



Texas is Trump's biggest – and most enthusiastic – partner on immigration overhaul

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By

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CIUDAD JUAREZ, MEXICO - U.S. Border Patrol agents and the Texas National Guard monitor the border between El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez on January 24, 2025.

Anadolu/Anadolu via Getty Images/Anadolu

After his inauguration, President Donald Trump stood before a crowd of followers and talked about winning most of the border counties in Texas, which have historically voted Democrat.

He then praised a longtime ally - Texas Republican Gov. Greg Abbott. The president and the governor endorsed each other's campaigns and have supported their respective efforts to build a wall at the border.

As Trump follows through on his campaign promise to stop illegal migrant crossings at the U.S.-Mexico border, [Abbott has become his most eager partner on the border.](#)

"He's doing a good job ... by the way, the governor of Texas," Trump told the crowd in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 21.

This week [Abbott signed executive orders](#) directing state agencies to work with the federal government to stymie illegal immigration.

Texas, the only border state controlled almost entirely by Republicans, will send 400 additional Texas National Guard troops to the border.

Abbott has also ordered state police to help federal authorities detain unauthorized immigrants and is adding more barriers at the border, including razor wire and buoys in the Rio Grande.

And he's directed state agencies to share information they have about Mexican cartels with federal authorities.

Since assuming office in 2015, Abbott has made illegal immigration a target of his administration.

He's backed bills by the Texas legislature to ban so-called sanctuary cities and launched [Operation Lone Star](#) in 2021. The program deploys the Texas National Guard and Department of Public Safety troops to try to stop people from crossing illegally into the U.S.

Abbott said the Biden administration mishandled immigration enforcement at the border and Operation Lone Star was a response to that.

But the program has been controversial from the start. The American Civil Liberties Union [says it perpetuates unconstitutional policing](#).

"OLS spends billions of dollars to racially profile and arrest people who pose no threat to public safety," the ACLU wrote in a 2024 report about the program.

Operation Lone Star is an example of how federal authorities can partner with states, said Katherine Hawkins, a legal analyst for the Project on Government Oversight, a nonpartisan watchdog of government spending.

"Operation Lone Star has really laid the groundwork for a lot of what the administration is now doing on immigration," Hawkins said.

Texas has the second largest population of people [in the U.S. without legal status](#) behind California, according to the Pew Research Center.

Since Trump took office, [ICE has detained at least a hundred people across Texas](#). In response, advocacy groups have been hosting community meetings to [inform people of their rights if they're approached by immigration authorities](#).

Some of the state's biggest cities, including Dallas, San Antonio, Houston and Austin, are run by Democrats. Political leaders in those cities have been less inclined than Abbott to comply with the federal government.

"San Antonio has always been a city that follows the law," Mayor Ron Nirenberg [told the local NBC affiliate](#). "We're also a compassionate city. We work with local law enforcement when requested on detainees for violent criminals but we also provide humanitarian assistance to people who need it in our communities."

According to a recent survey from the University of Houston, [about 87 percent of Texans support](#) deporting migrants without legal status who have been convicted of felonies. And 69 percent support creating more legal pathways to citizenship.



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