



## **Trump's national emergency at the border is fake. Here are some very real emergencies he should be addressing instead.**

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February 19, 2019

A little after 10:30 a.m. on Friday morning, President Donald Trump held a press conference in the White House's Rose Garden to officially declare a national emergency at our nation's southern border. After reluctantly signing a bipartisan spending bill that allocated \$1.37 billion for new fencing, the president announced he would redirect over \$6 billion in federal funds to build hundreds of additional miles of steel barrier to address the so-called immigration crisis and fulfill his otherwise failed campaign promise. He then flew to his Mar-a-Lago club, which has allegedly hired undocumented immigrants, for a weekend of golf.

At 1:24 p.m. on Friday afternoon, Aurora, Illinois police received reports of an active shooter at the Henry Pratt Company. An employee about to be terminated used a handgun to shoot and kill five people, wounding six others. The shooting occurred the day after the one year anniversary of the Parkland school shooting, where a former student of Stoneman Douglas High School used an AR-15 to shoot and kill 17 people on Valentine's Day.

Three hours after Trump somewhat incoherently notified the nation of what many experts agree is not really a national emergency, an actual, tangible, devastating emergency happened. Again.

Illegal border crossings and apprehensions have been declining for nearly two decades, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and in 2017 were at their lowest point since 1971. A 2018 study published by the Cato Institute found that undocumented immigrants commit less crime than native-born citizens, and according to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) the majority of illegal drugs coming into the country across the southern border are being smuggled through legal points of entry. In other words, this president has manufactured an immigration crisis for his own political gain, hoping that a fear of "the other" will help him win reelection in 2020.

"I could do the wall over a longer period of time," Trump said during his Rose Garden speech. "I didn't need to do this, but I want to do it faster." By the president's own admission this national emergency isn't necessary. It's just convenient.

But there are very real national emergencies this president has yet to address and, in many cases, that may have actually been worsened by his policies, rhetoric and political endorsements. Gun violence is one of them, as the most recent shooting tragically made clear. A reported 40,000 people died in shootings last year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(CDC); the highest number of deaths since 1968. From 2012 to 2014, an average of 1,297 children died from gun-related injuries. But this president can't even tweet the words "gun violence" on the anniversary of one of the deadliest mass shootings in America, choosing instead to describe the Parkland shooting as "school violence."

The National Rifle Association spent more than \$21 million to help Trump get elected, and at the organization's 2018 convention in Dallas, Trump promised to defend gun rights. After the shooting in Aurora, Illinois, Trump sent his "heartfelt condolences to all of the victims and their families."

A reported one in five women will be the victim of a completed or attempted rape in her lifetime, according to the CDC. That's a real national emergency. The same CDC report reveals around 50 million U.S. women experience some kind of sexual violence in a year. Yet we have a president who has been accused of sexual assault or harassment by over 20 women, who endorsed a man accused of pedophilia and who has defended at least six men accused of sexual assault while in office. The National Sexual Assault Hotline saw a 35 percent increase in calls after Trump bragged about sexual assault on tape, and a 201 percent increase in calls during Trump's Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation hearing.

The United States has the highest maternal mortality rate of any developed nation, and black women are three to four times more likely to die during childbirth than white women. That's a real national emergency. But Trump has tried and failed to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act on three separate occasions, which could've stripped health care from an estimated 24 million people by the year 2021 and made pregnancy and postpartum depression pre-existing conditions. Meanwhile, states with the highest number of abortion restrictions tend to have the worst women and children's health outcomes, according to a 2017 report by the Center for Reproductive Rights and Ibis Reproductive Health, but this president vowed to elect Supreme Court justices who will overturn Roe v. Wade and is being hailed by some as the most "pro-life president ever."

The country has also been experiencing a rise in hate crimes since 2016, according to the FBI. That's a real national emergency. There were more than 7,100 hate crimes reported in 2017, with an increase in attacks motivated by race, religion and sexual orientation. Yet this president believes neo-Nazis chanting "Jews will not replace us" are potentially fine people, has rolled back protections for transgender Americans and wants to allow people to discriminate under the guise of religious freedom. The president has attacked black athletes protesting systemic racism and relied on racist tropes to verbally assault prominent Democrats — is it any wonder a recent study found an increase in school bullying in areas that voted for Trump in 2016?

And looming over all of us is the very real threat of climate change. In just 12 years the world could experience extreme drought, flooding and heat, resulting in failed economies and extreme poverty. The Pentagon has stated that climate change poses a national security threat, and the U.S. government concluded that the U.S. economy could lose 10 percent of its GDP and thousands could die if climate change isn't slowed down or reversed. But this president has called global warming a hoax, openly mocks science on Twitter, has worked tirelessly to reverse President Barack Obama's environmental rules reducing air-pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and pulled the United States out of the Paris climate agreement.

These are the real national emergencies plaguing our country and making life more dangerous for a significant number of Americans. These are the real national emergencies this president should be focused on fighting. Conservative pundit and provocateur Anne Coulter said on Friday "the only national emergency is that our president is an idiot." The way things are going, she may have a point.

At the same time, Trump's misuse of executive power sets a powerful new precedent, as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi noted. "A Democrat president can declare emergencies as well," Pelosi said on Friday. Something to remember in 2020