

Representative Hill Border Visit Trip Report:

On August 29, 2023 I made a visit to the border at Eagle Pass, Tx with my good friend Max Brown. This region recently has been one of the most active areas for illegal immigration on the Texas border. The initial impression was the amount of resources that were positioned and active along the eight mile stretch we observed. Vehicles from the Texas Rangers, River boats from Texas Rangers, supplemented with Florida Game Warden boats and even drones. Several Army Guard units from numerous states were operating, including construction, communication, and tactical units. One commonality is everyone in every unit was heavily armed. I asked about the risk here of violence from cartels or others. The violence had been low, but the risk was still high. I'm sure this powerful armed presence keeps this in check. All the people working on this border are consummate professionals, working under extremely difficult conditions. They are all dedicated to the mission at hand.

The real issue at Eagle Pass region is humanitarian. Hundreds of illegal immigrants attempt to cross there each day. Over 100,000 in a month! All these people are taking tremendous risk crossing a treacherous river. We observed a group of 15 people, including mothers and small children attempting to cross. Luckily, they turned back before disaster. Many human traffickers make the kids come over as "family" members. Human trafficking is a multi-billion-dollar industry and much lower risk than drugs. The drug smuggling occurs in the less guarded and remote locations. Individuals pay \$5,000 - \$10,000 each and some get three tries to successfully cross for that price. We observed Coyotes assisting, but to a minimal degree. I see them taking no risks. The way to solve this humanitarian crisis is to disincentivize people from taking such risk. We in Idaho can do our part here.

