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# Congress of the United States
## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515–6143

MAJORITY   (202) 225–5074
MINORITY   (202) 225–5051

https://oversight.house.gov

**Ranking Member Shontel Brown**
**Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation**
**"Leveraging Technology to Strengthen Immigration Enforcement"**
**March 4, 2025**

Good afternoon and thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

Before I begin, I want to highlight that Chair Mace and my Federal Contractor Cybersecurity Vulnerability Reduction Act, which would close a critical loophole in federal cybersecurity standards, passed the House yesterday. Chairwoman Mace, I'm looking forward to continuing to work together on these important issues.

Moving to the topic of today's hearing: Immigration has remained a hot-button issue across both Republican and Democratic administrations.

Congress has the authority—not the President—to enact a lasting solution. I take this responsibility seriously, as well as our country's long history of accepting immigrants from all over the world, making us who we are today.

**But when I see the dangerous and cruel way that the current President treats and talks about immigrants, I know that I am not dealing with a serious and solutions-driven Administration.**

**We all want our cities to be safe. We all want to work with law enforcement and community members to prevent crime. No one wants dangerous criminals, terrorists, or illicit drugs coming in through our borders. But propagating lies and misplaced fear are not going to address the issue; in fact, it risks making the problem worse.**

Real change starts with real solutions. Last year, the Senate crafted comprehensive and bipartisan immigration reform, which presented a real opportunity to move the ball forward on this critical issue for the first time in a decade. In fact, the bill would have helped to address the fentanyl crisis by providing new scanning technology at ports of entry and increasing staffing for customs agents.

But what happened? Then-presidential candidate Donald Trump blew up the bill because he wanted to run on anti-immigration rhetoric instead of fixing the problem.

Instead of seeking to score political points, we should work on a bipartisan basis to find real solutions to our broken immigration system.

1

**That means modernizing our border infrastructure, reforming the asylum process, and ensuring a fair and efficient way to resettle asylum seekers across the country. To prevent abuse of the asylum system, we must invest in programs that speed up processing times, properly fund immigration courts, and ensure fair adjudications.**

And let's be clear — creating a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, TPS holders, farm workers, and so many others isn't just the right thing to do; it strengthens our economy and provides much-needed relief to communities that have earned it.

**And yes – technology has a real role to play here, and Congress recognizes that. The 2024 spending bill signed into law by President Biden included a more than a twenty percent increase in funding to purchase and deploy next-generation technology like surveillance towers, tunnel detection technology, and mobile surveillance technology. This funding is already helping to strengthen border security, prevent the flow of fentanyl, and combat human trafficking.**

During President Trump's first term, his Department of Homeland Security released a mobile application called "CBP One" that allowed immigrants to fill out much of the necessary paperwork before they reached the border. That seemed like a good idea, except the app frequently malfunctioned and often failed to recognize faces with darker complexions.

The Biden Administration ran with the idea and turned this broken app into a legitimate tool to provide a legal pathway for those escaping violence and persecution to come to America for a better life. That is leveraging technology to solve our border crisis.

While the revamped CBP One app wasn't perfect, the app helped more than one million immigrants legally enter the United States to become productive and valued members of our communities. And it deterred illegal border crossings. That is until the Trump Administration abruptly shut it down last month as part of his Day One – sign first, ask later – executive order rampage.

**So, what have we seen instead in the first weeks of the Trump Administration? An attempt to terrorize immigrant families. On his first day in office, Trump signed an Executive Order authorizing Immigration and Customs Enforcement to raid schools, churches, and hospitals, with little to no oversight or plan.**

**The Trump Administration should instead be focusing on the responsible and humane use of technology to address border security when it makes sense.**

**Any technology to address border security must be done with strong oversight and safeguards to protect privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties. These concerns must always be at the forefront of any conversation on the use of technology — and especially artificial intelligence — across the federal government.**

I hope that we can have a productive conversation today about the opportunities that come from modern solutions and how we can implement those solutions while safeguarding against abuse.

Thank you.

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Contact: Alexandra Bell, Communications Director (202) 226-5181