

Tell the story

Border lawmakers need to enlighten colleagues

One of the reasons bad legislation gets passed is that lawmakers often think they know an issue and don't read all the details of the legislation on which they vote. They rely on information from advocates and lobbyists, even though that information is biased and often extremist.

Reliance on misinformation leads to horrific incidents like the one that occurred in January when a Virginia politician showed up at the National Butterfly Center in Mission demanding to be taken to the place where fleets of rafts were bringing swarms of illegal aliens across the Rio Grande — and then attacking the center's director when told that such a scene didn't exist.

Such scenarios justifiably raise concerns when we learn that incoming Texas Republican members of Congress, whose party will take control of the chamber in January, have prepared a package of bills addressing border security and immigration. Those issues certainly need congressional action, but not the kind that we heard from many of these legislators during their campaigns for the November elections.

The lawmakers on Dec. 8 revealed a list of border measures they will file when the next Congress convenes. Items include finishing the wall across our entire southern border; clearing terrain along the border regardless of environmental concerns; requiring that all immigrants be detained for the duration of their application process or turned away if that isn't possible; giving full deportation authority to Immigration and Border Enforcement officials rather than relying on immigration courts; and other measures.

Several of those measures likely will create more problems than they address, and focus on symptoms rather than causes of our border and immigration problems.

Yes, we need secure borders, but that is best achieved with active surveillance using the best technology available, not by simply dropping slabs of concrete and shipping containers along the river's edge. Simple measures created by simple minds simply don't work.

And yes, we need to reform our terribly ineffective immigration policies, but not by simply trying to keep people out. We need to refine and speed up the process so that people who deserve to be here and can contribute to our national progress receive legal status within a reasonable length of time, and those who shouldn't be here are deported quickly.

Border residents know firsthand that many of the assumptions upon which many of these proposals are exaggerated or false, that immigrants are just as human as everyone else, and many have valid reasons to be here.

Thus, lawmakers from the Rio Grande Valley and other border areas should do their best to inform their colleagues of the realities rather than the hype, and seek solutions that can reduce our immigration problems effectively, such as reducing the wait for visas so that migrants no longer believe they have a better chance of living as fugitives than they do of gaining legal entry.

It will be hard to overcome inaccurate perception and demagoguery, but the effort must be made to pursue the most effective and most humane border policies possible. Our national security, and our progress as a nation, depend on it.



NEWS ANALYSIS

NEW RULES

Will immigration surge as asylum rule ends?



DARIO LOPEZ-MILLS, FILE /AP

A group of migrants stand next to the border wall as a Border Patrol agent takes a head count in Eagle Pass, Texas, Saturday, May 21, 2022. The Eagle Pass area has become increasingly a popular crossing corridor for migrants, especially those from outside Mexico and Central America, under Title 42 authority, which expels migrants without a chance to seek asylum on grounds of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

BY REBECCA SANTANA
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Since the pandemic began, the United States has been using a public health rule designed to limit the spread of disease to expel asylum-seekers on the southern border.

Title 42, as it's called, has been used more than 2.5 million times to expel

migrants since March 2020, although that number includes people who repeatedly attempted to cross the border.

But because of a judge's ruling, starting next Wednesday immigration authorities can no longer use Title 42 to quickly expel prospective asylum-seekers. The change comes as surging numbers of people are seeking to enter the

country through the southern border, and with Republicans intent on making immigration a key issue when they take control of the House in January.

A look at Title 42 and the potential impact of the ruling:

HOW IT STARTED

In March 2020, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued an order limiting migration

across the southern and northern borders, saying it was necessary to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. The virus was ravaging the U.S., schools were shutting down and hospitals filling up, and President Donald Trump was trying numerous ways to limit migration, his signature political issue.

PLEASE SEE RULES, C5

How the Fed's rate hikes could affect your finances

BY CORA LEWIS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — The Federal Reserve's move Wednesday to raise its key rate by a half-point brought it to a range of 4.25% to 4.5%, the highest level in 14 years.

The Fed's latest increase — its seventh rate hike this year — will make it even costlier for consumers and businesses to borrow for homes, autos and other purchases. If, on the other hand, you have money to save, you'll earn a bit more interest

on it. Wednesday's rate hike, part of the Fed's drive to curb high inflation, was smaller than its previous four straight three-quarter-point increases. The downshift reflects, in part, the easing of inflation and the cooling of the economy.

As interest rates increase, many economists say they fear that a recession remains inevitable — and with it, job losses that could cause hardship for households already badly hurt by inflation.

Here's what to know:

WHAT'S PROMPTING THE RATE INCREASES?

The short answer: Inflation. Over the past year, consumer inflation in the United States has clocked in at 7.1% — the fifth straight monthly drop but still a painfully high level.

The Fed's goal is to slow consumer spending, thereby reducing demand for homes, cars and other goods and services, eventually cooling the economy and lowering prices.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell

has acknowledged that aggressively raising interest rates would bring "some pain" for households but that doing so is necessary to crush high inflation.

WHICH CONSUMERS ARE MOST AFFECTED?

Anyone borrowing money to make a large purchase, such as a home, car or large appliance, will take a hit, according to Scott Hoyt, an analyst with Moody's Analytics.

PLEASE SEE RATE, C5

