

U.S. Sen. Johnson: Releases statement on letter calling for GOP Conference meeting to discuss border security negotiations

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WASHINGTON – On Sunday, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) released the following statement on the letter sent today by 15 Senate Republicans to Conference Chair John Barrasso, M.D. (R-Wyo.) requesting a meeting of the Conference the week of January 8, 2024 to discuss the negotiations with President Biden and Senate Democrats regarding border security.

“Earlier today, I joined 14 Republican Senate colleagues in releasing our letter calling for a meeting of the Senate Republican Conference to discuss the negotiations with the White House and Senate Democrats regarding securing our border.

“The crisis at the southwest border is unlike anything we’ve experienced in American history. The massive flood of illegal migration is an order of magnitude larger than the ‘humanitarian crisis’ President Obama sparked when he abused ‘prosecutorial discretion’ and granted Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals (DACA) to hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants in 2012. In 2019, Obama’s Secretary of Homeland Security, Jeh Johnson, stated that 1,000 apprehensions per day ‘overwhelm[ed] the system.’ We recently experienced over 12,000 ‘encounters’ in a single day, and it has become common for encounters to exceed 10,000 per day.

“Of the more than 6 million migrants who have entered and stayed since President Biden took office and opened the border, approximately 1.7 million have been what CBP calls ‘known gotaways.’ That’s a misnomer, because we have no idea who

these people are or where they went—we just detected them illegally crossing our porous border. With FBI Director Wray confirming that terror threats to our nation are at an all-time high, particularly from Foreign Terrorist Organizations, Biden's open border represents a clear and present danger to America.

“Unfortunately, President Biden and his Democrat allies in Congress WANT an open border. Biden came into office with the border largely secured, and then immediately reversed all the policies that had successfully stemmed the flow of illegal migrants. The fact that President Biden and congressional Democrats ARE the root cause of the current crisis is a major problem in conducting good-faith negotiations with them.

“Because President Biden has not faithfully executed existing law, lied repeatedly to the public, ignored and violated Supreme Court rulings, and failed to engage in meaningful negotiations on securing the border until only recently, it is impossible for Republicans to trust him to comply with whatever he agrees to. That's a real challenge for Republican negotiators.

“I appreciate Senator Lankford's knowledge and tenacity in negotiating the types of policies and legislative language that would provide a president who actually wants to secure the border with the authorities to do so. The essential ingredient will be how to enforce any agreement reached. I have suggested making Ukraine funding contingent on benchmarks being met on a monthly basis. I am open to other foolproof enforcement ideas.

“Conducting rushed and secret backroom negotiations is not the way to address the unprecedented border crisis. That's the kind of business as usual process that Washington leadership has relied upon to mortgage our children's future and weaken our country. Whatever negotiators produce will need to be fully vetted, discussed, and understood—by members and the general public. That will take weeks—not hours or days. I look forward to our conference meeting the week of January 8th, where we can begin that vetting and discussion.”