AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

THE BORDER WALL: STRENGTHENING OUR NATIONAL SECURITY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

APRIL 27, 2017

Serial No. 115–22

Printed for the use of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Available via the World Wide Web: http://www.fdsys.gov
http://oversight.house.gov

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

26–554 PDF WASHINGTON : 2017

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Publishing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
Fax: (202) 512–2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402–0001

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Jason Chaffetz, Utah, *Chairman*

John J. Duncan, Jr., Tennessee
Darrell E. Issa, California
Jim Jordan, Ohio
Mark Sanford, South Carolina
Justin Amash, Michigan
Paul A. Gosar, Arizona
Scott DesJarlais, Tennessee
Trey Gowdy, South Carolina
Blake Farenthold, Texas
Virginia Foxx, North Carolina
Thomas Massie, Kentucky
Mark Meadows, North Carolina
Ron DeSantis, Florida
Dennis A. Ross, Florida
Mark Walker, North Carolina
Rod Blum, Iowa
Jody B. Hice, Georgia
Steve Russell, Oklahoma
Glenn Grothman, Wisconsin
Will Hurd, Texas
Gary J. Palmer, Alabama
James Comer, Kentucky
Paul Mitchell, Michigan

Elijah E. Cummings, Maryland, *Ranking Minority Member*
Carolyn B. Maloney, New York
Eleanor Holmes Norton, District of Columbia
Wm. Lacy Clay, Missouri
Stephen F. Lynch, Massachusetts
Jim Cooper, Tennessee
Gerald E. Connolly, Virginia
Robin L. Kelly, Illinois
Brenda L. Lawrence, Michigan
Bonnie Watson Coleman, New Jersey
Stacey E. Plaskett, Virgin Islands
Val Butler Demings, Florida
Raja Krishnamoorthi, Illinois
Jamie Raskin, Maryland
Peter Welch, Vermont
Matt Cartwright, Pennsylvania
Mark DeSaulnier, California
John Sarbanes, Maryland

Jonathan Skladany, *Majority Staff Director*
William McKenna *General Counsel*
Sharon Eshelman, *National Security Subcommittee Staff Director*
Sharon Casey, *Deputy Chief Clerk*
David Rapallo, *Minority Staff Director*

Subcommittee on National Security

Ron DeSantis, Florida, *Chairman*

Steve Russell, Oklahoma, *Vice Chair*
John J. Duncan, Jr., Tennessee
Justin Amash, Michigan
Virginia Foxx, North Carolina
Jody B. Hice, Georgia
James Comer, Kentucky

Stephen F. Lynch, Massachusetts, *Ranking Member*

CONTENTS

	Page
Hearing held on April 27, 2017	1

WITNESSES

Steven A. Camarota, Ph.D., Director of Research, Center for Immigration Studies	
Oral Statement	5
Written Statement	8
Mr. Brandon Judd, President, National Border Patrol Council	
Oral Statement	18
Written Statement	20
Ms. Maria Espinoza, Director, The Remembrance Project	
Oral Statement	23
Written Statement	25
Ms. Agnes Gibboney, Mother whose son was killed by an illegal immigrant	
Oral Statement	30
Written Statement	33
Mr. Seth M. Stodder, Former Assistant Secretary, Border, Immigration and Trade Policy,	
Oral Statement	36
Written Statement	39

APPENDIX

2017–04–24 CATO "The Border Wall Cannot Pay for Itself", submitted by Mr. DeSaulnier	72

THE BORDER WALL: STRENGTHENING OUR NATIONAL SECURITY

Thursday, April 27, 2017

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY,
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ron DeSantis [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives DeSantis, Duncan, Gosar, Hice, Comer, Demings, Welch and DeSaulnier.

Also Present: Representative Grothman.

Mr. DESANTIS. The Subcommittee on National Security will come to order. Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time.

A core attribute of sovereignty is maintaining control over national boundaries, yet for years we have witnessed the failure of the U.S. Government to secure our southern border. This failure has allowed millions of foreign nationals to enter the United States illegally and has allowed huge amounts of illicit narcotics to be smuggled into the country. This sorry state of affairs has had significant consequences for American taxpayers, for victims of violent crime, and for the rule of law. It is time to secure the border.

A central issue of the President's 2006 campaign was the promise to build, quote, "an impenetrable, physical, tall, powerful, beautiful, southern border wall," end quote. The administration is taking steps to fulfill that promise, and the Subcommittee on National Security is closely monitoring this process. The President issued an executive order on January 25 for the Department of Homeland Security to, quote, "take all appropriate steps to immediately plan, design, and construct the physical wall along the southern border," end quote.

On March 17, the DHS issued two requests for proposals for prototype designs as a first step in fulfilling the requirements set forth in the executive order. DHS is expected to use these prototypes to inform actual construction.

Now, border walls have seen success in recent years. President Trump has identified Israeli border security measures as a potential model for securing the U.S.-Mexico border. The construction of a security fence on the Israel-Sinai border cut illegal entries from over 16,500 in 2011 to just 43 in 2013 and 12 in 2014, a 99 percent decrease. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu remarked that "President Trump is right; I built a wall on Israel's southern

border. It stopped all illegal immigration, great success, great idea."

Now, do those who oppose building a wall dispute that success, or is the reason they oppose building a wall precisely because they acknowledge its potential effectiveness at curbing illegal immigration? I think we have to figure that out.

Recent media coverage has focused on the cost of building the wall, and obviously this is a legitimate issue. DHS has only just begun the procurement process, yet opponents of a secure border have resorted to employing exaggerated cost estimates about a border wall. For example, Senate Democrats recently issued a very flawed report claiming that the wall would cost $70 billion. Today's Democratic witness wrote in January, however, that a border wall would cost as much as $14 billion, which is obviously much different than the Senate Democrat estimate. And I think what they did was take the highest historical number they could find and multiply it by the total miles of the border, which I don't think anyone is suggesting is the way to do it.

And other opponents of a secure border have parroted sloppy back-of-the-napkin math that is meant to confuse the issue, and the American people deserve better than misinformation. The wall should be built in a fiscally responsible way, and there are a variety of creative ways such as by using the seized assets of drug dealers to build it at little or no cost to the American taxpayer. At the same time, what is rarely discussed but which needs serious inquiry is whether securing the border will have a positive effect on American taxpayers at the local, State, and Federal levels.

And today, we will hear testimony from immigration expert Dr. Steven Camarota on the significant burdens that illegal immigration and having an unsecured border can impose on U.S. taxpayers. Dr. Camarota estimates that if a border wall prevented between 160,000 to 200,000 illegal crossings, which is only about 10 percent of the expected crossings in the next decade, then the U.S. would realize between $12-$15 billion in savings. That would effectively offset the cost of building the wall even if you didn't use the seized drug assets.

Of course, securing the border is more than about dollars and cents. It is also about our government's duty to secure its borders, defend our sovereignty, and, most importantly, protect our citizens. Illegal immigration has had significant human cost. Too many Americans have been robbed of loved ones through crimes committed by criminal aliens who should not have been allowed in this country to begin with.

One of them is Mrs. Agnes Gibboney who lost her son Ronald da Silva 15 years ago today. Ronald was murdered by a previously deported illegal immigrant with a long criminal record, and she herself is a legal immigrant from Hungary. Now, she did it the right way and her son was taken from her by someone who had no right to be in our country. What makes this tragedy and others like it so painful is that Ronald's murder was preventable. Had the government simply done its job and maintained a secure border, the murder would never have been able to enter our country, and Ronald would still be with us.

Building a wall on the U.S.-Mexican border will not stop all illegal immigration, but it is a necessary first step and, consistent with experiences in San Diego and Yuma, has the potential to dramatically reduce it. The United States will also need to deploy additional human, technological, and legal resources; in addition, predictable enforcement of immigration laws in the interior of the United States will restore the rule of law and deter would-be illegal immigrants from attempting to circumvent the laws in the first place.

We hope that our witness from the National Border Patrol Council, Mr. Brandon Judd, will speak more broadly about what our officers and agents on the ground see on the border every day and what they need to do to do their job.

This subcommittee will continue robust oversight over these actions to determining how they are meeting the threat posed by a porous border, and we want to make sure that taxpayer money is being used well, that the barrier is being built in an effective way, and we are going to continue to monitor this as this unfolds over the next year-and-a-half.

Mr. DESANTIS. I thank the witnesses for being here today and for their testimony. And with that, I yield to—sitting in for my friend from Massachusetts, the ranking member Mr. Lynch, is Mr. DeSaulnier.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank you and our staffs on both sides and the witnesses today on what is very emotional, I know—and legitimately for some of the witnesses today—issue. But I look forward to public, transparent analysis where we have an objective needs assessment, risk assessment, and an engineering assessment as to the cost-benefit of this potentially huge investment.

And Ms. Gibboney, I can't imagine—being a father of two sons who lost a parent to violence, I can't imagine what it is like to be here to sit on this anniversary. So for your loss and your passion to see something is done about that I am very respectful. Insomuch as we may have some differences, I understand I think as best I can of what has brought you here today and the earnest desire you have to see that—to make sure that other parents will never be in the position you are in.

Ms. Espinoza, from what I have read in your work, similarly, not as dramatically perhaps, but more globally as you see many, many cases, I very much respect your work and the ultimate desire that you have.

And, Mr. Judd, to you and your colleagues, great respect for the work that you do. I know when I was in the California Legislature, many times having conversation with our State law enforcement people about the border, the difficult jobs you do and the Department of Justice in California when they work with you on that.

And the other two witnesses, thank you for being here.

Let me just add to that that this crucial work we take is very serious. Again, it should be fact-based, looked at, this issue so that we identify what measures will work, what the benefits would be and what the cost would be to the taxpayers and all Americans.

The wall that the President is proposing simply won't work in my view and in others' and will divert resources away from the

areas critical to protecting the health, safety, and security of Americans.

Recently, Oversight Committee member Will Hurd, who represents a district covering 800 miles of the border, addressed his concerns with the President's plan. He wrote an op-ed in the Washington Post in which he called the wall, quote, "the most expensive and least-effective way to secure the border." He also wrote, quote, "True border security demands a flexible defense in-depth strategy that includes a mix of personnel, technology, and changing tactics, all of which come at a lower price tag than a border wall." I am in agreement with my colleague. The proposed wall is incredibly expensive with little if any return on the investment.

Despite the fact that the President claims that the wall would cost $10-$12 billion, most analysis place the number far higher. The Department of Homeland Security conducted an internal study that estimated the border wall would cost nearly $22 billion in upfront construction costs alone. Other independent and congressional studies have estimates up to $40 or even $70 billion. This is all in contrast to the programs the same administration has proposed getting, including those that help everyday Americans and provide returns to the American public.

It is troubling that the President's budget proposes billions towards a wall while slashing critical domestic programs, including his proposed budget that would cut nearly $6 billion or nearly 20 percent of the funding to the National Institutes of Health, jeopardizing medical advancements to cure chronic diseases and save lives, including cancer.

Additionally, the President's proposed wall will undermine our national security by redirecting funds from programs that actually work to secure our border. This money would instead be pulled from important airport security programs that help secure these major points of entry where drugs are much more likely to be trafficked into our borders.

Despite the President's rhetoric during the Obama administration, the number of unauthorized immigrants into the United States dropped from 12.2 million to 1.1 million in 2014. During that same time, more people became unauthorized to be in the United States simply by overstaying visas than by coming across the U.S. border with Mexico. At least 40 percent of all individuals in the United States illegally have overstayed their visas rather than coming across the border.

The President's proposal to build a solid concrete wall across the length of our southern border fails to be either workable or cost-effective. His request for Congress to appropriate billions of dollars is a shortsighted request for Congress and breaks one of his most fundamental campaign promises that the American people would not pay a dime for the wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Mr. Chairman, we have a short video to play at this time.

Mr. DESANTIS. Without objection.

[Video shown.]

Mr. DESAULNIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

When announcing his presidential bid, the President stated, and I quote, "I would build a great wall and nobody builds walls better than me. Believe me. And I'll build them very inexpensively. I will

build a great, great wall on our southern border and I will have Mexico pay for that wall. Mark my words," end of quotes.

At that February 2016 campaign rally, the President reiterated, "We will build a great wall along our southern border and Mexico will pay for that wall 100 percent." Of course, these are only a few of the countless times the President has overpromised and underdelivered for the American people.

Now, less than 100 days into his presidency, he has completely abandoned this promise and changed his tune. Earlier this week, President Trump tweeted that Mexico will pay for the wall, quote, "eventually and in some form." With his track record, nobody should believe that. Instead, he is demanding that American families have the burden of finding additional billions of dollars to build this wall. Until earlier this week, he was signaling that he would be willing to shut down the government to get the leverage to take this money out of the wallets of hardworking American families.

We have real problems to address in securing our borders, we all agree, but the President's proposed order wall does nothing to advance—nothing or very little to advance our national security. Not only should it not be built but it absolutely should not be built on the backs of hardworking American families.

I yield back.

Mr. DESANTIS. The gentleman yields back.

I will hold the record open for five legislative days for any members who would like to submit a written statement.

We will now recognize our panel of witnesses. I am pleased to welcome Mr. Steven Camarota, Ph.D., director of research, Center for Immigration Studies; Mr. Brandon Judd, president, National Border Patrol Council; Ms. Maria Espinoza, director, the Remembrance Project; Ms. Agnes Gibboney, mother of Ronald da Silva, who was killed by an illegal immigrant 15 years ago today; and Mr. Seth Stodder, former assistant secretary for Border, Immigration, And Trade Policy, Department of Homeland Security. Glad you were able to get here. Welcome to you all.

Pursuant to committee rules, all witnesses will be sworn in before they testify, so if you could all please rise and raise your right hand.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you. Please be seated.

All witnesses answered in the affirmative.

In order to allow time for discussion, please limit your testimony to five minutes. Your entire written statement will be made a part of the record.

Mr. Camarota, you are recognized for five minutes.

WITNESS STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF STEVEN CAMAROTA

Mr. CAMAROTA. Thank you. I would like to thank the chair and the committee for inviting me. My name is Steven Camarota, and I am director of research at the Center for Immigration Studies. My testimony today is based on a recent report published by the Center. This analysis reports the fiscal costs of illegal border crossers based on some fiscal estimates developed by the National Acad-

emy of Sciences Engineering and Medicine earlier this year—or I should say last year—for immigrants by education level. These calculations are based on some pretty well-established facts about illegal immigrants.

First, there is agreement that illegal immigrants overwhelmingly have modest levels of education. The vast majority either didn't graduate high school in their home country or have only the equivalent of a high school education. There is also agreement that immigrants who come to America with modest levels of education, regardless of legal status, create more in cost for government than they pay in taxes.

Now, taking the likely education level of illegal border crossers and combining them with the net fiscal estimates from that National Academies study shows that on balance, if you take all the taxes that they're likely to pay in their lifetime, given their education levels, and all the services and costs they create, there is a net drain on taxpayers of about $75,000 per illegal border crosser or about $7.5 billion per hundred thousand illegal border crosser.

This figure is only for the original illegal immigrant. It doesn't count their descendants. We can do that. That's also in the study from the Academies. If we apply those estimates, then the cost would rise to about $94 billion per illegal immigrant and their descendants, or about $9.4 billion per 100,000.

Now, to be clear, the fiscal costs of illegal immigrants is not due to the fact that they don't want to work. It's not even due to the fact that many work off the books. Rather, it reflects their educational attainment. In the modern American economy, people with this skill profile, native-born, immigrant, or—legal immigrant or illegal immigrant, pay less in taxes than they use in services. There's pretty much absolute agreement on that.

Now, what these cost estimates do is give us an idea not only of what illegal border crossers cost, but they let us evaluate the likely savings that different enforcement strategies create for taxpayers versus what these enforcement strategies might cost. So, for example, a newly released study by the Institute for Defense Analyses indicates that perhaps 1.7 million new illegal immigrants will successfully cross our border in the next 10 years.

Now, if that's the case, and no one knows what the future holds of course, but if that were to happen, and given these costs, it means that if we were to stop just 9 to 12 percent of those expected crossers over the next decade, it would generate $12-$15 billion in savings, which might be enough to pay for a wall. In effect, the wall could pay for itself even if it only kept out a small fraction of the people expected to come.

Now, recently, the Cato Institute evaluated my analysis, and they argued that the illegal immigrants weren't as unskilled as I thought they were based on my analysis of the data. But even so, they still found that the average illegal border crosser would pay 43—creates a fiscal deficit of $43,000 or $4.3 billion per hundred thousand illegal crosser.

Now, Cato in their analysis also tries to argue that State and local government costs, which are in the National Academies studies, shouldn't count because it's the Federal Government that is building the wall. Now, this argument doesn't make sense to me

but ultimately that's up to Congress whether to count the State and local costs, but it seems reasonable to me to do so.

Now, finally, I just want to make one more point about the costs that come from the National Academies. They employ a concept called net present value, which calculates the fiscal impact, but this concept, which is commonly used by economists, has the effect of reducing the size of the drain that unskilled immigrants will create because it discounts the costs in the future. If you didn't do that discounting, the costs are much higher, about roughly double, about $150,000. So if you want to do a different calculation where you don't discount the future, that's what you would get.

But the bottom line from this analysis is that unskilled immigration, which characterizes most illegal immigration, is very costly to taxpayers given their education and given the realities of the modern American economy that pays the less educated relatively low wages, coupled with the existence of a large and well-developed administrative state. It's not—the fiscal costs they create is not a moral defect on their part. It's simply the reality of education.

Thank you for allowing me to testify, and I look forward to your questions.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Camarota follows:]

Can a Border Wall Pay for Itself?

Testimony Prepared for the Subcommittee on National Security of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
April 27, 2017

by Steven A. Camarota, Ph.D.
Director of Research
Center for Immigration Studies
1629 K Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 466 8185
fax, (202) 466 8076
sac@cis.org
www.cis.org

Summary

This testimony is based on a report published in February of this year by the Center for Immigration Studies. The findings of the report indicate that if a border wall stopped a small fraction of the illegal immigrants who are expected to come in the next decade, the fiscal savings from having fewer illegal immigrants in the country would be sufficient to cover the costs of the wall. This analysis takes the likely education level of illegal border-crossers and applies fiscal estimates developed by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS) for immigrants by education level. Based on the NAS data, illegal border-crossers create an average net fiscal burden (taxes paid minus services used) of approximately $74,722 during their lifetimes — excluding costs for their U.S.-born children. If a wall costing $12 to $15 billion stopped or deterred between 160,000 and 200,000 illegal crossers — only about 9 to 12 percent of those expected to successfully cross in the next decade — it would pay for itself.

Key Findings

- There is agreement among researchers that illegal immigrants overwhelmingly have modest levels of education — most have not completed high school or have only a high school education.
- There is also agreement that immigrants who come to America with modest levels of education create significantly more in costs for government than they pay in taxes.
- A recent NAS study estimated the lifetime fiscal impact (taxes paid minus services used) of immigrants by education. Averaging the cost estimates from that study and combining them with the education levels of illegal border-crossers shows a net fiscal drain of $74,722 per illegal crosser.

- The above figures are only for the original illegal immigrants and *do not* include any costs for their U.S.-born descendants. If we use the NAS projections that include the descendants, the fiscal drain for border-crossers grows to $94,391 each.

- This means that for each 100,000 illegal immigrants stopped or deterred by a wall, the saving to taxpayers would be nearly $7.5 billion.

- If a border wall prevented 160,000 to 200,000 illegal crossings (excluding descendants) in the next 10 years it would be enough to pay for the estimated $12 to $15 billion cost of the wall.[1]

- Newly released research by the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) done for the Department of Homeland Security indicates that 170,000 illegal immigrants crossed the border successfully without going through a port of entry in 2015. While a significant decline in crossings from a decade ago, it still means that there may be 1.7 million successful crossings in the next decade. If a wall stopped just 9 to 12 percent of these crossings it would pay for itself.[2]

- If a wall stopped half of those expected to successfully enter illegally without going through a port of entry at the southern border over the next 10 years, it would save taxpayers nearly $64 billion — several times the wall's cost.

Important Caveats About These Estimates

- In addition to crossing the border surreptitiously, aliens join the illegal population primarily by overstaying a temporary visa. A southern border wall would not address this part of the illegal flow.

- A large share of the net fiscal cost of illegal immigrants is at the state and local level, not the federal level. The costs of building the wall will be borne by the federal government.

- To create its long-term fiscal estimates for immigrants by education level, the NAS uses the concept of "net present value" (NPV). This concept, which is commonly used by economists, has the effect of reducing the size of the net fiscal drain that unskilled immigrants will create in the future. The NAS does this because costs or benefits years from now are valued less in economics relative to more immediate costs. But this means the actual net lifetime fiscal cost of illegal border-crossers, given their education levels, is possibly $140,000 to $150,000 each in their lifetimes if the NPV concept is not used.[3]

Estimating the Cost of Illegal Border-Crossers

The Importance of Educational Attainment. There is a good deal of agreement among researchers that the education level of immigrants is a key factor in determining their net fiscal impact. As a recent study by the NAS states, the education level of arriving immigrants is one of the "important determinants" of their fiscal impact.[4] This finding is similar to a 1997 study by NAS that also examined the fiscal impact of immigrants.[5] This conclusion also is mirrored by a 2013 study from the Heritage Foundation. Referring to the education level of household heads, Heritage concluded that "Well-educated households tend to be net tax contributors." But at the same time, "Poorly educated households, whether immigrant or U.S.-born, receive far more in government benefits than they pay in taxes."[6] My own research has come to the same conclusion.[7] The reason for this is straightforward: Those with modest levels of education tend to earn low wages in the modern American economy, and as a result tend to make low tax payments and often qualify for means-tested programs. The less educated are a net fiscal drain, on average, regardless of legal status or if they were born in the United States or a foreign country.

Education Levels of Illegal Immigrants. In terms of the educational attainment of illegal immigrants, there is a good deal of evidence that they have modest levels of education, much lower than native-born Americans or legal immigrants. The Heritage study discussed above estimated that, on average, illegal immigrants have 10 years of schooling. My own analysis for all illegal immigrants (visa overstayers and illegal border-crossers together) is that 54 percent of adults have not completed high school, 25 percent have only a high school degree, and 21 percent have education beyond high school.[8] The Pew Research Center has estimated that of all adult illegal immigrants, 47 percent have not completed high school, 27 percent have only a high school education, 10 percent have some college, and 15 percent have a bachelor's degree or more.[9] These figures are for all illegal immigrants, including those who overstayed a temporary visa, not just illegal border-crossers.

Education Level of Border-Crossers. Since the border wall would by definition only impact the flow of those who cross the border illegally and not those who overstay a temporary visa, it is necessary to estimate the education level of illegal border-crossers separately. Illegal crossers tend to be the least educated component of illegal immigration because they are mostly from Latin America and because more educated foreign nationals wishing to come to the United States can often qualify for a temporary visa, which they can then overstay.[10] For example, a person with few years of schooling, a low paying job, and no property in their home country is not likely to qualify for a tourist visa or other temporary visitor visa. American consulates overseas would typically deny such a person a tourist visa (B2) or business traveler visa (B1) because the assumption is that such persons may be coming to stay permanently. They are "intending immigrants" in the terminology of the consular service. This is especially true for the primary sending countries of illegal immigration, which are all developing countries.[11] A more educated person is much more likely to qualify for a tourist visa, or for that matter a guestworker visa or a student visa, which they can then overstay.

Because illegal border-crossers are overwhelmingly from Mexico and the rest of Latin America,

we use the education level of illegal immigrants from Latin America to estimate border-crossers' education profile. My analysis of illegal immigrants from Latin America indicates that they have the following education: 57 percent, less than high school; 27 percent, high school only; 10 percent, some college or associate's degree; 4 percent, bachelor's only; and 2 percent, more than a bachelor's.[12] These educational levels provide a baseline for estimating the fiscal impact of illegal crossers. However, as we will see, even if we use somewhat different estimates of education, the fiscal impact of illegal border-crossers is still large and negative.

Fiscal Impact by Education Level. The 2016 NAS study mentioned above projected the lifetime fiscal impact (taxes paid minus services used) of immigrants by education. These estimates are expressed as a net present value. This is a concept used in fiscal studies to express the sum total of costs or benefits over long periods of time — in this case a lifetime. NPV represents the fiscal balance (taxes paid minus costs) if we had to spend the money today. Later in this report we discuss in more detail the concept of net present value, both its usefulness and it shortcomings.

In addition to the original immigrant, the NAS study also has separate estimates for the descendents of immigrants over 75 years.[13] In this analysis we focus only on the fiscal impact of the original immigrant. The tax payments and costs created by the descendants of immigrants over 75 years are speculative, whereas the estimates for the original immigrants are more grounded in current reality. The NAS study does not report separate estimates for illegal and legal immigrants. Rather, they simply estimate tax payments and expenditures on immigrants as they appear in Census Bureau data, primarily the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement. As result, the education estimates from the NAS are for both legal and illegal immigrants.

The NAS fiscal projections include eight different scenarios, each with different assumptions about future spending, tax rates, and the future flow of immigrants. It is not entirely clear what set of fiscal assumptions are best, and the NAS study itself does not identify the one best scenario. In Table 1 we simply take all eight scenarios and average them together by education level.

Table 1. Fiscal Impact of Average Immigrant by Education, Drawn from the 8 Fiscal Scenarios in "The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration" (thousands)

Scenario	Dropouts	H.S. Only	Some College	College	College-Plus
Scenario 1	$(109)	$11	$155	$330	$635
Scenario 2	$(115)	$(29)	$78	$210	$427
Scenario 3	$(158)	$(39)	$104	$279	$583
Scenario 4	$(179)	$(94)	$12	$144	$359
Scenario 5	$(186)	$(65)	$45	$195	$452
Scenario 6	$(177)	$(88)	$(4)	$107	$293
Scenario 7	$(230)	$(109)	-	$150	$407
Scenario 8	$(233)	$(145)	$(62)	$49	$235
Average	$(173)	$(70)	$41	$183	$424

Source: Francine D. Blau and Christopher Mackie, *The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration*, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2016, Table 8-12, p. 341
Figures are for only the original immigrant, U.S.-born descendents are not included.

It should be pointed out that in every scenario from the NAS, as shown in Table 1, immigrants without a high school education are a significant net fiscal drain during their lifetimes. That is, they pay less in taxes than they use in services. Those with only a high school education are a net fiscal drain in seven of the eight scenarios. In contrast, the most educated immigrants, those with at least a bachelor's degree, are a net fiscal benefit in all eight scenarios.

Calculating the Fiscal Impact of Border-Crossers. The first column of Table 2 reports the average fiscal effect of immigrants by education level, taken directly from the bottom of Table 1. Column 2 in Table 2 shows the education level of illegal border-crossers as discussed above. Column 3 multiplies the average cost by the share of border-crossers who fall into that educational category, and the bottom of column 3 adds up the costs to give a weighted average. This means that using the NAS average fiscal costs of immigrants by education and assuming the educational distribution of illegal border-crossers shown in the table means that the lifetime net fiscal drain per illegal crosser is $97,759. However, for reasons discussed below this figure somewhat overstates the fiscal costs.

Table 2. Lifetime Fiscal Impact of Illegal Border-Crossers Only (Excludes Costs for Their Children)

Education	Lifetime Fiscal Balance, Immigrant-Only (From Table 1)	Educational Attainment of Illegal Border-Crossers	Fiscal Impact of Border-Crossers Weighted by Education (Unadjusted)	Adjustment Factor for Being Illegal (Reduces Services Used & Tax Payments)*	Fiscal Impact of Border-Crossers Only (Adjusted)
Less than H.S.	$(173,375)	57%	$(98,823.75)	0.676	$(66,824.32)
H.S. Only	$(69,750)	27%	$(18,832.50)	0.799	$(15,041.54)
Some College	$41,000	10%	$4,100.00	0.893	$3,659.88
Bachelor's	$183,000	4%	$7,320.00	0.221	$1,614.20
Bachelor's-Plus	$423,875	2%	$8,477.50	0.221	$1,869.45
		Unadjusted Costs of Illegal Border-Crossers	$(97,759)	**Adjusted Costs of Illegal Border-Crossers**	$(74,722)

Source: See methodology section for calculations.
* Adjustments reflect lower cost of illegal immigrants relative to all immigrants, legal and illegal.

As already mentioned, the NAS fiscal analysis includes all immigrants — both legal and illegal. Although illegal immigrants do access some welfare programs and create other significant costs, it is still the case that less-educated *illegal* immigrants create smaller net fiscal costs than less-educated *legal* immigrants. Unfortunately, the NAS study has very little discussion of how legal and illegal immigrants differ in their fiscal impact. The study does state: "Unauthorized immigrants as a group may have a more positive fiscal impact than authorized immigrants."[14] We agree with this conclusion and so we adjust the fiscal drain created by less-educated illegal immigrants so it is less than that of less-educated legal immigrants.

To estimate the adjustment factor, we use the 2013 study by the Heritage Foundation mentioned above. That study has estimates for immigrants by education and legal status.[15] While adjusting has the effect of reducing the fiscal costs for less-educated illegal immigrants, it also reduces the fiscal benefits for immigrants who are more educated. This reflects the fact that while higher-skilled illegal immigrants are assumed to create a fiscal surplus, they often are unable to find work commensurate with their education level because of their legal status and so have to work at lower paying jobs. As a result they do not have as large a positive impact on public coffers as their legal counterparts. Since there are relatively few illegal border crossers in the higher education categories, adjusting for the most educated crossers makes only a modest difference to the results.

The right lower corner of Table 2 shows that the fiscal costs of border-crossers, including the adjustment, is $74,722 each. Adjusting does significantly reduce the fiscal costs — by 23.6 percent. However, it is still the case that every 100,000 individuals who cross the border illegally cost taxpayers nearly $7.5 billion. It must be remembered that these are the present values of the lifetime net fiscal costs (taxes paid minus services used) for illegal border-crossers only, with no costs for their children or descendants.

Do Net Present Values Make Sense? Net present values are created by reducing or "discounting" costs or benefits in the future based on how long in the future they take place. Page

325 of the NAS study states that they used a 3 percent annual discount rate, which is common in this kind of analysis. So, for example, the fiscal balance (whether a net drain or benefit) an immigrant creates two years after arrival is reduced by about 6 percent. After 10 years the amount is reduced by about 26 percent, and at 20 years the discount is 45 percent. This means events that occur further in the future have a smaller impact on the total costs or benefits today. Comparing the net present value fiscal costs of illegal border-crossers to the costs of a wall can be seen as reasonable because the wall has to be paid for up front while the fiscal drain accrues over time. Using an NPV makes the costs of the wall and illegal border-crossers more comparable.

The primary downside of using NPVs for fiscal estimates is that it masks the size of future outlays created by less-educated illegal border-crossers. For example, using a 3 percent annual discount rate, as the NAS study does, means that if an illegal immigrant creates a net fiscal burden of $10,000 in the 23rd year of the projection, it will be reported and added to the total NPV as only $4,900 because of discounting. Without discounting, the actual outlays associated with illegal immigrants are much larger. This fact is worth keeping in mind when looking at the NPVs.

Making Different Assumptions. There are four key variables in the above calculations. The first is whether to include the children of illegal crossers. Many of the descendants of less-educated immigrants struggle, earning low wages and using a good deal in public services. If we use the NAS study's estimates that include the progeny of immigrants, the fiscal drain increases to $94,391. But, as already mentioned, the tax payments and costs created by the descendants of immigrants in the NAS study go out 75 years and can be seen as speculative. Therefore it makes more sense to focus on the original immigrants only.

The second question is what fiscal scenario from the NAS study should be used. (All the scenarios are shown in Table 1.) Scenario 1 makes assumptions that are most favorable to the fiscal impact of immigrants. If we use only this scenario, then the net fiscal costs drop significantly, to $20,092 for each illegal crosser. While significantly less than our estimates shown in Table 2, which reflect all the NAS scenarios averaged together, the best possible fiscal scenario for immigrants still shows a substantial net cost that would equal $2 billion for every 100,000 illegal border-crossers. This reflects the fact that even if one makes very favorable assumptions about immigrants it is still the case that less-educated immigrants, which account for most illegal crossers, are a large fiscal drain.

By way of contrast, if we use Scenario 8 from the NAS study, which makes the least favorable fiscal assumptions about immigrants, the net fiscal impact of each border-crosser increases dramatically — to $125,141, or $12.5 billion for every 100,000 illegal immigrants. This is a good deal more than when all NAS scenarios are averaged together, as reported in Table 2. But what is important to note is that no matter what NAS scenario is used, there is a significant lifetime net fiscal deficit for illegal border-crossers.

The third key assumption in our estimates is the education level of illegal border-crossers. As already discussed, there is widespread agreement that illegal immigrants are a relatively unskilled

population. Further, illegal crossers are the least educated component of illegal immigration because they are mostly from Latin America and because, as already noted, more educated foreign nationals can often qualify for a temporary visa, which they can then overstay. The poor and less educated from Latin America typically have no other realistic option for getting into the United States other than surreptitiously crossing the southern border.

If we assume that border-crossers are as educated as Pew estimated for all illegal immigrants, not just border-crossers, the average fiscal cost would still be very large — $57,778.[16] While somewhat less than our estimated cost of $74,722, it would still mean that each group of 100,000 illegal border-crossers creates a net fiscal cost of more than $5.8 billion during their lifetimes. Again, Pew's figures show that about three-quarters of illegal immigrants have less than a high school education or only a high school education, and this makes them a large fiscal drain.

Finally, there is the question of the difference between the net fiscal impact of all immigrants (legal and illegal) by education level, which is what the NAS estimated, and the fiscal impact of illegal border-crossers. In Table 2 we adjust the fiscal impact of illegal border-crossers significantly, reducing the costs of less-educated illegal immigrants relative to immigrants of the same education by almost 24 percent. If we more than doubled this reduction to 50 percent for all educational categories, the net fiscal costs of border-crossers would still be $48,879. Under a 50 percent reduction, each 100,000 illegal immigrants still create a cost of nearly $5 billion, a very sizeable impact.[17] Like the other assumptions, the adjustment factor matters, but the education level of illegal crossers drives the results and the fiscal balance is decidedly negative.

Overall, different assumptions can affect the results. But because the overwhelming share of illegal border-crossers have not completed high school, or have only a high school education, it would require highly implausible assumptions to avoid a substantial net fiscal drain from those who cross the border illegally. In short, illegal border-crossers are a large net fiscal drain because of their education levels and this fact drives the results. Therefore, a border wall would pay for itself even if it only stops a modest fraction of those expected to successfully cross in the next decade. https://www.cato.org/blog/border-wall-cannot-pay-itself

End Notes

[1] There is no one definitive estimate of what a system of barriers, fencing, and walls will cost. The cost depends heavily on what type of system is constructed and the length of that system. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has said Congress would appropriate $12 to $15 billion for the wall, though he gave no time frame. As the senator is in a key position of authority to determine appropriations, his estimate seems a useful starting point for estimating what the federal government will spend on the wall. See Kate Drew, "This is what Trump's border wall could cost", CNBC, January 26, 2017. http://www.cnbc.com/2015/10/09/this-is-what-trumps-border-wall-could-cost-us.html

[2] John Whitley et. al., "Assessing Southern Border Security", Institute for Defense Analysis, May 2016, p. iv, Summary Table, http://cis.org/sites/cis.org/files/Border-Crossing-Stats-Report.pdf. It should be noted that some share of the 1.7 million border-crossers expected in the next 10 years may be people who successfully cross the border more than once. The border study does not have an estimate for the number of individuals who might cross successfully more than one time over a 10-year period. But if that number was perhaps a quarter of the total, then the number of unique border-crossers over a 10-year period would equal about 1.275 million. If this is correct, then a wall would have to stop 13 to

16 percent of illegal crossers in the next 10 years. Alternatively, if 41 percent are the same person successfully crossing more than one time in a 10-year period and the total number of unique crossers was one million, then a border wall would need to stop 16 to 20 percent of crossers to pay for itself.

[3] The NAS does not report the fiscal impact of immigrants with and without the reduction in costs, referred to as discounting by economists. However, if one assumes a 45- or 50-year lifespan for illegal immigrants after they arrive and that the fiscal drain is evenly spread throughout their time in the United States, then the actual average fiscal costs are likely between $140,000 to $150,000 — perhaps twice what the costs are when the NPV is used. It must be emphasized that our undiscounted cost estimate is only an educated guess and the actual costs could be higher or lower. Later in this report we discuss in more detail the advantages and disadvantages of using NPV to think about fiscal issues.

[4] Francine D. Blau and Christopher Mackie, eds., *The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration*, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, September 22, 2016, p. 286. https://www.nap.edu/read/23550

[5] James P. Smith and Barry Edmonston, *The New Americans: Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Effects of Immigration*, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 1997. https://www.nap.edu/download/5779

[6] Robert Rector and Jason Richwine, "The Fiscal Cost of Unlawful Immigrants and Amnesty to the U.S. Taxpayer", Heritage Foundation, May 6, 2013, p. v. http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2013/pdf/sr133.pdf

[7] Steven A. Camarota, "The High Cost of Cheap Labor: Illegal Immigration and the Federal Budget," Center for Immigration Studies, August 2004. http://cis.org/sites/cis.org/files/articles/2004/fiscal.pdf

[8] Steven A. Camarota, "Immigrants in the United States, 2010: A Profile of America's Foreign-Born Population", Center for Immigration Studies, 2012, p. 69. http://cis.org/2012-profile-of-americas-foreign-born-population

[9] Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, "A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States", Pew Hispanic Center, April 14, 2009, Figure 16, p. 11. http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/reports/107.pdf

[10] A study done for DHS by the Institute for Defense Analysis found that the overwhelming majority of successful border crossers are from Latin America. See John Whitley et. al., "Assessing Southern Border Security", Institute for Defense Analysis, May 2016, p. 24. http://cis.org/sites/cis.org/files/Border-Crossing-Stats-Report.pdf

[11] Less-educated people from developed countries can often enter the United States as tourists without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program, but developing countries are not typically part of the program.

[12] This is based on analysis of illegal immigrants identified in the public-use files of the 2011, 2012, and 2013 Current Population Survey's Annual Social and Economic Supplement by the Center for Immigration Studies.

[13] Both the estimates for the original immigrant and descendants are found on in Table 8-12 on p. 341 of the study. Francine D. Blau and Christopher Mackie, eds., The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, September 22, 2016, page 286. https://www.nap.edu/catalog/23550/the-economic-and-fiscal-consequences-of-immigration

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 280, end note number 2. See end note 16 in this report for a discussion of the fiscal costs of illegal vs. all immigrants (legal and illegal).

[15] The Heritage Foundation reports the average fiscal impact for illegal immigrant and legal immigrant households by education level. They also report the number of households by education and legal status. With this information it is a relatively straightforward matter to calculate the average fiscal impact of all immigrant households (legal and illegal)

by education. We then divide this amount by the estimated costs for illegal households by education to create an adjustment factor. So, for example, among illegal high school dropout households the net fiscal impact is -$20,485 a year, and for households headed by a legal immigrant who is a dropout the drain is a good deal more: -$36,993. In Heritage's estimate, illegal immigrants create a net fiscal cost that is about 55 percent that of the burden created by households headed by high school dropout legal immigrants. But this is not the proper comparison, as the NAS estimates are for all immigrants, not just legal immigrants. Given the number of households Heritage reports, the fiscal impact for all immigrant households (legal and illegal) headed by a dropout must be -$30,294. As this equals .676 of the estimated costs of illegal dropout households reported in the Heritage study, this becomes the adjustment factor. We do the same for the other educational categories. As the Heritage study does not show separate estimates for those with only a bachelor's degree and those with a graduate education, we use the same adjustment factor for both. Taken together, this approach reduces the net fiscal drain of illegal immigrants by almost 24 percent.

It is possible that this adjustment factor may be too large and that the costs of illegal immigration are actually greater. A study published by the Center for Immigration Studies in 2016 showed that the average illegal immigrant household creates 91 percent of the welfare costs of the average immigrant household (both legal and illegal). See Jason Richwine, "The Cost of Welfare Use By Immigrant and Native Households", Center for Immigration Studies, May 2016. http://cis.org/Cost-Welfare-Immigrant-Native-Households However, welfare is only one cost and the Richwine study did not take into account tax payments. In a 2004 study of the federal budget, I found that the average household headed by an illegal immigrant created a fiscal drain equal to 79 percent that of households headed by legal immigrants with the same level of education. Relative to all immigrants (legal and illegal immigrants together), illegal immigrants created a fiscal cost equal to 88 percent that of legal immigrants, again controlling for education. However, the 2004 study was only for federal expenditures and tax payments. That study did not include costs and tax payments at the state and local level. See Steven A. Camarota, "The High Cost of Cheap Labor: Illegal Immigration and the Federal Budget", Center for Immigration Studies, August 2004. Later in this report we discuss the effect of using a different adjustment factor. http://cis.org/High-Cost-of-Cheap-Labor

[16] As will be recalled from the discussion above, Pew estimated that 49 percent of all illegal immigrants, not just illegal border-crossers, have not completed high school, 27 percent have only a high school education, 10 percent have some college, and 15 percent have a bachelor's or more. To make the estimates match the educational categories in the NAS study, which reports graduate degrees separately, we assume that 10 percent have a bachelor's degree and 5 percent have graduate degrees.

[17] This would mean, for example, that the fiscal cost of legal immigrants with the same education would be substantially higher so that the average is what the NAS study reports. In the Census data the NAS study used, immigrants can only be legal or illegal, so the larger the reduction in costs for illegal immigrants, relative to all immigrants, the higher costs legal immigrants must create. Mathematically, the fiscal costs must average to those reported in the NAS study for all immigrants by education level.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you.

I now recognize Mr. Judd for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF BRANDON JUDD

Mr. JUDD. Chairman DeSantis, Congressman DeSaulnier, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today. In the—I want to emphasize first off I will not advocate for 2,000 miles' worth of border. That is just not necessary. But what I will advocate for is a border wall in strategic locations, which helps us secure the border.

I want to point out what happened and give you a historical analysis of why the border is unsecure today. In the mid-'80s, the United States faced its first illegal immigration crisis. The Border Patrol had approximately 4,000 agents who were charged with patrolling nearly 2,000 miles of the United States-Mexico international border. Other than barbed wire fences owned by ranchers, there were no vehicle or pedestrian barriers to impede illegal border crossers.

The Border Patrol was overwhelmed, and Congress chose to deal with the influx of illegal aliens entering the United States by passing the Immigration and Reform Act of 1986. The act promised to secure the border and ensure the United States was never put in the same situation again. The act failed. It failed in large part because the United States government put the cart before the horse. Without securing the border first, the government legalized several million persons who willfully violated U.S. law. By so doing, we broadcast a clear message to the world that our laws could be made void if enough people entered the country illegally. The message was heard worldwide, and illegal immigration exploded.

After of IRCA of 1986, illegal border crossings in high numbers took place almost exclusively in San Diego, California, and El Paso, Texas. The Border Patrol thought if it could control these two corridors, they would be able to control illegal immigration and narcotics smuggling. They threw the vast majority of their resources at these areas but left other areas like the El Centro, California; the Yuma, Arizona; and the Tucson, Arizona, Border Patrol sectors wide open. The prevailing thought was that the infrastructure did not exist on either side of the border to allow smuggling organizations to move their operations to the inhospitable and barren desert areas of Arizona. The prevailing thought was wrong.

For more than 10 years, the Tucson Border Patrol sector was overrun because we did not have the foresight to realize that smuggling is big business and that the cartels are extremely flexible and adaptable. In essence, we created the problem in Tucson, and the citizens and ranchers paid for our mistakes.

Unlike today, in the mid-1980s and early 1990s, ISIS didn't exist, criminal cartels didn't control every facet of illegal activity on the border, and transnational gangs weren't prevalent in the United States. Today, however, this is our reality. And if we refuse to learn from failed border security policy and operations of the past, we will never secure the border.

We must take a proactive approach, and it must start with the proper mix of technology, infrastructure, and manpower, and it must be comprehensive. We must acknowledge that shutting down the Rio Grande Valley sector without addressing Laredo, Del Rio,

and Big Bend will just create the same type of vacuum that we created in Arizona.

Part of the proper infrastructure, the wall, is being heavily debated, and as an agent who worked in two of the busiest sectors in the history of the Border Patrol, I can personally tell you how effective border barriers are. When I got to the Tucson sector, we had next to nothing by way of infrastructure, and I can confidently say that for every illegal border crosser that I apprehended, three got away. The building of barriers and large fences, a bipartisan effort, allowed agents in part to dictate where illegal crossings took place and doubled how effective I was able to be in apprehending illegal border crossers.

As an agent who has extensive experience working with and without border barriers and as the person elected to represent rank-and-file Border Patrol agents, I can personally attest to how effective a wall, in strategic locations, will be.

I implore both sides of the aisle to quit politicizing border security and illegal border entries and work with the men and women of the United States Border Patrol by providing the proper technology, infrastructure, and manpower. By so doing, Border Patrol agents will secure the border.

I appreciate your time and look forward to answering all of your questions. Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Judd follows:]

National Border Patrol Council

TESTIMONY OF BRANDON JUDD BEFORE THE HOUSE OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE
APRIL 27, 2017

Chairman DeSantis and Ranking Member Lynch I want to thank you for affording me the opportunity to testify this morning. My name is Brandon Judd and I am President of the National Border Patrol Council. The Council represents the 16,500 front line Border Patrol Agents. I am a nearly 20 year veteran of the Border Patrol and have served in California, Arizona, Maine and now Montana during my career.

Background

In the mid 1980's, the United States faced its first illegal immigration crisis. The Border Patrol had less than 4,000 Agents who were charged with patrolling nearly 2,000 miles of United States/Mexico International Border. There were no barriers to impede vehicles from driving across the border and other than ranch barb wire fencing, there were no physical barriers to keep individuals from walking across the border illegally. The Border Patrol was completely overwhelmed. Congress chose to deal with the influx of illegal aliens entering the United States by passing the Immigration and Reform Act of 1986 (IRCA 1986). The Act promised to secure the border and ensure the United States was never put in same situation again.

In large part, the Act failed because the United States Government, including President Ronald Reagan, put the cart before the horse. By legalizing a few million persons who willfully entered the U.S. in violation of law or who willfully overstayed visas without securing the border first, the U.S. Government sent a clear message to the world that our laws could be made void if enough people enter the country illegally.

Current Situation

Currently only 653 miles of the nearly 2,000 miles of the southern border has fencing. This fencing, which cost nearly $7 billion since FY 2007, consists of:

- 353 miles of primary fencing
- 300 miles of anti-vehicle fencing that prevent smugglers from driving over the border
- 36 miles of secondary fencing
- 14 miles of tertiary fencing

I want to emphasis to the Committee that fencing is a tool that allows Agents to maximize their available manpower. It is not however a panacea to illegal immigration and drug trafficking. Illegal immigrants and drug traffickers routinely go over, under, and through the existing fencing that we already have in place. Fencing without the proper manpower to arrest those who penetrate it is not a prudent investment.

I hope we can explore manpower in greater depth in the question and answer period, but I want the Committee to know we are now over 1,700 Agents below the congressionally mandated floor of 21,370 Agents. To put this in perspective Mr. Chairman, I understand the largest city adjacent to your district is Jacksonville, Florida. The Jacksonville Sheriff's department has 1,600 sworn officers - that is the gap in manpower we are facing below a congressionally mandated floor.

I am deeply concerned that when Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) starts hiring their additional 10,000 Agents, we will lose several thousand Border Patrol Agents to ICE overnight. The primary reason Agents will leave is that we lack pay parity with ICE and pay parity is directly under the jurisdiction of this Committee.

Additional Resources

Front line Border Patrol Agents do not believe that the entire 2,000 miles of the southwest border needs to be fenced to achieve border security. Instead, here is what the men and women who work the border every day want from the Administration and Congress:

- Manpower-The President has proposed the hiring of an additional 5,000 Border Patrol Agents and we fully support the Border Patrol total force strength increasing to 26,370. We believe that 3,500 of these Agents need to go to our Southern Border and 1,500 to our Northern Border, where we are woefully understaffed.

- Fencing- Before we build an additional mile of primary fencing, we need a double fence behind the primary fencing that we already have. In areas where we have only a primary fence, it takes one Agent to control one linear mile. In areas where there is double fencing, one Agent can control three linear miles. Our Agents are our most effective asset, but they are also our most expensive and we need to maximize our manpower.

  In addition to the 353 miles of primary fencing that we already have, we believe that we need an additional 300 miles of primary fencing. This fencing should be strategically placed in areas such as Del Rio and Laredo Texas and the Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation in Arizona.

- Equipment- Every day we deploy Agents with equipment that is inadequate. Let me give you two simple examples. Forty percent of our vehicles are past their service life. Patrolling off road for 10 hours a shift takes a toll and some of these vehicles are literally falling apart. The cost of replacing older vehicles would be $250 million.

  In many areas of the border, the Agents have no communications. Forget interoperability, we do not even have operability and this is a real threat to Agent safety. We estimate that we could dramatically increase border interoperability for $125 million.

- Training- The average federal law enforcement academy is 20 weeks in length. The Bush Administration, in order to meet hiring targets, reduced our training from 20 weeks to 55 days if you spoke Spanish. This was an enormous mistake and we need to revert back to 20 week academy immediately.

In closing, I would like to add one additional request - and it is not about money. If you truly want border security, we have to be allowed to do our jobs. Please understand that I do not mean this as a partisan statement. I have tremendous respect for President Reagan, but he was simply wrong in 1986 to grant amnesty to millions before securing the border. Likewise President Obama's catch and release policy incentivized tens of thousands to illegally enter the United States.

I want to thank the Committee for holding this hearing and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Mr. DESANTIS. I thank the gentleman.

Ms. Espinoza, you are up for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF MARIA ESPINOZA

Ms. ESPINOZA. Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to be here before you today to testify on issues associated with national security.

My name is Maria Espinoza. My testimony is based upon my nearly eight years of traveling across the country with the Remembrance Project, an organization that advocates for those families, our country's previously most forgotten, whose loved ones were killed by illegal aliens.

My testimony is designed to assist you and others to understand the urgency of the immediate need to secure our country. Americans will continue to be under assault until the wall is built and the border secured.

I have attended murder trials, criminal and civil hearings, testified in other States, and participated in roundtable discussions with sheriffs. I have made presentations and have spoken with groups all over the United States about the most devastating of all impacts of illegal immigration, the loss of a life. I have had hundreds of firsthand experiences with many Stolen Lives families.

For nearly 20 years, families of Americans slain by illegal aliens have given heart-wrenching congressional testimony like the one you're about to hear from Mrs. Gibboney about the tragic and violent killings of loved ones perpetrated by someone who should not have been in the country in the first place. The irony, while it seemed as though the politicians listened and even publicly gave the families their condolences, congressional leadership, the bodies of both houses, Democrat and Republican, have failed to enact the very measures that would have saved American lives.

America has spoken. We want the wall built right away.

Today, I speak on behalf of the Remembrance Project Advocacy, Incorporated, where we proudly support our President and an America-first national agenda. The wall is a foundation upon which a comprehensive border policy can and must be built. It is of the utmost urgency.

First, for a future perspective on the horrors of a national open-borders policy, let's look at Texas over the past six years. According to Department of Homeland Security status indicators, over 217,000 criminal aliens have been booked into local Texas jails between 2011 and 2017, committing nearly 600,000 crimes ranging from assault of which there were nearly 70,000, to over 6,000 violent sexual assaults of women and children and homicides which number nearly 1,200, all preventable.

These are only a sampling of the heinous crimes they have committed. Department of Homeland Security reports that a full two out of three of these crimes were committed by aliens here illegally. Those who falsely state that a great border wall would not work either don't know their history or are in denial. To those border wall naysayers, doubters, and deniers, I can assure you that a wall will work.

Today, where walls exist on our own southern border, illegal crossings have been drastically reduced by over 94 percent. In the

Arizona Yuma sector, arrests of illegal alien crossings dwindled from over 138,000 to just over 8,300. The known attempts to enter and those who escape dwindled to an equally minimal number compared to the hundreds of thousands who entered and evaded arrests in previous years.

Yes, your honorable committee men and women, walls do work. To falter now has dire future consequences to Americans and America's future. If not built when another open-borders President is elected, the technological deterrence and all-important army of border agents will be reduced or entirely removed allowing this holocaust of American killings to resume. This unwise policy must not be allowed to be perpetrated upon our families.

Based upon preliminary information, we believe that the American Stolen Lives may number in the tens of thousands, but because the government at every level has previously failed to identify correctly the illegal alien killers, no one knows for sure. We welcome Congress' commitment to assure an accurate accounting and believe that all Americans, if they knew the true human cost of this invasion, would demand the wall be built immediately. Just last month, there was a string of reports of heinous crimes committed by illegal alien gang members.

The Remembrance Project Advocacy stands behind President Trump with the American people in demanding that Congress immediately fund the construction of the wall. All of you here today and all of Congress bear a duty not just to your constituents but to all Americans to preserve our sovereign nation and keep our communities safe by first and foremost securing our borders. I ask you to do all you can to stop these preventable killings and murders that permanently separated families from their loved ones. Please, not one more stolen life.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless America.

[Prepared statement of Ms. Espinoza follows:]

Written Statement for the Record
Submitted by Maria Espinoza of
The Remembrance Project Advocacy, Inc.
toThe Subcommittee on National Security of
the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
April 27, 2017

To The Committee:

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee I am honored to appear before you today, to testify on issues associated with National Security.

My testimony is based upon my nearly 8 years of traveling across the country with The Remembrance Project, an organization that advocates for those families - our country's previously 'most forgotten' - whose loved ones were killed by illegal aliens. My testimony is designed to assist
you and others understand the urgency of the immediate need to secure our country before another life unnecessary and preventable American life is 'stolen.'
I have attended murder trials, criminal and civil hearings, testified in Texas and California, we were invited and participated in a roundtable hosted by the LA County Sheriff's Department, I have made presentations and have spoken with groups all over the U.S. about the most devastating of all impacts of illegal immigration - the loss of life. I have had hundreds of first hand experiences with many families whose loved ones have been killed by illegal aliens.

I have visited the borders along our southern states and spoken with Border Agents, Police Officers, and Sheriffs and border Sheriffs. I have also participated in a night watch with the Texas Border Volunteers to observe and report to Border Patrol criminal trespassers. I have personally seen criminal trespassers in the dark of night who had snuck into our country and carrying backpacks. It was my teams belief that contained in the backpacks were illegal drugs to be sold on American streets and possible reaching our children's school playground.
On our own accord, we realized what President Donald Trump has exposed - that the media is not telling the truth, not being good journalists so we created the Stolen Lives Quilt in order to connect-the-dots and do the job the media was, and still is, unwilling to do - and that is to inform the public of the epidemic of killings of Americans taking place all across the nation - making every state a dangerous border state.

My husband and I took the Stolen Lives Quilt along on our 25 state tour, speaking with staffers in 21 state houses about the importance of upholding current laws in order to protect the citizens in their states. I also met with former Attorney General Eric Holder and former DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson on this very same subject "national security." Our pleas fell upon deaf ears and we saw the Obama Administration with his phone and a pen do more harm to the sovereignty of our nation and to our constitution than any other president. The People rose-up and on November 8, 2016, we saw a truly historic election, and miraculously a man who according to all the polls, did not have a snowball of a chance of winning - but ladies and gentlemen God is good and he answered our prayers. We have been given a man who has pledged his allegiance to our one nation under God and is methodically moving forward with 'America first' policies.

For nearly 20 years, families of Americans slain by illegal aliens have given heart-wrenching Congressional testimony about the tragic and violent killings of loved ones perpetrated by someone who should have never been in the country.

The irony? While it seemed as though the politicians listened and even publicly gave the families their condolences, Congressional leadership and the bodies of both houses, Democrat and Republican, have failed to enact the very measures that would have saved American lives. America has spoken. We want the wall to be built now.

Through my work, I know nearly every one of those families. Thanks to their bravery and to Donald Trump, most Americans now know them as "angel moms and angel dads, angel wives and husbands"... they are America's "Stolen Lives" families.

Today I speak on behalf of The Remembrance Project Advocacy, Inc., where we proudly support our President and an "American First" national agenda. What is at stake here is nothing less than our national security, our American sovereignty. The wall is the foundation upon which a comprehensive border policy can and must be built. It is of the utmost urgency.

First, for a future perspective on the horrors of a national open borders' policy, let's look at Texas over the past 6 years:

[1]According to DHS status indicators, over 217,000 criminal aliens have been booked into local Texas jails between June 1, 2011 and March 31, 2017, committing nearly 600,000 crimes, ranging from assault where there were nearly 70,000, to over 6,000 violent sexual assaults of women and children;
and homicides which numbered nearly 1,200. These are only a "sampling" of the heinous crimes they have committed. DHS reports that a full 2 out of 3 of these crimes were committed by aliens here illegally.

A comprehensive list of all of these crimes can be found as noted below.
[Source: https://www.dps.texas.gov/administration/crime_records/pages/txCriminalAlienStatistics.htm]

Those who falsely state that a great border wall would not work either don't know their history, or are in denial. To those border wall nay-sayers, doubters and deniers, I can assure you that a wall will work. We see that throughout history. China built its Great Wall, the ancient Roman Empire built theirs, and we have the Vatican wall. And the walls had gates, the only place where entry was permitted. And a trained and armed militia to guard the walls. America could learn a lot about how to protect our Mexican border just by knowing a little "wall" history.

America actually has its own great examples. Today, where walls exist on our own southern border, illegal crossings have been drastically reduced by over 94%.

[2]Ronald Colburn, the former deputy chief of the Border Patrol testified that Yuma Sector arrests of illicit border crossers and traffickers had dwindled from over 138,000 down to 8,363. The known attempts to enter and the got-aways dwindled to an equally minimal number compared to the hundreds of thousands that entered and evaded arrest in previous years.

[Source: http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/border-boss-wall-cut-illegal-crossings-94/article/2619261#.WOOYlLI9qu4.twitter]

Yes, your honorable committeemen and women, walls do work.

---

[1] Source: https://www.dps.texas.gov/administration/crime_records/pages/txCriminalAlienStatistics.htm]

[2] [Source: http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/border-boss-wall-cut-illegal-crossings-94/article/2619261#.WOOYlLI9qu4.twitter]

And with today's sophisticated detection technology, and by putting many more boots on the ground, this 21st century wall will save countless American lives. Technology and boots are not enough! Congress has a moral obligation to support the peoples' demand for a secured border. Funding MUST be appropriated now. It's time to end the delay tactics and fund the construction of the wall - Not next year, not "one of these days"... but now.

To falter now has dire future consequences to Americans and America's future. If not built now, when another open-borders President is elected, the technological deterrents and the all-important army of border agents will be reduced or entirely removed, allowing this holocaust of American killings to resume. This unwise policy must not be allowed to be perpetrated upon our families.

Based upon preliminary information, we believe that the American Stolen Lives may number in the tens of thousands. But because the government, at every level, has previously failed to identify correctly the illegal alien killers, no one knows for sure. We welcome the Administrations efforts for an accurate accounting, and believe that all Americans, if they knew the true human cost of this invasion, would demand the wall be built immediately.

Gang-crime experts are surprised by the young age of some MS-13 gang members and have said the record numbers of unaccompanied minors coming across the border has significantly increased recruitment by violent illegal alien gangs operating in cities across America.

Just last month, in March, there has been a string of reports of horrific murders by illegal alien gang members:

- [3]In my home state of Texas, two (2) alleged MS-13 gang members were charged with murdering a 15-year-old girl and holding her 14-year-old friend captive.

[Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/i-have-been-set-up-final-minutes-of-15-year-old-killed-in-gang-slaying-described/2017/03/02/bc2bcbce-fd29-11e6-8f41-ea6ed597e4ca_story.html?utm_term=.7906c4814435

---

[3] https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/i-have-been-set-up-final-minutes-of-15-year-old-killed-in-gang-slaying-described/2017/03/02/bc2bcbce-fd29-11e6-8f41-ea6ed597e4ca_story.html?utm_term=.7906c4814435

- [4]In New York, 16 alleged MS-13 gang members where charged in 7 murders

[Source: http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/03/02/ms-13-gang-members-indicted-in-ny-teen-killings.html

- In Virginia, MS-13 gang members murdered a teenage girl and a young man.

As anyone can see from the murderous rampage by illegals, it is urgent we address the lack of national security in America immediately.

Equally important to securing our borders along the exterior of the country - is securing the interior. This means we must end the dangerous sanctuary city policies and put an end to the safe-havens for criminal illegal aliens.
The Remembrance Project Advocacy stands behind President Trump and with the American people in demanding that Congress immediately fund the construction of the wall. We also request that 'stolen lives' families be invited to participate in the ground-breaking ceremony for the wall.

All of you here today, and all of Congress, bear a duty, not just to your constituents but to all Americans, to preserve our sovereign nation and keep our communities safe by first and foremost, securing our borders.

We cannot bring back our precious Americans who were killed by illegal aliens, however, you can fulfill your promises through your oaths of office to protect America and Americans against foreign invaders.

I ask you to do all you can to stop these preventable killings and murders that permanently separate families fro their loved ones - Not one (1) more 'stolen life'.

Thank you. God bless you and God bless America.

---

[4] http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/03/02/ms-13-gang-members-indicted-in-ny-teen-killings.html

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you.

Ms. Gibboney, you are up for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF AGNES GIBBONEY

Ms. GIBBONEY. Thank you for inviting me here today.

My name is Agnes Gibboney. I was born in Budapest, Hungary. I was two when my family left in January of 1957 as refugees. We immigrated to Brazil where we lived for 13 years legally trying to apply to come to the United States. My parents, my brother, myself legally immigrated to the United States. We followed all the rules, the laws. We followed all the background investigation, thorough background investigation and thorough medical exams by American Consulate appointed and approved doctors. We also had to have character witnesses attesting that we had good moral standing, and my father was required to have a job contract.

Today, April 27 marks my son Ronald da Silva's 15th anniversary of his murder. Ronald was my first born, my only son. His father, my first husband, was a Brazilian national. Ronald was a good person, kind, considerate, respectful, loving, funny, and sometimes a practical joker. He helped my parents, and Ronald was a good big brother to his two sisters. He was always there when anyone needed his help.

Ronald went to visit his two children, Matthew and Marcel, and while standing on the driveway, he was shot, a bullet that was intended for someone else. The shooter, the murderer, was an illegal alien with a long criminal record who had been previously deported. Immediately after the shooting, he fled to Mexico. His wife was depositing her welfare check at the credit union so he could withdraw it in Tijuana so he can live on it.

He eventually turned himself—returned to the United States, and was sent to prison. He's due to be released in two years and seven months. I am afraid that California won't notify ICE of his pending release. It took me almost 11 years to find out he had an ICE hold.

Our borders would have been—if our borders would have been secured, Ronald would still be here, along with thousands of innocent victims killed by illegal aliens. Many criminal illegal aliens deported return to our unsecured borders to continue victimizing American citizens. One life lost is one too many. We need a barrier, we need a wall, and more Border Patrol officers to protect us all.

Ronald's murder devastated my family. My only sibling, my brother Laszlo, had a massive stroke at age 51 due to the overwhelming stress and despair. He died the following day only four months after Ronald was murdered. You see, my brother was married to my sister-in-law, who is from Mexico, and that devastated them. My father gave up living. He wanted to die to be with Ronald, his first grandchild. It took him 11 years of suffering. My mother tried to be so hard and strong for me and the family. She was our rock, but I could see the incredible pain in her eyes. She, too, is in Heaven now and they are together, my son, my brother, father, and mother.

I have never seen my husband Mark, a highly educated man, retired deputy chief of El Monte PD where my son was murdered, so helpless. Watching the devastation, the panic, the pain, there was

nothing he could do to undo or fix what happened. He was the one to call me at the campground where I was camping with my two daughters with Girl Scouts to tell me that Ronald was shot in the shoulder and he was expected to survive. We immediately drove home. As I walked in the house, he hugged me and said I am sorry. I told him I was going to the hospital to be with Ronald so when he came out of surgery, he wouldn't be alone. It was then that he said I'm sorry, Ronald didn't make it.

Now, I live a life sentence of pain and suffering wondering what would Ronald look like? Would he have gray hair at age 44? Would he be married? Would he—what would he be doing? I miss his beautiful smile, his warm bear hugs, his sense of humor, our talks. I miss his voice, his scent. I miss family get-togethers with all of us present. My family is permanently broken and separated. I can't travel anywhere in the world to see him ever again. I will forever miss all the tomorrows and all that was taken from me, all because of broken open borders.

I miss watching him iron his clothes and spend a long time fixing his hair, but what I miss the most is him calling me mommy. I miss everything. I simply miss my son. All I have left are his clothes, old photos, baby shoes, baby bottles, some toys and memories. I live with this emptiness, a hole in my heart longing for my son, and I live with the daily fear of losing another child or family member.

We cannot afford to lose one more life. Ronald is just one life. His death is not an isolated case. Deputy David March, murdered a couple days after Ronald in a neighboring town, his murderer also fled to Mexico and he also had been previously deported. His widow Teri and I became friends. We would compare our pain, our hurt, our grief, and often cry together. Officer Don Johnston, a coworker of my husband, was shot by someone who overstayed his visa. He became paraplegic. He ultimately died of his injuries.

Hundreds of victims' innocent lives. I wonder how many more are there that we don't know about because our government does not keep statistics on illegal aliens' crimes. What an overall problem it is for a nation that so many U.S. citizens are killed on a daily basis by illegal aliens who shouldn't be in our country to begin with.

When I became a U.S. citizen, the first President I voted for was President Ronald Reagan, who signed an amnesty bill which was supposed to be followed by securing our borders and enforcing immigration laws within our country, including verifying rights to employment. These things have never been done, and the conditions have gotten worse every year. The irony is my family and I legally immigrated to the United States and an illegal murdered my son who should have never been in the country to begin with.

I urge you to do what so many politicians have promised for years: a secure border. Eliminate incentives for illegal aliens to come here, and enforcement of existing immigration laws.

It is too late for my son Ronald and the thousands killed by illegal aliens, but there are so many lives that can be saved if you would just take action and put Americans first.

Our President Donald Trump deserves more respect. He is working so hard to protect our country, protect our Constitution. Illegal

aliens have no constitutional rights. A country without border is no country.

You may say that it is inhumane to deport illegal aliens who didn't care about breaking our laws. How inhumane is it that my son Ronald and thousands of innocent victims' lives were cut short? It is the responsibility of the government to keep us safe, and our President Trump is working to accomplish that. Please do not stand in his way. Work with him.

Thank you for your time.

[Prepared statement of Ms. Gibboney follows:]

Agnes Gibboney

Thank you for inviting me to be here today, it is an honor.

My name is Agnes Gibboney, I was born in Budapest, Hungary. My family and I left Hungary in January 1957 as refugees, I was 2 years old.

We immigrated to Brazil, where we lived for 13 years, while applying to come to the U.S.

My parents, brother and myself, legally immigrated to the United States. We followed all the rules, the laws. We had to go through a thorough background investigation and thorough medical exams by an American Consulate appointed and approved doctor. We also had character witnesses attesting we were of good moral standing and my father was required to have a job contract.

Today, April 27th marks my son Ronald da Silva's 15th anniversary of his murder. Ronald was my first born and my only son, his father, my first husband is a Brazilian National.

Ronald was a good person, kind, considerate, respectful, loving, funny and sometimes a practical joker. He helped my aging parents. Was a good brother to his two sisters. He was always there for anyone who needed help.

Ronald went to visit his two children Matthew and Marcel and while standing on the driveway he was shot, a bullet that was intended for someone else. The shooter/murderer was an illegal alien with a long criminal record who had been previously deported. Immediately after the shooting, he fled to Mexico. His wife was depositing her welfare check at a credit union and he would withdraw it in Tijuana, Mexico to live on. He eventually returned to the US and was sent to prison. He is due to be released in 2 years and 7 months and I am afraid California won't notify ICE of his pending release.

It took me almost 11 years to find out he has an ICE hold.

If our borders would have been secured, Ronald would still be here, along with thousands of innocent victims killed by illegal aliens. Many criminal illegal aliens that were deported returned through our insecure borders, to continue

victimizing American Citizens. One life lost is one too many. We need a barrier, a wall and more Border Patrol officers to protect us all.

Ronald's murder devastated my family. My only sibling, my brother Laszlo had a massive stroke at 51 years of age, due to the overwhelming stress and despair he felt, he died the following day. You see, my brother was married to my sister in law, who was born in Mexico.

My father gave up living, all the wanted was to die to be with Ronald, his first grandchild. It took him 11 years of suffering. My mother tried so hard to be strong for me and the family. She was our rock. But, I could see an incredible pain in her eyes. She too, is in heaven now. They are now together, my son, brother, father and mother.

I have never seen my husband Mark, a highly educated man, retired Deputy Chief of El Monte PD where my son was murdered, so helpless. Watching the devastation, panic, pain and there was nothing he could do to undo or fix what happened. He was the one to call me at the campground, where I was camping with Girl Scouts with our two daughters, to tell me that Ronald was shot on the shoulder, is in surgery and expected to survive. We immediately drove home, walked in the house. He hugged me and said: "I'm sorry". I told him I was going to the hospital to be with Ronald, so when he comes out of surgery, he's not alone. It was then that he said: "I'm sorry, Ronald didn't make it".

Now, I live with a "life sentence" of pain and suffering, wondering: What would Ronald look like? Would he have gray hair at age 44? Would he be married? What would he be doing?

I miss his beautiful smile, his warm bear hugs, his sense of humor, our talks.

I miss his voice, his scent.

I miss family get togethers with us all present. My family is permanently broken, separated. I can't travel anywhere in the world to see him ever again.

I miss all the tomorrows that were taken from me, all because of open borders.

I miss everything, I simply miss my son.

I miss watching him iron his clothes and spend a long time fixing his hair. But what I miss the most, is Ronald calling me "mommy".

All I have left are his clothes, old photos, baby shoes, baby bottle, some toys and memories.

I live with this emptiness, a hole in my heart longing for my son. And I live with daily fear of losing another child or family member.

We cannot afford to lose one more life.

Ronald is just one life, his death is not an isolated case. Deputy David March murdered a couple of days after Ronald was killed on the border of the same town. His murderer also fled to Mexico and he was also previously deported. His widow and I became friends, we would compare our pain, hurt and grief, often cry together. Officer Don Johnston, a co-worker of my husband, was shot by someone who overstayed his visa, he ultimately died of his injuries. Hundreds of victims, innocent lives. I wonder how many more are there that we don't know about, because our government does not keep statistics on illegal alien crimes.

What an overall problem is for our Nation that so many US Citizens are killed on a daily basis by illegal aliens, who shouldn't be in our country.

When I became a US Citizen, the first President I voted for President Reagan, who signed an amnesty bill, which was supposed to be followed by securing our borders and enforcing immigration laws within our country, including verifying rights to employment. These things have never been done. The conditions have gotten worse every year.

The Irony is, my family and I legally immigrated to the United States and an illegal alien, who should have never been here murdered my only son Ronald.

I urge you to do what so many politicians promised for years: a secure border, eliminate the incentives for illegal aliens and enforcement of existing immigration laws.

It is too late for my son Ronald and the thousands killed by illegals, but there are so many lives that can be saved, if you would just take action.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you.

Mr. Stodder, you are up for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF SETH STODDER

Mr. STODDER. Thank you so much.

Chairman DeSantis, Representative DeSaulnier, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify today to present my views on the administration's proposed wall across the U.S.-Mexico border.

I've been around this issue for a while, having served in senior law enforcement and Homeland Security positions in both the Bush administration, as well as the Obama administration. And in my view, President Trump's proposal to build a wall across the entire U.S.-Mexico border is deeply misguided and Congress should not support it.

Building a wall would be a massive waste of billions of taxpayer dollars and unfortunately we'll get very little in return because the wall won't help us address any of the most pressing challenges we face at the border. In fact, it will actually make us less safe. This is for several reasons.

First, the wall attacks the wrong problem: the fear that America is somehow being overwhelmed by massive numbers of Mexican economic migrants seeking to cross the Rio Grande to take our jobs. This is an old, outdated talking point from the 1990s. While of course illegal Mexican migration still occurs, the reality is that the Border Patrol apprehensions are at historic lows.

It's true that in the 1990s the border was out of control with illegal entries from Mexico approaching two million a year, but since then, we've dramatically strengthened enforcement and brought far greater control to our border. We've tripled the size of the Border Patrol. We've deployed sensors and aerial drones. And yes, we have constructed hundreds of miles of fence in strategic locations, mostly in urban areas like the double layer fence in San Diego.

This blend of enforcement efforts has been extraordinarily successful, making it far harder and more expensive for people to cross illegally. But it only tells part of the story. The other more important point is that Mexico is changing dramatically. Over the last two decades since NAFTA, Mexico has grown into the world's 11th-largest economy and our third-largest trading partner. There are good jobs in Mexico, and people are staying to take them.

What's the result of all this? According to the Pew Research Center, more Mexicans now leave the United States and head north, and border apprehensions of Mexicans are the lowest in decades with overall apprehensions now 75 percent less than at the high watermark of 2000 when 1.6 million people were apprehended by the Border Patrol.

Of course, some do still try to cross and some do get in. Border enforcement will never be perfect in the same way that even the best urban police forces will never be able to prevent all crime. But the reality is that the investments this Congress and the administrations of both parties have made in securing the border have paid off. Our border with Mexico is far more secure than ever before.

Now, this is not to suggest that we don't have pressing challenges at the border. We do. Unfortunately, a wall is not going to

help us address any of them. First, the wall will not make us more secure against terrorism. There is little evidence of terrorists seeking to enter the United States across our Southwest border. One of the most important reasons for this is our close partnership with Mexico. We work together to share and analyze information on travelers for the Western Hemisphere so we can spot known or suspected terrorists before they get here far away from our Southwest border. If the fight over the wall poisons the security partnership with Mexico, it will make the American people less safe.

Second, the wall will not stem the flow of illegal drugs. This is for the simple reason that drugs for the most part are smuggled into our country in the thousands of cars and trucks that enter our official ports of entry such as San Isidro. No one is proposing that we build a wall across Interstate 5 or block all trade or travel with Mexico, and a wall won't stop drugs from being smuggled through tunnels or by aircraft.

Third, a wall will not help us fight the drug cartels. Most senior cartel leaders don't travel to the U.S., but if they do, they don't wander across the Sonoran Desert. But if Mexico reduces its cooperation with ICE and DEA in retaliation for our effort to build that wall, it will be far more difficult for us to successfully build cases against key figures or locate them for arrest in Mexico.

And finally, the wall will not help us address the most pressing migration challenge we face, which stems from the crisis in Central America with thousands of Guatemalan, El Salvadoran, and Honduran families fleeing violence, extreme poverty, and environmental crises and coming to our border to seek asylum here. Most of these migrants are coming to our ports of entry or voluntarily turning themselves in to Border Patrol agents between the ports of entry in order to claim asylum. Under U.S. international law, we can't just build a wall and bounce them off. We must allow credible asylum claims to be heard in our immigration courts, and a wall will only channel those claims to the ports of entry. It won't prevent them from coming in the first place.

So a wall is not going to help us with any of the most pressing challenges we face at the border. Back in the 1970s, Senator Proxmire used to hand out what he called the Golden fleece award to highlight wasteful Federal spending. I can't think of any program that would make Senator Proxmire more proud than the border wall, the ultimate golden fleece of the American taxpayers with the billions going to contractors seeking to build a wall that will provide no security benefit to the American people.

Republican Representative Will Hurd puts it well. "Building a wall is the most expensive and least-effective way to secure the border." That's sad enough, but even sadder is that the effort to build a wall will divert resources away from measures that will actually help address the priority challenges at the border. Our immigration system is indeed in crisis, straining from the flow of Central American asylum-seekers.

We need more resources specifically devoted to addressing this challenge, and in the questioning, I'm happy to give my thoughts on that. But suffice it to say a wall's not going to help, nor will it make us safer from terrorism or organized crime. The wall is an

extremely bad idea, and I hope Congress does not support it. Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Stodder follows:]

Written Testimony of Seth M.M. Stodder
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Subcommittee on National Security
Hearing on "The Border Wall: Strengthening Our National Security"
April 27, 2017

Chairman DeSantis, Ranking Member Lynch, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for inviting me to testify today at this important hearing focused on "The Border Wall: Strengthening Our National Security." It is an honor to appear before the Subcommittee, and present my views on the Trump Administration's proposed Wall across the U.S.-Mexico border.

I know these issues firsthand. Over the last 15 years since the 9/11 attacks, I have served in senior homeland security and law enforcement positions in both the George W. Bush and Barack Obama Administrations. In the Bush Administration, I served as Director of Policy and Planning for what became U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), as well as Counselor/Senior Policy Advisor to CBP Commissioner Robert C. Bonner, for the three years immediately following the 9/11 attacks. More recently, in the Obama Administration, I served as Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Border, Immigration & Trade Policy, and previously as Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Threat Prevention & Security Policy. In those roles, I led the teams responsible for advising Secretary Jeh Johnson, as well as DHS and Component leadership, on border security, immigration, and trade policy. I also oversaw the U.S. Visa Waiver Program, as well as national security vetting and screening policy, and all DHS engagements with the countries of the Western Hemisphere, among other things.

In these roles – spanning administrations of both political parties -- I have seen and, indeed, helped lead an extraordinary transformation of not only our border, but also in our deep, cooperative relationship with Mexico. In those 15 years, working in concert with Mexico, we have greatly improved our border security against the most pressing threats to public safety, including terrorism and transnational organized crime, and we have established far greater operational control over illegal migration our Southwest Border than in any time over the last four decades – with Border Patrol yearly apprehension totals at historic lows.

In my view, President Trump's proposal to build a "Wall" across the U.S.-Mexico border is deeply misguided. If constructed, the Wall will quickly be recognized as a wildly expensive mistake that not only will constitute a massive waste of taxpayer dollars, but also – for the reasons discussed below – one that will <u>undermine</u> our current efforts to secure the American people from threats beyond our borders. Far from making us more safe, the effort to build a "Wall" will only make the job of securing our borders more challenging – while diverting precious taxpayer resources away from more pressing border security and enforcement needs.

The proposed Wall essentially addresses the wrong problem – the rapidly diminishing issue of illegal migration by economic migrants from Mexico across our border in the rural areas between our Ports of Entry – and fails to address any of the actual and pressing challenges we are currently facing at our

border. Specifically, the Wall will not help us with any of the four most important challenges we currently face:

- First, the Wall will not make us more secure against terrorism – in fact, potentially less so, given that the effort to build a Wall may undermine our close cooperative security relationship with Mexico, one of our most essential partners in keeping known or suspected terrorists out of the Western Hemisphere.

- Second, the Wall will not stem the flow of illegal drugs, given that most of the heroin/opioids, cocaine, and methamphetamine come into our country smuggled in the thousands of cars and trucks that enter our official Ports of Entry, such as El Paso or San Ysidro – and no one is proposing we build a Wall across Interstate 5 or block all trade and travel from Mexico. Additionally, some of the illegal drug flow comes in through tunnels and even, in some cases, by aircraft – neither of which would be stemmed by a Wall.

- Third, the Wall not help us interdict or build criminal cases against kingpins or operatives from major transnational gangs, such as the Sinaloa Cartel or the MS-13. Indeed, given that the effort to build a Wall may undermine our currently close cooperative law enforcement relationship with Mexico, the opposite may be true. If Mexico reduces its cooperation in retaliation for the Wall, it will be far more difficult for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to successfully build cases against key figures, or locate them for arrest in Mexico. And, to the extent senior cartel leaders travel to the U.S. at all (and the senior leaders generally do not), they are more likely to enter, again, through our official Ports of Entry, such as El Paso or Los Angeles International Airport. Simply put, well-heeled drug kingpins do not simply wander across the Sonoran Desert or swim the Rio Grande to come to the United States.

- Fourth, the Wall will not help address the most pressing migration challenge we face – which stems from the crisis in Central America, whereby thousands of Guatemalan, El Salvadoran, and Honduran families (and unaccompanied children) have been fleeing violence, extreme poverty, and environmental crises, and coming to our border to seek asylum here. Most of the Central American migrants come to our Ports of Entry, or voluntarily turn themselves in to Border Patrol Agents between Ports of Entry, in order to claim asylum. Under U.S. and international law, we must allow those asylum claims to be heard – and a Wall will only channel those claimants to the Ports of Entry, it won't prevent them in the first place. Moreover, to the extent that Mexico withdraws cooperation on managing Central American migrant flows as retaliation for the Wall, it may result in thousands more heading to our border.

So, a Wall will not help us address any of the most pressing challenges we face at the border – and likely will make addressing them more difficult. Republican Representative Will Hurd from Texas put it well: "Building a wall is the most expensive and least effective way to secure the border." I'm with Representative Hurd. By most estimates, building a Wall will cost somewhere between $20-25 billion in

taxpayer dollars – and this massive expenditure will not even remotely help with any of the most pressing issues we are currently facing at the border. It will more likely divert resources from measures that will. In thinking about the proposed Wall, the late Senator William Proxmire's "Golden Fleece Award" for wasteful federal expenditures comes to mind.

The only conceivable justification for building a Wall is to address what, over the last two decades, has in reality become a dwindling problem – illegal Mexican migration across the border between the Ports of Entry. While, of course, illegal Mexican migration still occurs, the reality is that Border Patrol apprehensions of Mexicans between the Ports of Entry are at historic lows.

Indeed, despite the political rhetoric, the reality is that the U.S.-Mexico border is more secure now than it has been in decades, and far fewer Mexicans are trying to cross. U.S. taxpayer dollars – especially in the extraordinary amounts being considered – should not be thrown wastefully and indiscriminately at solving a problem that, in reality, has for the most part already been solved. What we face now is not the same challenge we faced in the 1990s or early 2000s when, for instance, Mexican migrants were coming in the millions and the double-layer fence was constructed in San Diego.

Indeed, in the 1990s, the border was out of control, with illegal entries mostly from Mexico approaching 2 million a year. But since then, we've dramatically strengthened enforcement and brought far greater control to our border. Since 9/11, we have nearly tripled the size of the Border Patrol, we have deployed sensors and aerial drones across the border, and have developed better ways to analyze data and smuggling patterns, which help direct Border Patrol resources to where they are needed. And, yes, we have constructed hundreds of miles of fence along the border – primarily in urban areas, where this fencing is most useful in securing local communities and in helping the Border Patrol catch illegal border crossers. These placements of tactical infrastructure at strategic places along the border, among other factors, have helped CBP gain far greater operational control over the border than ever before.

In addition, the Border Patrol and CBP have evolved their strategy for gaining control of the border – first, through such 1990s-era efforts as Operation Gatekeeper, and more recently under the Bush and Obama Administrations the change to delivering legal consequences to illegal border crossers. Since 2005, CBP has almost entirely stopped voluntarily returning Mexican illegal border crossers, and instead has utilized legal tools such as Expedited Removal, formal removal, referrals to the Department of Justice for criminal prosecution, and deportations into the interior of Mexico or to other parts of the border, so as to disrupt human smuggling operations. Moreover, in addition to CBP's "Consequence Delivery System," U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has also stepped up its targeting of human smuggling organizations and their financial facilitators.

These enforcement efforts by both CBP and ICE, as well as the prosecutors within the Department of Justice (DOJ), have been extraordinarily successful in bringing greater operational control to the border. It is now far harder to cross, and the economics of human smuggling demonstrate this: It now costs 12 times more in real dollars to hire a "coyote" than 15 years ago. And, most surveys of deported individuals in Mexico show that people, once deported, are not generally trying again – deterrence is a

reality. And, no doubt, the Trump Administration's efforts to strengthen this deterrent will have (and is already having) additional impact.

But this only tells part of the story. The more important part of the story is that Mexico is changing dramatically. Over the past two decades since the implementation of the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA), Mexico has grown into the world's 11th largest economy. It is deeply integrated with ours through cross-border infrastructure, supply chains, and integrated bi-national manufacturing platforms, all facilitated by binational efforts to reduce barriers to commerce at the border – efforts that have spanned both the Bush and Obama Administrations, as well as Administrations of different political parties in Mexico. As a result, Mexico is now our third largest trading partner, and this dramatic expansion of binational trade has been extraordinarily good for the United States, creating huge wealth and large numbers of jobs here. But in addition, it has been good for Mexico and its economy, and the broader North American economy (including the U.S., Mexico, and Canada) is now the most competitive, dynamic regional economy in the world. As a result, there are now good jobs for Mexicans in Mexico – and thus, many more reasons for Mexicans to stay with their families in Mexico. This was certainly true during our economic crisis of 2008-09, but it remains true today.

And, there are fewer Mexicans around to take those jobs – as Mexico is an aging society, with the number of senior citizens in Mexico now more than double what it was in the 1990s. Arguably, the huge explosion of Mexican migration to the U.S. in the 1990s was demographically based, with many young people without opportunities in Mexico seeking them in the U.S. This situation is now very different, with fewer Mexicans now available to take larger pool of jobs available in Mexico.

What's the result of all this? According to the Pew Research Center, more Mexicans now leave the U.S. than head north, and border apprehensions of Mexicans are the lowest in decades – with overall border apprehensions now 75% less than at the high-water mark of 2000, when 1.6 million people were apprehended by the Border Patrol. Moreover, the undocumented population in the United States has been stable at 11-12 million for a decade, with some studies showing it is actually declining – as fewer Mexicans are coming, and more are leaving. Current estimates indicate that up to 75% of the current undocumented population has been here for 10 years or more – in other words, they came to the United States a long time ago.

Simply put, fewer people – in particular, Mexicans – are coming across our border illegally than in decades, and our border authorities are catching and removing most who try. The immigration and border security "crisis" that was imagined and debated during the recent presidential campaign simply does not exist, and is a relic of the past – an old leftover "talking point" from the 1990s that does not reflect current reality. Of course, some Mexicans do still try to cross, and some do get past CBP – but this is not a sign of systemic border enforcement failure any more than does the continuing occurrence of robberies necessarily indicate the systemic failure of an urban police force. The reality is we do not have a border security crisis involving illegal migration from Mexico; nor do we have an uncontrolled flood of people from Mexico coming to take our jobs. That talking point is a relic of the past, and billions of taxpayer dollars should not be thrown at an old talking point that no longer reflects today's reality.

This is not to say there aren't pressing challenges at our border, however – the threat of terrorism, the flow of illegal drugs, transnational organized crime, and the Central American migration crisis. But as noted above, the Wall will not actually address any of these actual challenges.

Indeed, the Central American migration challenge illustrates the point. Rather than the imagined fictional crisis involving Mexican immigrants streaming across our border to take our jobs, the actual migration crisis involves thousands of migrants from Central America's "Northern Triangle" – El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras – who are fleeing brutal gang violence, extreme poverty, malnutrition, or environmental and agricultural catastrophe, and who are seeking asylum protection here. Roughly half of these migrants are women and young children escaping desperate circumstances, facing the real possibility of death or rape if they stay. Others are fleeing extreme poverty in remote regions where education ends at the sixth grade and families are limited to one meal a day.

America obviously cannot solve all the economic problems of Central America, but under U.S. and international law, all migrants are afforded the opportunity to apply for asylum protection if they make it to U.S. soil. If U.S. immigration officials make an initial determination that the migrants have a "credible fear" of harm back home, they are referred to U.S. immigration courts for a full hearing on their asylum claim. Unaccompanied children who reach the U.S. are quickly either placed in foster care or with U.S.-based relatives while their asylum claims are heard in court. Given the dangerous conditions in Central America, nearly half these asylum claims ultimately succeed in the immigration courts.

Far from evading authorities, most of these migrants from Central America want to be caught by the Border Patrol, so they can claim asylum. This is very different from the immigration crisis that President Trump seems to imagine, where undocumented Mexicans cross the border and go into hiding. As I stated earlier, this does of course happen, but fewer Mexicans are doing this than at any time in the last few decades. We do not have a border security crisis involving an uncontrolled flood of Mexicans trying to cross into the United States.

Instead, what we have is a humanitarian crisis involving kids and families fleeing violence, extreme poverty, and environmental crisis in Central America. And this humanitarian crisis is leading to a crisis of our immigration system, which is now bursting at the seams from processing this influx of people from Central America (as well as some people from other areas, such as Haiti and Cuba). Currently, there is a 500,000-case backlog in the immigration courts – with many cases pending for five years or more. This backlog ripples its way through the system because we can't send people back who have pending asylum claims, as that would violate U.S. and international law and endanger asylum seekers with legitimate fears of harm. Additionally, under relevant legal precedents, basic kindness, and ordinary common sense, we can't and shouldn't incarcerate these asylum seekers during these lengthy delays that often last many years.

So our immigration system has broken down. And the human smugglers in Central America know this, and they tell migrants if they get to the border, all they need to do is make a minimally credible claim for

asylum and they'll be allowed to stay for the many years it takes to fairly resolve it in court. The smugglers aren't wrong.

Spending billions of taxpayer dollars to build a "Wall" isn't going to solve this most pressing problem. Under U.S. and international law, migrants are entitled to have credible asylum claims heard, either by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service's (USCIS) asylum office or by U.S. immigration courts. Simply put, we cannot just bounce kids and families seeking humanitarian protection off a wall, and leave them to their fate on the other side. Not only would this be immoral – leaving kids and families to be harmed by the very people they are seeking to escape – it would be illegal: U.S. and international law mandate that we afford all seeking entry an ability to claim asylum if they have a credible fear of harm in their home country.

Moreover, as a practical matter, even if we were to spend billions of taxpayer dollars to build a Wall along the border, such a Wall wouldn't block these migrants seeking asylum because most now seek entry through our official Ports of Entry along the U.S.-Mexico border, such as San Ysidro, Laredo, or El Paso. You can't just build a wall across Interstate 5 at the border between San Diego and Tijuana – the busiest border crossing in the world. Nor can you build a wall across the Bridge of the Americas between El Paso and Juarez, or cut Laredo off from Nuevo Laredo – unless one wanted to completely cut the United States off from Mexico, our third largest trading partner. This is obviously not a realistic option, and it would be suicidal to the U.S. economy – let alone a draconian act, cutting the close family ties between Americans and Mexicans.

So, whether there's a Wall or not, Central American – and other – asylum seekers will still come, and given the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Central America, they will still be coming in large numbers. And the Wall won't stop it.

Nor will a Wall stop the flow of illegal drugs from Mexico. This is for the simple reason that the vast majority of the heroin, fentanyl, cocaine, and methamphetamine is smuggled through the official Ports of Entry – within the millions of privately owned vehicles (POVs) or commercial trucks that enter the U.S. from Mexico every year – or through the many tunnels that have been constructed by the Sinaloa Cartel or other criminal organizations. These illegal drugs are not generally transported in backpacks through the remote regions between the Ports of Entry. So, again, spending billions of taxpayer dollars to build the Wall also will not stem the flow of illegal drugs into our country.

Bottom line – building a Wall across the U.S.-Mexico border would serve no useful purpose, and it would be particularly useless in addressing the key challenges we are currently facing, including the large flow of migrants seeking protection from violence in Central America, and the ongoing flow of illegal drugs smuggled through our official Ports of Entry.

But continuing the effort to build a Wall – and continuing to demand that Mexico pay for it – will have dire costs. As discussed, it would be an irresponsible waste of billions of taxpayer dollars – diverting funds that could be spent actually addressing real, as opposed to fictional, border security issues. But in addition, as we have seen vividly over the last few months, the rhetoric over the Wall is needlessly poisoning the U.S. relationship with Mexico – one of our closest economic and security partners.

Indeed, Mexico plays an indispensable role in managing the northbound migration flows from Central America by apprehending hundreds of thousands of Central Americans and others at the Mexico-Guatemala border and sending home those who don't need humanitarian protection. In 2014, Mexico also largely shut down the "La Bestia" trains that brought thousands of Central Americans – including unaccompanied minors – to our border. Without Mexico doing this, those Central Americans would be at our doorstep, further adding to the strain on our immigration system. Mexico also regularly interdicts "special interest aliens" from the Eastern Hemisphere being smuggled to the U.S. border – some presenting terrorist risks – and works with U.S. authorities to keep them from our border. And, Mexico and the United States work closely together to identify and interdict known or suspected terrorists seeking to fly by air to North America – including through Mexican airports. Without this binational cooperation on fighting terrorism, the American people will be far less safe.

In addition, CBP works closely with Mexican authorities at the U.S.-Mexico border, managing the flow of people seeking to enter the United States through our already-busy official Ports of Entry. Indeed, for example, without Mexican help in Tijuana last year, CBP would have been overwhelmed with a flood of Haitian migrants seeking entry through the San Ysidro Port of Entry – threatening the effective shutdown of the busiest port of entry in the world. Without Mexico's help, we would have had a crisis. Moreover, ICE regularly runs joint investigations with Mexican law enforcement into human smuggling rings, as well as other transnational criminal organizations – and both ICE and DEA work with Mexican law enforcement, military, and intelligence officials within Mexico to dismantle criminal networks and take down cartel leaders.

This deep binational cooperation on managing Central American migration flows, on law enforcement, and on counterterrorism is at risk, given the recent rupture of U.S.-Mexico relations concerning President Trump's effort to build the "Wall" and his unrealistic insistence that Mexico will somehow pay for it. This is especially true, given the political dynamics within Mexico – as Mexico is gearing up for its presidential elections in 2018. If we push to build a Wall that the Mexican people view as insulting or somehow targeted at them, Mexican politicians gearing up for the 2018 elections may cease this close law enforcement cooperation with the United States.

This would not only make America less safe, but it would also result in allowing those hundreds of thousands of Central Americans whom the Mexicans currently intercept at their border to come to our border. Ironically, the misguided effort to keep Mexicans out by building a Wall would likely result only in Mexico allowing more Central Americans to come to our border. And, of course, the worst case scenario is that Mexico in 2018 – responding to the rhetoric about the "Wall" and NAFTA – elects an anti-American president, leading to long-lasting breach in U.S.-Mexico relations that, until very recently, have been extremely close and cooperative, to the benefit of both of our countries. This would be a disaster for U.S. foreign policy and the security of the American people.

So the stakes here are very high, and Congress should oppose the construction of this useless, expensive Wall that could do such long-term damage to U.S. interests. Instead, Congress should use taxpayer dollars more wisely, focusing them on addressing the problems that actually exist – terrorism, illegal

drug flows, transnational organized crime, and the Central American migration crisis – as opposed to the fantasy one that seems to be motivating the proposal to build a Wall.

For example, instead of building a useless "Wall," we should instead focus our resources on re-establishing the rule of law with regard to migratory flows from Central America, while meeting our humanitarian obligations. Specifically, we should focus on the following key steps:

1.) We should spend resources on fixing our immigration system by providing more resources so that immigration courts can efficiently and fairly process asylum claims. This would resolve the huge backlogs that are at the root of our immigration system's crisis and inability to meet the challenges presented by the Central American humanitarian crisis.

2.) We should work to strengthen our existing efforts aiming at cracking down on the smuggling gangs and financial facilitators who prey on vulnerable populations in Central America, as well as those organizations that move special interest aliens presenting a potential terrorist risk. The only way to do this is by deepening our law enforcement cooperation with Mexico, the Central American countries, and key transit countries further south, like Brazil, Panama, and Colombia.

3.) We should work closely with Mexico, the Northern Triangle countries, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to establish a safe, credible, and efficient process for potential migrants to have their humanitarian claims adjudicated in their home countries or within the region. This could take the form of a robust refugee resettlement program for Central Americans or others that would evaluate claims within the region, protect people from harm while they wait, and then resettle those needing protection to other countries, including the United States, but also to Mexico, Chile, or other countries in the Western Hemisphere. This would give desperate people needing protection a legal way of escaping harm – and dry up the demand for the human smuggling organizations that abuse so many people in smuggling them to the U.S. border.

4.) Most importantly, the U.S. government should work with its hemispheric partners to help Central American countries build their institutions to fight corruption, defeat gangs, and develop their economies – in much the same way that the United States rescued Colombia from its crisis as part of Plan Colombia. Over the last few years, Congress has appropriated much to this end – as part of the Alliance for Prosperity – and these efforts should be continued and strengthened. Fundamentally, the only way to truly prevent people from migrating to escape harm or to find a better life for their children is to give them a reason to stay home. This is what happened with Mexican migration – as Mexico's economy grew and provided people a reason to stay in Mexico, fewer Mexicans sought to illegally enter the United States. There is no substitute for this, and the Central American migration problem will continue until people in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras feel safe to stay.

These are all real measures that could actually address the real migration problem – the one involving Central Americans.

Also instead of wasting billions on a useless "Wall," we should also take further steps to deepen counterterrorism cooperation throughout the Hemisphere, fight transnational organized crime, and lessen the supply of and demand for illegal drugs.

Simply put, building this proposed "Wall" makes no sense. It would be a huge waste or taxpayer dollars – a "Golden Fleece" – that, in addition to being useless in addressing the most pressing border challenges, would result in a long-term breach with Mexico, harm America's security against terrorism and organized crime, and result in more Central Americans coming to our border.

For these reasons, Congress should reject the Administration's misguided and counterproductive proposal to build a Wall, and direct that scarce taxpayer dollars be spent in more useful ways more likely to actually address the real challenges we face at our border.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

Mr. DESANTIS. I thank the gentleman. I will now recognize myself for five minutes.

One of the frustrating things with this issue is just it has been a failure theater in this country for over 30 years. I mean, Mr. Judd, you have mentioned it. Ms. Gibboney, the 1986 amnesty, we are going to do an amnesty bill, secure the border, no more illegal immigration. That is going to be a thing of the past. And illegal immigration quadrupled between then and now in terms of the numbers that are here.

In 1996 we were supposed to have an entry-exit visa system implemented, and that is different than this wall issue but there are millions of people who come legally and overstay their visa. To this day, we do not have an entry-exit visa system.

And then in 2006 with the support of people like Senator Hillary Clinton, Chuck Schumer, Joe Biden, Congress overwhelmingly passed the Secure Fence Act, which was supposed to provide 700 miles of double-layered fencing. And in areas where that has been done, it has been very effective, and yet Congress immediately gutted the next year, and we have had about I think 36 miles total.

And so we have got to get it right. We have been toiling with this for decades. Let's get it right and let's do it.

Now, Mr. Camarota, the examples of Israel and San Diego suggest that if you do effective fencing or a wall, that that could actually reduce illegal immigration much more than your estimate. So do you agree—you took a very conservative estimate about how a wall—how much illegal immigration a wall would prevent.

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes, I think it is pretty conservative. The experience with walls is that they do work where they are but where they're not, people tend to go around them. And there are, as you say, visa overstays, which is a very important question. But where they are, yes, they work quite effectively. That's for sure.

Mr. DESANTIS. Now, the strain on the taxpayer of people who come illegally, their medical costs that get borne by the taxpayer usually?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Right. That can often happen. People go up to emergency rooms or otherwise free clinics so that's a big area of cost.

Mr. DESANTIS. Education costs?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Education is another one. We spend about $17,000 on each child in the United States very, very roughly and have may be over a million illegal immigrant children in U.S. schools.

Mr. DESANTIS. And then law enforcement people say, well, people who come illegally don't necessarily commit crimes at a higher or lower level, and I don't know if that is true, but even if it is, that is taxing law enforcement, correct, because those would be people if the border was secured, that law enforcement wouldn't have to worry about it all, correct?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Perfectly reasonable. The data is all over the place on that. It's not clear whether illegals have a higher crime rate. But I think as we've heard today, that's really not the point, is it? If someone's not even supposed to be in the country and they kill someone, that is clearly preventable. And I think that's what frustrates the American people so much.

Mr. DESANTIS. Now, your study, it doesn't even take into account I don't think the noneconomic costs associated with having a porous border and allowing illegal immigration. I mean, you know, drugs, human trafficking, obviously the crime as we have seen, that is not even reflected at all in your study, correct?

Mr. CAMAROTA. No, I didn't include any of the costs for the children of illegal immigrants, too.

Mr. DESANTIS. Okay. So there is clearly—I think with the victims we have seen, I mean, there is immense cost to that goes with that. So you think that—your study, it is probably conservative in terms of the number of illegal entries that it could prevent, but it is also conservative in terms of some of the benefits because you would be talking about drugs, you would be talking about crime, you would be talking about reducing other bad things associated with having a porous border. Is that fair?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes, I think that's fair. I mean, look, a lot of these things you can't put a dollar amount on ——

Mr. DESANTIS. Now ——

Mr. CAMAROTA.—as we have heard.

Mr. DESANTIS.—in terms of paying for it, are there ways, whether it is what Senator Cruz suggested by taking the seized drug asset money, which is billions and billions of dollars, others have said take some of the illegally obtained refundable tax credits by, you know, that is $7–8 billion I think you could save. So do you agree there are ways where that money can be identified and used that don't necessarily involve just having the American taxpayer pay for it directly?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes. You've mentioned two. The other is the tax remittances that flow out of the United States, tens of billions of dollars. Put a tax on them and you could generate income as well.

Mr. DESANTIS. Now, Mr. Judd, I think you agree that when you have areas where these barriers have been effective like San Diego, obviously the bread and butter is still going to be you guys out there, but it really is a force multiplier because one of your agents can then cover a much larger territory if you do have that barrier. Is that right?

Mr. JUDD. With a barrier, it's estimated that all we need is one agent per three, four linear miles. Without a barrier, I need one agent per linear mile. So the cost effectiveness of a barrier in manpower is—it's extremely successful. So, yes, we need to—we absolutely need to look at where we have to put the wall, and it will allow us to dictate where crossings take place and allow us to be more effective.

Mr. DESANTIS. And the Secure Fence Act had 700 miles out of the 2,000. Do you think that makes sense? Is that probably enough? I don't think anyone is saying you need 2,000 miles, correct?

Mr. JUDD. I do. In fact, Chief Ron Vitiello recently came out and said the exact same thing that I've been saying for two years, that we need it in strategic locations. And again, that 700 miles is about what it is.

Mr. DESANTIS. Now, you are critic of the catch-and-release policies of the Obama administration it is fair to say?

Mr. JUDD. Yes.

Mr. DESANTIS. So doing a lot of things, we need to support you is important, but you can do all those things, and if there is an administration and power that doesn't really have the will or that ties your hands behind your back, then you can have the best of intentions. It is going to be difficult to get this problem right. Is that accurate?

Mr. JUDD. It is. And what's extremely frustrating is to cross the border at a place other than a port of entry, that's a crime. When we see these individuals, what we're effectively doing through the catch-and-release program, we're driving the criminal smuggling organizations and we're incentivizing them to allow these individuals to cross the border at places other than ports of entry. Every single one of these individuals could legally present themselves at a port of entry, but it's the smugglers who are forcing them to cross at places other than a port of entry, which then puts extreme pressure on us, and it takes people out of the field, which then opens up holes that allows smugglers to bring across even higher cost value traffic such as heroin and potentially even people from Middle Eastern countries. So it's a huge problem.

Mr. DESANTIS. So you think in terms of the issues with not having a secure border, I mean, you think the drugs—you do think drugs are coming across illegally and that's a major issue?

Mr. JUDD. I know they are. And in fact, if we really think that more drugs are coming across the ports of entry, we're absolutely wrong. All you have to do is pull agents out of the field, and that's what smugglers are doing by crossing these family units that are coming over here and asking for asylum. What we're doing is we're creating holes and we're allowing the smugglers to bring across their higher-value products such as heroin.

Mr. DESANTIS. Ms. Gibboney, thank you for your testimony. And this is something that is very personal to you to get this border under control, correct?

Ms. GIBBONEY. Absolutely.

Mr. DESANTIS. And I think you have said before that you would be happy to take your own shovel and work to build it even in the 120-degree heat?

Ms. GIBBONEY. I was just going to say that. Yes, I would be happy to go and work on the wall myself. I know it's not feasible, but trust me, I would be there.

Mr. DESANTIS. And that is because you don't want to see anyone else to be in your shoes someday?

Ms. GIBBONEY. Never. I—it's such a pain. It's so difficult, especially days like today that I don't even wish it upon the guy that murdered my son. I don't wish this pain on his family. That's how painful. I mean, you would think that I would wish him a lot of harm. I don't. But nobody should have to suffer through something like this because if my son would have been sick, I would have resigned myself that it was his time to go, that it was God's wishes. But my son's life was cowardly taken.

Mr. DESANTIS. And I think you also mentioned in your testimony, and this is going to be an issue that we are going to have to come on in a different hearing I think, but your son's murderer is in prison, will eventually get out. You are worried that California

may not notify ICE. And, you know, we have had Jamiel Shaw here, who is also from California. You probably know Jamiel.

Ms. GIBBONEY. Yes.

Mr. DESANTIS. And, you know, you had, you know, illegal aliens, they were involved in criminal activity, released by the State, and then murdered Jamiel Shaw. We had Casey Chadwick, her mother here last year, who you had a guy from Haiti who is illegally in the country, served a sentence for manslaughter. I think it was 12, 13 years. Connecticut, ICE did not send him back, released, and then he killed Casey. So that is going to be an issue I think that we are going to have to get right because if you know someone has already served a sentence, they are not here legally, releasing them into society to me puts the American people in grave risk. And so I think you are right to be concerned about it. We want to work with you to make sure that these States are working with ICE so that we are not letting dangerous people out.

I have gone over my time and I will give indulgences to my friend from California and I will recognize him now.

Ms. GIBBONEY. Thank you.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I would really—in Mr. Judd's comments earlier and to the degree you can help us with this and your members, it would be wonderful if we could get, knowing the passion involved—and I don't want to put words in your mouth, but your original testimony to depoliticize as much as possible. Having spent a good deal of time when I was in the State Legislature in California researching public works projects that are so-called mega-projects, that is any project over $1 billion, they are just fraught with concerns from an implementation standpoint, your point about where it is.

So it would be my wish that perhaps as an opportunity for us in a dispassionate, nonpartisan way look at just the engineering and from the security experts the best return on investment. And to that regard it has to be at least considered where the money will come from, whether the money will come from other parts of Homeland Security or whether it will come from NIH, which has equally compelling parent stories about people losing their lives because we haven't invested there. So that is an overall context.

First, Mr. Chairman, I would like unanimous consent to enter into the record the Cato report that Mr. Camarota referenced, not the most liberal organization in the world. The title of the report is "The Border Wall Cannot Pay for Itself." So I would like to enter that into the record.

Mr. DESANTIS. Without objection.

Mr. DESAULNIER. And, Ms. Gibboney, the comments about your concerns from California, having a good relationship and then being from California with the Governor's office and with the Attorney General and other public safety people, we have differences of opinion respectfully, but to the degree that it is appropriate, I would like to also work with the chairman to make sure that we communicate appropriately with you about the release of your son's perpetrator of that crime. So I'm happy to work with that with the difference that we have, some differences of opinion, but as appropriate, I would be happy to.

Mr. Stodder, you have a lot of experience in this field, as I said earlier, in big public works projects, usually get a needs assessment, extensive peer-reviewed need assessment so you get risk assessments. You let the engineers do their job, tell them what the objective is. You let the experts like Mr. Judd and Homeland Security have their input. With your extensive experience, are we at that point yet to go ahead and make a judgment that this is—realizing there are dueling ideological think tanks that are offering their own perspective, including some that you would have an unexpected—like the Cato Institute—view of it?

Mr. STODDER. I think we're at a position right now to know for a fact that a Federal program like this will have massive cost overruns. We know that for a fact. We know that the wall, whatever the estimates, whether it's $15 billion, $22 billion, $70 billion, we actually have no idea what a wall would actually cost.

The thing that I do know is that—I mean, I'm with Mr. Judd in the sense of I think the way to secure the border is to have the right blend of different things that we do, whether it be Border Patrol personnel, technology sensors and drones, fencing, also investigations as well, investigations of human smuggling networks and financial facilitators of those networks. You have to have a blend of all of them. And I think the fallacy I think of the wall is to think that, well, this is just one size that's going to fit all. We're just going to put a giant great wall across the southern border except for the ports of entry. So let's not forget the ports of entry and the stuff that comes in through the ports of entry.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Stodder, though, my comment is just to the dispassionate analysis from law enforcement experts, Homeland Security experts, and engineers. Has there been any of the due diligence done that you would expect ——

Mr. STODDER. No, not that I'm ——

Mr. DESAULNIER.—for similar public works?

Mr. STODDER. Not that I'm aware of. And I think it's something that absolutely need to be done. I mean, it needs—we need to focus—I think we need to get the pros from the Border Patrol and from ICE and others together to sort of thing through what's the right blend in any particular sector area.

And, I mean, I'm not a person that would say—I mean, I am as strongly enforcement-oriented as the next person, having served in both Bush and Obama. I just don't—I think—and it could be that additional fencing is required in certain areas in strategic locations. It did a world of good in San Diego certainly. But I just think the idea of putting a wall across the entire border I think without further deeper analysis is misguided.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Okay. I have got two quick quotes from you that I want you to respond to, both about the sentiment expressed here in these quotes in regards to illegal immigration and drug enforcement. Homeland Security John Kelly recently stated that a threat against aviation, quote, "keeps me literally awake at night," yet President Trump has proposed cutting the Transportation Security Administration budget, including a program that supports local police at airports.

The other quote that I would like you to respond to is in February Vice Admiral Charles Ray of the Coast Guard's deputy com-

mander of operations stated, quote, "As a result of lack of resources last year, we were prevented from getting over 580 known smuggling events, and those shipments made their way north." So could you respond to those two quotes?

Mr. STODDER. Sure. Let me take them in reverse order, first with Charlie Ray, who I know well, good guy. I think - I mean, the idea of cutting the Coast Guard in order to build a wall is kind of insane because when you think about it from the perspective that we always thought—in Homeland Security we think about the three borders in the United States, so northern border, southern border, and the Caribbean border. And the more we reduce the resource availability of the Coast Guard, we are opening ourselves up to mass migrations from Haiti, from Cuba, and also for a shift in drug trafficking from the current place where it is, which is the U.S.-Mexican border back to the days of the 1980s and the '90s of movements through the Caribbean. So we have to make sure that the Coast Guard is adequately resourced to handle our third border.

With regard to TSA, I mean, the cuts to TSA—I mean, I'm the first one to admit that, you know, certainly TSA requires some, you know, evaluations to sort of determine, you know, where it spends its money, but yes, the reduction of expenditure on the VIPR teams to help State and local law enforcement not only in airports but also surface transportation is perhaps unwise.

Mr. DESAULNIER. And just a concluding comment, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Cummings can speak to this with more expertise than me, but having spent some experience on this, it is always dangerous I think for us in elected office, irrespective of party, to jump to conclusions about criminality and how to stop it. That needs to be evidence-based. We have some bipartisan agreements on that in other fields. I would suggest that this is one of those opportunities, to be driven by evidence-based research in addition to the engineering aspects of this project, that it is thoroughly peer-reviewed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you. I ask unanimous consent to wave on Mr. Grothman from Wisconsin. He is not a member of the subcommittee and he wanted to participate there.

Without objection, so ordered.

The chair will now recognize Mr. Comer for five minutes.

Mr. COMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I have to say that during the two-week recess I spent the whole time traveling the district, I have a very wide district, very rural, six hours from east to west in my district in southern Kentucky. I had 10 town halls and I don't know how many meetings and how many conversations with people, and the wall always came up.

And there is overwhelming support in my district to build the wall, and that is something that people expect to get done in the very near future. So I had a couple questions first for Mr. Judd.

Would the border wall have mitigated the terrible opioid epidemic we are seeing sweep across America, especially in my rural district in Kentucky?

Mr. JUDD. It absolutely will because, again, we will then dictate where illegal border crossings take place if we build the wall.

Mr. COMER. How many criminal gang members have crossed into the U.S. in the past five years? And do you think the border wall could have reduced that number?

Mr. JUDD. I don't think it could; I know it could. When we catch these individuals that are coming here and asking for asylum, one of the biggest problems that we face is when we have them in the detention facilities, they're actually recruiting—while they're in our custody they're recruiting other individuals to join their gangs, and that's an extreme concern.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Judd, I saw in the newspaper, the Senate Democrats assume a per-mile cost of $36.6 million per mile. Do you agree with that cost estimate?

Mr. JUDD. I don't. I'm not an expert on what the cost will be. I can just tell you how effective it will be. But what I can tell you is that 9/11 cost the government trillions of dollars. We have to—$1 billion, that's a drop in the bucket compared to what happened on 9/11.

Mr. COMER. Obviously that is a concern of every taxpayer and every person that has any type of conservatism is the cost. When you look at the total cost, will all areas of the southern border require new fencing, as some of the opponents have claimed?

Mr. JUDD. It will. It will. We are—to build a proper wall—I'm an advocate of fencing, and again, I'm—it was a bipartisan effort to pass that. But the problem with fencing is it's defeatable. I can bring up a welding torch and I can cut holes in the fence. In fact, that's what happens. I have a brother who's also a Border Patrol agent who spent two years and all he did every day was patched holes in the fence. And so a wall is—cannot be defeated the way a fence can be defeated.

Mr. COMER. What other factors—I guess this is for anyone on the panel. What other factors could have an impact on the total cost of the border wall? Are there things that can be done to build the wall cheaper where we still have the maximum-security impact? Or what other factors would impact the cost or could impact the cost? Anybody?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Well, I mean, obviously one of the key questions is what are the most vital areas, right? There's parts of the border that are not likely to become major smuggling routes, at least for individuals, so we don't need a wall or even a lot of fencing there, maybe just a vehicle barrier. So I certainly don't think that we need a giant wall across the whole border. That's not my position. My position is that there are places where a wall and fencing barriers are vitally important and we don't have them. And we've authorized it in the past. It just—that seems crazy to me. And so I think that's where we should start at the very least.

Mr. JUDD. To address your question, one of the things that I have been impressed with—and again, this is not trying to take a political stance. I'm independent myself. But one thing that I have been impressed with is I've had the opportunity to meet with President Trump face-to-face on four occasions. I've had a telephonic conversation with him specifically about this issue. And one of the things is is, yes, he's come in with preconceived notions, but one thing that I have been very impressed with was, as a businessman,

he has been willing to listen to the experts and what they've had to say.

Now, what his ultimate decision is going to be I don't know, but I have had the opportunity to let him know that it's not 2,000 miles' worth of wall. It's strategic locations. And he's been open to that idea. So I'm hoping that's in fact where he goes because that will drive the cost way down.

Mr. COMER. That's great.

Mr. STODDER. One thing just to add to that a little bit is the—I mean, the unpredictable factors in terms of how you construct a wall like this or even fencing in areas is environmental issues, private lands, all kinds of litigation that could come out of this. I mean, I think we shouldn't—I mean, in any big project like that we cannot be Pollyannaish about how much this is going to cost and how long it's going to take because of the other factors that could go into it.

Mr. COMER. And I have huge concerns about the private property aspects of it, so I would agree with that.

But my time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DESANTIS. I thank the gentleman.

The chair now recognizes Mrs. Demings for five minutes.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for having this very important hearing.

First of all, I want to just say to Ms. Gibboney how sorry I am for your loss. I am the mother of three sons, and I can't imagine what it would be like to not have those hugs and talks and interaction with them, so I'm so sorry ——

Ms. GIBBONEY. Thank you.

Mrs. DEMINGS.—for your loss.

I spent 27 years in law enforcement at the Orlando Police Department, and I can tell you, as a 27-year veteran, I have worked my share of homicides, aggravated assaults, rapes, child molestations, kidnappings, more than I care to admit. And I wish that I could've simply put up a wall to stop it because I would have done that.

A question that came up earlier, what I can also tell you without hesitation is that the overwhelming majority of the people we arrested in those cases were not undocumented immigrants. And so the ranking member is absolutely correct that we do—as we keep America safe, it is my number one priority. We have to be careful that we are not generalizing a certain group of people from a certain place if we are committed to doing this correctly.

Mr. Judd, I also want to thank you for your service. This is not a political issue. It is certainly not for me. I am going to believe that it is not for you. You talked about how important effective border barriers areas are, and just to kind of clear up this for me in my mind, Candidate Trump, when he talked about the walls, that it is going to be hard and concrete, made out of rebar and steel, and that is not the wall you support. Is that correct?

Mr. JUDD. Actually, I absolutely support a wall that can be—that is not defeatable. Again, I ——

Mrs. DEMINGS. This wall, made out of steel, rebar ——

Mr. JUDD. It cannot ——

Mrs. DEMINGS.—and ——

Mr. JUDD. It has to be a wall that cannot be defeated by welding torches. We face that problem on a daily basis today, so yes, it has to be an impenetrable wall as far as ——

Mrs. DEMINGS. So you would support a wall that was 2,000 miles ——

Mr. JUDD. No.

Mrs. DEMINGS.—a concrete wall ——

Mr. JUDD. Absolutely not.

Mrs. DEMINGS.—made out of steel and rebar?

Mr. JUDD. No. I support a wall in strategic locations, which will then allow us to dictate where illegal border crossings take place.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Okay. When you say us, who exactly are you referring to?

Mr. JUDD. The United States Border Patrol.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Okay. All right. Mr. Stodder, I understand of course that you have worked on border issues in the Department of Homeland Security for 15 years under two administrations. Thank you so much for your service as well. And you have stated that we have greatly improved our border security against the most pressing threats to public safety, including terrorism, transnational organized crime, and we have established far greater control over illegal immigration on our southwest border than in any other time over the last four decades. Can you explain in more detail—I don't think we can talk about it enough how we have greatly improved our border security, or in other words, what has changed?

Mr. STODDER. Sure.

Mrs. DEMINGS. What did we not have four decades ago that we now do?

Mr. STODDER. Yes, I mean I guess what I can speak to is since when I served in the Bush administration in the years after 9/11 and then also serving in the Obama administration, there's been a bipartisan consensus, both administrations and in Congress, to strengthen border enforcement. We have tripled the size of the Border Patrol. We have deployed sensors, aerial drones across the border. We have put fences, secure fences in important strategic locations in the border. Are more fences needed in different places? I don't doubt it. But I think that's a question for the local Border Patrol sector chiefs to determine in their particular areas of responsibility what the right mixture of personnel, technology, and infrastructure really is.

The other thing is that I think ICE, U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, has become far more effective in going after human smuggling organizations and going after their financial facilitators. So our investigative capabilities are also fairly strong.

Now, here's the other thing that—I think to focus on here. Number one, with regard to Mexican immigration, you have to think in terms of the undocumented population in the United States, which is declining. It's around 11 million people right now down from about 12 million people 10 years ago. Less than half of the population now—it was just announced the other day—is Mexican. So that population is now mostly visa overstays. It's the—less than half is the Mexican population, and it's declining.

The numbers of people who are coming across the border now—the Border Patrol is regularly apprehending about 400,000 people

at the border every year down from 1.6 million when I started back in the first—in the Bush administration after 9/11. About half of those people are from Central America. So Central Americans who are coming up, and those folks either—whether they're apprehended by the Border Patrol or by the Office of Field Operations at the port of entry, most of those folks are actually claiming asylum because they're coming from—they're fleeing violence or they're fleeing other difficulties in Central America or they've been told to do so by the smugglers. Some are legitimate, some are not, but all of them are entitled to a day in court in their immigration courts if they pass a credible fear screening and about 90-something percent of them pass credible fear.

So what I would say is that we have become far more effective at policing the flow of people coming from Mexico. Mexico has changed economically so more people are staying home, fewer people are coming, but we still have serious problems. And the serious challenge that we're facing now in terms of migration is Central America. And that's straining our resources because people are claiming asylum, but there are 500,000-person backlogs in our immigration courts, and that's what causes CBP and ICE to have to release those folks into the United States pending their claims.

So if we were to spend it—you know, the first billion dollars I would spend in border enforcement probably would be going towards the immigration courts to staff those courts so we can actually expeditiously and efficiently process asylum claims so we don't have to have people in the United States for the length of five, six, seven years that it takes often to process an asylum claim. And that would send a message to the smugglers I think to say this is not a free pass to come to the United States.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Thank you so much. Mr. Chairman, thank you so much for the additional time. I yield back.

Mr. DESANTIS. You mentioned asylum. I mean, do you think that Congress needs to relook at how some of those statutes operate so that we can kind of not incentivize so many people to come in and make claims that really aren't meritorious?

Mr. STODDER. It's a difficult question. I mean I think—I mean, the way the system works right now is that people—I mean, kids who come unaccompanied don't have to go through the credible fear screening; they just come in so—if they're coming from Central America, not from Mexico.

But I mean the issue of whether credible fear should be looked at again I think is a difficult, tricky question because I think the reality is if—I mean, the stakes of being wrong, of a U.S. CIS Citizenship and Immigration Services officer being wrong in determining somebody does not have credible fear can result in certain circumstances of somebody going back to El Salvador or Honduras and being killed. So the stakes are high in terms of how we think about the credible fear test.

Now, having said that, I think the statistics are of people coming from El Salvador and Honduras and to a lesser extent Guatemala, about 95 percent of them make it through credible fear screening

---

Mr. DESANTIS. Okay

Mr. STODDER.—and then the immigration court is 50 percent ——

Mr. DESANTIS. Yes, let me recognize ——

Mr. STODDER. Yes.

Mr. DESANTIS.—Mr. Duncan for five minutes.

Mr. STODDER. Sure.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you most of all for the great job you do chairing this subcommittee. Let me just say, Ms. Gibboney, I have noticed that some Members of the Congress and many of these Saturday night comedians try to make jokes about the wall. It is not much of a joke to you, is it?

Ms. GIBBONEY. No, it is not. It's—I don't see what's funny about it because they have not been affected personally because if they would, they would think differently also.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, I wish that everybody could have heard your testimony. I have always heard that the worst thing that can never happen to you is to outlive one of your children, and certainly you have our condolences.

Let me say this. You know, some people imply or even say that if we try to enforce our immigration laws, that it is cruel or something is wrong with it, but, you know, I noticed in some of the staff material President Netanyahu of Israel, he said, "President Trump is right. I built a wall along Israel's southern border. It stopped all illegal immigration, great success, great idea." Somehow, he can do it and not be criticized, but if we try to do it, there is something wrong with it.

And then also I noticed in the material that I have been given from the staff, I mean even Mr. Stodder said that a border works in certain strategic locations, and I think that makes a lot of sense to me. I know the material we have been given says that just before they built the first wall in San Diego there were approximately 700,000 apprehensions, and this last year it was down to 31,000. So a wall has been very, very effective there.

You know, the situation is this. You know, there are two statistics that tell the whole story. With only 4 percent of the world's population, we buy almost 22 percent of the world's goods. We have a standard of living far beyond what anybody else has, so you certainly can understand why so many hundreds of millions, maybe even a couple of billion want to come here.

And the second statistic is that is that 58 percent of the people in the world have to get by on $4 or less a day. I mean, most people in this country don't realize how blessed we are, how fortunate we are. And you can understand why so many people want to come here. And we sympathize with all these people.

Americans are the kindest, most generous, most sympathetic people in the world, but we simply can't open our borders and just take in everybody who wants to come because our hospitals, our jails, our sewers, our schools, our roads, our whole infrastructure, and not to even mention our economy, we couldn't handle the rapid influx of people that would come here. And there is no other country that faces the problem that we face to the extent that we face it. And so it is not cruel. It is just common sense.

And, Dr. Camarota, the staff says that there is a recent National Academy for Sciences' study that estimated the net fiscal drain of each illegal crosser was $74,722. Are you familiar with that study?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes. Let me be clear. What the National Academy did was calculate the drain or fiscal benefit depending if someone's very skilled ——

Mr. DUNCAN. Right.

Mr. CAMAROTA.—by education for each immigrant. So what I did was just apply that to the skill level of illegal immigrants to come up with an estimate how big it would be. So I took their estimates by education and looked at the education of the illegals and it comes to about $75,000 per illegal.

Mr. DUNCAN. Then also we have been provided with figures that the IRS is paying out billions in improper payments to illegal immigrants every year through the use of refundable tax credits. Have you looked at that?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes, particularly the refundable portion of the additional child tax credit, the IRS a while ago made the determination that they could pay that out and they didn't have to worry so much about illegal status. So, yes, they are clearly paying hundreds of millions if not billions out to illegal immigrants. There's just—there's no question. It's also the case that they pay some out in the earned income tax credit ——

Mr. DUNCAN. Right.

Mr. CAMAROTA.—but less.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, final question, let me ask you this. For years we have seen this figure and even in the material that we have been given for this hearing, it says 11 million illegal immigrants. Almost everybody I talked to estimates that it is way more than that, way more. And we are really probably talking $20 or $30 million. But you have studied this in detail and I haven't. Tell me what you feel is the most accurate figure in that regard?

Mr. CAMAROTA. It's important to recognize that it is illegal and difficult to measure and there is a margin of error. But if you're asking me, I think it's $10 to $12 million. Could it be a little bit higher? Yes, it could be, but very briefly, the way we arrive at a number like that is we know about how many legal immigrants there should be in the United States, and then we look at the data the Census Bureau collects that identifies immigrants and then we subtract that out and we get a residual. And that number is about 10 million. And so then you think, well, maybe we're missing 10 percent based on some of the research, but it could be 20 percent. But you can see how it doesn't get up to $20 million.

Is the Census Bureau data itself any good? I'm going to argue yes just because when we look at what the data shows us about school enrollment or we look at what the data shows us about birth, it pretty well lines up with administrative data. So I think that those estimates are right.

Mr. DUNCAN. Let me stop you and ask ——

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes.

Mr. DUNCAN.—one last thing.

Mr. CAMAROTA. Sure.

Mr. DUNCAN. How many millions have we allowed to immigrate here legally over let's say the last 50 years?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Well, the total illegal—the total foreign-born is about 45, 46 million today in 2017 and about 10 or 12 of that is illegal. So there are about 33 million, 32 million legally people present in the United States who are foreign-born. Now, some have become citizens, but that total foreign-born ——

Mr. DUNCAN. Well ——

Mr. CAMAROTA.—legal is about $32 million.

Mr. DUNCAN. My point is that no other country in the world has even come close ——

Mr. CAMAROTA. True.

Mr. DUNCAN.—to allowing this many people to immigrate here legally as we have. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DESANTIS. I thank the gentleman. Time is expired.

The chair will now recognize our guest from Wisconsin for five minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay. I was going to do a follow-up but I will just ask you briefly. You are confident—how long has that 11 million figure been out there? How long if I would ask you or somebody in your position how many people are here illegally would we hear the 11 million figure?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Well, we think that it's been around that number for like eight years now because every year we take the American Community Survey or the current population survey and try to estimate it.

Mr. GROTHMAN. What was it in the year 2000?

Mr. CAMAROTA. I think the general estimate is somewhere around eight million.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I am not sure that is right but okay.

I am going to ask you guys some questions as far as the overall cost. Is there any estimate out there the amount of money we are paying every year for health care for people who are here illegally?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Do you want to count like U.S.-born children or just the illegal immigrants? Because a lot of children of illegal immigrants are signed up for Medicaid, so that would be a big cost anyway, so you'd have to ——

Mr. GROTHMAN. Give me either estimate.

Mr. CAMAROTA. It's several billion dollars a year for treatment for the uninsured because the illegal population makes up a large share of the uninsured.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay. Several billion, that would be, what, five billion?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes, that would be a perfectly ——

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay. I know it is difficult to get records—are there any estimates that agree to which income-based transfer payments are going to people illegally? I hear anecdotal evidence from income maintenance workers in my district that they are getting people that are illegal coming here. Do we have an estimate on the total amount of what we call welfare benefits claims of people here illegally?

Mr. CAMAROTA. We do have some estimates. Remember that an illegal immigrant can collect benefits on behalf of a U.S.-born child. If we include that, then those numbers certainly run, you know, to over $10 billion if you count things like the U.S.-born child on Med-

icaid. A family, for example, can get food stamps even though the parents are illegal because the food stamps come in the name of the U.S.-born children. So there's a lot of that going on.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Don't you believe that there are a lot of people, even adults, who are signing up for benefits who may not be citizens?

Mr. CAMAROTA. May not be citizens?

Mr. GROTHMAN. I hear that.

Mr. CAMAROTA. Sure. There are a lot of legal immigrants who also access the welfare system. I mean, I could give you my estimates for those things. I don't have them right in front of me, but yes, legal immigrants make extensive ——

Mr. GROTHMAN. How about illegal immigrants?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Illegal immigrants, yes. We know from the survey of income and program participation where they pretty well identify themselves as illegal based on some questions that more than half of all households headed by illegal immigrants have someone in that household signed up for some kinds of benefits, typically the non-cash programs.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Could you give me the total amount if you had to throw out a number there?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Total amount that illegal immigrants are receiving in income transfers, cash, and non-cash type stuff? Is that what ——

Mr. GROTHMAN. Right, right.

Mr. CAMAROTA. Oh, you know, that would be well over $10 billion at least, more than that, most of it from the Federal Government.

Mr. GROTHMAN. And of course most of that is going to U.S. citizens ultimately, right?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Well, it depends on how you view it, right, because if you have a family getting food stamps, the parent certainly can feed themselves on those food stamps.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay.

Mr. CAMAROTA. If the family lives in public housing because they have one U.S.-born child, which is certainly allowed, then the parents are benefiting. So depends on how you want to calculate or view that.

Mr. GROTHMAN. But most systems don't cut off U.S.-citizen children from welfare benefits?

Mr. CAMAROTA. That's right, they don't, and that's why illegal immigrants can use those programs through their U.S.-born children.

Mr. GROTHMAN. It's hard to get the numbers. Do you know how many people in our criminal justice system, how many people in local jails, prisons are illegal immigrants? Do we have hard numbers on that?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Incomplete numbers.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Substantial? I mean, when I am talking to people who run these facilities, they think it is a significant situation even in Wisconsin, but do you have any estimates?

Mr. CAMAROTA. You may remember the Federal Government is paying out lots of money already through the SCAAP program so

that might be a place to begin to look at what share of inmates ——

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay.

Mr. CAMAROTA.—in jails and prisons so it's big.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I will give you a question. Do you know what the age of consent is in other countries around the world?

Mr. CAMAROTA. I believe—I know it's less than U.S. I don't know ——

Mr. GROTHMAN. Does anybody know about the age of consent is in Mexico, for example?

Mr. Stodder, you have been involved in this area quite a while. Do you know?

Mr. STODDER. I don't know the age of consent in Mexico.

Mr. GROTHMAN. That is shocking. Well, obviously, when we have people coming from another culture it is important, you know, they adapt to our culture. How long were you involved in this game, Mr. Stodder, that you don't know that?

Mr. STODDER. The age of consent in Mexico?

Mr. GROTHMAN. Yes.

Mr. STODDER. It's never been presented to me to know what the age of consent is in Mexico. I know that the age of consent in the United States is 18.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Well, it varies from State to State, but yes ——

Mr. STODDER. Yes, California.

Mr. GROTHMAN. They are 18 in some areas, 16 in others. Isn't it age 12 in many parts of Mexico? Do you view that as a potential problem when people come into this country, men come into this country and are used to living in a culture in which the age of consent is 12? Should people talk about that? Should people be educated about that?

Mr. STODDER. What's the relevance of it? What are you driving at?

Mr. GROTHMAN. Well, I didn't—I am just saying ——

Mr. JUDD. From a law-enforcement standpoint absolutely because what we're doing is we're taking people into our country—the people are coming into our country that have a different set of rules and they're trying to take those sets of rules and apply them here in the United States when that's wrong.

Again, we're talking about illegal acts. We're not talking about legal acts. We're not talking about legal immigration.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Right.

Mr. JUDD. We're talking about illegal immigration. And when illegal aliens come to United States—and that's why Ms. Gibboney and Ms. Espinoza are here today is because these individuals come from countries that do not enforce their laws, and they come to the United States, and because they were allowed to break our laws, they think that they can break any law and they continue to perpetrate more crimes upon U.S. citizens.

Mr. GROTHMAN. And Mr. Stoddard can't figure it out but you see a danger in people coming to this country who don't know what our laws are with regard to the age of consent and may think the laws in this country are the same as the laws in other countries. And for those of us who care about women or young girls, we might view that as a concern.

Mr. JUDD. Well, we do. In fact, all you have to look at is what happened in the school in Virginia where that young girl was raped by two people who crossed the border illegally who were ultimately released under the catch-and-release program, which is why I'm so anti-against the catch-and-release program. But we see that people who break our laws willfully then try to apply their set of rules that they brought from their country into our own country, and that creates a huge drain on law enforcement.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Not just a physical drain but a drain on the certainly the victims. Certainly ——

Ms. ESPINOZA. Yes, and I do want to state also that not enforcing our laws encourages more breaking of the laws. And we certainly do not want to import more crime.

Mr. STODDER. I don't think there's any evidence to indicate that kids under the age of 18, whatever their age, whatever the age of consent in their home country is, makes them more or less likely to commit crimes once they're here. I think the data is not there. I don't think that's what the data says.

The one thing I will say about the age of consent that is important to think about, this Congress to think about is with regard to the Central American unaccompanied minors who are coming here, that when they—if they are under 18, if they're coming unaccompanied ——

Mr. GROTHMAN. Yes, I am running out of my time here. I am well past my time and the chairman has indulged me. But I just will say it concerns me that people are not being informed what our culture and our laws are who are coming here from other countries who think it is perfectly okay to have sex with a 13-year-old if that is the culture they are coming out of. But thank you.

Mr. DESANTIS. The gentleman's time is expired. I will recognize myself for five minutes.

Mr. Judd, it has been reported there has been a dramatic drop in illegal crossings over the past several months. Do you attribute that to the new posture being utilized by the Trump administration and Secretary Kelly?

Mr. JUDD. I know it is. And in fact when we interview these individuals that are currently crossing the border it's—is they know that the laws are going to be enforced. The simple promise that the laws are going to be enforced have driven down—but I must warn you, we're in a honeymoon period. We have to continue to enforce laws because if we don't, illegal immigration is going to go back up.

Mr. CAMAROTA. Can I say one quick thing about that?

Mr. DESANTIS. Sure.

Mr. CAMAROTA. What's interesting about this drop is, look, conditions haven't changed in Central America, just a lot more—fewer people have come. What that reminds us is migration is a choice. People's lives might be difficult but the fact is they make a choice to come. Things haven't changed. A lot of people say, look, people are compelled to come, they have no other option, but just the President's rhetoric mostly has affected people's behavior. Imagine if we follow it up with actual policy.

Mr. STODDER. I think it's too soon to make a judgment on that because I think the other way of looking at it could ——

Mr. DESANTIS. Let me just ——

Mr. STODDER. Yes.

Mr. DESANTIS. I just have a couple of things I have got to get to. I appreciate it.

Mr. Judd, crime on the border, a real problem?

Mr. JUDD. It's a huge problem. In fact, if you look at Border Patrol agents, we are assaulted at a rate higher than any other law enforcement agency in the entire United States. And so, yes, border crime is a huge issue.

Mr. DESANTIS. And because I think Mr. Stodder had mentioned the cartel leaders, they are not exactly crossing the border, but does that mean that the cartels aren't a major problem on the border or do you think they are?

Mr. JUDD. No, I know the—cartels—when I joined the Border Patrol in 1997 almost 20 years ago, we had mom-and-pop smuggling organizations. That does not happen anymore. Every single facet of crime is controlled by very, very dangerous cartels, pathologically dangerous. They have no regard for human life whatsoever, as we currently see in Mexico. And unfortunately, that is starting to spill over into the United States because they operate here in the United States now whereas they didn't do that 20 years ago.

Mr. DESANTIS. Dr. Camarota, let me ask you this. Do you agree that there are clearly a lot—a number of immigrants—I mean, legal immigrants I think—who have a very positive economic impact on our society?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Especially in the fiscal area, the most educated immigrants are definitely of fiscal benefit, paying more in taxes than they use in services, but that does not describe the typical illegal immigrant.

Mr. DESANTIS. Right, so there's a difference between people who are coming through the legal channels and it may not always be enforced, but our laws that people, when they come here are legally, are not to be a public charge. They have to support themselves, correct?

Mr. CAMAROTA. That is what the law—though it's defined in a very narrow way so it's not that meaningful.

Mr. DESANTIS. So you are talking about people who are going through obviously unauthorized channels, and there is even a difference between the visa overstays versus the border crossers. The border crossers would have even less skills and less education ——

Mr. CAMAROTA. They'd be the least educated, right.

Mr. DESANTIS. Yes, okay.

Ms. Espinoza, you have seen a variety of these issues or these tragedies over many, many years and you have been an activist, so can you just kind of, you know, crystallize for us the importance of this issue and how it affects some of the human lives that you have been able to work with over these many years?

Ms. ESPINOZA. Yes, Mr. Chairman, thank you. And what troubles us most is that all of these crimes and killings are preventable. And we only deal with the killings of Americans. However, child molestation and rape is very high as well. You can see stats in North Carolina. And what is also very troubling is the fact that our own victims, American victims, are misguided through the system. And Agnes here was not allowed to give an impact—a victim's impact statement.

So securing the border and enforcing laws—and I am for border wall and fencing just like Mr. Judd here. And I want to say also

——

Mr. DESANTIS. You agree with us I think most of the witnesses you don't need to do a 2,000-mile one ——

Ms. ESPINOZA. Correct.

Mr. DESANTIS.—because there are some areas that—so you just basically do it in areas where it can stop the crossing?

Ms. ESPINOZA. Absolutely.

Mr. DESANTIS. Yes.

Ms. ESPINOZA. Yes, sir, and that's common sense. And I don't want this issue to be politicized. And I'm a former Democrat. My father was born in Mexico. I've been in the strawberry fields since I was eight years old so this is not a political issue.

When we—my husband and I Tim Lyng started this Remembrance Project, we looked at the issue. It was about an officer in Houston, Texas, who was shot by an illegal alien and there was a lawsuit brought against the city by his widow, who was also a police officer, Joslyn Johnson. And that was about sanctuary cities, never heard of it before, we were not political, and here we are.

And again, I just stress to you that just let's look at the issue here, not politicize American lives. And we have seen so much. And again, I appreciate your time, but I just can't tell you how much—if you would just please look at the issue and focus on keeping Americans safe.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you.

Ms. ESPINOZA. Thank you.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you. I appreciate that.

I am going to recognize my friend from California for five minutes.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you and everyone who joined the hearing, including all of the witnesses.

I more taken by the fact that a lot of what we are dealing with here is symptoms of a larger problem, and that is for this country and particularly for Congress to come up with thoughtful immigration policy and reform. In a global economy where the world has clearly changed, as the chairman said in his introductory comments, things have changed. In this country, immigration and diversity is the basis of our success and our birth, and it's been part of our success ever since and differentiates us from every other country in the world.

And having said that, we need to have immigration policy that is right, that protects against the kind of criminality that we have heard about, both personally and statistically today.

So I just want to read one quote because Senator Moynihan many years ago in Congress across the other side of the aisle once famously said "Everybody is allowed their own opinions but not their own facts." And for some weird reason we have now entered into a period whether it is alternative facts or not, we fight opinions, period. So that is why maybe this is an opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to do what we have recently been able to do on a bipartisan level when it comes to the adjudication process and criminality is to deal with evidence-based research.

And if all of you could help us with that, knowing of your very strong passions and opinions and different perspectives, I think we would get to the point that the chairman started this committee on, is our failure to come up with an immigration policy that is effective, that allows people to come to this country that the Statue of Liberty proudly welcomes that want to come here and have opportunity but under conditions that we set as a nation in terms of policy to both protect the citizens who are here now but enable those incoming immigrants to flourish as the Founders wanted them to do.

So I just want to read one quote because we get into these dueling perspectives with cost from a New York Times Magazine article that was actually quoted by the majority staff and basically corroborating Mr. Camarota's comments and research. But it went on to say, and I quote, "There are many ways to debate immigration, but when it comes to economics, there isn't much of a debate at all. Nearly all economists of all political persuasions agree that immigrants, those here legally or not, benefit the overall economy, and that is not controversial."

He goes on to quote from Heidi Shierholz from the National Policy Institute that says, quote, "There is a consensus that, on average, the incomes of families in this country are increased by a small but clearly positive amount because of immigration," end quote. So I just end my comments in saying maybe this is an opportunity in this relatively poorly attended hearing that all of us could focus on the real issue, that we recognize that immigration is a great benefit to this country and it is a basis of this country's success.

In California there is plenty of research that shows that the reason we are the sixth-largest economy is because we have the most diversity and are the most reflective of the global economy. Having said that, we have to get immigration policy right, so the things that have happened at least statistically are reduced.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, I would again thank you and hope that this is an opening of a new chapter in a bipartisan effort to put our efforts to where it is most effective.

Mr. DESANTIS. I thank the gentleman.

The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Hice, for five minutes.

Mr. HICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Judd, let me begin with you. How did the construction of the multilayer border fence in San Diego back in '96 impact illegal entry into the area?

Mr. JUDD. It moved illegal entry over to Tucson, Arizona, and it caused a huge impact. But what I can tell you, Representative Hice, is that everywhere that we have built a fence, we have been effective. We have been effective in controlling where illegal immigration takes place, which then allows me to be more effective in the number of illegal aliens I take into custody.

Mr. HICE. Do you have any idea how many apprehensions there have been, the difference from before the wall was built in San Diego as to apprehensions now?

Mr. JUDD. Yes. Again, the high watermark was the very late '90s, early 2000s, and San Diego was a fairly busy place. After the

fences were built, the double-layer fences, the effective barriers were built, illegal immigration dropped to next to nothing in San Diego, and it all moved out to the locations where there weren't physical barriers.

Mr. HICE. Yes, let me give you some figures that I found, and you can verify this for me. What we have seen is there were in 1996 but prior to the barrier there were 480,000 apprehensions in 1996. The most recent figure is 2016. There were under 32,000. That is over a 93 percent decrease.

Mr. JUDD. And that is largely due to the enforcement posture which we took in San Diego. Unfortunately, we didn't take that same enforcement posture in the other sectors such as Tucson, Arizona, and so we drove everything out there. But since we have been taking those same types of postures, we've driven down illegal immigration in Tucson as well. So, yes ——

Mr. HICE. What are some of the other postures? I now realize we can't positively quantify the effectiveness totally with the layered wall that has been built, but there is no doubt the correlation. The numbers have dropped drastically, over 93 percent since it was put in place. But what other measures have been taken in San Diego?

Mr. JUDD. Well, the most important measures that we took was not only did we build these barriers, but we promised that anybody that would cross in that particular corridor, we were going to detain them, keep them in custody, and we were going to hold them until they had their deportation hearings, whereas in other locations, if we took them into custody and there weren't—there wasn't bed space with ICE, we would then end up just walking them out our door and letting them go and hope that they would show up for their immigration hearing sometime later on a couple years down the road.

But in San Diego what we did was we used what was called the consequence delivery system, which then anybody that crossed through that corridor we would hold in custody and we would put them through deportation proceedings.

Mr. HICE. Okay. Mr. Camarota, let me ask you. Do you believe that a border wall would help us address the issue of human trafficking?

Mr. CAMAROTA. Yes. I would second what Mr. Judd was saying. Fencing barriers, while in key places would—could make a very enormous difference as a force multiplier and would help us interdict trafficking.

Mr. HICE. Have these discussions come up in various communities where you have had talks on this issue?

Mr. CAMAROTA. I'm not sure I understand. Do you mean do I think that ——

Mr. HICE. Yes, have you brought this up in discussions you have had in the southwest border area specifically with the issue of human trafficking?

Mr. CAMAROTA. The agents that I have spoken to when I have traveled down there all, like Mr. Judd, seem to feel strongly about the wall being helpful.

Mr. HICE. So it would help obviously in multiple ways, be it just illegal individuals or drug trafficking, gangs, human trafficking? You believe it would be helpful across the board?

Mr. CAMAROTA. I think it can be very helpful, sure.

Mr. HICE. Okay. Mr. Judd, let me come back to you as far as—because I'm intrigued with what's happened in San Diego and your experiences overall. What other kind of technologies do you think could be implemented in addition to a physical barrier?

Mr. JUDD. First and foremost—I worked in the busiest sector, which was the Tucson sector. Individually, I ran a team of agents, which was a mobile interdiction team. We were arresting 100 illegal aliens a night. That was a team of five to six individuals, 100 people per night. Those 100 people that we were arresting, 300 people were getting away from us just simply because that's what the number of people that were coming across.

When we started deploying the technologies such as drones, such as more sensors, better scope trucks that had radar on them, when we started deploying that and we became more effective, what we did was we shifted the illegal immigration to other places that didn't have that. So what I'm going to tell you is that it has to be comprehensive because we can't just continue to shift the burden to different sectors.

Mr. HICE. Sure.

Mr. JUDD. We have to ——

Mr. HICE. I get that, but you're talking everything from drones to virtual walls to more border agents.

Mr. JUDD. They all work.

Mr. HICE. All of the above are necessary.

Mr. JUDD. They all work.

Mr. HICE. Okay. Thank you very much, and I appreciate it, Mr. Chairman. I yield.

Mr. DESANTIS. All right. The gentleman yields back.

I want to thank the witnesses for your testimony. We very much appreciate it.

You know, a couple things I think that we got from the hearing, I mean, we are not talking about a 2,000-mile wall. It is going to be basically finishing the job of the 2006 Secure Fence Act, and those are very important locations that can be a force multiplier. Doing that and reducing the flow can reduce burdens on taxpayers on the backend and can also reduce crime, which is obviously very important.

We all saw these crime victims have stories to tell, and these stories need to be told. And the tragedy is that, you know, the Federal Government is partly responsible for these things and that really upsets me. And you have got to do better.

This committee is going to monitor the cost of this thing. You know, we don't want to waste money. But I am convinced that this can be done creatively where you are not just appropriating money but actually using some of the money that is seized or some of these other programs that are clearly running amok and diverting money that was probably a better way to do it.

And then I think, Mr. Judd, physical security, just one aspect, important aspect but just one. We have got to support the Border Patrol. We have got to have good policies so that people know the law is going to be enforced. And we have got to deal with this issue of people who are convicted criminals here illegally being released back into society rather than sent back. We just cannot allow addi-

tional crimes to be committed at that point, and we have seen it time and time again.

So I appreciate everybody's time and testimony, and this is going to be an issue that the committee is going to continue to deal with. So thank you.

And with that, this hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:55 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

CATO AT LIBERTY

APRIL 24, 2017 1:32PM

The Border Wall Cannot Pay for Itself

By ALEX NOWRASTEH *and* DAVID BIER

Recent budget talks between the White House and Congress shows that President Trump puts a high value on funding the construction of a border wall. Crucial to this debate is how much a border wall will cost to construct and maintain. Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) published a brief report purporting to show that building a wall along the southern border would pay for itself if it keeps out only 160,000 to 200,000 border crossers over the next decade. That means the border wall would only have to deter about 9 to 12 percent of all illegal border crossers who would have successfully made it into the United States during that period. The report uses a variety of assumptions that unrealistically lower the cost of the wall as well as inflate the fiscal cost of border crossers.

We used more recent and precise data to update CIS's analysis without altering its methodology. Simply using newer numbers—with no changes to the report's unrealistic underlying assumptions—proves that the border wall cannot pay for itself. Despite fanciful promises to the contrary, a border wall is too expensive and will deter too few illegal immigrants to pay for itself—even under assumptions that are extremely generous to those who support a wall.

Updating CIS' Analysis

The first update was to factor in a more recent estimate of the cost of a border wall. The CIS study chose to rely on a statement made by Senator Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) rather than any actual cost estimate. We used an official estimate from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued after the majority leader's comment. This placed the cost of building a 1,250-mile border wall at $21.6 billion, or $17,280,000 per mile, that includes all costs such as the condemnation of private property through eminent domain. We also include the yearly maintenance costs.

The second is that we adjust CIS' fiscal cost estimate by controlling for the age of the border crossers. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) fiscal cost estimates show that the immigrant age of arrival is vital for estimating their fiscal impact. CIS used the 2010 education level of Mexican illegal immigrants as a proxy for the education level of all future border crossers. We used the March CPS to adjust for this by assuming that the education of future illegal immigrants will be more similar to those arriving in 2015 than 2010. We further divided up the illegal border crossers by age and education to get a more accurate view of their potential fiscal impact.

Using a more recent estimate of the border wall cost as well as the age of entry and education levels for unlawful border crossers shows that the border wall would have to deter the entry of about 1 million illegal immigrants over the next ten years to break even—an estimated 5 to 6.3 *times* as many as CIS estimated. Furthermore, this means that the border wall would have to permanently deter 59 percent of the predicted border crossers over the next ten years to break even. This does not include the cost of any additional enforcement measures such as hiring more border agents, border returns, or border deportations.

Calculating the Fiscal Cost

First, we used the 2016 March CPS to look at the ages and education of new immigrants from Mexico and Central America who comprise virtually all unlawful immigrants who enter as border crossers (Table 1).

Table 1

New Central American & Mexican Immigrants by Age & Education in 2015

	0-24	25-64	65+
Less than HS	18.93%	25.73%	1.94%
HS Grad	10.19%	18.45%	0.49%
SC	2.91%	9.22%	0.97%
College	0.97%	5.83%	0.00%
College+	0.00%	4.37%	0.00%

Source: 2016 March CPS.

Second, we took the average fiscal net present value (NPV) for each education-age cell from the NAS' Table 8-12 (Table 2). We chose Table 8-12 because that was the table chosen by the author of the CIS report.

Table 2

Fiscal Net Present Value of Immigrants by Age of Arrival & Education in 2015

	0-24	25-64	65+
Less than HS	-24,000	-225,500	-265,625
HS Grad	77,625	-105,125	-174,625
SC	156,625	12,375	-161,000
College	210,125	213,750	-179,875
College+	199,375	547,125	-122,375

Source: National Academy of Sciences, averages from Table 8-12.

Third, we used CIS' downward adjustment numbers to diminish the fiscal NPV to account for them being illegal immigrants (Table 3). This is the most objectionable part of the CIS study. Their downward adjustment figure is based on numbers from a notoriously flawed report, assumes a non-discounted household fiscal value is comparable to the NAS' individual level fiscal net present value estimate, adjusts benefits and tax revenues down equally even though illegal immigrants receive virtually zero welfare benefits, and are unadjusted by age. We kept this highly flawed step to show that we did not have to change CIS' methods to get drastically different results. A better downward adjustment figure would decrease government expenditures on illegal immigrants more than their tax payments.

Table 3

Adjustment Downward

	0-24	25-64	65+
Less than HS	0.676	0.676	0.676
HS Grad	0.799	0.799	0.799
SC	0.893	0.893	0.893
College	0.221	0.221	0.221
College+	0.221	0.221	0.221

Source: Center for Immigration Studies.

Fourth, we multiplied each cell by its corresponding cell in the above charts to get the fiscal NPV of illegal immigrants by age, education, and the percentage of immigrants by age/education cell (Table 4). This table is not useful outside of this cost projection as it is merely a means to add together the average NPV of a new border crosser.

Table 4

Fiscal Net Present Value of Immigrants by Age of Arrival & Education in 2015

	0-24	25-64	65+
Less than HS	-3,072	-39,219	-3,487
HS Grad	6,323	-15,494	-677
SC	4,074	1,019	-1,396
College	451	2,752	0
College+	0	5,283	0

Source: Authors' Calculations.

Adjusting for age and education, the average NPV fiscal cost of a new illegal immigrant border crosser is -$43,444, which is 42 percent less than CIS' estimate of -$74,722.

Calculating the Cost of the Border Wall

Calculating the cost of the border wall over the next ten years is the second portion of this model. We use the newer DHS cost estimate, assume all construction costs occur in the first year, and that the length of the new border fence will cover the remaining 1,637 miles of the border where there currently isn't a pedestrian fence. We also included annual maintenance costs not

counted in the CIS estimate for the entire length of the wall (Table 5). Our more realistic ten-year cost estimate for the border wall is $43.8 billion – 2.9 to 3.7 times as high as CIS' estimate.

Table 5

Cost of Border Wall

Year	Construction Costs (Per Mile)	New Fence (Miles)	Border (Miles)	Current Fence (Miles)	Construction Costs (Total)	Maintenance Costs (Per Mile)	Maintenance Costs (Total)	Tota
1	$17,280,000	1,637	1,954	317	$28.3 billion	$864,353	$274,000,000	$28.
2	$17,280,000	1,637	1,954	317	$0	$864,353	$1.69 billion	$1.6
3	$17,280,000	1,637	1,954	317	$0	$864,353	$1.69 billion	$1.6
4	$17,280,000	1,637	1,954	317	$0	$864,353	$1.69 billion	$1.6
5	$17,280,000	1,637	1,954	317	$0	$864,353	$1.69 billion	$1.6
6	$17,280,000	1,637	1,954	317	$0	$864,353	$1.69 billion	$1.6
7	$17,280,000	1,637	1,954	317	$0	$864,353	$1.69 billion	$1.6
8	$17,280,000	1,637	1,954	317	$0	$864,353	$1.69 billion	$1.6
9	$17,280,000	1,637	1,954	317	$0	$864,353	$1.69 billion	$1.6
10	$17,280,000	1,637	1,954	317	$0	$864,353	$1.69 billion	$1.6

Source: DHS, Reuters, Authors' Calculations.

Results

Comparing the adjusted fiscal NPV of -$43,444 to the adjusted wall cost of $43.8 billion reveals that the wall would have to deter just over 1 million illegal immigrants who would have otherwise entered the United States. That means the border wall, by itself, would have to deter about 59 percent of all border crossers who would have otherwise successfully entered. This result only comes from using more updates and specific numbers than CIS did and not by changing their underlying methods.

Three Additional Simulations

We ran three additional simulations to see how CIS' estimate holds up under slightly different assumptions. Our first simulation uses a different fiscal cost estimate. Our second relies on a different assumption about the flow of illegal immigrant border crossers. Our third relies on a different border wall cost of construction estimate.

Our first simulation kept every table above as the same except we replaced Table 2 with the better fiscal cost estimate from Table 6. The new Table 6 contains the fiscal NPV of immigrants for the federal government only and excludes the incremental costs of public goods. This is the best table because the federal government will actually be paying for the wall and because spending on pure public goods does not increase due to more immigrants because they are non-rivalrous and non-excludable. Table 6, combined with the other tables above, produced an average fiscal NPV of -$33,932 for each illegal border crosser. Plugging that higher fiscal NPV into our model shows that the border wall would have to deter 1.3 million unlawful immigrant border crossers, or 73 percent of all those who would come without the wall, to break even—a number 6.2 to 7.8 times as high as CIS' estimates.

Table 6

Federal Only NPV Per Immigrant, Public Goods Excluded

	0-24	25-64	65+
Less than HS	13,000	-215,000	-229,000
HS Grad	108,000	-109,000	-152,000
SC	189,000	2,000	-149,000
College	264,000	220,000	-159,000
College+	271,000	567,000	-104,000

Source: National Academy of Sciences, averages from Table 8-15.

The second simulation we ran uses CIS' tables but assumes that the 50 percent reduction in illegal immigrant entries during February and March of 2017, relative to the same months in 2016, continues for the next decade. This means that there would be an estimated 850,000 successful border crossers over the next decade rather than the higher pre-Trump estimate of 1.7 million. However, the costs of the wall do not budge. In this situation, the border wall would have to deter 118.5 percent of the number of estimated border crossers over the next decade to break even—a mathematically impossible feat.

The third simulation we ran uses the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) cost estimate for the border wall, which is similar to a cost estimate produced by Senate Democrats on the House Homeland Security and

Government Affairs Committee. The only difference is that we took MIT's per mile estimate and added 36.3 percent for the cost of land acquisition. This brings the 10-year border wall construction and maintenance costs up to $98.6 billion. Under this scenario, the border wall would have to deter 2.3 million to 2.9 million border crossers over the next decade to break even—an estimate 134 percent to 171 percent of all the border crossers that the government predict to come over the next ten years. That is mathematically impossible.

A Better Cost Estimate Should Include These Variables

A better fiscal cost analysis of the border wall will include the more detailed demographic and age profile of anticipated illegal immigrant border crossers as well as several other factors listed below.

1. The wall will not prevent nearly as many apprehensions as assumed. CIS' report does not provide *any* evidence that the wall will stop illegal immigrant border crossers. There is virtually no evidence that the current border barriers—particularly those outside of urban areas—have any impact on the net flow of illegal entries. The main effect of border barriers is to channel illegal border crossers into more remote areas. The Congressional Research Service concluded, "The primary fence, by itself, did not have a discernible impact on the influx of unauthorized aliens coming across the border in San Diego."
2. Marginal apprehensions are costly. CIS also assumes that catching people has zero fiscal cost. A proper fiscal accounting compares all of the taxpayer costs and benefits of apprehension with all of the costs and benefits of the illegal border crosser living and working in the United States. Ideally, such an estimate would also compare the costs and benefits of allowing the worker into the United States legally with a guest worker visa or some sort of other employment authorization document. According to the Department of Homeland Security, each removal of an unauthorized immigrant costs taxpayers almost $9,000. Almost half of the immigrants included in this estimate were apprehended in the interior as opposed to the border. Assuming that border removals are half as costly as those in the interior, apprehending 1.7 million illegal border crossers and deporting them will cost $7.65 billion dollars.

3. Walls don't apprehend border crossers. Government employees do, and they are expensive. CIS also assumes that enforcement of the wall will require no additional personnel, despite the fact that the executive order requiring its creation mandates the hiring of 5,000 additional border agents. "If you build a wall, you would still have to back that wall up with patrolling by human beings," Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly recently told Congress. The annual average cost of a federal employee including benefits is $123,160. This makes the ten-year cost of 5,000 new employees roughly $6.2 billion on top of the cost of apprehensions.

4. Not all border crossers retire in the United States. CIS assumes that border crossers retire in the United States at the same rate as other immigrants. This point is important because a large proportion of the fiscal costs are incurred *after* the worker retires and becomes eligible for Social Security and Medicare. However, border crossers are much more likely to return to their home countries than retire in the United States. Harvard economist George Borjas found that 42 percent of Mexican immigrants, who make the largest share of the illegal immigrant population, emigrated in the 1990s while the worldwide average was just 18 percent. Mexican illegal immigrants are most likely to be illegal border crossers. Some research indicates that the illegal immigrant emigration rate could even be 50 percent. Thus, fiscal costs later in life need to be adjusted downward for age and rates of immigration for illegal border crossers.

5. Border crossers are younger than the average immigrant. The age of the border crossers changes the estimates of the net fiscal impact. CIS and Cato rely on older and imperfect estimates from the Current Population Survey. The latest Border Patrol estimate of the age of apprehended border crossers is from 2010 and the huge surge of Unaccompanied Alien Children has since decreased their average age. The NAS report acknowledges that the younger age profile of illegal immigrants reduces their net fiscal cost:

> "These estimates suggest that unauthorized immigrants as a group may have a more positive fiscal impact than authorized immigrants, but only because of their age structure. The average undocumented immigrant is of younger working age than the average documented immigrant (there are very few undocumented immigrants of retirement age); thus, the net fiscal impact of the former is more positive at the federal level and overall. Also, as detailed in Chapter 3, undocumented individuals, young unauthorized immigrants who qualify for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, temporary visa holders, and recent legal permanent residents are ineligible to receive benefits from some programs; and unauthorized immigrants do not qualify for the earned income tax credit. Nonetheless, since, at any given age, unauthorized immigrants tend to earn less than their authorized counterparts, controlling for age, they are less of a benefit to public finances than authorized immigrants (p. 280)."

6. Unauthorized immigrants expand economic growth, which increases tax revenues. Any fiscal cost estimate needs to consider the lost tax revenue from reduced economic growth.

Conclusion

Those who support Trump's border wall should be able to make the case without relying on unrealistically cheap construction costs and outrageous estimates of the number of illegal immigrants that it will deter. Assuming future border crossers have similar ages and educations as more recent crossers make it virtually impossible for the border wall to pay for itself. Adjusting for higher border wall construction costs estimated by MIT means the wall, by itself, would have to deter more people who are estimated to even enter over the next decade without a wall. Whatever the purported benefits of such a wall, its construction will cost a great deal more than it will save even under very generous assumptions.

Topics: International Economics, Development & Immigration

Tags: border wall, border crossers, Trump border wall, president trump, Center for Immigration Studies

This work by Cato Institute is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.

PRINTED FROM CATO.ORG