

AMERICA DOES NOT NEED THE STREAM PROTECTION RULE

(Mr. CRAMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CRAMER. Madam Speaker, North Dakota does not need the stream protection rule and neither does the Nation. By passing this resolution today disapproving the Office of Surface Mining edict, we are responding to the cries of the American people who are tired of nationwide job-killing regulations from Washington.

Madam Speaker, the Obama administration took nearly an entire term and over 10 million taxpayer dollars developing this job killer designed to prevent billions of dollars of coal reserves from ever being developed with absolutely no environmental benefit.

Today's action prevents further destruction of jobs and low-cost energy for the American people.

I urge the Senate to swiftly send this resolution to the President's desk.

□ 1700

ATTORNEY GENERAL NOMINEE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to acknowledge the fallen Navy SEAL officer in Yemen and offer my concern to his family. I will rise tomorrow to continue my questioning on that, but today I wanted to make sure that I prayerfully acknowledged the sacrifice he made for this Nation.

I rise today because we are one step further for the nominee for the Attorney General of the United States of America. And I join my colleagues in the Senate, the other body, who raised concern of not being able to inquire of Mr. SESSIONS what his position would be on what has been determined by five courts, at least, of the unconstitutionality of the executive order. It is a ban on Muslims, it is a violation of the First Amendment, equal protection of the law, and due process—First Amendment being freedom of religion.

Therefore, we now have an Attorney General making the first step, Mr. SESSIONS, where we do not know whether you will be able to embrace the laws that protect the most vulnerable women, children, the civil rights of many, and the voting rights of many, and, frankly, I believe those questions should be answered.

I conclude by saying, when you questioned Deputy Attorney General Yates, she was able to say that she would stand as an independent, objective person Attorney General having oversight over the White House. Will you be able to do the same?

TRAFFICKING AT THE SUPER BOWL—NOT IN OUR TOWN

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, as the United States is gearing up for the Super Bowl in Houston, unfortunately, so are many human sex traffickers.

Just a few days ago, a 21-year-old trafficking victim with mental special needs was rescued in Houston. The young girl was kidnapped off the streets of Ohio by a dastardly trafficker. He put her in his car and told her: Now you work for me. She was brought to Houston specifically to be trafficked at the Houston Super Bowl. However, the woman's mental disabilities and seizures became too much for the moral-less trafficker, so he dropped the victim off downtown Houston where she later was sexually assaulted by a local criminal.

A Good Samaritan rescued the girl and brought her to the hospital. As exploiters and buyers roam the streets looking for prey in Houston, they should know that Mayor Turner, the Department of Homeland Security, and local law enforcement are prepared to jail traffickers and rescue victims.

No trafficking. Not in our town. We will protect victims and prosecute the slave trafficking deviants and buyers.

And that is just the way it is.

GET AMERICA MOVING BY INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, the clock is ticking. Not that clock, but the new clock that I put up on the Democratic side of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which is the cost of congestion clock.

The President has proposed \$1 trillion investment in infrastructure. He went to the Republican Conference last week and said: Fix it first, and we want it in the first 100 days. I am with him on that, we should do that, and I have proposals to actually fund a way to get there. Not to \$1 trillion, but a good part of the way.

So this clock indicates, from the day he was sworn in, noon a week ago Friday to today, the cost of congestion for American commerce, the movement of goods, and the American people. It is \$438 million per day.

So the clock is ticking. Let's get America moving again, and let's invest in our infrastructure.

UNITED IN REINING IN REGULATIONS

(Mr. ALLEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Speaker, for the last 8 years, Americans have felt the burden of excessive and intense regulatory overreach having to comply with time-consuming rules and regulations. But that ends now. For the first time in 8 years, the legislative branch

and the executive branch are on the same page. We must get the government out of the way.

Last week, I joined my colleagues on the One In, One Out Act, which requires Federal agencies to repeal or revise a rule before they can issue a new one, and any new rule must be of equal or lesser cost to Americans.

And in true Trump fashion this week, the President announced his own version, the one in, two out executive order.

These measures are commonsense at their core. To begin growing our economy and creating jobs, we have got to reduce the size and scope of the Federal Government and tackle the mountain of red tape surrounding our Nation's job creators. Americans are ready for growth and innovation, and, for the first time in a long time, the President is on our side.

SCALING BACK BURDENSONG REGULATIONS IMPLEMENTED BY THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, this week, House Republicans have undertaken the effort to scale back some of the burdensome regulations implemented by the previous administration.

The use of so-called midnight rules to slip in regulations at the last minute and without congressional approval was a favorite tool of the last President. Many of these regulations would negatively impact, and have, American people by destroying their jobs, hamstringing our economy, often for no good reason.

That is why, at the very start of the 115th Congress, we passed the Midnight Rules Relief Act, which utilizes the Congressional Review Act, to allow Congress to review multiple midnight rules en bloc.

Additionally, we now have the unique opportunity to utilize the CRA, Congressional Review Act, and express our disapproval for some of these harmful, burdensome regulations that hurt jobs and stunt the economy, in order to protect the American people from these harmful effects.

The regulatory state has been rapidly expanding in recent years for too long, and I am happy to see that Congress is taking action to reverse this destructive behavior.

U.S.-MEXICO RELATIONSHIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. TENNEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'ROURKE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. O'ROURKE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise

and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Madam Speaker, with the President's recent announcement that through an executive action he would commit resources and national attention and focus on building a wall with our neighbor to the south—Mexico—and given some of the rhetoric that we have heard over the last year in the Presidential campaigns about rapists and criminals coming from the country of Mexico, one might be confused, at best, or, at worst, believe that we have some kind of crisis on our border with Mexico, some kind of crisis in our relationship with our closest neighbor, a country that has done more to benefit the United States than any other country I can imagine, a country that is the number one trading partner of the State of Texas, the third largest trading partner of the United States, our partner on security, on economic development and growth, and on other important hemispheric issues.

It is important today that we take this opportunity to ensure that our colleagues in the House have the facts. And it is with those facts that we can make better decisions, informed judgments, and a policy that is truly going to benefit not just the U.S.-Mexico border, not just border States like Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, but the entire United States. Here are some facts that I would like to start with, and then I want to ensure that some of my colleagues who can bring their wisdom and experience and perspective to this are able to do so.

The first fact that we should know is that we have record low levels of northbound migration from Mexico. In fact, more Mexican nationals today are going south into Mexico than are coming north into the United States. We have less than zero migration from Mexico. Total northbound apprehensions of any people from any country coming across our southern border are also at historic lows. And if there are any surges in people or populations coming across that border, it happens to be young children and families fleeing horrific, historic violence in the northern triangle of Central America. And those little kids, they are not trying to evade detection, they are not trying to climb fences, they are not trying to escape the Border Patrol. They are, in fact, turning themselves in, and presenting themselves to Border Patrol agents and to Customs and Border Protection officers at our ports of entry.

We should also note that we are expending record amounts of U.S. taxpayer resources to secure the border—\$19 billion a year this year, last year, and the years going forward—only to increase with these executive orders. We have more than doubled the size of

the Border Patrol in these last 15 years from just a little under 10,000 agents to over 20,000 agents on the U.S.-Mexico border and some on the U.S.-Canada border.

There has never been a terrorist, a terrorist organization, a terrorist plot, or a terrorist act connected to our border with Mexico. There has been with our northern border with Canada. There has been connected to our international airports. There have been homegrown radical terrorists. There has never been a case of terrorism connected with our border with Mexico.

But just in case, and we should remain vigilant, just in case, we have got those 20,000 Border Patrol agents, we have got thousands of Customs and Border Protection officers, we have 600 miles of fencing and physical obstructions already on our border with Mexico, we have aerostat blimps, we have drones flying overhead, we have a concentration of Federal law enforcement—DEA, FBI, among others—including one of the largest military installations anywhere in the world—Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, with 32,000 Active Duty servicemembers. We have the security resources already that we need.

I also think it is important to mention that El Paso, Texas, which is conjoined with Ciudad Juarez in Mexico and forms what I think is the largest true binational community in the world, certainly the largest on the U.S.-Mexico border, El Paso, Texas, is not just the safest city on the U.S.-Mexico border, it is not just the safest city in the State of Texas, it is the safest city in the United States. And it is not an outlier. If you look at other U.S. border cities, like San Diego, California, you will find that they are among the safest in the United States. In fact, there is a positive correlation with the number of migrants and immigrants, documented and otherwise, in a community and that community's relative safety. The U.S. side of the U.S.-Mexico border is far safer than the average American city deeper into the interior. These are some of the facts that we need to have at our command as we are developing policy, as we are judging the President's recent executive actions, and as we are thinking about how best to secure this country.

Here is another fact that we need to keep in mind. If we are committing resources where they are not needed, where, for example, we don't have terrorism, where we don't have a problem with immigration, where we don't have an issue with security, then by definition we are taking those resources from where they could be best used, where we have known risks and threats, where we have real problems against which we must contend, where we are not keeping Americans as safe as they could be because we are directing resources where they don't need to be, this is something that we need to know, I think, as we make policy for this country, as we fulfill our most im-

portant solemn obligation, which is the safety and security of this country and every American within it.

Madam Speaker, I am very fortunate today to be joined by some outstanding colleagues. One whom I would like to introduce from the great State of New York is a new colleague, he himself an immigrant to this country. He represents tens of thousands of immigrants in his Congressional District, has already, from day one, become a leader on this issue, introducing legislation that provides a more rational, humane, smarter approach to some of these issues that have been blown out of proportion, politicized, mythologized, and from that steering the country in the wrong direction. Here is somebody who wants to get us back on track.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT).

□ 1715

Mr. ESPAILLAT. I thank the gentleman from Texas.

Madam Speaker, back in 1987, then-President Ronald Reagan issued one of his most famous speeches—"tear down this wall"—as he addressed then-Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to insist that he open the barrier dividing East and West Berlin. It was, perhaps, one of the most exciting times as we watched to see, finally, if the Cold War would end. It was a moment of hope and strength and character that propelled our country to a higher regard and standard of our identity throughout the global community.

Today, in stark contrast to that famous speech given by President Ronald Reagan, President Trump orders the construction of a \$25 billion wall that divides communities, separates families, and perpetuates fear and hate. It sets a dangerous precedent and fails to elevate our country and confidence abroad the way it was back when President Reagan gave that famous speech. The economic ramifications will be devastating to the entire country, going as far north as New York City, because it is \$25 billion or more that will be spent on building this wall that could otherwise go to other meritorious projects.

These executive actions also secure what I call insecure communities, not Secure Communities—a program that strains relationships between law enforcement and communities along the border and throughout that region of our country.

We live in a global society and are connected with countries and citizens from around the world. To build this wall not only separates the United States from our bordering country—our neighbor, Mexico, which is one of our biggest trading partners—but the wall itself sends a strong message to citizens around the world that they are not welcome here in America. The President's wall and his anti-immigrant agenda is a continuation of the

irrational and hateful rhetoric we have witnessed from him before, and it stands contrary to who we are as Americans and to what we believe as a nation.

I am proud to introduce one of my first bills in Congress, called This is Our Land, which is legislation that will prohibit this divisive wall from being erected on public lands. This is a time when we should be investing in our infrastructure—in roads, bridges, tunnels, airports, schools, housing—and also respecting our public lands. Building President Trump's wall would trample on our public lands and potentially put precious endangered species at risk and likely disrupt or destroy environmentally important ecosystems and habitats. It would also deplete precious resources from our cities. We should be building a wall around Trump to stop these irrational executive orders—instead of this ludicrous \$25 billion wall between our closest ally.

Mr. O'ROURKE. I thank the gentleman from New York for his comments—again, bringing his experience to bear and, right from the beginning, introducing legislation, not just criticizing or complaining, but offering an alternative. It reminds us that, if we are to spend \$20 billion on building something in this country—which is the upward cost of what President Trump's proposal would take from the American taxpayer—there are roads; there are bridges; there are tunnels. There are legitimate infrastructure needs on which we could spend that money that would put people to work, and it would be money much better spent.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS), someone who represents a part of the border that really demonstrates what is beautiful about the United States-Mexico relationship in San Diego and Tijuana. He is a fierce advocate for our shared economic development and growth, for the jobs that are connected to that, and for everything that is beautiful about the U.S.-Mexico border.

Mr. PETERS. I thank Mr. O'ROURKE for putting together this Special Order to talk about what is really an important issue and, with all of the things going on, something that has even got a little bit lost.

Madam Speaker, for the region that I represent in San Diego, the border is an economic engine—it is a job creator. Home to the Otay Mesa, San Ysidro, and Tecate ports of entry, San Diego-Baja is the busiest border crossing in the world. From life sciences to electronics, San Diego is an attractive place to start a business and to manufacture goods, in part, because of our proximity to border crossings and international trade.

Last month, Mr. O'ROURKE and other members of the Congressional Border Caucus and I held a hearing with local leaders from chambers of commerce from around our districts to discuss

real pragmatic solutions and issues around the border. I was joined by Jerry Sanders, who San Diegans well know as the former mayor. He is also the former police chief of San Diego and is now the current president of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce. During that hearing, Mayor Sanders said that an efficient border is a safe border, and he knows something about safety from his time as a police chief. We also know that 99 percent of what gets screened at border crossings is safe and that there is no need to worry about its coming into the country. What we need is to get more efficient at approving the 99 percent of safe cargo and travelers and better at stopping the 1 percent that we don't want to come in.

One of the big challenges that we faced when I first came to Congress was in border delays. We saw that delays at the border crossing were costing us, at that point, \$7.2 billion of economic activity in our county and 35,000 jobs annually—numbers so big that they are almost unbelievable, but those numbers came from independent assessments.

One of the great successes I have had in Congress, in working with my colleagues within our congressional delegation, is to have worked together to secure more than \$500 million to finish the expansion and the improvements at the San Ysidro border crossing. We did that in working with Democrats JUAN VARGAS and SUSAN DAVIS and with Republicans DUNCAN HUNTER and DARRELL ISSA because we all understood how important the United States-Mexico border is to our regional economy.

By investing in infrastructure and innovation in San Diego, Tijuana, and across the border, we are keeping Americans safe and supporting the export of goods made in America by American workers. In San Diego and in other communities, we are embracing this forward-looking approach of opportunity and job creation.

Now President Trump wants to put us in reverse by building a wall, which we have assessed at \$15 billion. I mean, I have heard estimates of its being from \$18 billion to \$20 billion. By any count, it is a waste of money. Let's say, for purposes of argument, it is \$15 billion. It took Congress more than a year to approve \$170 million to help Flint, Michigan, recover from a crisis that has poisoned children and left an entire city without clean water—\$170 million compared to \$15 billion for a wall that nobody needs. We are talking about spending 100 times the money for Flint to build a wall that will do nothing to make us more secure, to make our children safer, or to make us more prosperous.

\$15 billion is exactly how much the American Society of Civil Engineers says we will need to fill the funding gap for infrastructure needs at all of our Nation's ports for the next decade. So, if you took the money you were going to spend on this wall, you could

cover all of the investment we would need at our ports around the country for the next decade. We are going to spend it on a wall.

\$15 billion is also three times as much money as the Federal Government spends to help the homeless every year. For the cost of this wall, we could build the Navy the 11th aircraft carrier that it needs. For 60 times less—or 1/60th—we could finish the modernization of the Otay Mesa border crossing, which is the third busiest commercial port of entry along our southern border and which facilitates \$35 billion in trade every year.

What are we doing here?

Unlike President Trump's wall, this investment will support long-term job creation and increase revenues and is a much more responsible way to spend American taxpayer dollars. Let's be clear. American taxpayers are going to foot the bill for this wall, not Mexico. It is the leader of the Senate and Speaker RYAN who have committed they are going to spend \$15 billion on this wall. That is American taxpayers. That is not Mexico.

Instead of trying to turn his campaign rhetoric into policy, we would prefer that President Trump listen to those who understand what business is like at the border, to those who understand that border cities are safe, like El Paso, like San Diego, and that the border is an opportunity for America, not a threat. We don't need a wall. We need to hire more Customs officers. We need newer screening technologies. We need to modernize and expand our infrastructure at other border crossings like we are already doing at San Ysidro. That is how you would create jobs in America. That is how you would keep us safe.

I thank my friend BETO O'ROURKE for his leadership and for his hosting this conversation today. I look forward to working with the gentleman in diverting this money from this silly proposal—this dangerous proposal—to the kinds of things and investments that our country needs from Texas to California.

Mr. O'ROURKE. I thank the gentleman from California for sharing his community's perspective and for reminding us that, when it comes to Mexico and our shared connection with Mexico—the U.S.-Mexico border—we have much more to look forward to than we do to fear.

In fact, in the State of California, there are hundreds of thousands of jobs that depend on U.S.-Mexico trade. In the State of Texas, it is just under a half a million. In fact, every single State in the Union, including Alaska, has tens—if not hundreds—of thousands of jobs that depend on the flow of U.S.-Mexico trade, which happens at our ports of entry and comes through at our border. There are 6 million jobs in this country, which represent hundreds of millions of dollars in salaries and economic growth and add-on effects, that are dependent on U.S.-Mexico trade. When we begin to prioritize

our separation, in sealing Mexico off from the United States literally physically, we deprioritize those connections that make us stronger, that grow our economy, and that create more jobs in the United States.

One thing that we should know, as long as we are talking about sharing facts and confronting some of these unfortunate, untrue myths about the border, is that, when we export to Mexico, of course, we win—we are building things in our factories; we are sending them to Mexico; the Mexican consumer buys them; those dollars are flowing back to the U.S. worker. It also happens that, when we import from Mexico, we win as 40 cents of every dollar of value that we import from Mexico originates in the United States. Literally, factory floor jobs in Ohio, in Iowa, in Michigan are producing things that go to Mexico and that are part of the final assembly that is reimported to the United States.

We certainly make things in America today, but we make a lot of things in the United States and in Mexico concurrently. Our economies, our production platform—our future—is inextricably connected, and to try to break that apart is not simply going to hurt Mexico. It is going to hurt the United States. It is going to hurt the U.S. worker. It is going to hurt our economy. It is going to hurt our opportunity at growth.

If we continue to cast Mexico as the enemy, if we threaten trade wars or to pull out of free trade agreements, if we construct a wall to try to humiliate that country at a time that it poses no security threat to the United States, the consequences are not going to be good. You may remember that I reminded you that migration from Mexico over the last 4 years is less than zero. More Mexicans are going south than are coming north to the United States. If you build a wall, withdraw from our trade agreements, try to de-link our economies, where you do not have a security or an economic problem today, you will in the future have one. You will give people in Mexico a reason to flee that country and to seek opportunity and jobs and connections and safety and shelter somewhere else, and that somewhere else, in many cases, is, in fact, going to be the United States.

If we want to make this country safer, if we want to make this country more prosperous, if we want to protect the American worker, then the policies that this President has adopted in the first 10 days in office are precisely the wrong way to go about doing it. They will make us less secure; they will slow down this country's economy; they will jeopardize the 6 million jobs that depend on U.S.-Mexico trade.

If the U.S.-Mexico border is as secure as it has ever been—look at any metric, and you will see that I am right—if we are having record low levels of northbound migration and apprehensions, if we are spending record

amounts, if we are using new technologies, like drones, to patrol the border, if we have 20,000 Border Patrol agents, which is also a record high, why is there so much concern, why is there so much interest, why is there so much anxiety, why is there so much fear built up around the border?

□ 1730

I will tell you, this is a long time in coming. And when we say that there are real issues with where these border measures are coming from, let me give you an example of some of those.

One of our colleagues, when describing young Mexican immigrants coming to this country, said: Look at them. They have calves the size of cantaloupes. They are bringing drugs into this country.

When you have a Presidential candidate dismiss Mexican immigrants as rapists and criminals, despite the fact that immigrants commit crimes in this country at a much lower level than native-born U.S. citizens, when you have this kind of rhetoric, when you have this kind of mischaracterization, when you have this kind of vilification of an entire people and their connection to us at the U.S.-Mexico border, then you be the judge of where these priorities are coming from and what they are about and why they in no way reflect the real concerns, threats, and issues that we have in this country today.

My colleagues, the fact of the matter is Mexico presents opportunity to the United States and it always has. Whether it is the \$90 billion in U.S.-Mexico trade that passed through just the points of entry in El Paso, the city I have the honor of serving in Congress, and Ciudad Juarez, the city with which it is connected, whether it is the 6 million jobs that we already have in the United States economy, whether it is our security cooperation to ensure that we are disrupting transnational criminal organizations that are trying to move drugs and human chattel into this country, whether it is our work to address the real security issues in the northern triangle countries of Central America that border Mexico, we will lose a very valuable partner. We will lose those things that we want most: job growth, economic development, security for the people that we represent.

When we begin to humiliate that country and its leadership—and President Pena Nieto has canceled a trip to visit the United States in just 1 week of this administration—nothing good will follow that.

We cannot wall Mexico off from the United States. We cannot wish them to disappear. They will always be there, and they should always be there. And we should be grateful that they will always be there because they have always been a part of our history, our success, those things that are best about the United States; and, God willing, they will always be part of our future.

I think it is going to take each and every one of us—every Republican,

every Democrat, every person who doesn't feel affiliation to a party—to stand together behind and with the facts, with the truth, with this country's best interests in mind. I am confident that if we do that, if we will simply look at what is happening today, what has happened historically with that country, where our interests lie, we will make better policy. We will not be constructing walls between the two countries.

We will, at some point—hopefully, sooner rather than later—tear down the 600 miles of fencing that already separates us. We will build more bridges that connect us, not just for trade, not just for economic growth, but for the reasons that the people I represent are so grateful for and proud of, the place that they call home, a city that, with Ciudad Juarez, forms the largest binational community in the world, where last year alone 32 million times people from El Paso and Juarez crossed into each other's cities.

Our families are on both sides of the border. Our business partners are on both sides of the border. Students at the University of Texas at El Paso, who live in Ciudad Juarez and are Mexican nationals, are granted in-state tuition because we want to attract the very best and the very brightest. And we are going to find them all over the world—in the United States, certainly, but also in Mexico.

I want to read to you a comment that a constituent of mine posted on our Facebook page this evening when I let my constituents know I would be on the floor talking about the border, asking them to share the truth and the reality, their perspective versus the myth that we hear so often here in Congress, on national TV, and from those who don't live on or understand the border.

Lisa Esparza said:

The border has been great because I grew up in Ciudad Juarez. I came to El Paso, paid for an education at a private school, learned English. I love the fact that I am binational, and I can think and speak in two languages.

Lisa and millions of fronteriza and fronterizo border residents exemplify the best of this country, literally, of what makes America great.

El Paso, for those of you who do not know, has, for more than a century, served as the Ellis Island of the Western Hemisphere. If you came up from Mexico or your family did—or El Salvador or Guatemala or Honduras or Costa Rica or Argentina—there is a good chance that you came through the ports of entry in El Paso, Texas; that your family may have, before they went on to a destination further in the United States, settled in Segundo Barrio or in Chihuahuita. This is a community where they learned our laws, our values, where they learned to speak English, where they went to school, where they not just participated and believed in the American Dream, but became net contributors to it. It is one of the reasons that El Paso,

Texas, is the safest city in the United States.

It is the safest city not in spite of the large number of immigrants who live in my community—and, by official counts, 24 percent of the people that I represent were born in another country. It is not in spite of those people who were born in another country that El Paso is so safe. It is, in large part, because of their presence.

Families made extraordinarily difficult decisions to leave their home country—their home city, their families, the language they knew, the customs that they loved—to come to a new country. They make sure that they follow our laws. They make sure that their kids follow our laws. They make sure that their kids are doing the right thing by this country so that they can get ahead, have an opportunity and a crack at the American Dream. Not only is there nothing wrong with that, there is something profoundly great about that. It is what has helped make El Paso the safest city, a wonderful city in America, a great country.

I yield to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM), someone else who understands the value of our relationship with Mexico, the special character of border people, and the value of immigration and immigrants.

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, the people who, in fact, know the border issues the best—whether it is companies or lawmakers, both Republicans and Democrats, border communities, trade groups, economists, and law enforcement officials—all agree that building a wall is unnecessary, impractical, ineffective, and it is a complete waste of time and taxpayer money.

This wall, in fact, damages New Mexico's economy, and that is without taking into account President Trump's idea to now impose a 20 percent tax on Mexican imports to pay for it. In the end, we know that it is American jobs, American consumers, and American companies that will be hurt.

Given that the United States already maintains approximately 650 miles of border fence, drones, cameras, motion detectors, thermal imaging sensors, ground sensors, and 21,370 Border Patrol agents, the wall is completely unnecessary for the stakeholders who are, in fact, most impacted. The only person it truly benefits is President Trump by furthering his isolationist, divisive, and anti-immigrant agenda.

I agree that this country should be building, and I agree with my colleague from El Paso, Mr. O'ROURKE, that there is a wonderful thing, an incredible thing about building bridges, building highways, building buildings, and re-focusing our energy on making sure that everyone has a fair shot and that we are looking at those economic values and those economic indicators. That is not what we are doing here. We are diverting our attention for an un-

necessary, huge, colossal mistake that hurts the progress that border communities and border States have made.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM) for bringing her State's experience and perspective to bear on this issue and for being a champion for the best in our traditions and our values.

I would like to build on the gentlewoman's remarks and talk about one of the consequences of building walls. I have already made the case that the border is as secure as it has ever been. Those who study and understand security issues have come to the conclusion that extra miles of wall don't deter migrants.

The lower levels of migration that we have seen to this country have a lot more to do with the U.S. economy and its struggling performance in the immediate aftermath of the Great Recession and throughout that road to recovery and, relatively speaking, the performance in other countries, including Mexico, that has afforded Mexican nationals more opportunity to stay there.

The border is as secure as it has ever been. We have recently doubled the size of the Border Patrol. We are using the latest and greatest technology to remain as vigilant as possible, which we should.

It is also important to know the character and quality of the Border Patrol agents and Customs and Border Protection officers who man the line, who are at our ports, and who have one of the most difficult, dangerous jobs that anyone has in the Federal Government. The conditions in which they work, the situations which they must anticipate, the constant vigilance that they must maintain, and the kind of threats that they have to be aware of—which include drug smuggling, which is critically important to stop; which include human smuggling, which we must deter and stop; and which includes, even though there has never been a terrorist or terrorist act connected to the U.S.-Mexican border, includes the possibility that sometime that might happen—those men and women are literally on the front line protecting this community.

I would like to see some of the \$14 billion to \$20 billion proposed for the construction of a wall put behind our Border Patrol agents to improve their salaries, their working conditions, and the ability for them to do their job and to keep us safe.

I would like to hire more Customs and Border Protection officers, the men and women in blue at our ports of entry who facilitate legitimate trade and travel at our ports of entry. They are the ones who help to keep this economy humming while keeping us safer.

Madam Speaker, one of the consequences, though, of building walls, while it doesn't make us safer and while it uses a lot of resources that

could be better put toward other more legitimate security challenges, it does do one thing that I want all of us to know about. It does ensure that migrants coming to this country will unnecessarily suffer, and many will die.

In the same time where we have gone from 1.6 million apprehensions a year—that was the year 2000, 1.6 million apprehensions on our southern border—to last year, when there were just a little over 400,000, so a quarter of the level that we had 15, 16 years ago, in that same time that we have had record low levels of migration, we have maintained record high levels of migrant deaths. So those few migrants who do try to cross in between our ports of entry and do encounter physical barriers are going to more remote sections of the border. They are dying of thirst. They are dying of exposure. These are otherwise preventable deaths.

So I ask you to think about it this way. Whether you are looking at the moral dimension of this—the otherwise preventable deaths, the effort to humiliate our closest partner in the country, of Mexico—whether you look at the economic dimension of this, if you want to protect those 6 million jobs that depend on a strong U.S.-Mexico connection, whether you look at the security dimension and taking our eye off the ball when it comes to real threats, proven threats that we have in this country at our international airports, at our northern border with Canada or increasingly homegrown radicals in the United States radicalized over the internet, if you want to remove resources from those real threats, then go ahead and build a wall if it makes you feel good. But it is going to make us less safe, it is going to make us less economically secure, and it is going to be to our lasting shame. It will haunt us, and it will haunt us for generations for anyone who supports this or does not stand up and speak against it.

I would like to leave you with two anecdotes that I think exemplify the beauty, the strength, and the safety of the border. The first is a story of an event that took place this weekend in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, where we are joined by the Rio Grande River channel. Right now, all that water is stored up at the Elephant Butte Reservoir in New Mexico. Really, there is just a little trickle in the river channel not more than a couple of inches deep.

Thanks to the Border Network for Human Rights and thanks to the Border Patrol who allowed this, they were able to organize 300 families from Mexico and El Paso who were allowed to meet—one family at a time—in the middle of that river channel, both sides clearly identified so there would not be any security or immigration issues.

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And those families got to spend a total of 3 minutes together, families who, in some cases, had not seen each other for decades. A young woman

posted on Facebook that she drove down from Oklahoma City to see her dad who she had not seen in 10 years.

You had folks meeting grandchildren they had never seen before, sons or daughters-in-law that they had never seen before, weeping, crying, laughing, hugging, holding, kissing for 3 minutes.

That, to me, is absolutely beautiful. That, to me, is family values. That, to me, shows you the extent to which people will try to be together, to be with each other, to do the things that perhaps you and I, as U.S. citizens, take for granted. And that happened in El Paso, Texas, thanks to the Border Network for Human Rights, thanks also to the men and women in the Border Patrol.

It didn't compromise our security. It didn't add any new immigrants to this country. It was just doing our best under the current conditions.

The other anecdote that I would like to share with you, and which I will close on, involves another outstanding organization in the community that I have the honor to serve, Annunciation House, led by Ruben Garcia, who—when we faced unprecedented numbers of young children and young families, young moms in their teens and twenties, coming up from Honduras and Guatemala and El Salvador, which have become the deadliest countries, not just in Central America, not just in the Western Hemisphere, but in the world, the deadliest countries in the world; kids being murdered and raped and sold into slavery.

Those kids fleeing that horrific brutality and violence, coming up the length of Mexico, sometimes riding on top of a train known as la bestia, or the beast, to come and present themselves at our border, not evade detection, not try and escape, not try to do anything against the law; literally, as the law proscribes, presenting themselves at our points of entry to a Border Patrol agent, or a Customs and Border Protection officer, and asking for help and for shelter, depending on the best traditions inscribed on the Statue of Liberty, counting on the United States in their moment of need.

Well, the Border Patrol were outstanding. The agents themselves, out of their own pockets often, were buying toys and gifts for these young children, taking care of them, having their hearts broken, doing their best to serve them. Agents who work for ICE and immigration were doing their best as well.

As that flow of people, the number of people became too many temporarily for us to hold and to process, they got in touch with Ruben Garcia at Annunciation House, which is a charity operated in El Paso, Texas. And Ruben took those asylum seekers, those refugees, and housed them, clothed them, fed them, insured they had showers and medication and a visit with a doctor, the ability to talk to their families deeper in the interior of the United States and, most importantly, espe-

cially for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, had a full and complete understanding of their legal obligations under U.S. law, what they were allowed and not allowed to do, what their court expectations were, and that they must appear in court, and that their issue must be adjudicated, and that they may or may not be able to stay in this country.

Annunciation House, Ruben Garcia, the volunteers who work for him, and hundreds of other El Pasoans who contributed did this at not a penny's cost to the Federal taxpayer or to our government.

So \$20 billion to build a wall or Annunciation House taking care of refugees, asylum seekers, little kids who need our help for free?

That is the border. That is the best of us. That is the best of this country. That is what we need to think about. Those are the folks we need to listen to. Those are the facts we need to understand before we even contemplate building a wall, separating ourselves from Mexico, giving in to the nativist sentiment and instinct that was so proudly on display during this Presidential election.

I think if we look at the facts, if we take the best from the border, we are going to get the best policy and the best outcome from the United States.

And after all, isn't that why we were all sent here? Isn't that what we are supposed to do when our voters sent us here to do the work of the American people?

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

CONDITIONS AT THE SOUTHERN BORDER OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, it is my honor to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. And I came here to the floor with a bit different topic in mind, but as I listened to the gentleman from Texas, I thought it would be a good idea, while there still was a captive audience on the topic, to refresh some things with perhaps a bit different perspective.

And that would be that, from my time and experience, I have traveled most every mile of the southern border, that would be 2,000, all together. I think it would be true that I have traveled every mile of California and Arizona and New Mexico, and most all the miles in Texas. I have flown a lot of it. I have driven a lot of it. I have been out on the water on some of it. And I have spent some nights down on the border, a number of them in some of the dangerous crossings, like San Miguel's crossing on the Tohono O'odham Reservation. It is one of those without any night vision and without what we would call official security.

So when I hear that the border is as secure as it has ever been and that there is no security threat to the U.S., which is what we have just heard here in this previous hour, Madam Speaker, I absolutely don't agree with that.

And if there is no terrorism that is any factor at all, that there has never been a terrorist attack on the southern border, I would point the gentleman to the five heads that were lined up on the Mexican side of the fence across from the people that were driving to church in New Mexico a few years ago. I think those children that looked out the windows of their cars as they were getting a ride to church were victims of the terror that was created by heads stacked along the side of the highway within feet of our U.S. border.

As I spend time with the Border Patrol agents that have made a career out of protecting our border down there, they tell me that there are murders on the Mexican side of the border, where they just throw the body over the fence on to the U.S. side; and other cases where they identify bodies on the Mexican side of the border, and they will call the Mexican security people, whom they have good relations with, as a rule, and they will see the equivalent of an S-10 pickup pull up and just throw the body in the back of the pickup and drive away, with zero forensics and very little attempt to identify who the perpetrators might be that have committed these murders there so close to the border.

I have made surprise visits down to the border on a number of occasions, and I make it a point to drop in and see what is going on and talk to the people that are there protecting and guarding our border.

I recall one of those visits down to Sasabe, Arizona, at a relatively rural crossing there. I pulled into that port of entry and port of exit for us, and I got out and I decided on the spot that, well, I should let them know who I am for reasons of courtesy, and so I introduced myself.

Madam Speaker, I said: I'm Congressman STEVE KING from Iowa.

That agent immediately said: I can't talk to you. And he turned and walked away.

And so I went to the next agent and I introduced myself: I'm STEVE KING from Iowa.

And he said: I can't talk to you, but talk to Mike. Mike is the supervisor here tonight, and he's ready to retire, and he has terminal cancer. He will talk to you.

And I went and spoke to Mike. The gentleman's name is Mike Crane. It was Mike Crane. He did have terminal cancer. That is verified. And he has since passed away.

But as we were speaking about the difficulties in securing the border and the illegal crossings, both one east and one west of the crossing at Sasabe, he got a phone call, and he said, Excuse me, and stepped away, and he was gone for a couple of minutes outside the circle.