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## Hotel rooms for migrant families spark misleading claims

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**CLAIM:** Joe Biden and Kamala Harris forced troops to sleep on the floor of a parking garage, yet are spending millions on hotel rooms for immigrants who broke the law to get into the country. This would never have happened under Trump.

**AP'S ASSESSMENT:** Partly false. The Biden administration did authorize \$86.9 million to provide hotel rooms and other services to families who cannot be expelled under a public health rule in effect at the border. But the post is wrong on the two other points. The Trump administration did use hotels to hold migrants at the border. And members of the National Guard who provided security at the U.S. Capitol in the days after the inauguration also had hotel rooms.

**THE FACTS:** Posts spreading on social media are making misleading claims in an effort to criticize an initiative by the Biden administration to use hotel rooms for migrant families arriving at the border.

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The Biden administration is immediately expelling most people stopped trying to cross the border without legal permission. Those expulsions are happening under Title 42, a public health rule put in place by the Trump administration at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. But some places in Mexico are not allowing expelled migrant families to return. Those families are instead processed in the United States, where they face immigration court dates and deportation unless they win their cases.

Under federal policy, children are not supposed to be held in Border Patrol facilities for longer than 72 hours.

Over the weekend, Tae Johnson, acting director for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, announced the agency had entered an \$86.9 million contract with Endeavors, a nonprofit organization, to provide 1,239 beds at hotel rooms and other services to migrant families who are not expelled at the border.

“Families will be provided clothing, meals/snacks, access to medical care, legal counsel, unlimited phone access, and individual rooms for appropriate physical distancing,” reads a statement from ICE.

The new contract will provide families with hotel rooms while they are being processed, and will also include three meals a day, COVID testing, legal services, transportation, clothing and other expenses.

In response to the policy, posts swirling on social media suggest that the Biden administration is treating migrants better than members of the National Guard.

“Joe Biden and Kamala Harris forced our troops to sleep on the floor of a garage, yet has authorized \$89 million for hotel rooms for illegal immigrants, who broke the law to get into this country. This would have never happened under the Trump administration,” says one popular Facebook post, which misidentified the dollar amount of the contract.

The contrast highlighted in the post is misleading.

While members of the National Guard assigned to securing the U.S. Capitol had to take rest breaks in a parking garage the day after the inauguration, [they were not housed there](#). “Nobody slept there. Nobody spent the night there,” Army Maj. Gen. William J. Walker told reporters on Jan. 25 about the parking garage.

Captain Chelsi Johnson, a spokesperson for the D.C. National Guard, told The Associated Press that all National Guard members participating in the mission had hotel rooms to go back to at the end of their shifts. [The AP reported](#) the National Guard said it originally moved troops out of the Capitol Rotunda and other spaces to garages at the behest of the Capitol Police. The guard members were allowed back inside late on Jan. 21 after reports were widely shared of the conditions in the garages, with few bathrooms and little covering from the cold.

The post is also incorrect in the assertion that the Trump administration did not house migrants in hotels. It did.

“This is not a new policy. The Trump administration also used hotel rooms in places like McAllen, Texas,” said César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández, a law professor at the University of Denver who specializes in immigration law.

The [AP reported in July 2020](#) that the Trump administration was detaining immigrant children in hotels in Arizona and Texas.

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“It’s a very similar, almost identical tactic to address shifting developments along the Southwest border,” García Hernández said.

ICE currently runs two permanent detention facilities that also house migrant families. The agency requested \$270.1 million for 2,500 family detention beds in 2020 during the previous administration, according to the Department of Homeland Security’s budget.

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