



EDITORIAL: Border wall brouhaha

Connor Niszcza

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“I would build a great wall, and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me, and I’ll build them very inexpensively. I will build a great, great wall on our southern border and I’ll have Mexico pay for that wall.”

Then candidate Donald Trump made that claim for the first – but not last – time in his presidential announcement speech from Trump Tower on June 16, 2015 (I know, less than four years ago, even though it feels like an eternity.)

Trump’s soon to be die-hard base ate that up, and it became one of, if not the, signature promise of his presidential campaign. Now, Trump had no real plan to get Mexico to pay for it, but because he assumes that he is the world’s greatest deal maker, he probably thinks that they will roll over and believe or do whatever he says. I mean, he is used to the unwavering support of his base and most of the Republican party, so why would he expect Mexico to stand up against him?

I realize that the 2016 campaign is long over, but it seems as if we are just now feeling the real consequences of Washington’s fight over the wall since the government shut down at 12 a.m. on December 22nd. 800,000 federal workers have been placed on furlough or are working without pay and likely will not receive a paycheck on January 11th because of the President’s refusal to admit that he was wrong.

Both sides of the aisle want us to have the strongest border security we can, but we have to do it in an intelligent and effective way. A wall is neither of those things.

In a now infamous line from his presidential announcement speech, Trump said this about Mexican immigrants: “They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.” The aspect of crime has stood out the most, but do illegal immigrants actually commit crimes more often than native born Americans?

No.

In 2016, 1,955,951 native-born Americans, 117,994 illegal immigrants, and 43,618 legal immigrants were incarcerated in America. For every 100,000 natives, 1,521 of them were behind bars. That number drops to 800 per every 100,000 illegal immigrants and 325 per 100,000 legal immigrants. By that data from the Cato Institute, illegal immigrants are **47**percent less likely to be imprisoned than native born Americans are. For a visual aide, see [here](#).

Further information that may also be helpful can be found in this [Washington Post](#) link

The false claim that the wall will lower crime rates is not the only reason why it is an unnecessary waste of taxpayer money.

A wall will not stop drugs from ‘pouring into the country,’ as the president says. The reality is that most drugs that come up through the Southern border “[are] smuggled in privately-owned vehicles and tractor-trailers at legal ports of entry, where the drug is co-mingled with legal goods,” according to the DEA. There are tunnels used solely for drug smuggling that a wall obviously would not be able to stop. These tunnels aren’t some little known secret; they have been shown on T.V. and written about extensively. Therefore, the president must know that a wall will not solve this issue.

The wall, which has morphed into ‘steel slats’ and now a ‘steel barrier,’ according to Trump, was not proposed by the Democrats, as he stated. That is blatantly false. Democrats have opposed any type of wall or barrier, regardless of its material, believing it is immoral.

Trump is now saying that the wall will be paid for ‘indirectly’ by the new (and not yet ratified) trade deal with Mexico. At this time, no money has been specifically set aside or guaranteed for wall funding. Also, per the Washington Post, “Countries do not “lose” money on trade deficits, so there is no money to earn; the size of a trade deficit or surplus can be determined by other factors besides trade.” So that statement can be rated false, or, as the Post says, “a nonsense claim.”

Next lie coming up to bat is the flat out bogus claim that thousands of terrorists are pouring in through our Southern border. This first gained traction back when Fox News and Trump were raising hell about the caravan. (Remember that? It seems to have mysteriously vanished since the midterm elections, but I’ll try to jog your memory.) Trump claimed that there were Middle Easterners in the caravan with no proof (he eventually admitted that he had no evidence) and that has slowly morphed into the ‘fact’ that “nearly 4,000 known or suspected terrorists come into our country illegally, and we know that our most vulnerable point of entry is southern border,” according to Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders. This is nonsense. Per the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency, part of Trump’s own government, in the first half of the fiscal year 2018, only 6 immigrants entered whose “names were on a federal government list of known or suspected terrorists,” according to NBC News’s Julia Ainsley.

So your president, your vice president, and your press secretary have all gone on TV in the past weeks and lied to your face about terrorists pouring into our country. They are trying to utilize fear mongering to rally support for this unnecessary wall, because if this president fails to deliver on this promise, he knows that it will be the end of his presidency.

Now, let’s delve into the biggest completely fabricated claim repeatedly perpetuated by Trump and all of his cronies: that there is a “crisis” at the Southern border. It is simply not true.

In 2017, illegal border crossing arrests hit a **46** year low.

In fact, they have dropped 80% since the year 2000, from 1.6 million to 300-350,000.

Every year since 2007, more people have become undocumented because they fly here and overstay their visa, not because they are coming in from Mexico.

As a student journalist, I am taught that we must stick to the facts. The definition of crisis is “a time of intense difficulty, trouble, or danger.” Looking at the facts, we are experiencing the

opposite of a crisis. In no way is there any intense difficulty or danger when it comes to illegal immigration.

At this point in the government shutdown, everyone has his or her opinions on the wall already. There will continue to be bipartisan discussions, but neither side wants to give in and seem weak to their constituents. But hey, this is Trump World now, so anything is possible.