sorting out of the priority of the issues?

MCGRAW: Well, I mean, getting defense funding to Ukraine is still a priority for some in the Republican Party. You see leadership in the Senate who have continued to ask for funding and can -- have continued to highlight the issues in Ukraine and what President Zelenskyy is facing.

But as we see the issue at the border and the concerns that I think a lot of lawmakers are hearing on the ground from their constituencies about what's happening at the southern border, Ukraine does continue to get pushed aside here by the Republicans.

CAVUTO: One of the things I first heard, very quickly, on the anxiety over what's happening at the border, is that more and more Democrats are sharing that right now and thinking it's a potent political issue for Republicans, and they want -- they would love to take that away from them.

MCGRAW: Well, I think this is going to be a potent issue heading into 2024.

I just got back from Iowa, where I spent a lot of time on the ground talking to Republicans. And when I asked them about what their concerns are, Iowa isn't exactly close to the border, and yet that's something that came up again and again...

CAVUTO: Right.

MCGRAW: ... when I was talking to voters, that they think that this is going to be an important issue for them when they go to the polls.

CAVUTO: Yes, it was the number one issue. I was there too. But all I remember, though, Meridith, is how cold it was. That's all I remember.

Meridith McGraw, the Politico political reporter, on those developments here.

So, they're talking. That's promising. They're not saying overly nasty things about each other. That's kind of promising. We will see.

Here's "The Five."

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