

The recent crisis on the Texas border has brought immigration reform onto the forefront of many senator's agenda. The top aides for two opposing senators meet to negotiate the structure of a bill to reform US immigration policy. The issues are:

1. Immediate funds to HHS, FEMA, Customs and ICE and other agencies to alleviate the human rights crisis currently at the border. These funds will go to providing healthcare, food, shelter and faster processing of the migrants coming to the border. Cost: \$1 - \$5 Billion;
2. Beefed up border security;
3. Increase the number of people US will allow as asylum seekers (either by increasing the allotted number or adding categories for seeking asylum);
4. Reduce immigration into US based on family ties as this policy has led to the release of many migrants into the US.

40% of unauthorized migrants enter legally into the United States on short term visas and overstay their visa terms. Neither side wants to target these immigrants as they have passed at least some initial screening that reduces terrorist or criminal threat risk.

Senator Zenz is from Texas. S/he narrowly defeated his opponent in the 2018 election and may not run for reelection in 2024 as s/he has supported legislation limiting senators to two terms. Also, s/he was heavily criticized during winter storm URI for leaving in February 2021 to fly to Cancun Mexico as millions in Texas were left without power and water during the state's worst snowstorm in history.

Nevertheless, Zenz has significant party support and is considering running for president in 2024 if s/he can bring the illusion of control over the border crisis and take credit for that from the current State governor (who also appears to be positioning himself to make a presidential bid).

Senator Zenz' interests are:

- (1) Increased funds for removal operations transporting the border migrants to their countries of origin when ineligible for asylum or other basis to remain in the US (essential-\$2 Billion)
- (2) Increase the number of Immigration Law Judges to process and deny asylum applications and expedite removal procedure (important-\$2 Billion)
- (3) Finish the border wall to prevent more immigrants from physically entering the US and discourage migration north to Mexico from Haiti, Central America, and Caribbean countries (desired-\$1-2 Billion).

Senator Zenz is not really interested in providing humanitarian medical aid, food, or shelter for the migrants. However, s/he is willing to divert funds from his/her "finish the border wall" interest to fund these efforts because realistically s/he knows that the wall's completion will cost much more than the available funds and is likely to be judicially challenged for decades after s/he has retired from politics. S/he also believes that a bipartisan agreement in which s/he achieves his/her essential interest, while appearing to be a human being in agreeing to feed and shelter children before they are sent back to their countries, will not show him/her to be "weak" on "bad hombres" immigration, but "compassionate, yet tough".

His/her BATNA is item 1 because it does not require a change in the law and his appropriations committee has assured him/her that funding for this essential item has been earmarked and is available. However, achieving item (1) is not sufficient to him/her to clinch his/her aspirational presidential bid and would make it a closer call than s/he would like. Nevertheless, s/he is certain that s/he would be reelected as senator in 2024 (despite his/her prior support for term limits) if running for president is precluded. Therefore, s/he has some flexibility as long as his/her tough stance on preventing criminal immigrants from overrunning Texas is not threatened with a deal allocating more funds to helping immigrants than to keeping them out and sending them back.