

# Republicans escalate anti-immigrant agitation following midterm elections

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In his first trip outside of Washington D.C. following the midterm elections, House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy led a delegation of Republican lawmakers to the US-Mexican border in El Paso, Texas, on Tuesday to demand the resignation of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and threaten to impeach him for the supposed “collapse” of border security.

The Republicans won control of the House of Representatives by a narrow margin in the November 8 vote and McCarthy is bidding to become speaker of the House when the new Congress assembles on January 3. With his visit to the border, he sought to underline the intention of the Republican Party to use its control of the lower chamber of Congress to escalate its fascistic agitation against immigrants.

He was emboldened by the rush of the Biden administration and the Democratic Party to conciliate with the pogromist propaganda of the Republicans and step up their own record-setting wave of arrests, expulsions and deportations.

At a press conference during his tour of the border, McCarthy said of Mayorkas: “His actions have produced the greatest wave of illegal immigration in recorded history. This is why today I am calling on the secretary to resign.

“He cannot and must not remain in that position. If Secretary Mayorkas does not resign, House Republicans will investigate every order, every action and every failure to determine whether we can begin an impeachment inquiry.”

After meeting with local politicians and border patrol agents, McCarthy reportedly told Fox News if he is elected speaker of the House, he will hold congressional hearings at the border.

The US-Mexico border has witnessed a surge in undocumented crossings since early 2021. According to

government data, US border police recorded over 2.3 million migrant encounters over the last fiscal year, a significant increase from the 1.7 million recorded in 2021.

Current trends indicate that the efforts of impoverished and oppressed workers fleeing countries devastated by American imperialism and seeking asylum in the US—what capitalist politicians and media call “the border crisis”—will not abate in fiscal year 2023, with more than 230,000 migrant encounters in October—the highest number for October in recent years.

The Republicans routinely speak of an “invasion” across the southern border. At a Senate hearing last week, Mayorkas limited his response to Republican baiting to pointing to the broader refugee crisis across the Western Hemisphere. “The entire hemisphere is suffering a migration crisis,” he said. “We are seeing an unprecedented movement of people from country to country. It is not restricted to the southern border.”

The White House responded to the GOP’s thuggish attacks on immigrants by implicitly accepting the premise of an “invasion” by criminal elements. It criticized the Republicans for failing to advance a plan to deal with the crisis.

“McCarthy has no plan. The Republican Party has no plan. They do nothing except political stunts,” White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Tuesday.

The Democrats responded with similar cowardice and duplicity when Texas Governor Greg Abbott began sending busloads of migrants to New York City and Washington D.C. during the summer, and previously when Abbott authorized state police to deport asylum seekers across the border, in violation of federal authority on matters of immigration.

Republicans denounce the Biden administration for rolling back Trump-era border policies such as “Remain in Mexico,” which effectively negated the legal right to asylum by blocking refugees from applying for asylum in the US and forcing them instead to remain in squalid camps in Mexico pending resolution of their claim.

But Biden was no less ruthless in gutting asylum rights, using Title 42, an emergency public health provision implemented by Trump to use the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext for suspending asylum applications to summarily expel refugees seeking asylum without even the trappings of legal process. The White House recently announced cooperation with Mexican authorities in deporting Venezuelan nationals, as well as establishing more checkpoints along Mexico’s southern border.

On Monday, 15 states—all controlled by Republicans except for Virginia—filed a lawsuit to delay implementation of a recent court order lifting Title 42. The Biden administration itself asked for and obtained a delay until December 21, and is reportedly considering its own appeal of the ruling lifting the anti-migrant provision.

Under Biden, border agents intercepted migrants nearly 2.4 million times at the southern border in fiscal year 2022, which ended September 30. Of this number, the largest annual total ever, some 40 percent were summarily expelled.



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