

Immigrants being bused from Texas and Arizona to New York and Washington D.C.

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10 August 2022

Since April, Texas governor Greg Abbott has sent busloads of migrants and asylum-seekers to locations across the East Coast, including Washington D.C. and New York City. Arizona governor Doug Ducey joined Texas and started busing migrants to the nation's capital in May.

As part of the state's anti-immigrant Operation Lone Star, Abbott directed the Texas Division of Emergency Management to transport migrants who crossed the US-Mexico border to locations outside Texas. Charter buses have since dropped off thousands of migrants who Abbott claimed had been released into small "overwhelmed" Texas communities.

According to Abbott's office, Texas has already sent more than 6,100 migrants to the nation's capital. The buses arrive six days a week, as early as 6 a.m. and as late as 11 p.m.—sometimes multiple buses a day. Abbott starting busing migrants to D.C. after the Biden administration attempted to lift the Trump-era Title 42 order that allowed the US to deny asylum-seeking migrants entry on the pretext of concern for public health.

Most recently, Abbott claimed a bus with 54 migrants that arrived in New York City on August 5 was the first to be sent to that city by Texas. In a statement, Abbott mocked New York Mayor Eric Adams, a Democrat, and said he included New York as a destination in order to increase pressure on President Joe Biden to enact stricter border security measures.

"New York City is the ideal destination for these migrants, who can receive the abundance of city services and housing that Mayor Eric Adams has boasted about within the sanctuary city," Abbott said in the statement. "I hope he follows through on his promise of welcoming all migrants with open arms so that our overrun and overwhelmed border towns can find relief."

New York City officials, however, have disputed Abbott's claims, pointing to a considerably larger number

of migrants who have arrived in the city in recent months. Authorities estimate that more than 4,000 immigrants seeking asylum have arrived in the city from Texas, though not all by bus.

At a press conference on Sunday, Adams criticized Abbott for using "innocent people as political pawns to manufacture a crisis." Adams' official Twitter account posted images of him greeting migrants and refugees arriving at the Port Authority bus terminal in midtown Manhattan.

"This is horrific when you think about what [Abbott] is doing," Adams said. "New York is a city that has always represented democratic values. Showing our values. That's what we're doing today."

However, despite the Democrats' supposed love for democratic values, local authorities and the federal government have offered little assistance to the migrants shipped to the East Coast. For example, in Washington, D.C., only local volunteers and non-profit organizations have greeted migrants deposited at Union Station, just a few blocks from the US Capitol building.

Abel Nuñez, head of the Central American Resource Center, told NPR he stepped in to help people being bused to D.C. as long ago as last April.

"It was really crazy because they were just leaving them on the street," Nuñez said. He showed up at Union Station on April 16 after getting a tip from the D.C. Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs that a bus was on its way.

"We knew it was on its way so we were there since 5 a.m. just waiting for them, along with mutual aid organizations," he said, adding that the first bus didn't arrive till 8 a.m. "And it was incredible how shell-shocked these people were coming out of the buses."

After speaking with migrants, activists learned they had been released from immigration detention centers at the border and spent very little time—sometimes less than a day—at a shelter or nonprofit before being kidnapped and

put on the bus for the 36-hour journey.

“For them, it was just a free ride,” Nuñez said. “They didn’t really have any other options and were offered a bus to the East Coast—Washington, D.C.—which some of them understood was closer to their final destination... so they were happy.”

However, Nuñez added, with only local volunteers and nonprofit staff greeting the buses of migrants, and no government support, the migrants were confused and unsure what to do next after arriving in D.C.

“We have to recognize that the immigrants coming in were primarily from Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba... some folks from Central Africa... so they had [final] destinations such as Miami, New Jersey, New York or Tennessee [in mind],” Nuñez said.

Both Adams and D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser, also a Democrat, have asked for federal aid to help with the new flow of migrants.

Abbott’s political stunt is part of a campaign by Republican leaders in border states to blame the Democrats for what they call an “invasion.” The fascistic forces around Trump have called for governors to invoke emergency powers reserved for war to stop the supposed invasion by drug cartels and criminal gangs.

During an interview with Fox News, Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick likened the “invasion” at the southern border to the attack on Pearl Harbor during World War II. He said the state should “put hands on people.”

Biden’s Republican opponents have absurdly claimed that he and the Democrats are pursuing an “open border” policy. In truth, the Biden administration is just as hostile to the plight of immigrants, still enforcing the Title 42 policy imposed by Trump. After news spread that Abbott was using state police to deport immigrants, the White House’s only response was to release a statement claiming that Biden was focused on “real policy solutions” to “actually secure our border.”



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