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Government shutdown hits off 2019

Serena Ngin

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During New Year's, many say that each individual day is simply a new chapter in the collective sense — 365 total chapters to be exact. People across the globe celebrate the holiday with joy and laughter, with hope and anticipation, with gleaming eyes and determination to shed the skin of 2018 and dawn the coat of 2019.

How did the Americans ring in the festivities this year? With a government shutdown.

Effective Dec. 22, 2018, President Trump decreed a partial cessation in government operations due to Congress and the President being unable to determine funds for the 2019 fiscal year — the U.S.-Mexico border wall put forth as the central issue.

In his first National Address on Jan. 8, the President stated from the Oval Office that one of the main reasons for advocating such a barrier was in the interest of National Security and to prevent harm on U.S. citizens.

In terms of criminal gangs, the Trump administration has repeatedly projected in the past of how illegal immigrants pose a threat — especially those in the ongoing Migrant Caravan.

There has been no concrete evidence of individuals, such as terrorists, employing such methods of entry. However, it should be noted that crimes in relations to illegal immigrants do exist. The most recent would be the death of California Police Officer Ronil Singh, a 33-year-old officer with the Newman Police Department in Newman, California, early on Dec. 26, 2018. The shooter, identified as Gustavo Perez Arriaga, reportedly did not have legal citizenship status.

While President Trump heightened tensions by specifically mentioning the event, this isn't the first time fatalities have occurred to legal citizens by those here unlawfully.

Nonetheless, such occurrences should not be used to represent the bigger picture. University of Buffalo's Robert Adelman released a study in 2017 that analyzed 40 years of crime from 200 differing metropolitan areas. The conclusion was that immigrants actually helped *lower* crime. The libertarian think tank, Cato Institute, saw similar results and concluded that those here illegally were at lower odds to commit crime than the average U.S. citizen and those here legally were even less likely to do so.

Looking at the government shutdown at hand, Reuters released a poll that displayed an astounding 51 percent of the nation placed blame on Trump.

It takes two sides of the government to be shut down. The requested \$5.7 billion for the border wall serves as one, and Democrat refusal to approve serves as the other.

With January serving as the official launch for the Democrats taking over the House of Representatives, where the nations stands and how it will continue to operate finds itself under question.

To Trump, whoever manages to be triumphant in this standoff will gain crucial political leverage for the remainder of his term.

After Nancy Pelosi was signed in for another year as serving as House Speaker, it was unveiled during a meeting with the President that he had threatened to “keep the government closed for a very long period of time. Months or even years.”

The nation can't possibly afford to have a shutdown as lengthy as the President is willing. As of right now, a quarter of the federal workforce has been working without pay or furlough. Deutsche Bank economists stated that implications involve the Federal Reserve's interest rate decisions being delayed and would thus “would significantly impair” economic forecasters' prediction for growth.

The most detrimental effect of the shutdown that multitudes have been eyeing is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. Supplying over 40 million people in food benefits, those living beneath the poverty line could be cut off from aid. As of Sept. 2018, \$4.7 billion in benefits were dispersed throughout the country for that month. There's only \$3 billion in SNAP's emergency funds. Thus, SNAP is forecasted to be completely depleted of funds by February or March.

The national parks, already, have taken a toll. With a third of all national park sites already closed, and Park Services losing about \$400,000 a day from entrance fee revenues, the areas that remain open have experienced staffing cut to the extremes. Unable to properly supervise, visitors find themselves creating dangerous environments for others and wildlife as accumulate.

Should the shutdown continue to Sunday, President Trump will walk away with a legacy of launching the longest government shutdown in American history. 2019 for the U.S. hardly sets a positive precedent for the upcoming year. However, only time will tell if circumstances shift.

If our first installment leaves the American people at a cliffhanger like this, the remaining 320 chapters could prove to be the most turbulent yet.