



## Congress again voids Trump's border emergency declaration; veto likely

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Arizona lawmakers split on party lines this week as Congress voted again to terminate President Donald Trump's declaration of a national emergency at the border, which he has cited to justify use of Pentagon funds for border construction.

The resolution passed by the Senate Wednesday and the House Friday is virtually identical to one in March that the (president vetoed, and the latest effort is expected to meet the same fate.

Eleven Republicans joined all Democrats in the Senate to approve the resolution on a 54-41 vote. But that falls well short of the majority that would be needed to override any veto.

The House vote Friday also largely followed party lines, with 224 Democrats joined by 11 Republicans and one independent to support the measure and 174 Republicans voting against it. Arizona's delegation cleanly split on party lines in both the House and Senate, with all Democrats supporting and all Republicans opposing.

For Republicans like Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Gilbert, the vote demonstrated that Democrats "simply don't know what an emergency is" if they have a problem with Trump's border declaration.

"Forty percent of the drugs that come in to this country from the south, they come from the Tucson sector," Biggs said during debate on the House floor Friday. "You know why? There are 75 miles of open border. You got one port of entry."

But Democrats said the greater threat to national security was Trump's decision to divert \$3.6 billion from Defense Department projects to border wall construction, using what they called a contrived emergency. Defense Secretary Mark Esper earlier this month identified 127 Pentagon construction projects that could see funding diverted to the border.

"The president's decision to cancel \$3.6 billion off of military construction to pay for his wasteful wall makes America less safe," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Friday on the House floor. "The administration is stealing funds from 127 initiatives, 21 countries, 23 states and three territories, stooping so low as to steal from a middle school in Fort Campbell, Kentucky."

Pelosi cited an Air Force report that said the wall project would require cancellation of construction for the European Defense Initiative, a move she said would make Russia happy as the initiative's mission is to deter Russian aggression.

Trump declared the emergency in February at the end of a 35-day partial government shutdown that began when the president refused to sign the federal budget because it did not include the \$5.7 billion he was demanding for border wall construction this year. He eventually relented and signed the budget without the wall funding – then immediately issued the emergency declaration.

Trump said at the time that the emergency was needed to combat what he called a growing crisis on the border.

“We’re talking about an invasion of our country with drugs, with human traffickers, with all types of criminals and gangs,” Trump said.

Even though the president is expected to veto the resolution, one analyst said it was important for lawmakers to make a second try at eliminating the emergency.

“I think that members of Congress want to put themselves on the record opposing the administration’s action here,” said David Bier, an immigration policy analyst at the Cato Institute. “They don’t want to just not do anything in response to the president taking money that they appropriated and using it for a totally different purpose.”

Bier said Democrats will also point to these votes while on the campaign trail in 2020.

“This will be a talking point for Democrats to say in elections, here’s members of Congress who don’t care whether the administration takes money away from the military for a border wall,” he said.

One of those Democrats is Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Tucson, who has long criticized “militarization” of the border and who said Trump’s declared crisis is a fake national emergency.

“Trump created this crisis through his dehumanizing immigration policies. It’s dangerous, unconstitutional, and damaging to the borderlands and the people who live there,” Grijalva said in a statement after Friday’s vote.