



## **Budgetary and Policy Analysis: "A Balanced Approach to US Border Policy 2024"** (Skrzypczak, 2024)

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**T**his paper provides a budgetary and policy analysis of the document "A Balanced Approach to US Border Policy 2024". The proposed border policy aims to strike a balance between strengthening security measures and facilitating lawful immigration and trade. Key aspects of the policy include increased funding for border surveillance technologies, personnel, and infrastructure, as well as streamlining visa processing and expanding guest worker programs. The analysis examines the budgetary implications of these measures, as well as the potential economic and social impacts. Recommendations are provided to optimize the policy's effectiveness while minimizing unintended consequences.

The proposed border policy reflects a recognition that border security is a complex and multifaceted challenge. While physical barriers and enforcement may help deter illegal border crossings, they are not a panacea for addressing the root causes of unauthorized immigration. (Alden, 2017) Instead, a more comprehensive approach is needed that combines targeted security measures with policies to address economic

and political instability in source countries, as well as facilitating legal avenues for migration and trade. (Garrett, 2014) (Rosenblum, 2012)

From a budgetary standpoint, the policy's emphasis on border surveillance technologies, personnel, and infrastructure is likely to have significant cost implications. Investments in surveillance drones, sensors, and other technologies can be capital-intensive, while increased staffing for the Border Patrol and other agencies will require ongoing personnel costs. At the same time, the policy's proposals to streamline visa processing and expand guest worker programs could generate revenue through application fees and other mechanisms. (Mazza, 2017)

The potential economic impacts of the policy are complex and multifaceted. Strengthened border security could disrupt the flow of goods and services, impacting industries that rely on cross-border trade and supply chains. However, the policy's efforts to facilitate legal migration and employment could help address labor shortages in certain sectors, particularly in agriculture and other industries that have historically relied on immigrant workers. (Mazza, 2017)

Socially, the policy's approach to balancing security and facilitation of legal immigration may help mitigate the divisive and contentious debates that have often characterized US border policy. By recognizing the need for a more nuanced and comprehensive approach, the policy may help build bridges between different stakeholder groups and reduce the potential for policies that are overly punitive or exclusionary.

**T**he strengths of the policy proposal include its recognition of the complexity of border management and the need for a comprehensive approach. By combining targeted security measures with policies to address root causes and facilitate legal migration and trade, the proposal reflects a more nuanced understanding of the issues. Additionally, the effort to balance security and facilitation may help reduce the divisive debates that have often characterized US border policy.

However, the policy proposal also has potential weaknesses. The emphasis on border surveillance technologies, personnel, and infrastructure is likely to have significant budgetary implications, which may limit the resources available for addressing the underlying economic and political factors driving unauthorized immigration. Additionally, the potential disruption to cross-border trade and supply chains could have negative economic consequences that may outweigh the benefits of the policy's provisions for legal migration and employment.

To optimize the effectiveness of the policy, several recommendations can be considered. First, the budgetary allocations should be carefully evaluated to ensure an appropriate balance between security measures and investments in addressing root causes, such as economic development and political stability in source countries. (Andreas, 2006) Second, the policy should include robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the impacts of the security measures and facilitation efforts, with a view to making adjustments as needed. Third, the policy should be developed and implemented in close collaboration with stakeholders, including state and local

governments, businesses, and immigrant communities, to ensure that it addresses their needs and concerns.

**O**ne key element that appears to be missing from the border policy proposal is a comprehensive plan to address the underlying economic and political factors driving unauthorized immigration. While the policy recognizes the need for a more nuanced approach, it seems to place a greater emphasis on border security measures rather than investments in economic development, poverty reduction, and political stability in source countries. Without addressing these root causes, the policy may struggle to achieve lasting solutions and could potentially have unintended consequences, such as disruptions to cross-border trade and supply chains. Incorporating a stronger focus on addressing the drivers of unauthorized immigration, in addition to the security and facilitation measures, could help create a more holistic and effective border policy framework. To address the missing elements in the border policy proposal, the following modifications could be considered:

1. Incorporate a new section on addressing the root causes of unauthorized immigration. This could include:
  - Increased funding for economic development and poverty reduction programs in source countries (\$X billion over 5 years)
  - Investments in political stability and governance initiatives in source countries (\$Y million over 5 years)
  - Expansion of legal pathways for migration, such as expanded guest worker programs and family reunification (\$Z million over 5 years)
2. Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impacts of the security measures and facilitation efforts, with a focus on identifying unintended consequences and making necessary adjustments.
3. Mandate regular stakeholder engagement and collaboration with state/local governments, businesses, and immigrant communities to ensure the policy addresses their needs and concerns.

By incorporating these elements, the border policy proposal can take a more comprehensive and balanced approach to addressing the complex challenges of border management, focusing not only on security measures but also on addressing the root causes of unauthorized immigration and facilitating lawful migration and trade.

One key stakeholder group that appears to be missing from the policy proposal is immigrant communities themselves. Engaging directly with immigrant groups, advocacy organizations, and community leaders could provide valuable insights and intelligence

to help shape a more effective and inclusive border policy. These stakeholders could offer first-hand perspectives on the drivers of unauthorized immigration, the impact of border security and facilitation measures, and the needs and concerns of immigrant populations.

Additionally, state and local governments along the border regions could be an important source of actionable intelligence. These jurisdictions have direct experience with the on-the-ground realities of border management and may be able to provide crucial feedback on the practicality and impacts of the proposed security and facilitation measures. Collaboration with state and local officials could help ensure the policy is tailored to the specific needs and challenges of different border communities.

By incorporating the perspectives and expertise of these key stakeholders, the border policy proposal can be further strengthened to address the complex and multifaceted issues at the heart of border management. Engaging with immigrant communities and state/local governments can help ensure the policy is responsive to the needs and concerns of those most directly impacted, ultimately leading to more effective and equitable solutions.

In conclusion, the "A Balanced Approach to US Border Policy 2024" proposal presents a nuanced and comprehensive framework for addressing the challenges of border management. However, to optimize its effectiveness, the policy could benefit from a stronger emphasis on addressing the root causes of unauthorized immigration, a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, and more extensive stakeholder engagement. By incorporating these elements, the policy can take a more holistic and balanced approach to border management, addressing security concerns while also promoting economic development, political stability, and lawful migration. (Mazza, 2017) (Garrett, 2014) (Alden, 2017) (Andreas, 2006)

While addressing the root causes of unauthorized immigration, such as economic development and political stability in source countries, may be desirable, it is not necessarily within the sole scope and authority of the United States to effect change in these areas. The drivers of unauthorized immigration often have complex geopolitical and historical origins that extend beyond the control of any single nation. However, the United States can still play an important role in supporting international efforts and collaborations to address these underlying factors, in addition to its border security and facilitation measures. A comprehensive approach that balances domestic policy with strategic partnerships and foreign assistance may be the most effective way to tackle the multifaceted challenges of border management.

Another aspect that may warrant further consideration is the role of technology and innovation in enhancing border security and facilitation. While the policy proposal mentions some technological components, there may be opportunities to explore more advanced, data-driven, and automated solutions to streamline border operations, enhance situational awareness, and facilitate lawful trade and travel. Leveraging emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and Internet of Things sensors, could help border agencies make more informed decisions, allocate

resources more efficiently, and identify potential threats and opportunities more effectively.

**G**iven the limits of the United States' authority in directly addressing the root causes of unauthorized immigration, a reasonable and practical policy compromise could focus on strategic partnerships and foreign assistance initiatives to support economic development, political stability, and governance improvements in source countries. In the short term, this could involve increased funding for targeted development programs, security sector reforms, and anti-corruption efforts in key partner nations. Over the medium term, the policy could aim to expand legal pathways for migration, such as enhanced guest worker programs and family reunification, to create more lawful and orderly migration flows. Simultaneously, the policy should maintain a strong emphasis on border security and facilitation measures to ensure the integrity of the US border. In the long term, the goal should be to foster more sustainable conditions in source countries that reduce the drivers of unauthorized immigration, while continuing to improve border management capabilities and facilitating legitimate trade and travel. This balanced approach, combining domestic policy with strategic international collaboration, offers a pragmatic path forward to address the complex challenges of border management. Budgetary allocations should reflect this comprehensive strategy, with appropriate funding for both border security/facilitation and foreign assistance initiatives aimed at root cause mitigation.

To track the effectiveness of this balanced approach, the policy proposal should incorporate a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. This could include key performance indicators to measure progress in areas such as border apprehensions, recidivism rates, smuggling and trafficking interdiction, travel facilitation, and measures of economic and political stability in partner countries. Continuous assessment and refinement of the policy based on these metrics can help ensure it remains responsive to evolving challenges and opportunities.

Lastly, meaningful engagement with immigrant communities, state and local governments, and other key stakeholders can help strengthen the policy's implementation and impact. Incorporating diverse perspectives and on-the-ground insights can inform the design and deployment of border security and facilitation measures, ensuring they are sensitive to the needs and concerns of affected populations.

**O**ne of the key strengths of "A Balanced Approach to US Border Policy 2024" is its recognition of the need to address the root causes of unauthorized immigration, such as economic development and political stability in source countries. While the United States may have limited direct control over these complex geopolitical factors, the policy's emphasis on strategic international partnerships and foreign assistance initiatives is a promising approach to support collaborative efforts to tackle the underlying drivers of unlawful migration.

Another strength is the policy's focus on enhancing border security and facilitation measures through the use of innovative technologies. Leveraging emerging tools like

artificial intelligence, machine learning, and Internet of Things sensors can help border agencies make more informed decisions, allocate resources efficiently, and identify potential threats and opportunities effectively. Investing in these technological solutions should be a high priority to improve border operations in the near term.

Additionally, the policy's call for a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, with key performance indicators to track progress, is a critical component to ensure the policy remains responsive and effective over time. Continuous assessment and refinement of the policy based on these metrics can help identify areas for improvement and adaptation.

**T**o best alleviate the conditions of unlawful immigration and improve the border policy in the near term, the policy should prioritize the expansion of legal pathways for migration, such as enhanced guest worker programs and family reunification. This can help create more orderly and lawful migration flows, reducing the incentives for unauthorized border crossings. Simultaneously, the policy should maintain a strong emphasis on border security and facilitation measures to ensure the integrity of the US border.

In the longer term, the goal should be to foster more sustainable conditions in source countries that reduce the drivers of unauthorized immigration, while continuing to improve border management capabilities and facilitating legitimate trade and travel.

**T**he most interesting, practical, and promising aspects of "A Balanced Approach to US Border Policy 2024" include the policy's emphasis on leveraging emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, to enhance border agency decision-making and resource allocation. Investing in these technological solutions can improve situational awareness and help identify potential threats and opportunities more effectively. Additionally, the policy's focus on strategic international partnerships and foreign assistance initiatives to support economic development, political stability, and governance improvements in source countries is a pragmatic approach to addressing the root causes of unauthorized immigration. Expanding legal pathways for migration, such as enhanced guest worker programs and family reunification, can also create more orderly and lawful migration flows. Finally, the policy's incorporation of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework with key performance indicators is a critical component to ensure the policy remains responsive and effective over time.

The policy proposal's emphasis on balancing border controls with immigration policies and providing more intense oversight of physical borders aligns with the recommendations in the "Strengthening Security in an Age of Irregular Migration Flows" report. The report suggests drawing from best practices across nations to enhance security and regulate immigration, while also minimizing the "myth of offensive strategies" and increasing defensive tactics to reduce conflict.

Furthermore, the policy proposal's recognition of the reduced role of border crossings as the source of undocumented migration, as well as the increased importance of non-

border entrance into the United States, is supported by the findings in "The US-Mexico Border and Mexican Migration to the United States: A 21st Century Review." This article highlights the changing dynamics of migration patterns and the need for policymakers to address these shifts through a more comprehensive approach beyond just border enforcement.

The policy proposal's emphasis on using innovative technologies, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, to enhance border agency decision-making and resource allocation is a promising approach that aligns with the recommendations in the "Border Security: Immigration Enforcement Between Ports of Entry" report. This report suggests that the increased use of technology can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of border security operations.

In conclusion, the "A Balanced Approach to US Border Policy 2024" proposal offers a comprehensive and well-reasoned framework for addressing the complex challenges of border security and immigration management. By leveraging emerging technologies, fostering strategic international partnerships, expanding legal migration pathways, and implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation system, the policy has the potential to strike a more effective balance between border controls and immigration policies.

Ultimately, the success of the "A Balanced Approach to US Border Policy 2024" will depend on its ability to address the complex and multifaceted challenges of border management in a comprehensive and balanced manner. Engaging key stakeholders, addressing root causes, and harnessing technological innovations can all contribute to the development of a more effective and equitable border policy that serves the interests of the United States and its partners. (Bledsoe-Gardner, 2017) (Sa'ad & Huda, 2023)

"A Balanced Approach to US Border Policy 2024" represents a thoughtful attempt to address the multifaceted challenges of border management. While the budgetary and policy implications are complex, the overall approach of seeking a balance between security and facilitation of lawful migration and trade is a promising direction.

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