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<https://www.wsj.com/articles/title-42-expires-migrant-surge-border-89d085d1>

Pandemic-Era Border Policy Expires, and Surge in Migrants Wanes

Thousands of migrants had sought to reach the U.S. before the end of Title 42

By [Juan Montes](#) [Follow](#) in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, [Alicia A. Caldwell](#) [Follow](#) in El Paso, Texas, and [Michelle Hackman](#) [Follow](#) in Washington | Photographs by Paul Ratje for *The Wall Street Journal*

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The number of migrants entering the U.S. illegally began to fall on Friday after thousands made it in this week ahead of Title 42's expiration, while cities and officials prepared shelter and services for migrants fanning out across the country.

Title 42, a pandemic-era policy that allowed for the rapid expulsion of migrants seeking asylum, expired just before midnight Friday and was replaced with new rules that the Biden administration said included tougher consequences for those who cross into the U.S. without legal authorization.

This week, thousands of people crossed into border communities like El Paso, Texas, and Yuma, Ariz., many of whom are now dispersing around the nation by bus, plane and car, adding to the strain on shelters and aid groups in cities like New York and Chicago, where local officials say they are already overburdened with migrants who need help.

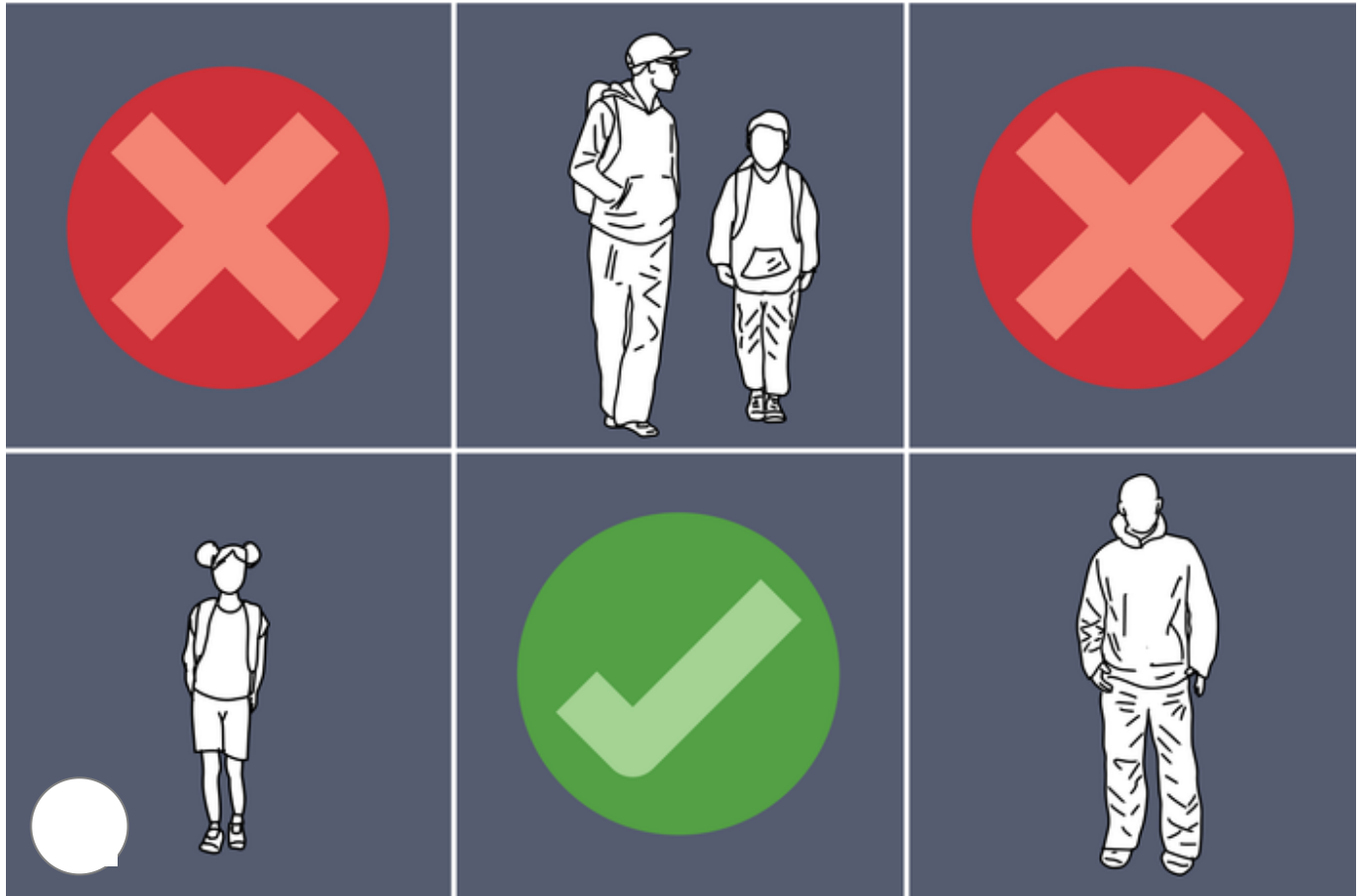
On Friday, Gov. Kathy Hochul sent a letter asking President Biden to allow the state to construct and operate temporary shelters on federal lands controlled by the Defense Department and the National Park Service. Ms. Hochul specifically asked about a former airfield in Brooklyn but also mentioned "other spaces on military installations, including naval resources, in and across the Northeast" in order to "maintain critical and essential public services, specifically sheltering and housing."

The U.S. Border Patrol chief wrote on Twitter Friday that about 68,000 people had been apprehended at the border in the past week. Officials didn't say how many were released into the U.S., rather than being deported.

The number of arrests at the border started to decline Thursday as just under 10,000 people were apprehended, a U.S. official said, after regularly topping that figure earlier in the week.

In the popular crossing point of Matamoros, Mexico, no migrants were seen trying to get across the river on Friday, and the presence of U.S. and Mexican law enforcement officials along that part of the border was down sharply.

U.S.



How the New Immigration System Works After Title 42

Father Francisco Gallardo, who runs two Catholic migrant shelters in Matamoros, said many migrants, most of them Venezuelan, forded the river into the U.S. Thursday night. He said the two shelters he runs aren't full, although he expects more migrants to arrive in Matamoros during the next few days.

In Ciudad Juárez, some say they will stay in Mexico and apply for asylum appointments.

“After so much money spent, after four months on route, after so many efforts and hardship, you don't want to be deported or sent to another point at the border you don't know,” said Marcos Vega, from Venezuela. He said he spent thousands of dollars to make it to the border, and was expelled to Mexico on Wednesday before the expiration of Title 42.

Early on Friday, more than 100 migrants who had a scheduled appointment to request asylum through the CBP One app crossed the border bridge to El Paso escorted by U.S. authorities.

The new relative calm could be short-lived, however, as the Biden administration’s new rules have come under attack from the left and right, including lawsuits by the American Civil Liberties Union and the GOP-led state of Florida. In the latter case, a federal judge in Florida issued a temporary restraining order Thursday night blocking the U.S. government from releasing migrants without court dates for the next two weeks.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said it would comply with the ruling, but said it risks creating dangerous conditions for migrants and government agents.



In recent years, the U.S. has grappled with a surge in migrants from Latin America, many of them fleeing poverty and violence.



A Venezuelan family in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, on Thursday. They said they want to turn themselves in to Border Patrol to be processed in El Paso, Texas.

Along Mexican border communities on Friday, there were signs that migrants were opting to wait for appointments instead of attempting to cross illegally into the U.S.

Alexander Noa, a Venezuelan migrant who crossed the Rio Grande on Wednesday evening, said he was expelled to Matamoros on Thursday after being detained by U.S. authorities.

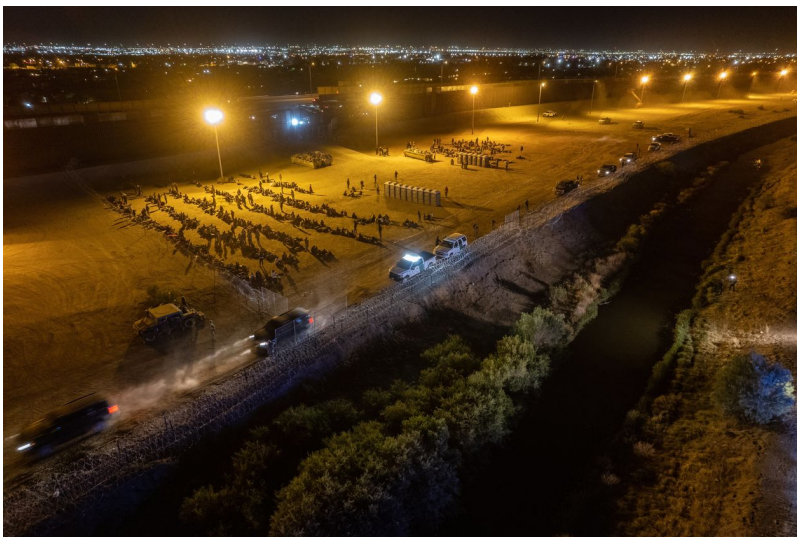
He now plans to apply for asylum by requesting an appointment through the U.S. government online app to make appointments.

“For now, we will camp out with the rest of the people here,” he said.

Title 42, which was introduced in March 2020 by the Trump administration, encouraged some border crossings as migrants who were expelled under the rule could cross again without legal consequences. But in the eyes of the Border Patrol and many politicians, it helped to deter asylum seekers. In recent years, the U.S. has grappled with a surge in migrants from Latin America, most of them fleeing poverty, violence and political repression.

Under new rules set up by the Biden administration, migrants crossing illegally are, with few exceptions, barred from requesting asylum. They also face deportation to Mexico or their country of origin, and a five-year ban on re-entry. Anyone caught trying to enter the country again could face criminal charges and prison time. Appointments to make asylum requests must be booked using an online application.

The ACLU, joined by several other immigrant-rights organizations, filed an immediate legal challenge Thursday night against the new rules, saying they illegally restrict asylum access beyond what existing laws intend. The ACLU successfully sued against a similar Trump-era policy in 2019, and it filed Thursday’s lawsuit in the same federal judicial circuit in northern California.



Migrants line up at the border near El Paso, Texas.



Under new rules set up by the Biden administration, migrants crossing illegally are, with few exceptions, barred from requesting asylum.

Throngs of migrants tried to enter the U.S. this week before the policy change. The migrants, mostly from Venezuela, but also from other countries in Central and South America, said they hoped to be admitted and allowed to work in the U.S.

The Biden administration has said it would now quickly deport most migrants who enter the U.S. illegally, either to their home countries or back to Mexico, which has agreed to take up to 30,000 deportees a month from Haiti, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba. Mexican migration officials said they expect the U.S. to send back about 1,000 migrants from those four countries on Friday alone.

The U.S. Border Patrol apprehended more than one million migrants who crossed illegally between October and March. It detained more than 2.2 million migrants during all of fiscal-year 2022.

El Paso Mayor Oscar Leeser said Friday that arrivals at the border in his city have slowed in the last day.

“Title 42 has come and gone,” Mr. Leeser said. He added that after seeing spikes of arrests in the last week, the flow of migrants slowed Thursday to about 1,800, down from well over 2,000 in the past few days.

Border Patrol agents have released about 4,700 people since May 1, but on Friday only about 150 migrants were being housed in city-run shelters, including families being housed at a decommissioned school.

Many of the other released migrants have been housed at local shelters run by church groups and other nongovernmental agencies or have left the city.

The mayor said he remains optimistic that the city will continue to be able to manage the flow of migrants through the community.

“We will continue to treat people how we want to be treated,” Mr. Leeser said. “Now we need to continue to be prepared for the unexpected.”

The Border Patrol reported having more than 6,000 people in custody in El Paso Friday morning.



A Venezuelan man displays his immigration documents from U.S. officials after being released in El Paso, Texas.

—*José de Córdoba contributed to this article.*

Write to Juan Montes at juan.montes@wsj.com, Alicia A. Caldwell at alicia.caldwell@wsj.com and Michelle Hackman at michelle.hackman@wsj.com

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