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The southern border wall may be coming. Do you know why? A quiz

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President Trump has declared a national emergency in an attempt to override Congress's refusal to even partially fund what could easily become a \$30 billion project. If the national emergency declaration is not overridden, the funds will come from approved military projects.

Do we fully understand the depth of this emergency and the need to move critical funding to satisfy the president's campaign pledge? Do you agree that we should spend billions to build the wall?

To help answer that question, please take this 10-question quiz about unlawful immigration.

1. Since 2000, unlawful migration across the southern U.S. border has:
 - a. Increased by 75 percent
 - b. Increased by 10 percent
 - c. Stayed the same
 - d. Decreased by 10 percent
 - e. Decreased by 75 percent
2. Since the 2008 recession, the number of illegal immigrants in the U.S. has:
 - a. Increased greatly
 - b. Increased slightly
 - c. Stayed the same
 - d. Decreased slightly
 - e. Decreased greatly
3. More than two-thirds of the illegal immigrants in the U.S. got into the country:
 - a. By crossing the southern border on foot or by swimming
 - b. By illegal entry through Canada
 - c. In caravans organized by smugglers
 - d. Legally, but overstayed their visas
 - e. With fake passports or visas

4. Undocumented immigrants in the U.S. get (check all that apply):
 - a. Food stamps (SNAP)
 - b. Social Security
 - c. Medicare and Medicaid
 - d. Public education
 - e. None of the above
5. Undocumented immigrants working illegally pay (check all that apply):
 - a. Social Security taxes
 - b. Property taxes directly or through rent
 - c. Local and state taxes
 - d. Use, sales, and excise taxes
 - e. None of the above
6. Undocumented immigrants are a disproportionate threat to a community's safety:
 - a. True
 - b. False
7. The majority of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. came from Mexico:
 - a. True
 - b. False
8. Of the 15 lethal terrorist attacks in the United States since 9/11, the following is true:
 - a. Most were American citizens or legal residents
 - b. None were undocumented immigrants
 - c. None were women
 - d. None were of Mexican heritage
 - e. All of the above
9. States with larger shares of undocumented immigrants tend to have:
 - a. More crime
 - b. Less crime
 - c. No difference in crime
10. In Texas (where this data is available) homicide, sexual assault and larceny rates for undocumented immigrants were:

- a. Much higher than for native-born Americans
- b. Indistinguishable from statistics for native-born Americans
- c. Much lower than for native-born Americans

The answers may surprise you. Illegal immigration is a problem only because it subverts legal means of immigration, not because illegal immigrants present some disproportionate threat.

The answers:

- 1 — e (Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection)
- 2 — d (Source: Pew Research Center)
- 3 — d (Source: Center for Migration Studies)
- 4 — d (Public education is the only social service available to illegal immigrants other than emergency medical care)
- 5 — a, b, c, d
- 6 — b (Source Criminology & Public Policy, 7[1], 59-82)
- 7 — b (Source: Center for Migration Studies)
- 8 — e (Source: New America, Terrorism in America After 9/11)
- 9 — b (Source: Criminology, March 25, 2018)
- 10 — c (Source: Cato Institute Immigration Research and Policy Brief No. 4)

If both illegal immigration and the number of illegal immigrants in the U.S. have been declining, most of the undocumented immigrants in the U.S. got here on legal visas and undocumented immigrants are less of a threat than our own citizens, what is the purpose of the wall? U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials want more agents and better technology, and some physical barriers, but not a “big, beautiful wall.”

We are facing much larger threats than illegal migration from across the southern border. The national opioid crisis took over 70,000 lives last year. Our infrastructure is crumbling. We still have millions without health care. We are under constant cyberattack by Russia and China. Yet our entire focus as a country has been on an unnecessary government shutdown and a declared national emergency that is anything but a true emergency.

What are our elected officials thinking? Can party politics override common sense and the national interest? Apparently.

I urge you to write or call your congressman and senators to demand that funding NOT be removed from critical defense projects like cyber security. Yes, we need border security, but not a wasteful and easily circumvented wall. Please ask your representative to override the phony national emergency declaration.

