



President Donald Trump's speech to the nation

My fellow Americans: Tonight, I am speaking to you because there is a growing humanitarian and security crisis at our southern border.

Every day, Customs and Border Patrol agents encounter thousands of illegal immigrants trying to enter our country. We are out of space to hold them, and we have no way to promptly return them back home to their country.

America proudly welcomes millions of lawful immigrants who enrich our society and contribute to our nation. But all Americans are hurt by uncontrolled, illegal migration. It strains public resources and drives down jobs and wages. Among those hardest hit are African Americans and Hispanic Americans.

Our southern border is a pipeline for vast quantities of illegal drugs, including meth, heroin, cocaine, and fentanyl. Every week, 300 of our citizens are killed by heroin alone, 90 percent of which floods across from our southern border. More Americans will die from drugs this year than were killed in the entire Vietnam War.

In the last two years, ICE officers made 266,000 arrests of aliens with criminal records, including those charged or convicted of 100,000 assaults, 30,000 sex crimes, and 4,000 violent killings. Over the years, thousands of Americans have been brutally killed by those who illegally entered our country, and thousands more lives will be lost if we don't act right now.

This is a humanitarian crisis — a crisis of the heart and a crisis of the soul.

Last month, 20,000 migrant children were illegally brought into the United States — a dramatic increase. These children are used as human pawns by vicious coyotes and ruthless gangs. One in three women are sexually assaulted on the dangerous trek up through Mexico. Women and children are the biggest victims, by far, of our broken system.

This is the tragic reality of illegal immigration on our southern border. This is the cycle of human suffering that I am determined to end.

My administration has presented Congress with a detailed proposal to secure the border and stop the criminal gangs, drug smugglers, and human traffickers. It's a tremendous problem. Our proposal was developed by law enforcement professionals and border agents at the Department of Homeland Security. These are the resources they have requested to properly perform their mission and keep America safe. In fact, safer than ever before.

The proposal from Homeland Security includes cutting-edge technology for detecting drugs, weapons, illegal contraband, and many other things. We have requested more agents, immigration judges, and bed space to process the sharp rise in unlawful migration fueled by our very strong economy. Our plan also contains an urgent request for humanitarian assistance and medical support.

Furthermore, we have asked Congress to close border security loopholes so that illegal immigrant children can be safely and humanely returned back home.

Finally, as part of an overall approach to border security, law enforcement professionals have requested \$5.7 billion for a physical barrier. At the request of Democrats, it will be a steel barrier rather than a concrete wall. This barrier is absolutely critical to border security. It's also what our professionals at the border want and need. This is just common sense.

The border wall would very quickly pay for itself. The cost of illegal drugs exceeds \$500 billion a year — vastly more than the \$5.7 billion we have requested from Congress. The wall will also be paid for, indirectly, by the great new trade deal we have made with Mexico.

Senator Chuck Schumer — who you will be hearing from later tonight — has repeatedly supported a physical barrier in the past, along with many other Democrats. They changed their mind only after I was elected President.

Democrats in Congress have refused to acknowledge the crisis. And they have refused to provide our brave border agents with the tools they desperately need to protect our families and our nation.

The federal government remains shut down for one reason and one reason only: because Democrats will not fund border security.

My administration is doing everything in our power to help those impacted by the situation. But the only solution is for Democrats to pass a spending bill that defends our borders and re-opens the government.

This situation could be solved in a 45-minute meeting. I have invited Congressional leadership to the White House tomorrow to get this done. Hopefully, we can rise above partisan politics in order to support national security.

Some have suggested a barrier is immoral. Then why do wealthy politicians build walls, fences, and gates around their homes? They don't build walls because they hate the people on the outside, but because they love the people on the inside. The only thing that is immoral is the politicians to do nothing and continue to allow more innocent people to be so horribly victimized.

America's heart broke the day after Christmas when a young police officer in California was savagely murdered in cold blood by an illegal alien, who just came across the border. The life of an American hero was stolen by someone who had no right to be in our country.

Day after day, precious lives are cut short by those who have violated our borders. In California, an Air Force veteran was raped, murdered, and beaten to death with a hammer by an illegal alien with a long criminal history. In Georgia, an illegal alien was recently charged with murder for killing, beheading, and dismembering his neighbor. In Maryland, MS-13 gang members who arrived in the United States as unaccompanied minors were arrested and charged last year after viciously stabbing and beating a 16-year-old girl.

Over the last several years, I've met with dozens of families whose loved ones were stolen by illegal immigration. I've held the hands of the weeping mothers and embraced the grief-stricken fathers. So sad. So terrible. I will never forget the pain in their eyes, the tremble in their voices, and the sadness gripping their souls.

How much more American blood must we shed before Congress does its job?

To those who refuse to compromise in the name of border security, I would ask: Imagine if it was your child, your husband, or your wife whose life was so cruelly shattered and totally broken?

To every member of Congress: Pass a bill that ends this crisis.

To every citizen: Call Congress and tell them to finally, after all of these decades, secure our border.

This is a choice between right and wrong, justice and injustice. This is about whether we fulfill our sacred duty to the American citizens we serve.

When I took the Oath of Office, I swore to protect our country. And that is what I will always do, so help me God.

Thank you and goodnight.



Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer Response Speeches

Pelosi: Good evening. I appreciate the opportunity to speak directly to the American people tonight about how we can end this shutdown and meet the needs of the American people. Sadly, much of what we have heard from President Trump throughout this senseless shutdown has been full of misinformation and even malice.

The President has chosen fear. We want to start with the facts.

The fact is: On the very first day of this Congress, House Democrats passed Senate Republican legislation to re-open government and fund smart, effective border security solutions.

But the President is rejecting these bipartisan bills which would re-open government – over his obsession with forcing American taxpayers to waste billions of dollars on an expensive and ineffective wall – a wall he always promised Mexico would pay for!

The fact is: President Trump has chosen to hold hostage critical services for the health, safety and well-being of the American people and withhold the paychecks of 800,000 innocent workers across the nation – many of them veterans.

He promised to keep government shutdown for 'months or years' – no matter whom it hurts. That's just plain wrong.

The fact is: We all agree we need to secure our borders, while honoring our values: we can build the infrastructure and roads at our ports of entry; we can install new technology to scan cars and trucks for drugs coming into our nation; we can hire the personnel we need to facilitate trade and immigration at the border; we can fund more innovation to detect unauthorized crossings.

The fact is: the women and children at the border are not a security threat, they are a humanitarian challenge – a challenge that President Trump's own cruel and counterproductive policies have only deepened.

And the fact is: President Trump must stop holding the American people hostage, must stop manufacturing a crisis, and must re-open the government.

Thank you. Leader Schumer.

Schumer: Thank you, Speaker Pelosi.

My fellow Americans, we address you tonight for one reason only: the President of the United States – having failed to get Mexico to pay for his ineffective, unnecessary border wall, and unable to convince the Congress or the American people to foot the bill – has shut down the government.

American democracy doesn't work that way. We don't govern by temper tantrum. No president should pound the table and demand he gets his way or else the government shuts down, hurting millions of Americans who are treated as leverage.

Tonight – and throughout this debate and throughout his presidency – President Trump has appealed to fear, not facts. Division, not unity.

Make no mistake: Democrats and the President both want stronger border security. However, we sharply disagree with the President about the most effective way to do it.

So, how do we untangle this mess?

There is an obvious solution: separate the shutdown from the arguments over border security. There is bipartisan legislation – supported by Democrats and Republicans – to re-open government while allowing debate over border security to continue.

There is no excuse for hurting millions of Americans over a policy difference. Federal workers are about to miss a paycheck. Some families can't get a mortgage to buy a new home. Farmers and small businesses won't get loans they desperately need.

Most presidents have used Oval Office addresses for noble purposes. This president just used the backdrop of the Oval Office to manufacture a crisis, stoke fear, and divert attention from the turmoil in his Administration.

My fellow Americans, there is no challenge so great that our nation cannot rise to meet it. We can re-open the government and continue to work through disagreements about policy. We can secure our border without an expensive, ineffective wall. And we can welcome legal immigrants and refugees without compromising safety and security.

The symbol of America should be the Statue of Liberty, not a thirty-foot wall.

So our suggestion is a simple one: Mr. President, re-open the government and we can work to resolve our differences over border security. But end this shutdown now.

Thank you.