

If donors raised enough money, here's how they could theoretically build the wall

Mariana Alfaro

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- The US-Mexico border is 1,954 miles long. A new nonprofit organization is trying to privately pay for portions of a wall that President Donald Trump has promised would cover 1,000 miles of the border.
- The nonprofit, which grew out of the GoFundMe campaign that attempted to raise the \$5 billion Trump is demanding from Congress to pay for the wall, hasn't said how it plans to build portions of the wall on the border.
- We asked a border-security expert what it would look like if a private entity tried to build a wall on the US-Mexico border.

A new nonprofit named We Build the Wall Inc. is aiming to privately build portions of the wall at a faster rate and for a smaller cost than President Donald Trump. With a reported \$7 million in the bank, the organization — led by the man who started a GoFundMe campaign to build the wall — hasn't publicly released its plans on how it will raise a wall on the US-Mexico border.

David Bier, a border-security expert at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, said the organization "could absolutely construct whatever they want" on the border — as long as they do it on private land.

"As long [as] Border Patrol was, you know, okay with it, and the federal government didn't intervene to prevent it from happening, then yeah, they can do whatever they want," he said.

Read more: [After GoFundMe refunded donations to a 'Fund The Wall' campaign, people sent the organizer over \\$7 million to build the wall privately](#)

If, however, they tried to build portions of the wall on federal land, the nonprofit organizers would need congressional approval. According to the US Government Accountability Office, 40% of the land along the southern border are federally designated as national forests, parks, monuments, wildlife refuges, or tribal reserves. Of the total 1,954-mile-long boundary, about 820 linear miles are federally-owned or managed.

"Right now [the Department of Homeland Security] only has very limited authority in what types of money it can accept from private citizens to fund itself," Bier said.

Also, if the organization managed to build a portion of the wall on private property, they would still be expected to hand control of it over to the Border Patrol or the Department of Homeland

Security. Bier said he's not aware of any protocol of how that would work, given that it's never happened before.

"They could purchase land construct whatever they wanted to construct and at that point it's really up to them about, you know, how much they want to pour into the project in order to maintain upkeep for this wall," he said. "I can imagine it would be a very long process acquiring the land, getting permission from landowners, or whatever they plan to do in order to construct anything meaningful."

If they build something, Bier said it "would not amount to much."

The original GoFundMe campaign, started by Brian Kolfage, the man who is now running We Build the Wall Inc., initially raised \$20 million for the wall. However, GoFundMe is now issuing refunds to all donors.

Kolfage has asked his supporters to send the money directly to his nonprofit. So far, Kolfage has reportedly received \$7 million.

Is it enough? "With 20 million dollars, you could build less than a mile of border wall," Bier said.