Press Release

Rethinking Southwest Border Solutions

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The U.S. Southwest border is under strain as migrant encounters reached a monthly record high of more than 250,000 individuals in December 2022, rendering border authorities unable to control illegal migration or adequately process asylum seekers. In a new insight, Labor Policy Analyst Isabella Hindley discusses the problem at the border and explores potential reforms.

Key points:

- The volume of migrants is exacerbating the border's infrastructural challenges, such as inadequate detention capacity, overwhelmed federal resources, insufficient staffing, and Customs and Border Protection officers' inability to flexibly handle various migrant cases.
- To temporarily suppress arrivals, the Biden Administration has focused on emergency and deterrence-based policies, including the extension of COVID-era Title 42 and the January 2023 border plan, to increase restrictions and enforcement at the border, but these policies do not provide long-term immigration solutions.
- Ensuring a comprehensive and sustainable approach to controlling the flow of migrants at the border must include policies that expand pathways to legal employment, promote international cooperation with Mexico and the countries of the Northern Triangle, and improve border infrastructure.

Read the analysis