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## **Steve King: ‘Good Chunk’ Of Remittances To Mexico Are ‘Laundered Drug Money’**

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Rep. Steve King (R-IA) on Tuesday applauded Donald Trump’s suggestion that the United States force Mexico to pay for a wall along its border by threatening to block remittances sent by undocumented immigrants to their families back home.

“I suspect that a good chunk of that is laundered drug money,” the Iowa representative said in a Newsmax interview.

King is an immigration hardliner infamous for his [2013 claim](#) that undocumented immigrants have “calves the size of cantaloupes because they’re hauling 75 pounds of marijuana across the desert.” Even though King serves as the national co-chair for Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX)’s presidential campaign, he expressed support for Trump’s border wall proposal.

“I’d like to see Donald Trump go a little further with this dialogue,” King said in the Newsmax interview, insisting that remittances sent from the U.S. are “flowing back to fund the drug cartels.”

Trump laid out his [controversial proposal to fund a border wall](#) in a Tuesday memo published in the Washington Post. The plan involves implementing a new rule under the Patriot Act that would require proof of legal residence in the U.S. in order to send a wire transfer, though Trump noted that if Mexico paid \$5-10 billion to construct the wall, he wouldn’t move forward with that rule.

Like King, Trump highlighted the supposed criminality of Mexican immigrants, claiming that Mexican gangs and drug cartels take advantage of “our open borders.”

Mexico’s central bank reported that the country received nearly \$24.8 billion in remittances in 2015, according to NBC. That number includes the total sum sent from all foreign countries, and it is unclear how much of it is sent by undocumented immigrants in the United States.

Alex Nowrasteh, an immigration policy analyst for the libertarian Cato Institute, told the Washington Post that Trump’s proposal would prove vastly more complicated than it appears on paper. Requiring that every individual who sends money from the U.S. is a legal resident would be a costly, difficult process, he said.

“The only way to do this is to force every Western Union or bank employee to ask for proof of lawful presence,” Nowrasteh told the Post’s Greg Sargent. “Unless you want to patrol every transaction, it would have to stereotype specifically against Mexican Americans and Mexicans in the United States.”