



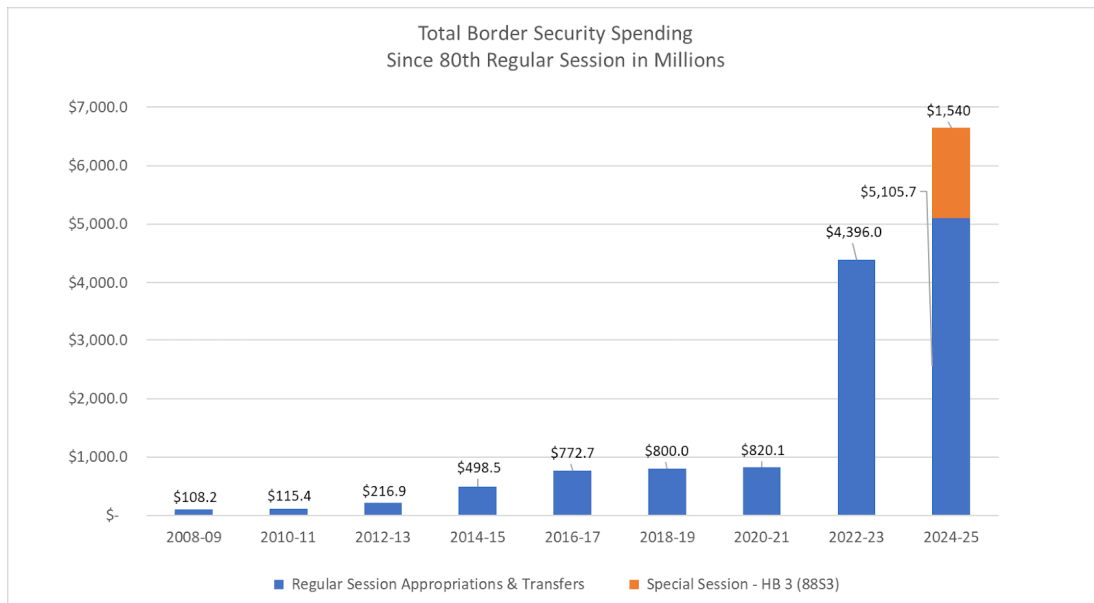
Testimony to Senate Committee on Border Security

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June 11, 2024

Our state is spending billions of taxpayer dollars and making it more dangerous and more difficult to be an immigrant in Texas by continuing Operation Lone Star and pursuing anti-democratic policies such as SB 4. Yet, newly arrived Texans continue to power our economy. All Texans, no matter their immigration status, want to contribute to safe and prosperous communities they can call home. According to a report from the Immigration Research Initiative and Every Texan, immigrants make up 17% of the state population, and their efforts contribute more than 22% of our state's economic productivity.

Current state policy costs us all, not only through the \$12 billion dedicated to punitive and wasteful actions such as Operation Lone Star but also by openly challenging federal authority with the enactment of SB 4. With common sense solutions, however, Americans can keep our social and economic engine churning. Spending billions on failed policies while attacking hardworking Texans is an expensive waste of our state's resources. Even though the 22% of immigrants working in the Texas economy earn more than \$157 billion annually, state leadership continues to disparage and attack immigrant communities.



Texans deserve better than failed deterrence policies that prioritize violent shows of force over the well-being of our communities and allegiance to American democracy. Under SB 4, Texas is openly flouting federal authority and creating potential conflicts not seen since the 1950s era fights over desegregation. More dangerous, Texas's justification for SB 4 denies federal authority to protect Americans from actual "invasions" while dehumanizing hardworking people



seeking refuge and asylum in the United States. The vacuum of power left by Congressional inaction on immigration policy is not Governor Abbott’s to fill, nor is it the job of this Legislature as Senator Birdwell so eloquently stated last November.

Texas is big enough, strong enough, and smart enough to reject the hateful, exclusionary policies of Operation Lone Star and SB 4. **With commonsense solutions, we can embrace people who have the most Texan qualities: the desire to work for a fair wage and provide for one’s family.** Since the 2006 Comptroller’s report, we have known that newly arrived Texans are hardworking and contribute more to our state than they “take.” [Our recent study](#) shows new Texans in the first 5 years of having the right to work increased their annual wages by 45 percent, contributing \$3.7 million in state & local taxes per 1,000 workers.

	Annual Wages	Aggregate Wages per 1,000 Workers	State & Local Taxes Paid per 1,000 Workers
When First Working	\$20,000	\$20 million	\$2.6 million
After About 5 Years	\$29,000	\$29 million	\$3.7 million

Texans deserve policies that recognize the benefits our immigrant friends and family bring to our state if only our state and federal leadership recognized their proven contributions. Failed deterrence policies such as Operation Lone Star cheat Texans out of a future where every one of us - no matter our legal status - can contribute to safe, prosperous communities. We could have invested that money in our schools, our hospitals, and the sure bet that is our immigrant family, friends, and neighbors, rather than wasting billions of dollars on consistently failed policies. Like hardworking Texans who have been here for generations, people arriving from across the world yearn to breathe freely and contribute to an economy starved for qualified workers. Policies such as Operation Lone Star and SB 4 threaten to further divide Americans from each other while wasting critical resources that could benefit us all.

Texans should reject the governor’s use of state resources for his unending conflict with the federal government. Texans are welcoming, and we believe in upholding our oaths of allegiance to the Constitution. History and research prove time and again that immigrants, new and old, asylee, refugee, or undocumented, benefit our society. They build homes, churches, and communities. They pay millions in local, state, and federal taxes. They fill crucial holes in our labor sector, all while being our friends, family, and neighbors. All Texans, from Eagle Pass to Muleshoe, deserve state leadership that embraces the dignity and productivity of migrants sojourning in our land, rather than continuing expensive policies that betray our values as Americans and Texans.