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## **Cammack: Illegal immigrants getting baby formula while Americans left with empty shelves**

By Bethany Blankley | The Center Square contributor  
May 12, 2022

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U.S. Rep. Kat Cammack, R-Fla.

Jacquelyn Martin | AP

(The Center Square) – U.S. Rep. Kat Cammack and other Republican lawmakers are calling on the FDA and the Biden administration to take immediate action to solve a months-long baby formula shortage that's left parents scrambling to find healthy food for their infant children.

Cammack, R-Florida, called on Americans to “demand that the administration take action putting the baby formula back on the shelves for American kids,” prioritizing them over illegal immigrants.

Cammack **posted photos** of stocked shelves of baby formula at a Customs and Border Protection detention facility in Texas alongside a photo of empty shelves in an American store. Describing them, she said, “The first photo is from this morning at the Ursula Processing Center at the U.S. border. Shelves and pallets packed with baby formula. The second is from a shelf right here at home. Formula is scarce.”

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The Florida congresswoman was referring to the Central Processing Center in McAllen, Texas, which is the largest detention facility at the southern border where illegal immigrants are held during processing. By law, federal agents are required to provide food and water to illegal immigrants held in detention facilities. CBP officers are also **required** to determine admissibility of baby formula for personal and commercial use that is brought into the country.

“We literally are struggling to find baby formula around the country,” Cammack said during a Facebook Live **stream**. “Moms are struggling, going from store to store to store and then the stores are actually capping the amount of baby formula that they will sell them but, and this got sent to me by a Border Patrol agent this morning, and said, ‘This is disgusting. You will not believe this. They’re receiving pallets, and more pallets of baby formula at the border.’”

She added, “He has been a border patrol agent for 30 years and he has never seen anything quite like this. He is a grandfather and he is saying that his own children can’t get baby formula.”

In response, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott issued a joint statement with National Border Patrol Council President Brandon Judd saying, “President Biden has turned a blind eye to parents across America who are facing the nightmare of a nationwide baby formula shortage.

“While mothers and fathers stare at empty grocery store shelves in a panic, the Biden Administration is happy to provide baby formula to illegal immigrants coming across our southern border.

As of April 24, 40% of the top-selling baby formula products were out of stock nationwide, according to an analysis by Datasembly, which tracked baby formula stock at more than 11,000 stores, CBS News **reported**.

“This is yet another one in a long line of reckless, out-of-touch priorities from the Biden Administration when it comes to securing our border and protecting Americans,” the joint statement from Abbott and Judd said. “Our children deserve a president who puts their needs and survival first – not one who gives critical supplies to illegal immigrants before the very people he took an oath to serve.”

On Tuesday, House Republican Conference Chair Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., and Rep. Ashley Hinson, R-Iowa, sent a letter to FDA Commissioner Robert Califf requesting answers on the shortage. Stefanik has been contacting the FDA about the shortage since February.

Also on Tuesday, Califf issued a statement providing an update on the FDA’s failure to increase the availability of infant and specialty formula products. In February, it **warned** consumers not to use certain products from Abbott Nutrition’s Sturgis, Michigan, facility, which had issued a voluntary recall of certain products. Since then, increasing shortages, coupled with supply chain and other issues, have led to what is now a crisis for many.

“We recognize that many consumers have been unable to access infant formula and critical medical foods they are accustomed to using and are frustrated by their inability to do so. We are doing everything in our power to ensure there is adequate product available where and when they need it,” Califf said. “Ensuring the availability of safe, sole-source nutrition products like infant formula is of the utmost importance to the

FDA. Our teams have been working tirelessly to address and alleviate supply issues and will continue doing everything within our authority to ensure the production of safe infant formula products.”

Stefanik led a coalition on Thursday calling on the FDA and the Biden administration to take immediate action.

“Joe Biden simply has no plan. In fact, when Joe Biden's White House was asked about the shortage, they laughed. Shameful,” Stefanik said. “Make no mistake, there is nothing laughable or funny about this crisis.”

The administration “should have had a plan for this shortage months ago,” she added. “Instead, bare shelves Biden has continued to pass the buck. ... This is not a Third World country. This should never happen in the United States of America. We’re unified in demanding action to address this crisis.”

More than 100 House Republicans wrote a letter to Biden Wednesday demanding that he address the shortage “with the appropriate urgency it deserves.”

Karine Jean-Pierre, White House principal deputy press secretary, addressed the issue during a press briefing on Wednesday. She told reporters, “Ensuring that infant formula is safe and available for families across the country is a top priority to the White House and this administration. This is an urgent issue that the FDA, as you all know, and the White House is working 24/7 to address.”

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