

Trump's wall will not meet objectives

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Is President Donald Trump's signature wall along the land border with Mexico cost effective? Will it in fact meet Trump's stated objectives — curtailing illegal immigration and drug trafficking into the U.S. — and at what cost to taxpayers? Mexico will not be paying the tab, so U.S. taxpayers would bear the cost.

How much would Trump's border wall cost? He originally asked Congress for \$25 billion in 2017. He's since reduced his request to \$5 billion and now to \$2.5 billion. Trump wants to barricade 1,000 miles of the remaining 1,300 miles of our border with Mexico that does not already have walls or fencing. The Department of Homeland Security estimates the cost at \$21.6 billion. MIT Technology Review, in an article entitled "Bad Math Props Up Trump's Border Wall," estimates the cost at \$38 billion.

Will a wall along the border stop illegal immigration? The short answer is "no," according to an analysis by the Cato Institute, a conservative think tank, simply because it does not address the principle route of illegal immigration. Most unauthorized immigrants (58 percent) enter the U.S. lawfully as tourists, workers or business travelers, and then overstay their visa. A wall by itself doesn't prevent illegal border immigration, according to Fox News interviews of U.S. border agents. It must be coupled with sufficient agents and monitoring technology. Border agents often refer to a border wall as a "speed bump in the desert."

Nor will a wall prevent illegal drug trafficking. Most illegal drugs enter the U.S. at legal ports of entry hidden in normal commercial traffic.

Trump's border wall will not stop illegal immigration or drug traffic. As such, and given its high cost, it would be a useless expenditure of our tax dollars, a true boondoggle.

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