

# [***Republicans Will Regret Turning Down Border Bill: Ex-Bush Official***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B9D-G121-JBR6-9003-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 812 words

**Byline:** Natalie Venegas

**Highlight:** "This 2024 window for an enforcement-only bill is briefly open and will likely never reappear," C. Stewart Verdery Jr. wrote Saturday.

**Body**

Republicans will regret striking down the [*bipartisan border security bill*](https://www.newsweek.com/senate-border-security-bill-aid-1866774?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), C. Stewart Verdery Jr., a former [*George W. Bush*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/george-w.-bush?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) official, wrote Saturday in an opinion article.

Following tensions over the U.S-Mexico border with illegal immigration, text of the much-hyped bill was released last week, introducing what would be the most substantial border security reform in years, alongside aid packages for Ukraine and Israel among their ongoing wars with Russia and [*Hamas*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/hamas?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) respectively.

The $118 billion deal would [*address key concerns at the southern border*](https://www.newsweek.com/senate-border-security-bill-aid-1866774?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), increasing [*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/ice?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) detention capacity from 34,000 to 50,000 and allocating $20 billion to immigration enforcement. The proposal would also overhaul the asylum system with faster and tougher enforcement, as well as allow the [*Department of Homeland Security*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/department-of-homeland-security?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) (DHS) to temporarily shut down the border to most migrants if there are an average of more than 5,000 crossing attempts per day over seven days.

However, the GOP-led House struck down the bill in the [*Senate*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/senate?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) on Wednesday, as conservative hardliners argue the bill does not go far enough to end illegal immigration into the U.S. At least 60 "yes" votes were required to advance the bill to the House, where House Speaker [*Mike Johnson*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/mike-johnson?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), a Louisiana Republican, had already declared the legislation "dead on arrival."

In an opinion piece published in The Hill on Saturday titled, "History confirms Republicans rejected a once-in-a-lifetime immigration opportunity" Verdery Jr., a former assistant secretary for Homeland Security during the Bush administration, warned that Republicans will regret striking down the bill as it will likely "never reappear."

"This 2024 window for an enforcement-only bill is briefly open and will likely never reappear. Border hawks may be cheering the demise of the Senate bill, but they will regret it," he wrote.

*Newsweek* has reached out to the White House and Johnson via email for comment.

All Republican senators voted against the bill except Senator [*James Lankford*](https://www.newsweek.com/republican-defends-border-bill-1-million-fewer-migrants-us-right-now-1866880?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) of Oklahoma, the bill's lead GOP negotiator, and moderate Senators Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and [*Mitt Romney*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/mitt-romney?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) of Utah. In addition, five [*Democrats*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democrats?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) joined the Republicans in voting against the bill.

In his opinion piece, Verdery Jr. added that Republicans will regret turning down the border bill as there hasn't been another time in which Democrats have agreed to this level of "Republican enforcement policy" at the border than the bipartisan border security bill.

"This one-sided deal that favors Republican enforcement policy is unlikely to ever reappear. There has never been another moment this century when Democrats agreed to enforcement legislation without meaningful legalization provisions. Nor have they ever agreed to fund Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to anywhere near the level needed to locate and deport millions of individuals already in the country illegally," he wrote.

This comes as President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) is seemingly embracing tougher measures, including shutting down the U.S.-Mexico border, marking a shift from his earlier messaging as he has signaled that he's [*open to "massive changes" on border policy.*](https://www.newsweek.com/joe-biden-all-he-can-do-about-us-mexico-border-greg-abbott-texas-1865348?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)

In addition, Verdery Jr. noted on Saturday how the ***politics*** surrounding the 2024 election may have also contributed to Republicans striking down the bill as they will look back at this bill as the "biggest whiff."

"The ***politics*** that have killed this deal in 2024 are clear. If Republicans pass legislation that improves the border chaos that's plagued President Biden's presidency, they ease a political albatross around his neck in the middle of a presidential campaign. But just as most Republicans look back at 2006, 2007, 2013 and 2018 as missed chances to improve our border policies, we surely will look back at this 2024 bill as the biggest whiff," he wrote.

Immigration is among the top issues ahead of the 2024 presidential election, with polls showing doubts over Biden's handling of the situation, on which Republican frontrunner [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) has promised tougher action.

In December, a Harvard-Harris poll found that only [*38 percent of Americans gave Biden positive marks on immigration*](https://www.newsweek.com/joe-biden-offended-border-security-1854120?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships). Meanwhile, 28 percent of Americans said immigration is among the top issues facing the country. The poll surveyed 2,034 registered voters from December 13 to 14.

The former president has previously urged [*Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) not to accept anything less than a "perfect" border deal before the general election in November, sparking questions about whether some Republicans are working to prevent Biden from scoring a victory by signing the border bill into law.

Meanwhile, Biden slammed Republicans after the border deal was shut down in the Senate, saying Wednesday that he "never thought I'd see something like we are seeing now" in [*Congress*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/congress?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and blamed the failed vote on Trump.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2347398/migrants-crossing-border.jpg)

**Graphic**

Migrants Crossing Border

John Moore/Getty Images

Seen from an aerial view, immigrants walk towards the U.S.-Mexico border wall after crossing the Rio Grande into El Paso, Texas on February 01, 2024 from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Republicans will regret striking down the bipartisan border security bill, said C. Stewart Verdery Jr., a former George W. Bush official, on Saturday.

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