

FINISH THE WALL

A nation without borders is no nation at all. At one time, physical border barriers were considered a commonsense and bipartisan approach to securing our homeland. In 2006, more than 80 members of the United States Senate voted for the Secure Fence Act, authorizing the construction of physical barriers along the southern border.

Federal law enforcement officers responsible for patrolling the border and keeping Americans safe have long advocated for an effective border wall system as part of a comprehensive border security strategy.

Starting in 2017, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CPB) started constructing a border wall system with several types of infrastructure, including but not limited to:

- ★ Internally hardened steel-bollard barriers that ranged from 18 feet to 30 feet high;
 - ★ New and improved all-weather access roads;
 - ★ Perimeter lighting; and
 - ★ Enforcement cameras.
- ★ An effective border wall system enables the U.S. government—not cartels and human traffickers—to decide where people and goods cross the border. Effective border wall systems cause illegal crossings and crime to fall.

Towards the end of the previous administration, nearly two miles of border wall were being built each day, and 450 miles of wall had been completed in high-priority areas identified by law enforcement officials.

Unfortunately, the current administration immediately halted border wall construction upon taking office. This decision endangered everyday Americans and Border Patrol agents on top of wasting billions of taxpayer dollars earmarked for construction. Malicious actors are taking full advantage of our porous border, and illegal immigration has surged since January 2021.

During 2021, we witnessed the highest number of southern border apprehensions in history. That is, until 2022, which set a new record before the fiscal year even ended. Hidden within the unvetted flood of illegal aliens are potential public safety and national security threats. We have also seen an immense spike in human trafficking, drug trafficking, and drug overdoses, largely due to the importation of illicit fentanyl. Drug overdoses now surpass car accidents as the leading killer of young Americans.

Absent federal leadership, states have begun taking steps to protect their citizens by enforcing state laws that curb illegal immigration. Texas began construction of the first-ever state-funded border wall system, and non-border states are now partnering to mitigate the crisis created by the decision to stop construction of the southern border wall.

THE FACTS

- ★ 450 miles of new border wall were built between January 2017 and January 2021, and 250-300 more miles had been fully funded.
- ★ In one short 12-mile section in the San Diego Sector, the wall reduced CBP manpower needs by 150 agents every 24 hours, saving taxpayers \$28 million per year in salaries and benefits.
- ★ In the Yuma Sector, illegal entries in areas with the new border wall system dropped by 87% from fiscal years 2019 to 2020.
- ★ In the El Paso Sector, drug smuggling efforts fell by as much as 81% in areas with the border wall system.
- ★ Illegal apprehensions at the southern border increased by 278% to a historic high of 1.7 million in fiscal year 2021 since the halted construction of the border wall.
- ★ More than 2.1 million apprehensions have taken

place so far in 2022.

- ★ The Border Patrol has estimated that there have been more than 900,000 gotaways since the beginning of the Biden Administration.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Finish constructing the border wall system and fully fund the Border Patrol agents needed to secure the border.

At the state level, support policies that:

- ★ Construct physical border infrastructure and create or expand other non-wall buffers along the U.S.-Mexico border.
- ★ Expand, widen, and/or dredge waterways on the U.S. side of the Rio Grande River.

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