

# [***Mexican Cartels Are Helping Biden With Border: Texas Republican***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BB8-HDP1-JBR6-90M3-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 660 words

**Byline:** Alex J. Rouhandeh

**Highlight:** "I do think the cartels are trying to carry the Biden administration a couple rounds" in the border fight, Rep. Anthony Gonzales told Newsweek.

**Body**

The number of migrant encounters at the United States-Mexico border decreased last month, though one Republican congressman attributes it to the Mexican cartels aiding President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships).

Southern border encounters [*dropped about 42 percent*](https://www.newsweek.com/border-crossings-see-biggest-drop-since-biden-took-office-1869960?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) from December 2023 to January 2024, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) data released Tuesday. It represents the biggest month-to-month decrease since Biden took office, coming as he and his administration—notably the now impeached [*Department of Homeland Security*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/department-of-homeland-security?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) Secretary [*Alejandro Mayorkas*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/alejandro-mayorkas?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)—continue to combat rhetoric that illegal immigration remains out of control.

Total border crossings [*exceeded 988,900 individuals*](https://www.newsweek.com/how-many-migrants-are-crossing-border-1867407?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) between October and December of the current fiscal year, following a record-setting number of migrant encounters in fiscal year 2023. Immigration has become a major issue heading into November's presidential election, as nearly half of voters in a [*CBS*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/cbs?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) News poll last month [*agreed with Donald Trump's statement*](https://www.newsweek.com/migrants-poisoning-blood-half-all-voters-poll-agree-trump-1860603?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) that illegal immigrants are "poisoning the blood" of the country.

Republican Congressman Tony Gonzales, who represents Texas' 23rd Congressional District—spanning across more of the U.S-Mexico border than any other district—told *Newsweek* on Wednesday that January's numbers should be viewed through a wider lens based on aggregate figures.

The decrease could also be attributed to Biden receiving some help from the other side of the border, he added.

"When you say border crossings are down, you're talking about January being the most encounters ever," Gonzales said. "So, was it as bad as December? No, because that was [an] all-time, but it still was the worst January ever. So, that's not good. It's not good.

"I do think the cartels are trying to carry the Biden administration a couple rounds. Mexico has an election in June that no one's really tracking. And, I suspect, for the next couple of months, everything will be cleaned up a little bit. I mean, over 7,000 people a day is still astronomical."

Claudia Sheinbaum, Xóchitl Gálvez, and Jorge Álvarez Máynez are competing for the Mexican presidency, to succeed current President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Gonzales also said that "things are still going very bad both in Texas" and that Texas Governor [*Greg Abbott*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/greg-abbott?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) is doing all he can to remedy the situation. California "is getting hit harder than most," Gonzales said.

The numbers in Texas, viewed as an epicenter of the broader illegal immigration issue in the U.S., mimicked national statistics in terms of decreased migrant encounters.

Crossings on the southwest land border in Texas totaled 68,260 in January, according to CBP statistics, a [*decrease from the 149,806 migrants*](https://www.newsweek.com/texas-sees-huge-drop-border-crossings-greg-abbotts-fight-heats-1869904?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) who attempted to enter the U.S. through the state in December. Encounters there totaled 119,628 and 111,129 in October and November, respectively.

Barriers in the Rio Grande and razor wire erected in heavily traversed areas like Shelby Park in Eagle Pass have been attributed to migrants seeking entry at different areas and ports, diminishing the numbers this year. Abbott and Texas have received assistance from myriad Republican-led states, both in terms of vocal support in addition to National Guard soldiers.

Earlier today, National Border Patrol Council President Brandon Judd was asked by Stuart Varney on [*Fox*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fox?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) Business's *Varney & Company* whether he [*expects a border surge*](https://www.newsweek.com/migrants-flood-border-out-fear-trump-border-patrol-union-head-1869970?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in anticipation of a potential [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) election victory this November.

"We do," Judd said. "We saw this back when President Trump was up for reelection again, we saw a huge surge expecting that Biden was going to win, they wanted to get here before Biden took office knowing that he was going to put policies in place that were going to protect them.

"We see the cartels, they are very intelligent in everything that they do. They know what the ebbs and flows of our ***politics*** are. They know how to generate money based on what our ***politics*** are. They also understand what the media is reporting."

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2349241/tony-gonzales.jpg)

**Graphic**

Tony Gonzales

Alex Wong/Getty Images

Co-chair of the Congressional Hispanic Conference (CHC) Rep. Tony Gonzales (R-TX) speaks during a news conference at the U.S. Capitol on February 1, 2023 in Washington, DC. Gonzales told Newsweek on February 14, 2024, that the decrease in southern border crossings can partly be attributed to Mexican cartels aiding the Biden administration.

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