



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on April 13, 2021

# Humane ICE Facility Nearly Empty as Biden Puts Illegal Immigrants in Hotels

As the Biden administration focuses on “optics” instead of substance, the crisis on the southern border has gone from bad to worse. Having created the crisis by essentially inviting any and all to illegally cross into the United States, President Biden is now throwing obscene amounts of money at the problem by housing detainees in hotels while refusing to use a multi-million dollar U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facility that is perfectly suited for that purpose.

Located on 29 acres in a rural area in Karnes City, Texas, the Karnes County Residential Center (KCRC) is an ICE facility capable of housing 830 illegal border-crossers in family units. Families are kept together. The ICE website fact sheet [describes](#) KCRC as representing “a significant milestone in the agency’s long-term effort to reform the immigration detention system.” In fact, the facility “allows individuals in our custody unescorted movement, enhanced recreational opportunities and contact visitation, while maintaining a safe and secure atmosphere for residents and staff.”

KCRC was constructed at a cost of \$57 million and is under a five-year contract between Karnes County and ICE as a state-licensed facility to hold people who arrive at the border as part of a family group. And KCRC is nothing like the “kids in cages” facilities built under the Obama administration and then condemned by Biden during the Trump administration before being used under the Biden administration.

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As the ICE webpage for KCRC explains, “Residents have freedom of movement and access to outdoor recreation areas, indoor play rooms, social workers, 24/7 access to snacks, juices, and milk, and classrooms with state-certified, bilingual teachers.”

Furthermore, families at KCRC have freedom of movement throughout the facility from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. and can receive visitors seven days per week, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Each suite is designed for up to eight people and has cable television and telephones. Each resident is given a telephone calling card to



Image of Karnes facility: Screenshot of YouTube video by mysoutex



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be used at the in-room phones. There is also a computer lab with Internet access and e-mail services.

Those detained at the facility are given hygiene products and six full sets of “non-institutional clothing” instead of orange jumpsuits — and they have the option of maintaining their own clothes if they choose to use the available laundry rooms.

The facility’s cafeteria provides three meals per day in a buffet-style setting and is open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Snacks are available throughout the facility and can also be purchased from the commissary.

And KCRC provides indoor and outdoor recreational activities such as two soccer fields, a volleyball court, and an outdoor playground. There is also a gymnasium with exercise equipment and a basketball court.

This writer has stayed in hotels and motels that offer far less in amenities than KCRC. In fact, few of the resorts that this writer and his family have visited for vacations boast such amenities.

KCRC and similar facilities are equipped to handle the needs of those who have illegally entered the United States while they await legal deportation. Their medical and psychological needs are met upon arrival with a full medical exam, X-ray screenings for tuberculosis, and the administering of any vaccinations they are missing. And mental health services are made available to all residents who may need them.

And yet — despite the facility’s size and amenities, not to mention the expense of its construction and maintenance — KCRC sits nearly empty at a time of unprecedented increase of illegal border crossings. As the *Washington Examiner* [reports](#), two sources with inside knowledge of the facility say that KCRC is presently at less than 20 percent occupancy. That is because the Biden administration has already spent \$87 million in taxpayer funds to house families in seven hotels across Arizona and Texas.

As the *Washington Examiner* reports:

Sources said the Karnes County Family Residential Center is far better equipped to hold hundreds of families even amid the coronavirus pandemic but claimed Biden officials are making a “PR play” and are concerned about the “optics” of holding people at a facility that is operated by a for-profit group. Hotels holding families are overseen by the Family Endeavors nonprofit group and are not required to be licensed because they are not holding people more than 72 hours.

And while the loophole through which Biden is driving caravans of illegal immigrants allows groups such as Family Endeavors to house those illegal immigrants for a mere 72 hours, those same families could be receiving better treatment for up to 20 days at KCRC while they await legal deportation. The *Washington Examiner* explains that *that* is because KCRC is a “reception and processing center” for families after they have been taken into custody at the border by Border Patrol agents. Because of a 2015 update to the Flores settlement agreement, ICE cannot hold families for more than 20 days.

It is clear that Biden is not seeking the best solution, merely the most politically expedient one. By allowing the already-paid-for — and designed-for-this-purpose — facility to sit nearly dormant while doling out what will likely end up being hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to cut standards and house illegal immigrants in hotels with far less oversight, he also slashes 20-day holds to three days, greatly increasing the chances that the majority of those detainees will be released into the United States if they do not simply walk away from the hotels before then.



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Of course, the decision to farm the problem out to a non-profit that houses illegal immigrants in hotel rooms also allows Biden to sidestep the “kids in cages” trope that he helped create after he helped create the facilities that he condemned for putting kids in cages. And it helps him do so without ever acknowledging that KCRC and similar facilities have been keeping families of illegal immigrants together and in very humane conditions since at least 2014.

One of the sources for the *Washington Examiner* article summed up the way the Biden administration is using those illegal immigrants as grist for the mill of Biden’s politics, saying, “They’re putting people in worse conditions and not using the tools that they have, that have gone through the oversight, that meet the standards, that have the third-party accreditation.” That source went on to say, “They’re going and spending tens of millions of dollars to create these makeshift situations.”



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