

History of border patrol in the us



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Introduction

Turn on the television today and one of the stories popular in the media is President Trump's border wall which is aimed at curbing crimes. One of the crimes in question is illegal immigration primarily along the southern border. To members of Congress, Mexico presents a threat to the United States. Although, in a broad sense, this can be perceived as unfair, or even unjust; however, from a perspective of breaking U. S. immigration laws, there is a justifiable reason for the perception. Every year the U. S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) apprehends millions of individuals who enter the United States illegally. Of those " apprehensions 90% were made along the United States-Mexico border" (Guerette, & Clarke, 2005, p 161). The Southern Border has been the focus of political debate for years. Since the early 90's, border enforcement along the border has increased dramatically in terms of manpower, and budget. The amount of money spent on border patrol has the annual budget of the U. S. Customs and Border Patrol has increased from "\$363 million to more than \$3. 8 billion" (The Cost, 2007, p. 1). Operating with over sixty thousand employees, Customs and Border Patrol has the important task of securing the homeland by enforcing laws and depriving access of weapons and terrorists access to the U. S. Impressively the agency can accomplish this mission without disrupting international travel and trade (About, 2018). The following paper focuses on a brief history of Customs and Border Patrol and their role in diverting illegal immigration, and methods used to keep America safe.

A Brief History

Even though it was the early 1900's, the United States still had an influx of immigration. Men apart of the U. S. Immigration Service defended the border to deter unlawful border passing. This was not a permanent mission as patrols were only conducted when man power and assets were available (Border, 2017). Understanding something needed to be done to keep track of these individuals, Congress passed the 1907 Immigration Act. This law required all immigrants and non-citizens to enter the United States at designated ports of entry. The law tightened down border measures by making it mandatory each person had to be inspected and receive authorization by a border inspector that they are clear to enter (Hernandez, 2010, p 1). However, the very foundation of the Customs and Border Patrol began in the late 1700's when Congress introduced several acts aimed at applying Tariffs. The agency was authorized by the President to enforce health and quarantine laws in 1796. In 1798, authorization was given to deport foreigners who were deemed dangerous. In 1819, all ships arriving into the United States were required to be inspected by customs officials called collector of customs. Immigration was rapidly evolving and customs services had to keep up. In 1853, the U. S. Customs and Border Patrol to patrol by riding horses along the borders; primarily locating individuals who were trying to dodge custom collections or come into the country illegally. With Congress increasing the number of tariffs it was evident that more people were required to enforce the laws (Timeline, 2018). Congress was passing new immigration laws at an increasing rate and needed them enforced at the border. Spanning just a few decades, laws were passed to ban " lunatics, idiots, convicts, those liable to public charges" (Hernandez, <https://assignbuster.com/history-of-border-patrol-in-the-us/>

2010, p 36). A few years later, Congress deemed epileptics, anarchists, and women who were prostitutes were not to be admitted into the United States. In 1917, Congress had banned all people of Asian descent from entering the United States. In 1924, Congress decided with it was time to tighten the border security and created the U. S. Customs and Border Patrol. The agency was tasked with administering migration laws by averting unsanctioned boundary exploitations by patrolling designated regional limits. They were given law enforcement powers with the ability to detect and arrest people who were deemed to be illegal (Hernandez, 2010, p 2). The outfit was later renamed Bureau of Customs and held that name to the early 1970's. It was then renamed Bureau of Customs and Border Patrol (1789, 2013). Today their mission is much the same. They are responsible for securing the boundaries of the nation and upholding laws dealing with citizens and immigrants entering the United States. The mission of U. S. Customs and Border Patrols is never-ending.

Role in Immigration

When people think of immigration they tend to automatically think of illegal immigration. The Border Patrol plays a key role in both legal and illegal immigration. To individuals who have not encountered, nor have experience with the U. S. immigration process, this can be daunting and confusing. Foreign individuals can enter the U. S. for either short-term or long-term periods depending on visa status. Border Patrol plays a crucial role in screening and determining if these foreign individuals may enter the U. S. Each year there are over 200 million entries under the visa waiver program alone. Border Patrol must accomplish their mission of immigration

screening without deterring tourism and future investors. Border Patrol in 2017 alone, processed over four hundred million travellers' through U. S. ports of entry. This equated to over two hundred million people by land; a hundred million by air; and eighteen million by sea. Interestingly, even if a visa has been issued to the individual, it is ultimately Border Patrols decision on whether to admit the individual. In an average year, 8 million people with visas come to the United States; however, Border Patrol rejects around 2 million of these individuals (Alden, 2012, p 111). Even with all these rejections, illegal immigration is a continuous and growing problem today that has been going on for years.

The late 80's was the time period in the United States that saw a vast increase in illegal immigration from Mexico, primarily fueled by an economic crisis that halted the growth of the economy and reduced the number of jobs available in their homeland. (Alden, 2012, p. 110). Illegal immigration was so serious that apprehensions rose from " 1 million annually in the 80's to over 2 million at the end of the 90s" (Alden, 2012, p. 110). Initially the problem was just viewed as annoying; however, that perception quickly evolved into concern on the basis of security. States such as California were concerned with the increase in illegal immigrants and reached out to Congress for assistance. This led states such as California, Arizona, and Texas to engage in an escalation of the force of armed personnel along the southern border (Alden, 2012, p. 110). Of all the immigrants coming to the United States, over four hundred thousand individuals were caught trying to enter the country illegally outside the official port of entry (Immigration, 2015, p1). These people who do not come in the official ports of entry give

Border Patrol a run for their money. Border Patrol has a much harder job to perform as individuals who are not tracked slip under the radar. According to Ngai (2010), " it is now estimated that over 12 million people in the United States, over a third of the foreign-born population, is not in legal immigration status" (pg. 93).

The United States has never been more proactive under the current administration in dealing with the problem with illegal immigration. In 2017, over 700, 000 Mexicans were deported from the U. S. This number is enormous and for good reason, as " one hundred thousand removals is the worldwide total" (Ngai, 2010, p 98). Congress have prioritized this issue and increased Border Patrols budget immensely. The spending alone has tripled from 2003-2006 with an annual budget of just under 4 billion dollars.

Honestly, the agency needs every cent as they are tasked with enforcing immigration laws and patrolling over 700 miles along the southern border. With the extra funding, drones have been utilized with infra-red and heat technologies. The number of CBP agents has also tripled to a congressionally mandated 21, 500; the number of ports of entries increased by thousands, and the number of ICE agents has tripled since 2016 (Cost, 2017, p 2).

Unfortunately, even with all this attention to the southern border, it is not enough to deter immigration. On an average day, there is over 3 deaths along the border as a result of attempting to enter the U. S. illegally (The cost, 2017, p 1). Furthermore, congress has become more proactive in deportation and removal of illegal immigrants. So much that funding for the Customs Enforcement agency increased by eighty percent. With the increase in funding, more agents were added to the mission with " the number of

apprehensions more than doubled and the number of interior removals increased by three-fold" (Amudeo and Lopez, 2017, p120). The increase in captures is identified as an increase in information sharing between apprehension and deportation of unauthorized immigrants which has since been a standard in every jurisdiction. One may ask why are so many people from Mexico attempting to risk everything and come to the United States? The answer is follow the money. The wages in the United States are over four times high on average than those in Mexico.

Over the years, Border Patrol has changed immensely. As immigration laws change, they must adjust and enforce the new laws. As new Presidents come into office they also must accommodate their beliefs. The modernization of immigration enforcement has smart borders at the ports of entry in Canada and Mexico. Computers make life easier to include immigration enforcement. President Trump has a border wall on the table with Congress allocating over 2.5 billion for border security to include construction of a physical wall which is seen as the most extreme version of an enforcement strategy to "to reduce illegal immigration in the United States" (Aiden, 2017, p 483). Today the Border Patrol has close to sixty thousand agents along the southern border. With the recent approval by President Trump to deploy the National Guard to defend the southern border, the security of the nation is increased. Deterrence has also played a valuable part in border security to thwart illegal immigration. With the U. S. ending the era of 'catch and release' it lets know people who are considering committing the act that their actions can result in jail time and felony prosecutions. One argument however with the change in protocols and the multibillion-dollar wall is whether they will

work, or if it's even worth it. When the President approved the Consolidated Appropriation Act, construction of approximately 100 miles of new border were began. Even with the high-tech wall, its effectiveness is still challenged. Statistics have shown that Mexico " ceased to be the route of choice for those seeking to enter the United States and remain illegally. Increasingly, the easiest path into the country has been to arrive on a legal visa and then simply remain after the period of admission has expired." (Aiden, 2017, p 487). The main perpetrators of illegal immigration are in fact visa overstayers. Employment in the United States of illegal immigrants has been a sensitive issue with the citizens of this country. Big penalties exist for citizens who do not verify the eligibility of their workers. Congress has mandated the use of the networked database called E-Verify. Anyone who wants to work in the United States needs to have a background check and be entered in the E-Verify work authorization system by employers. This program confirms eligibility within minutes.

Border Patrol after 9/11

On the morning of September, the 11th 2001, the U. S. Customs and Border Patrol functions were put to the ultimate test. In the midst of chaos, the organization stepped up with other federal agencies to secure the nation. Operation Safe Passage was formed requiring an increase in Customs officers at all important ports of entry. This was a daunting time. Agents were working over 18 hours a day. Seven days a week to inspect flights and cargo from ships coming into the United States. Within days, things intensified with President Bush and Congress creating the Homeland Security office as well as the Homeland Security Act which required provided Border Patrol

with more power to enforce customs, immigration and agricultural laws. The changes entailed seizing contraband, greater powers in determining admissibility, apprehending illegal immigrants, and “protecting our agricultural interests from pests and diseases and collecting duties and fees” (Remembering, 2017).

The Customs and Border Patrol is a multi-facet organization that constantly is on the lookout for child exploitation, goods and drugs smuggling, and the detection and prevention of terrorism. With any one of the millions of visitors coming to the United States each day, it seems like a relentless never-ending task. Luckily for the citizens of the nation, Border Patrol is equipped with the manpower, technology and undying patriotism of defending the nation and constitution of the United States. Just months after the heinous terror attack, Border Patrol implemented the Container Security Initiative Program which focused on determining the safety of containers from foreign ports before they reached the United States. This was accomplished by sending Agents to host countries and working closely with foreign governments. This program proved to be so successful that it now is operating at over 80 ports in multiple countries (CSI, 2014). The Customs and Border Patrol has many hurdles to overcome. They have the unique job of staying vigilant while at the same time, appear welcoming.

Challenges

Perhaps one of the biggest hurdles Customs and Border Patrol encounters is enforcing immigration laws, identifying threats and potential terrorists with minimal interruption to economic incentives. According to Stana (2003), “

Achieving the balance between security and commercial needs is greatly affected by commercial and border and immigration control

Workload”(p 1). On any given day Border Patrol must select and examine any shipment deemed high risk; however, at the same time must clear the cargo in an efficient and timely manner. Time is money and when that money equates to trillions of dollars per year, Customs and Border Patrol has a very serious task indeed. The continuous stress knowing that if they missed one weapon of mass destruction or let one individual who was able to perform grave damage is a realism the agents must face. The Agents must be aware that their actions can disturb potential investors coming to the United States and affect tourism. They must be able to perform their vital task without disrupting the smooth influx of positive reinforcement to the nation's delicate economy. Arguably Trump's Border wall imposes such a restriction. If it is not done correctly, “ it could result in a small investment in terror into massive disruption of daily life that has a clear and adverse effect on the U. S. and overall global economy”(Flynn, 2004).

To offset some of these problems, Border Patrol partners with other agencies and private sector entities with the purpose of fortifying international supply chains. The increased trust between agencies also adds to the information sharing and reporting with PClI protections in place for the private sector. With increased trust, comes increased reward and is the foundation of the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT) network. As discussed earlier, increased security and detection can slow down the economy. The CTPAT works on trust and strict provisions. Border Patrol enters an agreement with partners of the supply chain ultimately exposing security

gaps and allowing for the implementation of corrections. This program is essential as it significantly reduces the number of Customs and Border Patrol examinations, shortens the waiting times at the port of entry, and a plethora of rewards as being a trusted partner of the Customs and Border Patrol. With over twenty thousand partners, this program has been an enormous success aiding in the U. S. economy at the same time as keeping the nation safe (CPAT, 2018). Before this program cargo was inspected upon arrival. With the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Patrol is the lead agency to protect the nation from threats that may come into the ports. Programs such as the ones mentioned positively affect the economy by streamlining processes. By being more efficient helps bolster economic needs of the nation; however, there are other ways they help the economy.

The U. S. Customs and Border Patrol are constantly on alert for people and goods smuggling. Smuggled goods enter the U. S. with no duties paid which allows for criminals to sell them at a much cheaper price. This lack of regulation leads to the loss of revenue to the government as no tax is paid. Legitimate business struggle to compete with knock off which ultimately leads to job loss. Items such as medications which have not been FDA approved can be harmful to the population as their ingredients cannot be guaranteed. Smuggling is such a serious problem. In 2014, over 80 % of the 80, 000 firearms seized in Mexico were from the United States. Furthermore, billions of dollars are smuggled across the border into Mexico which can depreciate the currency. U. S. Customs and Border Patrol are America's front line on tackling this issue.

Modernization

With the implementation of networks between agencies, and information sharing abilities, the U. S. Border security has become 'smarter'. Biometric technology which is comprised of retina and finger print scanners are being utilized at all ports of entry which confirms if an individual is legally allowed to enter the United States, and if they are a known threat. With such technology in place, combined with increased border agents and drone technology; this all is an effort to divert anyone thinking of committing illegal immigration. Technology such as facial recognition is being introduced in pilot programs to test their effectiveness at ports of entry and even in moving vehicles. Kiosks assigned with passport scanning abilities are being implanted in some airports. When entering the port of entry into the United States, it is not uncommon to see individuals utilizing their smart phones with their electronic passport application opened. U. S. Customs and Border Patrol also use an application themselves to detect illegal activity and improve the safety of officers (Powerful, 2018).

Conclusion

It can not be overstated the importance of the role the U. S. Customs and Border Patrol plays in the physical and economical safety of the nation. The agency has come along way from its horsepatrolling days with only a few men; however, its mission has stayed the same-to protect the United States. When ever Congress deemed it necessary to create a new law, the Customs and Border Patrol were there to implement and regulate them. The threats in the world do not remain static, the agency knows this and adjusts accordingly. Modernization of techniques and technology have allowed the

Customs and Border Patrol to stay vigilant and streamlined. In 2018 alone, over 32,000lbs of cocaine has been seized, 290,000lbs of marijuana, 360 gangmembers apprehended, and 289,000 people have been turned around at the border (CBP, 2018). Considering that it is only 4 months into 2018, the agency has worked extremely hard this year alone. As long as America is a prosperous nation it will be targeted by people who are in less fortunate situations. This reason alone is why it is doubtful illegal immigration will cease. The same logic can be applied to smuggling. People will always try to exploit the system. Fortunately for the law-abiding citizens of the country, the U. S. Customs and Border Patrol is there step up to the plate and protect the borders.

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