

Republican governors deploy police and troops against immigrants along US-Mexico border

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Responding to a June 10 letter from Republican governors Greg Abbott of Texas and Douglas Ducey of Arizona, seeking “emergency” assistance, nearly a dozen Republican governors have responded that they will be deploying National Guard soldiers and state police to the US-Mexico border.

In preparation for former President Donald Trump’s fascist rally in McAllen, Texas, on June 30, Republican governors in South Dakota, Florida, South Carolina, Iowa, Idaho, Georgia, Nebraska and Arkansas have either announced or have already sent National Guard soldiers or state police officers to Texas and/or Arizona.

A quick summary of some of the announced deployments:

Florida: Earlier in June Governor Ron DeSantis pledged to send 50 police officers “because of the failure of the Biden administration to secure our southern border and indeed to really do anything constructive about what is going on in the southern border.”

South Carolina: The morning Trump arrived in Texas, South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster tweeted that he had authorized “over 300” National Guard soldiers to be deployed to the border.

Arkansas: Governor Asa Hutchinson has authorized a 90-day deployment of up to 40 National Guardsmen. “My hope is that our 90 days of support will improve the security of our country and reduce the adverse impact of illegal immigration on Arkansas,” he said.

Iowa and Nebraska each have already each sent 25 state patrol officers to the border, while the Iowa National Guard still has 24 soldiers deployed to Texas under a federally-funded activation in response to a

Trump administration request from October 2020.

While the numbers are small, the action has great political significance. Patrolling the US border has always been a federal responsibility. While forces from the border states may occasionally play a backup role within their own states, police and troops from other states have never before been mobilized to the border, without a federal request.

Even more remarkable, South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem announced that “up to 50” National Guard soldiers would be sent to Texas, with their deployment “paid for by a private donation.”

A spokesman for Noem, Ian Fury, confirmed to multiple news outlets that the donation came from the Willis and Reba Johnson Foundation, located in Franklin, Tennessee. In short interviews with the *Daily Beast*, *Politico*, *USA Today* and the *Washington Post*, billionaire chairman of Copart Inc. Willis Johnson confirmed he had made the “donation” but refused to reveal the total amount.

Copart Inc., founded in 1982, dominates the automotive salvage and auction industry in the US, where it enjoys close relationships with major insurers State Farm, Allstate, Nationwide and Farmers. According to Forbes, Johnson’s net worth as of today is \$2.2 billion.

Johnson is a Republican mega-donor, who gave more than \$350,000 towards Trump’s reelection campaign and nearly \$180,000 to the Republican National Committee in the last two years. According to a 2018 IRS form, the Willis and Reba Johnson’s Fund also donated \$1.15 million to a Tennessee Baptist church and \$25,000 to the National Rifle Association.

In an interview with the *Daily Beast*, Johnson

confirmed that he reached out to Noem, after he heard that Florida Governor Ron DeSantis had agreed to send police officers to Texas.

“I seen (sic) what Governor Abbott was doing down there in Texas,” Johnson told the online magazine. “I thought, you got two big states in it, now you got a smaller state doing it, I thought I might as well help out. So I gave her a call.”

Johnson, who plans to support either Trump, Noem or DeSantis for president in 2024, described his actions as “helping America,” adding that he thinks “that people can come to America, I love America, but it’s gotta be under the law, not under some president who can just say ‘we’re opening the borders up’.”

While the US government regularly hires fascistic private military death squads, such as Blackwater or Northern Red Inc., to train US police or deploy mercenaries in neocolonial imperialist wars overseas, it is historically unprecedented for a billionaire to simply pay a state government to deploy soldiers in another state for political reasons.

In a story for military.com, neither the Pentagon nor the National Guard bureau would comment on the fact that National Guard soldiers, supposedly sworn to uphold the Constitution, are now mercenaries for hire, at the disposal of anti-immigrant billionaires.

The deployment of soldiers along the border against immigrants and their families is an attack on the entire working class and an example of the methods and tactics the ruling class is prepared to use against workers both within the US and internationally.

In several statements and interviews parroting Trump, the Republican governors have claimed the deployment of soldiers and police on the border is necessary to stem an “invasion” of “drug smugglers, child traffickers and cartel members” who have been emboldened to cross the border due to President Joe Biden’s “weak” immigration policies.

The coordinated attack on immigrants by far-right Trump-aligned governors and the unconstitutional deployment of National Guard troops have been met with silence by Biden.

Testifying to the terminal fecklessness of the Democratic Party, Texas Democratic congressmen Filemón Vela and Vicente González released a statement describing Abbott’s and Trump’s actions as a “distraction,” while Representative Henry Cuellar

(28th Congressional District), like Biden, remained silent.

The fact is the Biden administration’s immigration policies have been just as cruel and inhumane as those of his predecessor. In May, Customs and Border Patrol reported over 180,000 “encounters” on the border, with over 60 percent of those encounters ending with immigration police quickly deporting asylum seekers and refugees via Title 42, which invokes public health reasons (the COVID-19 pandemic) for denying a hearing.

The use of Title 42 to expel migrants was first suggested to Trump by his neo-fascist White House advisor Stephen Miller. This policy has continued under the Biden administration.

Appearing in Texas alongside Abbott on Wednesday, Trump spewed fascist lies regarding immigrants and again railed against the 2020 presidential election, claiming it was stolen.

Trump alleged, without evidence, that “countries are opening up their jails, opening up their prisons ... they are letting their murderers, rapists, drug dealers, and human traffickers come to the US.”

Intertwining his fascist lies together Trump added: “We have a sick country in many ways. It’s sick in elections, and it’s sick in the border. And if you don’t have good elections, and if you don’t have a strong border, you don’t have a country.”



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