

# [***Greg Abbott's Border Policies Are Working***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BBG-0WM1-DY68-100B-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** James Bickerton

**Highlight:** One political scientist said California and Arizona have now turned into "weak spots" for illegal immigration.

**Body**

Governor [*Greg Abbott*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/greg-abbott?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)'s tightening of security along the Texas-Mexico border is likely pushing illegal migrants to attempt crossings in neighboring states instead, according to a prominent political scientist who said California and Arizona have been turned into national "weak spots."

Mark Shanahan, an expert in American ***politics*** at the University of Surrey, was speaking after U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) data showed a [*sharp fall*](https://www.newsweek.com/texas-sees-huge-drop-border-crossings-greg-abbotts-fight-heats-1869904?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in overall crossings for January versus December. Shanahan said illegal migrants are aware of tightened security in Texas, so they are targeting other states.

"Both organized gangs and migrants simply looking for a better economic future have always probed the border for weak points and for the moment, those are mostly in California and Arizona," he told *Newsweek*. "It's no surprise they're avoiding Texas. Migrants generally have excellent intelligence on where's supposedly easiest to cross into the U.S., and will be all too aware of Abbott's crackdown."

He added: "While Texas can look and act strong, the actions Abbott takes are pointless unless they're replicated in the other border states, California, Arizona and New Mexico."

*Newsweek* reached out to Abbott's office via email for comment.

In January, border protection officers made 124,220 arrests for illegally crossing the southern border, down from 249,000 in December. [*CBS*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/cbs?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) News, citing internal government documents, reported around 60 percent of all illegal border crossings now take place into Arizona or California, with the flow having "largely shifted away from Texas."

Figures from the U.S. Border Patrol's Tucson Section show a sharp increase in illegal crossings over the Arizona border for the past year, which rose from 5,900 in the last week of January 2023 to 13,800 in the final week of January 2024.

Jason Cabel Roe, a veteran Republican political strategist, agreed with Shanahan, telling *Newsweek*: "When you make it more difficult in Texas, the flow is naturally going to move to the western states with Democratic governors who are less committed to border enforcement."

Referring to the fall in Texan border crossings, Roe added: "This is evidence that enforcing the border works. The message from the Biden administration from the time they took office was the days of Trump-style border enforcement were over, and whatever the administration's intent, that was heard around the world as an invitation to come to America. And people from distressed nations the world over accepted the invitation."

Endorsing the Texas governor's policies, he said: "Regardless of what the administration and [the Department of Justice] think, Governor Abbott has an obligation to step in and protect his state and its residents if the federal government fails to do so."

However, Thomas Gift, who heads the Centre on US ***Politics*** at University College London, said Abbott's policies are unlikely to be the only factor behind the decline in illegal crossings from Mexico to Texas.

"Causal factors driving the geographic dispersion of immigration are complex," Gift told *Newsweek*. "While it's not unreasonable to think that Governor Abbott's border controls are having an effect on reducing illegal border crossings— and there's no doubt he'll take political credit for it in Texas—the shifting numbers could driven by multiple, competing dynamics."

Abbott deployed thousands of Texas National Guard troops to the Texas-Mexico border, where they have been [*placing razor wire*](https://www.newsweek.com/razor-wire-barrier-texas-new-mexico-unconstitutional-1836079?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) to combat illegal crossings. The [*Supreme Court*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/supreme-court?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) ruled on January 22 that federal agents can remove this wire, sparking a furious response from the Texas governor, who said his state is facing an "invasion" and invoked its "constitutional authority to defend and protect itself."

Arizona Republican [*Kari Lake*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/kari-lake?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), who is hoping to take a [*Senate*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/senate?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) seat in November, [*told Newsweek*](https://www.newsweek.com/kari-lake-says-arizona-inundated-migrants-due-texas-border-policy-1869927?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) Abbott's increased border security has "without a doubt" resulted in an increase of illegal immigration for Arizona.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2349690/governor-greg-abbott.jpg)

**Graphic**

Governor Greg Abbott

Brandon Bell/GETTY

Stock photo showing Texas Governor Greg Abbott at the state Capitol on June 08, 2023 in Austin, Texas. Abbott's border policies have successfully reduced crossings into Texas, but boosted them for Arizona and California, according to a political scientist.

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