

**JUSTICE AND MERCY CAN WALK TOGETHER:
WHY TEXAS IS RIGHT TO SECURE ITS BORDERS**

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With our nation's border crisis worsening by the week, the legal tug-of-war between the Biden Administration and Texas Governor Greg Abbott once again exposes a false narrative: that citizens who support secure borders lack mercy. More to the point, proponents of this narrative often accuse Christian conservatives of being hypocrites who lack mercy toward undocumented immigrants.

So, let's be clear. God instituted the sphere of government and politics for one reason: to achieve justice for the various individuals and communities under its purview.

Notice, first, that the government's reason for being is to achieve justice. In other words, the government doesn't exist for the purpose of showing mercy. It can and should show mercy appropriately as it carries out its task of achieving justice. But its God-ordained purpose is to secure justice.

Notice, second, that the government's quest for justice has a limited purview: it secures justice for the individuals and communities under its purview. It is not called to seek justice for the citizens of other nations, except as the situation in another country affects our citizens' well-being (e.g., military alliances).

So, what does justice look like regarding illegal immigration?

For the United States government to achieve justice for American citizens, it must secure its borders so that we have control over who enters our nation and who is denied entrance.

Consider that the U.S. Border Patrol had more than 6.3 million encounters with illegal immigrant border crossers from January 2021 to December 2023. Nearly 50% of those crossings occurred in Texas. Further, the Department of Homeland Security estimates that between 1.6 and 1.8 million illegal immigrants passed through without being apprehended by Border Patrol.

The United States thus has a choice. It should either enforce the laws on its books or get rid of the rules, allowing open access to the United States for anybody in the world who so desires, except perhaps for known criminals. One or the other.

I suspect that very few Americans—not even the most fervent-browed progressive virtue-signalers—want our nation to roll out the red carpet in this manner. That is because, while controlled immigration can be mutually beneficial for our country and for immigrants, uncontrolled immigration is harmful in many ways, but here are just a few:

- Illegal immigration eliminates competition in the job market and drives tax-paying American citizens into poverty.
- Illegal immigration results in an enormous economic strain, reducing the quality of essential public services and local resources funded by the American taxpayer.
- Illegal immigration threatens national security, permitting criminals to prey on the innocent, all the while benefitting from the wealth of resources provided by American society.



Therefore, the United States must stop sending mixed signals by keeping immigration laws on the books but refusing to enforce them. We must either enforce the laws we have or modify those laws as we see fit.

But is it possible to show mercy while upholding justice?

Yes. It is quite possible to show mercy in how we enforce immigration laws. We can refine our laws and enforcement procedures so that justice and mercy walk together.

We uphold justice by agreeing to deport undocumented immigrants who have a criminal record while at the same time providing multiple paths for other undocumented immigrants to become citizens. This allows our nation to determine how many immigrants we can assimilate without capsizing our social systems and harming tax-paying American workers. It will enable our law enforcement agencies to perform careful background checks on prospective immigrants.

We secure justice by penalizing immigrants who have entered illegally but doing so in a way that isn't harsh or unfair. For example, we should send undocumented immigrants to the "back of the line" for green cards or visas so that they don't jump in front of individuals who have applied for entrance legally.

Suffice to say that justice and mercy can walk together safely. But not if justice is beaten down so severely that it can no longer walk.

