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The problem is with policy

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There is no crisis at our southern border. There are multiple definitions of the word “crisis.” To apply this word to the situation at the Mexico/United States border is at best a stretch and certainly an opinion as opposed to verifiable fact. Merriam-Webster defines crisis as “a difficult or dangerous situation that needs serious attention.” The Cambridge English Dictionary says a crisis is “an extremely difficult or dangerous point in a situation.” Some synonyms listed are emergency, disaster and catastrophe. In looking at our southern border and having visited my son in El Paso at Thanksgiving it is obvious to me “crisis” is a gross mischaracterization of the actual facts.

There is no crisis at our southern border. We have an immigration problem that is wholly solvable without spending \$5.7 billion on a physical border. What we may have, what Republicans called a crisis during the Obama years, is a growing national debt and federal budget deficit. According to CBS News the national debt topped \$21 trillion for the first time in 2018. At the same time our federal budget deficit “swelled to \$779 billion in 2018,” up from \$666 billion in 2017. The federal debt amounts to \$67,201 per person. I’m not sure when — if ever — anyone comes to collect that debt, but I’m very sure most of us couldn’t pay it. Now that would be a crisis.

There is no crisis at our southern border. We’ve all heard of, or lived through, a military crisis. There is no way the immigration problem is a military crisis. We are not being attacked by an armed force from Mexico. The cities and towns nearest to our border with Mexico are still governed by the United States and the citizens living there. Take a look at the most current map you can find. The line that roughly follows the Rio Grande River hasn’t changed. We haven’t ceded conquered US land to Mexico because there hasn’t been an invasion. While we may have more undocumented workers than we want arriving via the southern border, the boundaries and laws of this nation are intact.

There is no crisis at the southern border. This past Sunday on FOX News, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, claimed that up to 3,000 foreign nationals with terrorist connections arrived in the US this past year. Host Chris Wallace pointed out that those 3,000 people came from areas or countries known to have terrorists, they were never identified by Homeland Security as terrorists. When Sanders went on to say another 4,000 people with terrorist connections were stopped at the southern border, Wallace again corrected her saying he had done the research and those 4,000 suspected terrorists were stopped at airports, not the southern border.

There is no crisis at the southern border. One often repeated claim contends murderers and rapists are flooding across the border and killing and raping US citizens. While there have been a few well-publicized cases of illegal immigrants involved in violent crime, overall the number of violent crimes among them is lower than among native US citizens. According to the FBI’s

statistics violent crime has fallen from 747.1 crimes per 100,000 people in 1993, to 392.9 crimes per 100,000 people in 2017. According to the CATO Institute in 2018 there were just under four convictions for homicides per 100,000 native US citizens in Texas, while for the rate for undocumented immigrants was just under three per 100,000. Also according to the CATO Institute, illegal immigrants are 47 percent less likely to be incarcerated for crime than native US citizens. Evidently people born and raised in the US are far more likely to be criminals than illegal immigrants.

There is no crisis at the southern border. During the 2016 campaign for president the phrase “build the wall” became a rallying point for the eventual winner and our President Donald Trump. In one writer’s opinion that phrase was engineered by campaign staffers to be a popular pneumatic; that is, an easy to remember and easy to repeat phrase. That’s sort of like the chorus of your favorite rock song. We can all remember this line from the popular Billy Joel hit: “Sing us a song you’re the Piano Man ...” but few can recall every word of the entire song. The same goes for the Queen ballad “We are the Champions my friend ...” In other words it was made up by professional campaign strategists to unite people at MAGA rallies. Only after the election did the administration have to back that famous rallying cry up with facts. As seen in the Sander’s interview this past Sunday, there just aren’t enough facts to support a wall.

There is no crisis at the southern border. But there is a situation in which people migrate across that border often without going through proper channels to find jobs and a better life for their families. Should the border be open as many Republicans claim their Democratic opponents wish? Certainly not, and the Democrats don’t wish for that by the way. Security, border patrols and strong court rulings to enforce our current laws are needed. There will always be some physical barriers, but there must also be a strong and enforceable policy agreed on by both Democrats and Republicans. This is a policy problem, not a border crisis.