

ASYLUM ABUSE REDUCTION ACT

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After visiting the U.S.-Mexico border twice this year, Sen. Inhofe is proposing legislation that will complement the President's plan to build a wall by addressing immigration loopholes to strengthen the integrity of the asylum process to ensure that it is only used by individuals who are genuinely seeking asylum. The United States experienced a 234 percent increase in asylum applications from 2014 to 2016, generating a backlog in our immigration courts.

“We need to build the wall along the southern border, but we also need to close all of the loopholes that illegal aliens use to come into this country. Smugglers and illegal aliens have attempted to use false claims of asylum to gain entry to the United States. By reforming our asylum process, we can minimize false asylum claims, ease the backlog on our immigration courts and end ‘catch and release’—all while improving the process for those who truly need it,” **Sen. Inhofe said.**

“My legislation is just one part of improving our nation’s border security. Paired with building the wall, increasing support for ICE and Customs and Border Patrol and eliminating sanctuary cities, we can make a meaningful reform to improve our immigration process and protect American families.”

Require migrants declare asylum at our embassies/consulates in Mexico or Canada before entering the United States.

- Currently, migrants who cross the border illegally and declare asylum are released pending credible fear screenings and other legal procedures, but rarely show up for proceedings – never completing the asylum process.
- The dramatic increase in asylum claims, as urged by smugglers, creates a huge strain on our resources, a backlog in the immigration process and most migrants don’t show up for their court date.
- The Asylum Abuse Reduction Act requires individuals seeking asylum to have their preliminary credible fear screening at an embassy or consulate outside the United States prior to being considered for admittance for asylum purposes.

Create a criminal bench warrant for immigrants that have failed to appear for immigration court.

- Currently, when illegal immigrants fail to show up for court, their information is not entered into police databases.
- With Inhofe’s bill, if migrants don’t appear for court, they will be given a bench warrant so if they are stopped for an unrelated offense, like speeding, there will be a warrant for them in the system for violating immigration law.

Create a pilot program for alternatives to detention.

- The Flores decision says that we can’t detain illegal immigrants with children or families for more than 20 days. Currently, that usually means they are released pending trial – and then fail to appear.
- Inhofe’s bill establishes a pilot program that would allow families to be released to a qualified organization, contracted with the federal government, to ensure migrants comply with immigration proceedings.

KEY BACKGROUND

Previous administrations have operated under a policy of “catch and release,” where many illegal immigrants caught crossing the border illegally are given citations for appearing in court, but then released into the United States. Recent data from Department of Homeland Security makes it clear – over 40,000 immigrants accused of illegal border crossings last year simply never appeared for their court proceedings.

The asylum process has also been abused in the past, with immigrants entering the country after declaring asylum, but never completing the process by attending court dates or necessary interviews with immigration officials—thereby never receiving proper documentation. We’ve also experienced a dramatic increase in the number of individuals claiming asylum

QUESTIONS ABOUT INHOFE’S ASYLUM ABUSE REDUCTION ACT

Would this bill deter families and individuals from seeking asylum?

No. Rather, this will reduce the backlog on our immigration courts and make it easier for families legitimately seeking asylum to have their cases heard.

What about building the wall or other border security initiatives?

Sen. Inhofe is a strong advocate of building the wall, but additional legal changes need to be made to eliminate illegal immigration. The Asylum Abuse Reduction Act would work in collaboration with other border security initiatives.

Will this legislation do anything to address family detention?

Yes. Earlier this year, families were separated because existing case law prevents children from being detained with their parents while the parents are undergoing criminal proceedings for illegal border crossing. Sen. Inhofe’s bill creates an alternative to detention program that would allow families to stay together while ensuring they still comply with all immigration proceedings.