

# Valdosta Daily Times

## Building walls of ignorance, fear

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There is not one human being on this planet who is free of ignorance, and many of our fears are rooted in that lack of knowledge.

My recent column “Of empty mangers, ICE-cold hearts” was inspired by current immigration discussions but focused on the question of what it means to be Christian today, and the way I see it, we are failing miserably.

Strangely enough, after reading my column, Mr. Eldrige concluded that I am calling for open borders, and Mr. Lyons seems convinced that we have a national emergency of sorts.

No one is calling for open borders, and the national emergency on our southwestern border is a figment of the imagination of those intent on instilling fear in the hearts of ordinary citizens.

So, let’s talk about our southwestern border, border security and immigration:

A large portion of the 2,000-mile-long border with Mexico is naturally fortified in the form of rugged terrain and the Rio Grande, which makes it difficult for people to cross. Hence border security in these areas is easily provided via fencing and modern surveillance technology.

In addition, the government built about 700 miles of new fences and walls since 2006 to protect our border, particularly near populated areas and official ports of entry. Because of this increased border security, the total number of illegal border crossings has dropped by about 80 percent, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Still, there seems to be the fear that “terrorists” may be coming across unprotected areas of our southwestern border. Yet there is not one known case to support this claim.

We also supposedly have an issue with drugs coming across unprotected areas of our border. Yet according to experts, narcotics have mainly been smuggled in via trucks, cars and airplanes at official ports of entry.

Moreover, it is important to note that the New York Times recently reported “that a great majority of the undocumented immigrants in the country didn’t arrive by sneaking across the border, but rather came legally, often at airports, and overstayed their visas.”

Lastly, as the CATO Institute, the George W. Bush Institute and others pointed out, immigration has a positive impact on the economic growth in the U.S., and crime rates among immigrant groups are significantly lower than they are among native-born Americans.

In the face of all this, you cannot help but wonder what “national emergency” folks are talking about, and what on earth a wall would accomplish, running from Brownsville, Texas, to San Diego, Calif.?

If there truly was a national emergency on our southwestern border, those who controlled the Senate, the House of Representatives and the White House these past two years had plenty of time to remedy it. But they didn't. Why? Because there is no emergency, except for the humanitarian crisis caused by Trump's policy of separating children from their parents.

There is no doubt we need immigration reform, and we can certainly benefit from increased border security, but the current standoff about "the wall" is ludicrous, as is the government shutdown caused by it.