



Democrats should not give in to Trump's wall

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Virtually every discussion about the impasse over funding President Trump's wall brings up the idea of "compromise" to bring the government shutdown to an end. There is no reason why Democrats should compromise on their refusal to allocate nearly \$6 billion for a wall on our southern border. To do so would create a dangerous precedent for how policy differences should be resolved between Congress and the Executive branch.

Democrats had no role in creating the crisis. The blame for the situation lies squarely with the President, abetted by his party. The GOP-controlled Senate passed a spending bill on Dec. 19, without wall funding, to keep the government open. But Trump reversed himself on supporting the measure after he was ridiculed by conservative commentators who called him "gutless" for not keeping to his pledge to "proudly" shut down parts of the government if his wall — that he originally promised would be paid for by Mexico — wasn't funded.

On policy grounds, Democrats should not back down from their opposition to fund Trump's wall. The President has engaged in ongoing deceptions — about drug trafficking, terrorist infiltrations and crime — to justify a physical barrier on the southern border. Border security is worthy of debate, but sound policy is based on facts, not fabrications. There is little evidence to support the efficacy of a border wall. Cato Institute, the Koch-funded conservative think tank, concluded, "President Trump's wall would be a mammoth expenditure that would have little impact on illegal immigration."

It would be immoral for Democrats to accede to President Trump's demand for a border wall. The wall has become a symbol of his bigoted, xenophobic, racist strategy to exploit the anxiety of whites in an increasingly multicultural society. For Trump the wall is not really about border security, it's his divisive strategy of fear and hate used to cement the fealty of his base.

The most important reason, however, for Democratic rejection of compromise is the incentive it would create for Presidents or political parties to hold government employees and the general public hostage to get what they cannot get through politically acceptable negotiation. The U.S. doesn't negotiate with hostage takers because it would only encourage more acts of terrorism. The same should be true when dealing with a President who is putting the economic security of hundreds of thousands of Americans, and the nation at large, at risk to get what he can't get otherwise.

Democrats — and Republicans — shouldn't let President Trump get away with using employees of the government he leads as pawns in his quest for power and control.