

# [***'Set Politics Aside' for Border Deal, Says GOP Campaign Chief Steve Daines***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B5K-N8D1-DY68-117R-00000-00&context=1516831)

Newsweek.com

January 23, 2024 Tuesday 6:04 PM EST

Copyright © 2024 Newsweek Inc. All Rights Reserved



**Length:** 469 words

**Byline:** Alex J. Rouhandeh

**Highlight:** "I hope we can set ***politics*** aside and put in place policies to secure the southern border," Daines told Newsweek.

**Body**

Congress must set ***politics*** aside and reach a deal that addresses the record number of crossings at the southwest border, said Montana Senator Steve Daines, who chairs the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

The soaring number of illegal border crossings from Mexico has become a top priority for voters in the presidential election year with opinion polls showing little confidence in the handling of the situation by President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and with Republican frontrunner [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) placing heavy emphasis on the importance of tightening border controls.

But concerns from conservatives about a deal not going far enough and—from some—about potentially benefitting Biden in an election year have dimmed prospects of a potential deal winning approval in the Republican-controlled House.

Daines, who has also [*been vocal*](https://www.newsweek.com/fentanyl-crisis-fuels-democratic-support-border-deal-1852285?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) about his concern over fentanyl crossing the border, said the border issue must come before party ***politics***. Daines heads the committee which works to get GOP members elected to the upper chamber.

"I hope we can set ***politics*** aside and put in place policies to secure the southern border," Daines told *Newsweek*. "Latest polls now show it as a bigger issue than inflation."

Findings [*released Monday*](https://harvardharrispoll.com/) by Center for American Political Studies at Harvard University and Harris Poll revealed that immigration ranks as the top concern of voters.

With 35 percent of respondents selecting it as their top issue, immigration outranked inflation (at 32 percent) as well as economy and jobs (at 25 percent).

Just 35 percent of voters approve of Biden's handling of immigration, and the president faces a 42 percent approval rating, according to the poll.

Some pundits believe that if [*Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) strike a deal with [*Democrats*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democrats?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) then that could help Biden's poll numbers heading into the elections.

Republican Representative Troy Nehls of Texas [*told CNN*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/03/politics/senate-immigration-negotiations-congress/index.html) that he's "not willing to do too damn much right now to help a Democrat and to help Joe Biden's approval rating."

As total annual encounters between migrants and border patrol have fluctuated between roughly 1.73 million to nearly 2.48 million over Biden's presidency — significantly higher than under the previous Trump administration — immigration has emerged as a top concern.

Daines said that Biden "could secure the southern border right now if he chose to," but a deal would provide extra tools to aid a president in enforcement.

"My concern is that President Biden has many of the tools he already needs to secure the southern border," Daines told *Newsweek*. "I'm doubtful he'd actually enforce a policy that might be put in place here in [*Congress*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/congress?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)."

Biden has hardened his stance on border security as the number of immigrants has risen and has said he is ready for major changes in immigration rules. *Newsweek* contacted the White House for comment.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2339678/steve-daines-calls-border-deal.jpg)

**Graphic**

Steve Daines Calls for Border Deal

Photo by Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images

Republican Senator Steve Daines of Montana speaks during a news conference following the weekly Republican Senate policy luncheon meeting at the U.S. Capitol Building on September 19, 2023 in Washington, D.C. Senate Republicans spoke to reporters about their desire to see a border agreement reached.

**Load-Date:** January 23, 2024

**End of Document**