



Mr. Trump and Congress: It's time to compromise

Shevani Tewari

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For many, the holidays are a great time to unwind from stress, travel, spend time with family, and drink hot chocolate. However, for thousands of federal workers and thousands of others dependent on federal funds, this holiday period has been a source of stress due to ruined family vacations, struggles to pay critical bills, and political turmoil.

On December 22, the Senate failed to pass a bill that included border wall funding in the budget for the next fiscal year. As a result, Trump refused to sign a budget into policy, causing a government shutdown. Though federal departments have been surviving off emergency funds, according to Fox News, the shutdown has been damaging most departments, including the US Department of Agriculture that struggles to continue providing loans to farmers and homeowners, and national parks that scramble to remain adequately staffed to protect both visitors and wildlife.

Despite claims from libertarian such as the Cato Institute that a border wall would be wasteful, harmful, and ineffective, our president is willing to shut down the government over a lack of ability to fulfill his campaign promise. On the other hand, Democrats who have historically supported border control methods, such as increased fencing and border patrol, were unwilling to compromise for some form of border control before the deadline over fear of looking like a pawn of Trump.

Essentially, our political system has endangered the wellbeing of thousands of Americans over the hurt feelings of a few. Put simply by Washington Post Opinions Writer Paul Waldman, "[Democrats] willing to offer more money for border security, but they need to be able to say, to themselves and their constituents, that they didn't give Trump his stupid wall, at the same time that Trump needs to say that he got his big, beautiful wall."

Unfortunately, this complicates the chances of a resolution. Compromise is critical, but it is significantly less likely when egos are on the line.

After a winter break, House of Representatives is finally reconvening this Thursday in an attempt to pass a new funding bill. But, it is currently unclear as to whether this will fund a wall, fence, or another form of border security.

One thing is clear: the government cannot stay shut down. Americans who live paycheck to paycheck cannot be forced into a position where they continue to sacrifice basic needs over paying bills, and many departments will be severely harmed without funding.

Both sides must make compromises. Democrats must get over direct opposition to Trump and become willing to support some form of border security, and Republicans must be willing to give up their fantasy border wall for a less aggressive manner of border security. The list of

possibilities is endless: improve training for border officials, implement advanced technology at ports of entry to decrease trafficking, optimize legal immigration processes to decrease the number of people resorting to illegal methods, and conduct diplomatic efforts with Mexico prevent people from entering. A solution between parties is possible, and must be accomplished.

While I, among many other Democrats, believe that putting even more money towards border security is unnecessary, I am willing to set aside an opinion for a compromise to advocate for policy that leads to a functioning government. Older, experienced, and respected representatives should be able to do the same. Americans are not pawns in a political battle between 536 officials, and should not be treated as such.