




## Flood of Illegal Immigrants Now Includes Gang Members

Among the thousands of illegal immigrants  — many of them unaccompanied minors — pouring across our southern borders are members of notorious gangs, including MS-13.

Arizona Governor Jan Brewer was probably the most prominent individual voicing concerns about gang members being among the illegal aliens. In a June 12 letter sent to House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), Brewer wrote:

Our country is in the midst of a crisis manufactured by President Obama and his administration's refusal to enforce our nation's immigration laws. As a result, thousands of people from Central America — including unaccompanied children — are flooding into the United States and not fleeing from, but surrendering to, United States Border Patrol officials.

Brewer then continued to address a more critical threat:

By the Obama administration's own estimation, 230,000 unaccompanied alien minors are expected to cross through the Rio Grande Sector by the end of next year.... If Border Patrol is overwhelmed, what consideration is being given — and what is being done — to determine if any of these illegal aliens have criminal histories or gang affiliations? For example, we know that MS-13, one of the world's most notorious international gangs, has strong ties to several of the Central American countries from which these aliens are arriving. The administration's refusal to properly verify that violent criminals are not among those entering the United States shows an alarming lack of concern for our homeland's security. As a nation, we cannot sit back and allow this policy to continue.

While Brewer's concerns are valid, they were based mostly on educated suspicions. However, Chris Cabrera, the vice president of the National Border Patrol Council Local 3307 in the Rio Grande Valley, offered more substantive details that validated Brewer's statement. Cabrera told *National Review* that Border Patrol agents have reunited identified gang members with their families in the United States. Cabrera said an officer recently told him about a known teen member of the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) transnational gang whom he was powerless to stop entering the country.

"I've heard people come in and say, 'You're going to let me go, just like you let my mother go, just like you let my sister go. You're going to let me go as well, and the government's going to take care of us,'" Cabrera said. "Until we start mandatory detentions, mandatory removals, I don't think anything is going to change. As a matter of fact, I think it's going to get worse."

Art Del Cueto, president of the National Border Patrol Council Local 2544 in Tucson, Arizona, complained about the Border Patrol's policies in a statement also quoted by *National Review*: "It's upsetting that a lot of them are 16 or 17 years old and a lot of them are not going to face deportation."

As the swelling wave of immigrants, most now from Central America, has received more publicity in recent weeks, members of the media have scrambled to get the facts behind the story. In response, one assistant chief patrol agent, Eligio "Lee" Pena, sent an e-mail warning more than 3,000 Border Patrol agents in South Texas that journalists seeking information about the border crisis "may try to disguise themselves" in order to get agents to reveal information to them.



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on June 16, 2014

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The e-mail, which was obtained by The Associated Press, said agents should not speak to reporters, on or off duty, without advance permission and warned that anyone who does could be charged with a crime or disciplined administratively.

Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Gil Kerlikowske told the AP on June 13 that he was not aware of Pena's e-mail warnings but said that, as a general principle, "I am not a fan of telling people not to talk."

Kerlikowske did not formally disavow Pena's directive, and while adding that Border Patrol agents should be focused on their jobs while on duty, did not state his opinion about what agents should say or not say while off duty.

Journalists covering the crisis have attempted to get at the root of the problem — determining what has encouraged so many of these unaccompanied minor children and teenagers from Central America to come across the border at this time.

Rumors that illegal immigrants with children — or even unaccompanied children — will not be deported but be given a haven in the United States, are circulating throughout Central America. Unfortunately, our government's policies add much credence to the rumors. Because of over-taxed detention facilities, illegal immigrants are basically freed in their own recognizance, and dropped off at bus stations with orders to appear before immigration authorities at the ICE office of their choice within 15 days. It is impossible to determine how many appear for their hearings and how many simply join the underground army of illegal immigrants. "The Border Patrol does not have enough space in its processing facilities to handle a surge in illegal immigrants in south Texas," Andy Adame, a spokesman for the Border Patrol in Arizona was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Reporter Cindy Carcamo wrote in the *Times* on June 6:

The fact that so many parents with children have been freed to travel within the U.S. has sent rumors flying through Central American nations that parents will not be detained in the U.S. if they arrive with a child — spurring even more families to launch the journey, according to immigrant advocates and Guatemalan consular officials in Phoenix who have been working to help find shelter for families stranded at bus stations.

The circulation of rumors or, as we have seen, fairly accurate reports of a very lenient U.S. policy towards illegals, is widespread throughout Central America. KRGV News in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas reported on June 3 that Nora Griselda Bercian Diaz, a woman from Guatemala, told the station that that the message being disseminated in her country is: "Go to America with your child, you won't be turned away." Along her journey, Bercian Diaz and her six-year-old daughter endured threats from members of the Los Zetas crime cartel and extortion from corrupt Mexican police. She paid Mexican immigration officers a 1,500-peso bribe for them to allow her passage.

In a bizarre twist on traditional border enforcement, Bercian Diaz told the news crew that when the reporters encountered her, she and her daughter were lost and *searching for* Border Patrol agents!

"I was planning to go to McAllen then call a friend for her to send me money on the bus," Bercian Diaz said.

If U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Border Patrol agents were enforcing U.S. law, it is doubtful that illegal immigrants crossing the border would seek them out instead of hiding from them. And from what the border patrol union leader Cabrera said, not even evidence of gang membership is



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sufficient to detain and deport illegal immigrant minors. Cabrera asked, “If he’s a confirmed gang member in his own country, why are we letting him in here?”

The same question might be asked of every illegal immigrant who has broken our laws by entering our nation without permission.

Photo of MS-13 gang member: AP Images



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