

U.S. Rep. Gallagher: Unveils common-sense border security package

Posted on Monday, Feb 22, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI) today announced he reintroduced three bills that would better secure America's borders, combat corruption and instability in Mexico, and reduce the backlog in America's immigration courts. The bills, which he originally introduced in the 116th Congress following a trip to the U.S.-Mexico border, would crack down on cartels and restore fairness and accountability in our immigration system.

"President Biden's immigration proposal grants amnesty to millions of illegal immigrants, does not adequately provide resources to secure our borders, and fails to address the root causes of our immigration crisis. It will be a nonstarter in Congress," said Rep. Gallagher. "In the absence of comprehensive reform, there are important steps we can take to fix our broken immigration system. These three common-sense bills are a good place to start, and will ultimately keep Americans safe while instilling more accountability in the system."

The three bills included in the package Rep. Gallagher introduced are:

- **R. 1120: Empowering Immigration Courts Act**
- This bill would give immigration judges the authority to impose criminal fines on anyone in contempt of their court. Existing law allows for the Attorney General to define regulations to impose fines, but none have been put in place since the law's enactment 22 years ago.
- The Heritage Foundation [published a study](#) indicating that this lack of authority means those that come before the court "cannot be held accountable to the judge with respect to matters such as timelines, docketing dates, or

even court orders.”

- **R. 1121: Illicit Arms Trafficking Security Enforcement Act**
- This bill would establish a Border Enforcement Security Team (BEST) within the Department of Homeland Security to focus solely on the reduction of arms trafficking. Of the current 57 BESTs, none are solely dedicated to arms trafficking.
- The purposes of the team would be to: reduce arms smuggling of weapons, weapon parts, munitions, explosives, and related items; apprehend arms smugglers; ensure coordination with ATF for data tracking of seized firearms through eTrace; deconflict arms trafficking investigations between DHS and DOJ.
- A recent GAO report found that 70% of weapons seized from cartels are smuggled across the border from the US to Mexico. This would ensure arms trafficking in and out of the country was better monitored and at a minimum would help ensure American companies aren't unwittingly supplying cartels with weapons.
- **R. 1122: Supporting Mexico Against Corruption (SMAC) Act**
- This bill would combat corruption by requiring the President to impose Magnitsky Sanctions on individuals in the Mexican government that the U.S. Treasury Department has “credible evidence” engaged in corrupt activities outlined by the Global Magnitsky Act. Under the SMAC Act, the President would have 120 days to implement these sanctions.

The Treasury Department has only sanctioned one Mexican government official for corruption and human rights abuses under the Magnitsky Act since passing the act in 2016. This would require the President to sanction anyone who meets the standards under the Magnitsky Act to help deter officials from aiding cartels.