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Written by **James Murphy** on May 10, 2023

With Title 42 Set to End, Abbott Deploys "Texas Tactical Border Force"

AP Images
Greg Abbott

On Monday, Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced the deployment of the new Texas Tactical Border Force, a specialized tactical unit of Texas National Guard troops specifically trained to deal with the emergency on the border with Mexico. The new force will be in place for Thursday when Title 42 — a Covid-era provision that allows authorities to quickly expel illegal immigrants — expires.

Cities along the southern border are bracing for a spike in illegal immigration once Title 42 expires. Immigrants have already inundated border cities such as El Paso, overwhelming relief shelters and straining city services. News outlets report that immigrants are even sleeping on the street in downtown El Paso.

"With the ending of Title 42 on Thursday, President Biden is laying down the welcome mat to people across the entire world, but Texas is deploying our new Texas Tactical Border Force," Abbott explained. "The Texas National Guard is loading Blackhawk helicopters and C-130s and deploying specially trained soldiers for the Texas Tactical Border Force, who will be deployed to hotspots all along the border to help intercept and repel large groups of migrants trying to enter Texas illegally. The Texas Tactical Border Force will bolster our Operation Lone Star efforts to secure the Texas border amid the chaos caused by President Biden's elimination of Title 42."

The deployment of several hundred troops with the new specialized force will complement thousands of troops already deployed as part of Operation Lone Star, which Abbott launched in March of 2021 to deal with increased illegal immigration coinciding with President Biden taking office.

Texas Border Czar Mike Banks joined Abbott at the press conference announcing the deployment.

"I have traveled along the border and seen firsthand the impact President Biden's border crisis is having on Texas communities," Banks said. "Governor Abbott is doing the job that President Biden and the federal government is refusing to do, and Texas will continue to work relentlessly to defend our border."

"Today's deployment of the Texas Tactical Border Force will allow us to shift resources to needed locations effectively and efficiently. I will continue to work with Governor Abbott as we continue to protect Texas against this unprecedented influx of illegal immigration," Banks added.

During a border visit last Friday, U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas disputed Abbott's accusation that the Biden administration was doing little to address the situation on the border. Mayorkas blamed human smugglers for the expected surge.

"The border is not open, it has not been open, and it will not be open subsequent to May 11," Mayorkas declared. "And the smugglers who exploit vulnerable migrants are spreading misinformation. They are spreading false information, lies, in a way to lure vulnerable people to the southern border, and those individuals will only be returned."

Abbott clearly disagrees with Majorkas. Last November, the Texas governor invoked the invasion clauses of the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Texas, calling the situation at the border a danger to the citizens of Texas.

"I invoked the Invasion Clauses of the U.S. & Texas Constitutions to fully authorize Texas to take unprecedented measures to defend our state against an invasion," Abbott tweeted at the time.

The new Tactical Border Force is not the only action that the Lone Star State is considering. Recall that in March, GOP members of the state's House of Representatives led by Representative Matt Schaefer introduced HB 20, a bill that would create a new state law-enforcement department that would have the authority to "arrest, detain, and deter individuals crossing the border illegally, including with the use of non-deadly force."

HB 20 was placed on the House's Major State Calendar for a second reading on May 9. So, despite Secretary Mayorkas' (and President Biden's) assertion that the southern border is under control in Texas, those who live in the state do not agree and may be looking to address the issue in a Texas way — by themselves.

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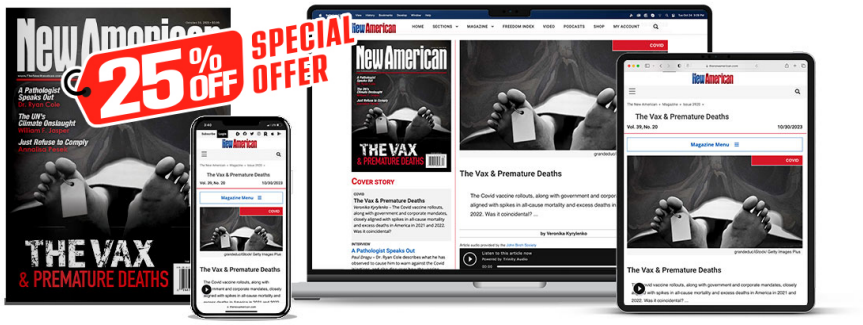

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