



SBCC MESSAGE GUIDE ON BORDER WALL

TOPLINE MESSAGE: Any proposal to build more border walls and barriers must be based on the four pillars of good decision making: data, analysis, consultation, and the rule of law.

TALKING POINTS

- The concern about a border wall isn't about abstract questions of how many miles or how many dollars; it's about whether we need it, whether it's effective, and how it would impact people, our communities, commerce and wildlife. The best way to answer these questions is do what good decision makers do: look at the data, analyze it, consult with experts and stakeholders, and follow the rule of law.
- At a time when unauthorized crossings are at a [historic low](#), building more walls has not been justified and would be a [monumental waste of taxpayer dollars](#).
- If the White House is really concerned about border enforcement, it should look to technology such as ground sensors that detect tunnels, and scanners that inspect cargo containers. We currently only inspect 5 percent of cargo containers entering the country, which the [GAO](#) has identified as one of the greatest security risks facing this country.
- The building of an unnecessary border wall will come at the expense of upgrading our outdated ports of entry to facilitate trade and effective technologies to keep us safe.
- The administration's misguided insistence that a border wall must be built is an affront to the just demands of border communities to be consulted in the decisions that impact the quality of life of the 15 million people that live in the southern border region.
- Existing fencing, barriers and walls have inflicted severe environmental damage, fragmenting endangered species' habitat, acting as dams and causing flooding, and tearing through wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, and national monuments. Flooding has endangered border residents and caused significant damage to roads and property.
- Any border wall construction must comply with the rule of law. Currently, DHS exercises what the Congressional Research Service has characterized as the broadest waiver of law in American history to ignore water pollution, waste disposal, historic preservation, environmental, religious freedom laws and much more.

Q&A:

People are more important than walls, so why shouldn't we trade a wall for a Dream Act?

People should not be bargaining chips for a poorly thought out wall that itself hurts people. The wall exacerbates flooding and has already [killed people in Arizona and caused millions of dollars in damage](#); the wall draws resources away from what we desperately need to revitalize our communities -- schools, roads, infrastructure, health clinics; and in some parts of the border the wall literally cuts people off from their own land, from emergency services, and from the neighborhood they live in. Additionally, the symbol of the wall has a negative impact on our relationship with one of our largest trading partners, Mexico, which will affect jobs in the U.S.

Do we need a wall to secure our border?

No. According to DHS, the border has never been harder to cross undetected. Border communities are among the safest in the country, and Border Patrol agents now average fewer than two people apprehended per month. True border-security experts consider a wall the LEAST effective measure, especially if money and other resources are diverted for its construction.

Would a wall help with drug interdiction, including the opioids crisis?

No. To tackle drug importation, ports of entry and the mail are far more important. They would be neglected if massive funds are expended on wall construction.

What is eminent domain and why are people concerned about land being seized for wall construction?

Eminent domain is a government power to take private property for a public purpose. Although just compensation must be paid, the government can take title to the land while the amount is negotiated or imposed by a court. Hundreds of eminent domain cases remain unresolved from a decade ago when private property was seized under the Secure Fence Act. Numerous private property owners stand to lose significant portions of their land if more wall is approved.

Will environmental and other laws apply to protect endangered species, flood plains, historic sites, and Native American rights?

No. The Secretary of Homeland Security has unprecedented authority to waive EVERY statute or regulation that could apply to restrict border barrier construction. This authority offends the separation of powers and is flatly inconsistent with the rule of law. There is no emergency requiring wall construction, and Congress must ensure that all of its laws apply throughout the country, with no border-security exception. Laws waived to date include all federal, state, local and tribal laws environmental laws and other laws ranging from the Religious Freedom Act to the Historic Preservation Act.

Key news stories:

Trump's DHS nominee: No need for full border wall (The Hill)

<http://thehill.com/homenews/359486-trumps-dhs-nominee-no-need-for-full-us-mexico-border-wall>

White House wants technology cuts, pay freeze to fund border wall (Washington Post)

<http://wapo.st/2DID8DD>

San Diego mayor calls for bridges not walls (KPBS)

<http://www.kpbs.org/news/2017/jul/27/san-diego-mayor-calls-border-bridges-wall-inches-f/>

THE TAKING, the federal government boldest land grab in a generation (ProPublica)

<http://bit.ly/2DIEaQ1>

Border security is tougher than ever, DHS report finds (Washington Post)

<http://wapo.st/2DpMBK2>

To Pay for Wall, Trump Would Cut Proven Border Security Measures (NY Times)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/08/us/politics/trump-border-wall-funding-surveillance.html>

America's Wall (KPBS)

<http://www.kpbs.org/news/2017/nov/13/americas-wall/>

The Wall video stories (CNN)

<https://www.facebook.com/thewallusatodaynetwork/>

**THIS IS WHAT BORDER
COMMUNITIES REALLY NEED:**



Better Schools

so that taxpayer money is invested in people,
not policies that separate communities



Better Roads & Infrastructure

so the border region continues to be an
economic engine for the country



Better Healthcare

to improve the quality of life of the millions
of people who call the border region home



**REVITALIZE
NOT MILITARIZE
BORDER COMMUNITIES**

