

2,400 pounds of fentanyl were seized by our Border Patrol last year alone, enough to kill every living American.

The Customs and Border Patrol agency states, in no uncertain terms, a barrier or a wall is essential to do their job.

Even if these facts are trivialized, no one in Congress can seriously claim that we do not have a crisis at our southern border. It is up to Congress to act. The first duty of government is to afford protection to our citizens, and our citizens are demanding it.

I have received hundreds of calls to my office, urging us to follow the plan offered by Homeland Security experts to secure our border, build a barrier, enforce our immigration laws, and do our jobs.

END THE CHARADE AND REOPEN THE GOVERNMENT

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

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the son of refugees, and the first Eritrean American to be elected to the House of Representatives.

My father, who immigrated to this country 35 years ago, sat in this same Chamber up there in the gallery only a week ago to watch his son be sworn into the people's House.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a simple, solemn, and serious request: that this administration stop its demonization of immigrants and reopen the government.

The administration has manufactured a crisis based on fear and is now holding our government effectively hostage, blatantly causing harm to the economic security of American families across the Nation.

Bruce, a constituent in my district, had to close down his small business in Estes Park as a result of the shutdown. As Rocky Mountain National Park remains closed, small businesses have continued to struggle under this burden.

Countless workers in my district—Federal lab workers, national park employees, national firefighters, weather forecasters, and many others—have been furloughed or are working without pay, and \$700 million in national parks' revenue in Colorado has been threatened.

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough.

Mr. President, end the charade and reopen the government now.

LET'S STAY AND OPEN THE GOVERNMENT

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

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I find it just fascinating that my Democratic colleagues come down here to the well of the House to talk about opening up the government when, indeed, it is

their reluctance to negotiate at all that is keeping the government shut down. On day 1 of the shutdown, it was zero money for new border barriers. On day 20, it is still zero money for new border barriers.

And to suggest to this body and to the Nation that, indeed, they are negotiating in good faith, I just find it incomprehensible.

I can tell you that we are ready to negotiate. In fact, they have been saying, it is their way or the highway. And do you know what? They are going to hit the highway in just a few hours and get out of here.

I think we ought to all stay here, let's negotiate, let's get a result, let's open the government, but, more importantly, let's protect our borders and communities across the country.

LET'S REOPEN THE GOVERNMENT

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

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this body has passed bipartisan bills to open up the government, yet this shutdown could become the longest one in the history of this country.

My communities in Houston are feeling the real effects of this shutdown. Over one-in-five families in my district depend on food stamps. This shutdown continues to threaten their food security and, in some cases, their health and well-being. This issue hits our seniors especially hard, because over 11 percent of food stamp recipients are seniors and over three-quarters of those live alone.

In Texas, almost 30,000 Federal employees are furloughed or working with no guarantee of a paycheck.

At Houston's Hobby Airport, in my district, we may put air travelers at risk. TSA employees, air traffic controllers, and Customs and Border Protection agents are required to work without pay.

No one should be forced to barter for their rent or food, be evicted from their home, or be forced to work without pay.

We have passed bipartisan legislation to end this shutdown. Let's reopen our government and let's pay our workers.

LET'S PUT A BARRIER WHERE WE NEED IT

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, the Democrats refuse to open the government. They won't provide more than a dollar. The Speaker said she would give a dollar for a border barrier. That is outrageous.

How many people in this body have walls around their homes and live in gated communities. How many people in this body at night check to make sure their door is locked, not because a burglar can't get around it, but be-

cause they love the people in their home and they don't want burglars having it too easy getting in, even though they could, but it slows people down. That is what a border barrier does.

And for the little girl that was killed by an illegal alien in my district and thrown in a well, this is not a charade. This is life or death for many people.

Let's put a barrier where we need it, and then we can have everybody getting paid.

THE COST OF A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, we are paying a high price for the President's demand for more than \$5 billion to fund his wall.

The shutdown not only hurts those directly affected, it has begun to spread to the broader economy.

The shutdown slows economic growth, weakens business confidence, softens consumer spending, and depresses lending.

JPMorgan Chase estimates the economic costs to be \$1.5 billion per week during the shutdown.

Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's, says that if the shutdown lasts into February, economic growth could be reduced by \$8.7 billion.

President Trump's own Council of Economic Advisers projects that economic growth will slow every week that the shutdown continues.

In addition, the rating agency Fitch has warned that a prolonged shutdown could lead to a downgrade of U.S. debt. This will raise borrowing costs for companies and consumers across the country.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce states that the shutdown is harming the American people, the business community, and the economy.

Mr. President, you are playing a very dangerous game, and we all will pay the price.

BORDER SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, tonight, we are here to have a conversation about the situation at our southern border.

The President calls it a border crisis and a humanitarian crisis, yet others call it immoral to give more funding to secure our Nation at the southern border. So what really is the situation?

We are in the 20th day of a government shutdown over the question of: Is the security of the American people at risk because of what is happening at

our southern border? And, if it is, what should we do about it?

Tonight, my colleagues and I want to share the facts regarding the situation, and some stories from our districts, that illustrate why we support building a wall, as well as securing our border in other ways.

For me, it is a matter of three things:

The need to stop the flow of illegal drugs;

The safety of innocent families in our districts, as well as the safety of innocent individuals who want to come here and immigrate to our country; and

Third, I believe it is a matter of fairness.

Let me share what I mean.

I believe, and I think most people agree, that we have a drug crisis in our country. I see it every week when I am back in my district, when I talk to my law enforcement, when I talk to my families who have lost a child through a heroin overdose, when I see the rising foster care numbers in our State because their parents are drug addicted. We have a crisis.

I recently had a chance to travel to the Nogales-Mariposa port of entry that is south of Tucson, in Arizona, and boy was it eye-opening. There I learned from our Border Patrol agents that the drug cartels are waging a war, basically, against our country, and, sadly, in many ways, they are winning. They have more money, they have more manpower, and they are using drug mules to carry drugs across the unsecured part of our border. They are involving the gangs that come down, and then those travel up into our districts. I am from Missouri, and we see it there in Missouri.

Last year, sadly, more than 72,000 Americans died from a drug overdose. That is more than died in the entire Vietnam war, the entire war, and this happens every year. That is also more deaths than people who passed away in our country from traffic accidents and homicides combined. Think about it.

When we hear the nightly news and there is a homicide, that somebody has been shot and killed, it is tragic. Or we hear a report about somebody dying in a car accident, it is terrible. But all of the people in America who died from the traffic accidents and every person who died in a homicide, if you put those numbers together, that does not come close to the number of people who have died from drug overdoses. We have got to do better.

I have got some pictures of some individuals who are victims of this drug crisis that is a result of our open borders. But they are not just statistics. The reason I put up their pictures here on this poster is because they are not a number. They have names. They lived. People loved them. They were sons, daughters, coworkers, and they were friends.

The lady on the far side with her little boy, her name is Victoria and her

son is Andrew. Now she didn't pass away, but she has been addicted to meth, so that when she gave birth to Andrew, he was addicted and had to go through withdrawal symptoms, and she struggled with a drug addiction.

□ 1700

The young man in the middle is named Eamon, and he, sadly, passed away from a heroin overdose.

The mother here and her daughter, she is still alive, but she is struggling with drug addiction, through heroin, and she has lost custody of her little girl.

Like I said, we have a record number of foster kids right now in America because of parents losing their children to drug addiction.

A large number of the people have drug addictions due to opioids. In fact, according to the CDC, of more than 72,000 drug overdoses, many of them were due to fentanyl, which is also coming across our southern border. In fact, fentanyl killed 30,000 Americans last year.

The Border Patrol is doing a great job with the resources they have, but they need more help. They found and interdicted 1.2 tons of fentanyl—1.2 tons. That is enough to kill every American. It takes only 2 milligrams of fentanyl to kill an individual. If you add up how much damage 1.2 tons of fentanyl could do, it adds up to over 500 million people who could be killed. It is unbelievable.

Then cocaine, they seized enough cocaine at the southern border last year to fill 141 1-ton pickup trucks. I made a poster just to show this because a lot of us are familiar with pickup trucks. We have 1-ton trucks, $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton trucks. 141 of them, picture them filled with cocaine. That is how much was caught by our Border Patrol at the southern border. We have no idea how much more is not caught.

Next one I want to talk about is methamphetamine. They seized 124 tons of methamphetamine. Here is a face, and maybe you have seen these posters or pictures before. This is what meth does to individuals in a very short amount of time. It is awful. It is so addictive.

At one time, Missouri was called the meth capital of our country. It tied with California for several years. It is a terrible distinction to have, but there were meth labs everywhere. Our law enforcement was doing as good a job as they could, interdicting and shutting down these meth labs.

Now when I talk to my law enforcement at home, they say that we have hardly any meth labs, but the reason is sad. The reason is because the meth is still there, but it is coming from across our border. It is part of this tonnage coming up. That is why we have to build a wall and secure the border.

I could talk about heroin. They seized 6,500 pounds of heroin. That is over 3 tons. In Missouri, in my State, we lost 380 people to heroin overdose last year.

This is the fact: 90 percent of the heroin in our country comes from across the southern border. The drug cartels aren't backing off. They don't care. They see this as a revenue opportunity. They don't care about people.

Just in 2 years, there has been a 73 percent increase in fentanyl that they have shoved across our border, a 38 percent increase in methamphetamine, a 22 percent increase in heroin. That just is what is seized.

Our Border Patrol needs some help. We have to stop this drug crisis.

But there is more. Besides drug deaths, there have been numerous deaths linked to illegal immigrants that come here.

Now, all of us support people coming here legally. Almost every one of us in the body have some story about a relative who came here, maybe they went through Ellis Island. I support legal immigration. But when we have an open border, anybody can come across.

Last year, they caught 17,000 people coming across the border who had criminal records. The ones who didn't get caught end up in our communities and, sadly, kill people like Officer Singh.

Our hearts were broken the day after Christmas when we heard this story of this legal immigrant who did it right. He came from Fiji. He immigrated here, and his goal was to become a police officer. He wanted that so much, first to be a citizen, but then he traveled 4 hours every day to attend his police academy.

He learned English. He took English classes to learn the language, so that he could be a good police officer. And he was a good one. He was an honorable one.

An illegal immigrant who came across our southern border shot and killed him. This is why we have to secure our border, and we can do it.

I am also concerned about the innocent people who are being told a lie by the drug cartels. They are giving their life savings to a coyote to come here. They are brought to the border and then travel across the border.

Doctors Without Borders tells an upsetting statistic to me, and to anybody who is listening, that one-third of all the women who try to make that trip are sexually assaulted.

This current system is incentivizing them, with an open border, to try to make that trek, and they are being harmed. Instead, we have to close that border and give them the tools that will help them come here legally, come here safely. That is what we all want.

Lastly, I want to talk about the issue of fairness. Right now, there are 700,000 people who are in the process of becoming legal citizens of our country, trying to come here and be an immigrant, following our laws.

In my district, I am working with some families who are trying to get relatives here through the legal system, and it is amazing what you go through. First of all, it takes years. It

takes years, but they fill out the paperwork. I have seen the pictures of the stacks of paperwork that they have to file with our immigration system to get them here.

There are 700,000 people right now trying to do that. It is just not fair to allow people to jump the line and to just walk across.

Because of the way our laws are now, if you bring a child into our country, they can hold them only 20 days, and then you have to let them go. So they know that.

I learned that the drug cartels at the border actually have attorneys. They are a big business. They are something else.

They know the laws. They know they are going to be let out, and they are here. That is just not right. We can do better. We can secure the border.

\$5.7 billion in the scheme of things is not that much. We give \$50 billion every year for foreign aid, so it is about a tenth of the foreign aid we give to other countries to secure their borders.

Why don't we secure our country? We can do that.

I wanted to share some of those facts and invite some of my colleagues to come here tonight to share their thoughts on this very important issue that is before us as a nation and to hear their stories.

The first person I want to yield to is the gentleman from Montana, GREG GIANFORTE.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Missouri for focusing the attention of this Chamber on this crisis at our border and the need for reform.

America's borders have been too open for too long. As a result, we face a humanitarian and national security crisis that is getting worse. Congress has a responsibility to the American people to address it.

Providing for our Nation's security is the chief function of the Federal Government. It is past time for leaders on the other side of the aisle to get serious, do their jobs, stop playing political games, and secure our border.

What is happening at the border and to those seeking to enter our country illegally is a tragedy. More than 30 percent of migrant women making the trip to our southern border have been sexually assaulted during their journey. More than two-thirds of all migrants making the trek have reported violence.

Our broken immigration system encourages parents to send their kids on a dangerous journey by themselves.

The humanitarian tragedy is one element. Our open borders are also a threat to national security and community safety. Drug cartels, gangs, and human traffickers are exploiting our weak borders and bringing crime into our communities.

Last year, Border Patrol agents arrested 17,000 individuals with criminal records. About 800 gang members were caught trying to cross the border.

The crisis extends to Montana where our epidemic of meth use tears apart families and threatens our communities.

However, we no longer have Montana meth because of the good work of our law enforcement. Now we have Mexican meth. Law enforcement in Fergus County, Montana, tells me that they know when a shipment from Mexico arrives because they see an increase in crime. Domestic violence, burglaries, and violence are the result of Mexican meth coming into Montana communities.

Law enforcement in the State also told me that, in addition to an uptick in crime, addiction has left more families broken apart and more kids in foster care.

Law enforcement tells me that over 90 percent of all the crime we have in Montana is addiction-related.

The humanitarian crisis is not limited to our border. We can see it in our communities: crime, violence, and broken families. We must secure our border.

One element of improving border security is a wall or a physical barrier. Walls work. The results bear it out. Walls at the border in San Diego, El Paso, Tucson, and Yuma have seen dramatic declines in the number of illegal immigrants crossing the border.

Facing an increasing humanitarian and national security crisis, it is past time that leaders across the aisle focus on securing the border. End the games. Get the job done and secure the border.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for the time and for her leadership on this issue.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I appreciate his comments. They were spot on.

We are seeing the same thing in Missouri with that meth coming up from Mexico and the record number of people in foster care. It just breaks your heart, and it doesn't have to be that way.

Mr. GIANFORTE. We must act.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Yes, we must act.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to invite my friend from Louisiana, MIKE JOHNSON, to share what he is seeing down there in Louisiana, what his constituents are saying, and what his thoughts are.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON).

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman has given us this opportunity tonight to speak on the growing crisis at our southern border. It is a critical issue that our friends on the other side of the aisle are simply failing to address.

Over the course of this government shutdown, many have sought to dismiss the very real challenges that we are facing regarding human trafficking, sexual assault, and drug smuggling that clearly are occurring. Thousands of people are making the dan-

gerous journey to and across our southern border, and this has been the result.

What these same opponents fail to mention is the perverse incentives that exist for these crimes.

For example, our lax immigration laws have encouraged illegal immigration.

For example, the dramatic increase in unaccompanied minors and supposed family units at the border are a direct result of our catch-and-release policies.

The President made his case to the American people just a few nights ago, and he addressed the urgent need for border security. He is precisely right.

Securing our borders and protecting the American people must be a top priority of this Congress. It is our duty. It is important to maintain the strength and the sovereignty of our Nation.

A strong America is good not only for our national security and our prosperity, but it is good for all people around the world. As the last great superpower, we have to maintain our sovereignty and our strength, and it is important to do exactly that.

Here are just a few of the most devastating facts, and we will hear many of them tonight.

Last year, Customs and Border Protection agents apprehended 17,000 adults with existing criminal records.

In the past 2 years alone, ICE agents have arrested over 230,000 illegal aliens with a prior criminal history committed within our borders. That is assault, homicide, and sexual assault—violent crimes. Our border agents have arrested thousands of gang members and traffickers, and they have rescued countless children from exploitation.

By any objective measure, this is a humanitarian and a national security crisis. Anyone who says otherwise is either ignoring the facts or being dishonest.

Right now, so many of our friends on the other side are refusing to do what they have supported in the past, simply because it is now in line with President Trump's agenda.

□ 1715

When President Obama was in office, for example, all 54 Senate Democrats voted for \$46 billion in border security and hundreds of miles in border fencing.

What has changed, Mr. Speaker?

That is an important question. Do our friends across the aisle need to hear from the families who have lost loved ones at the hands of an illegal alien? Do they deny that children being smuggled across the border deserve reprieve?

Sadly, the legislation that has come before the House this week fails to address the extraordinary crisis we face. This isn't an honest attempt to end the shutdown. These aren't good faith negotiations. This is a political stunt. These bills will not be considered by the Senate; they will not be signed by the President; and everybody knows

that. Rather than working on solutions, the Democrats here have chosen to waste the people's time with these symbolic votes.

Not securing our border is an immoral act. What we have done here and what we are doing here is immoral by failing to address this issue. I command the President and all of my Republican colleagues for taking this stand.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you so much. I appreciate your perspective down there from Louisiana.

You bring up the great point of the number of children coming across. I heard yesterday how Health and Human Services, which gets custody of these children, just does not have the capacity to house them and to take care of them. It is a crisis. That is why the President says it is a humanitarian crisis. So we have got to act.

Mr. Speaker, we started off in Missouri; we had Montana; we have gone down to Louisiana to hear their perspective; and now we go to North Carolina to hear from Representative TED BUDD.

I appreciate your being here, Representative BUDD, and we would love to hear what your thoughts are on this very important topic.

I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD).

Mr. BUDD. Thank you, as a friend and Congresswoman from Missouri, for yielding and holding such an important and timely Special Order.

Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, President Trump went to the American people and rightfully made the case for the border security proposal he has submitted to Congress, and it is a proposal that I fully support.

This plan, which was developed by border security and law enforcement professionals, takes necessary steps to secure our border, protect our communities, and it ends the plague of crimes that were committed by illegal aliens against American citizens.

The truth is America is at a decision point. It is time to decide what kind of country, exactly, we want to be: a country founded on the rule of law or on lawlessness.

We have seen States across the country declare themselves a sanctuary for illegal immigrants, willing to put the lives of U.S. citizens at risk for political purposes. We have lawmakers here in this Chamber who are intent on eliminating our Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, ICE, which is tasked with enforcing our immigration laws.

We know that the vast majority of immigrants are great people, and it would be foolish to even think otherwise. In fact, legal immigration—that is legal, with an L—historically has been beneficial economically, socially, and culturally to the United States, and I have no doubt that we are going to continue to invite and welcome legal immigrants with open arms to our country every day. We do that for about 1 million a year. We are a very

welcoming and generous country. But to ignore the crisis at our southern border is also dangerous.

Throughout 2018, Customs and Border Patrol seized 1.7 million pounds of narcotics. We have seen a 38 percent increase in methamphetamines and a 73 percent increase in fentanyl coming across our borders. These drugs are taking the lives of tens of thousands of our people every year—I think we heard the number 72,000 last year, including many of those from my home State of North Carolina. For those who are living with addiction, these drugs steal their dignity, and they steal their self-worth.

The trafficking of women and children across our southern border is equally as egregious. In his address to the Nation the other night, the President called this a crisis of the heart and a crisis of the soul.

The Department of Homeland Security has also been very clear regarding the national security implications that come with having a border that can be easily accessed by those who want to cause us harm.

To conclude, I will say that, right now, the government is in a shutdown because President Trump requested funding for a border wall that Democrats once supported when there was a different President.

To be frank, the current shutdown isn't due to policy difference; it is due to politics. So let's put politics aside, and let's do what is right for our constituents and for our country.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Well said, Representative.

Mr. Speaker, now we have my colleague and friend to the south in Arkansas. Representative FRENCH HILL wants to share a little bit. I appreciate his being here tonight.

I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL).

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. I thank my friend from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) for her leadership on this issue. Thanks for letting us gather together on the people's House floor tonight and talk about this issue and try to lay out for the American people who are watching some of the facts associated with this situation. I am not sure they always get the full story.

When I came to Congress, I knew the only way to really understand this border security issue was to go to the border. Since I was elected in 2014, I have been down on the southwest border four times and am getting ready to go back in just a few days.

On those trips, I meet with Border Patrol agents, local law enforcement, county judges, citizens, and community leaders. We all talk about the issue of what is the definition of border security: the physical barrier aspect? the technology? the observation? the manpower? the coordination with local law enforcement?

We always talk about drugs and drug cartels. You have heard from our leader tonight that they outman and

outgun American law enforcement, Federal and State.

Just last week, I got a note from my good friend that we lost another young person from my high school due to heroin and fentanyl overdose.

I carry a little packet of Sweet'N Low in my pocket, Mr. Speaker, because a gram of fentanyl, which is the size of a Sweet'N Low packet, has enough fentanyl in it to kill 500 Americans. So it is killing our kids, Mr. Speaker, and it is coming across the border with Mexico.

Physical barriers shape the strategic deployment of our force. That is why county judges support it, mayors support it, and our Border Patrol supports it. This is why, over the past 20 years, when President Bush proposed it, President Clinton proposed it, Bush 43 proposed it, and Obama supported it, we built fence, starting in San Diego. We see, where there is fencing, 90 percent reductions in people crossing illegally.

Fences work. Physical barriers work. Physical barriers shape our force deployment and allow us to better use our manpower and coordinate our very understaffed and undergunned forces.

Secondly, it is increasingly frustrating to me that this is a crisis of politics in this House Chamber and in the United States Senate. It is utterly hypocritical on the part of our leaders in the House and our minority in the Senate to not see this need for humanitarian assistance on the border and physical security on the border. Republicans have proposed this time and time again last year. We got no Democratic votes for it last year.

I want my friends on the other side of the aisle to be able to make the moral distinction between those who come to our country legally and those who come here illegally. It seems to me that is a straightforward promise. America is a nation of immigrants. We are the most generous and welcoming country in the world.

One other point I want to make before I close, my friend from Missouri, is to talk about people seeking asylum here, people coming to our border with no papers, no documentation.

There was a news story this week about the Bangladeshi pair of men trying to come in and cross the border, interviewed on national television. We see, time and time again, people come from Bangladesh and from all over the world. They come to Mexico; they come to our border; and they have no passport.

How do they come into the United States? They have no documents. They claim asylum, credible fear, and yet here, Mr. Speaker, is a driver's license handed to me by a Border Patrol agent in Chula Vista, California, of a Saudi Arabian born in the early 1990s, and yet we have no record of someone from Saudi Arabia crossing at Chula Vista in the time frame that this driver's license was found in the Chula Vista station outside San Diego.

We have a crisis on this border, and when people tell you there isn't one, they are not telling you the truth. That should terrify us that we don't know who is coming across our border, Mr. Speaker.

Therefore, I thank the gentlewoman from Missouri for holding this hour. I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to the American people about the drugs and the impact on our youth and the impact on our national security by not having a secure southern border.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, gentleman, that was excellent; and I appreciate you bringing a picture so we can all see that what the Border Patrol and others are running into is that individuals, clearly, are here from other countries illegally, and that is why we need to secure this border. It is very concerning what is happening as a result of having an open border.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad that my colleague from Florida has shared a little bit of his time this evening to come join us.

JOHN RUTHERFORD. I appreciate your being here, and I look forward to hearing what you have to share tonight.

I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD).

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are calling the situation at the southern border a manufactured crisis. What a heartless and naive thing to say.

Tell that to the families of almost 300 people who die every week from the heroin flooding across our southern border.

Tell that to the ICE agents who seized enough synthetic opioids in 2017 to kill every single American by overdose.

Or come on down with me to the 2100 block of Jefferson Street in Jacksonville, Florida, and you tell that to the medical examiner who saw, in 2017, the highest rate of fentanyl-related deaths in the entire State of Florida.

A manufactured crisis? Hardly, Mr. Speaker.

Thankfully, the experts at DHS who are on the ground doing the good work to protect us understand what is necessary to combat this crisis, and they have asked Congress for our help. These DHS professionals have told us that security at the border requires a multilayered approach that includes additional personnel, increased technology, access roads, and, yes, a wall.

The wall is not and never has been the beginning and end to border security, but it is an important part of a comprehensive security plan. Let's give the DHS the money for the wall, get out of the way, and let the folks on the ground do their job.

Mr. Speaker, I have spent 41 years of my life as a law enforcement officer, including 12 years as sheriff. One thing I know firsthand is the judgment of the patrolman should amplify larger than

the back-office bureaucrat. Listen to those in operations. Those who would argue against the pleas of the DHS either haven't seen what is really going on or are intentionally ignoring the crisis.

For my friends on the other side of the aisle who are calling this a manufactured crisis, they know this isn't about the \$5 billion for the wall. In fact, most of them at one time or another have already voted to fund a wall. To them, it is really about not wanting to support our President. It is about being part of a resistance movement.

If you want to talk about a manufactured crisis, I can point you in the right direction, because it is manufactured in Central America, it is manufactured in South America, and it is being manufactured by drug cartels to be trafficked north and smuggled across the southern border and into our communities. I have seen firsthand the lives destroyed and the communities torn apart by this scourge coming through our porous southern border.

This bickering over one-tenth of 1 percent of our annual budget has become a hyperbolic political football, putting lives at risk. I say, enough, Mr. Speaker. Our Federal law enforcement officers on the ground at the border have asked for our help, and we have a solemn obligation to give them what they need to keep Americans safe.

A manufactured crisis? Hardly, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. HARTZLER. You sure know what you are talking about because of the lifelong service that you have given to law enforcement.

I loved what you shared. It is time to listen to those people on the ground and in operations. That is who we need to listen to.

You are right. When I had a chance to go to the border, the Border Patrol are saying we need this. They are there every day risking their lives trying to keep us safe.

So thank you for sharing your firsthand perspective from law enforcement and what you are hearing. I appreciate it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn to another colleague of mine, whom I actually had to travel to the border with back in October. She is from Arizona, which is where the port was in Mariposa, Nogales, that we went to.

DEBBIE LESKO, thank you for joining us tonight. I really appreciate your sharing with America and with our colleagues here about what you are seeing from Arizona and your perspective on the need to build this security wall at the border.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. LESKO).

Mrs. LESKO. Thank you very much, Representative HARTZLER; it was really eye-opening when we went down to the Arizona border. I have been there a number of times, but I learned directly from not only the high-ranking officials, but from rank-and-file agents.

When I asked if a border fence was necessary to protect our Nation, they said, absolutely, yes. That is part of the solution. We have a major problem.

Today, I would like to focus on some people from Arizona, Representative HARTZLER, who were killed. They were killed by illegal immigrants who came into our country illegally. So I rise today because our open borders have caused a humanitarian and security crisis.

When the Democrats say that this is a manufactured crisis, that is absolutely false. I have seen firsthand and have talked to people firsthand. We have a crisis on our southern border.

□ 1730

Arizonans know the challenges of an unsecured border all too well. Just ask Mary Ann Mendoza whose son, Brandon, a Mesa, Arizona, police officer, was killed in a head-on collision caused by an illegal immigrant.

The illegal immigrant who killed Brandon was arrested in the nineties for burglary and assaulting a police officer. He never showed up for court and was reapprehended at the border in 2002 attempting to come back into our country. Unfortunately, a lenient judge let him stay. Because of that, this law enforcement officer was killed.

Arizona Border Agent Brian Terry's life was taken by a group of traffickers hoping to smuggle drugs into our country. When Agent Terry and three other border agents tried to stop their illegal activity, they shot him. Perhaps had our border not been so porous, Agent Brian Terry would still be with us today.

A rancher from Cochise County, Arizona, Robert Krentz, was killed by an illegal immigrant at home on his ranch.

Unfortunately, there are way too many stories just like these of innocent people getting killed by illegal immigrants.

I live in a border State. I have been to the border a number of times. Most recently, I visited the United States-Mexico border in Nogales with the gentlewoman, where I met with Customs and Border Protection agents. I asked the agents if they thought the border fence would help. As I said before, they said absolutely, yes, that a fence will help in our efforts to combat illegal immigration and other illegal activity across the border.

The crisis we are dealing with at the border is not just illegal immigration. There are illicit and illegal drugs flowing through our borders; human trafficking; and, as we learned from the agents, dangerous cartels at the border that are exploiting vulnerable children and mothers. In fact, according to Doctors Without Borders, more than 30 percent of the women who come to the southern border have been sexually assaulted on their journey.

This is something that is up to Congress to fix. We need border security. The fence is just part of the solution.

We need technology like sensors and drones, so we have eyes where we can't have our agents. We need more boots on the ground. We have funded more agents on the ground. Let's hire more agents, so our resources aren't spread too thin.

What we are asking for is a multi-faceted approach to border security. Democrats know this. In 2006, Democrats supported a border fence. CHUCK SCHUMER and then-Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton voted to fund \$52 billion for 700 miles of fencing. Now we are asking for \$5.7 billion. To me and you, that is a lot of money, but it really represents only one-tenth of 1 percent of our spending.

On December 20, the Republicans in the House voted to keep the government open and secure the border. Unfortunately, not one Democrat voted for the bill. Now we are in a situation where the government is shut down. They won't come to the table. They won't negotiate. They don't have a counteroffer.

I am willing to sit down and listen to their suggestions, but they haven't brought forward any suggestions. They are refusing to negotiate and refusing to deal with this national security crisis.

While Democrats refuse to come to the negotiating table, our brave Border Patrol and ICE agents continue their mission of protecting our borders, even without a paycheck. We should be supporting them by giving them the tools and resources they need to do their jobs and keep our Nation safe.

Instead, unfortunately, my Democrat colleagues are ignoring the public calls for border security. In fact, when Democrats repeatedly say, "We are for border security," I think their talk is talk. They need to walk the walk and listen to our law enforcement that tells them what we need. Part of that is a border fence.

President Trump addressed the Nation this week. Now it is up to Congress to address and solve the issue with legislation. Let's stop these political ploys and fund comprehensive border security.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her excellent summation of what is important. It was so touching. I thank her for bringing the pictures of Arizonans who have lost their lives due to Congress' failure to build the wall and keep us safe.

That is why we are here tonight, saying now is the time. We have to stop this.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota, PETE STAUBER. He is new to Congress. I am so glad to have him here. I appreciate him coming, and I look forward to hearing what he has to say from a Minnesotan's point of view.

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the State of Missouri for her leadership. It is a privilege to stand here on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss the pressing issue of border security. Across our southern border, we have thousands of miles of unprotected terrain where weapons, human trafficking victims, and drugs are easily smuggled into this country every single day.

Believe it or not, the drugs that are crossing our southern border even make their way to the most northern communities in my great State of Minnesota. Just last year, more than two dozen people were arrested for their involvement in a large heroin trafficking network that brought drugs to St. Louis County, where my family, friends, and constituents live. This is unacceptable.

During my 23 years as a law enforcement officer, I worked tirelessly to keep illegal drugs off the streets and out of the hands of our young children. I have given too many death notifications to unsuspecting parents. The pain and anguish of each family will never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, it is high time we recognize that our porous borders are intrinsically tied to the drug crisis, the rise in human trafficking, and illegal immigration in this country. I urge the Democratic leadership to put partisan politics aside so we can finally work together and secure our borders. The health and safety of the American people are depending on it, and doing nothing is no longer an option.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman has that law enforcement background that is so critical right here in Congress. That is why we are glad he is here and appreciate him sharing. I can't imagine what he has gone through so many times, having to go to somebody's home—the parents—and face a mom and dad to tell them that their child has died.

That is why we are here today. I appreciate the gentleman's passion for this issue. I share it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois, MIKE BOST, a colleague to the east. I thank him for being here tonight and appreciate him sharing about this important crisis that we have at our border.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Missouri for yielding and for putting this on tonight.

Mr. Speaker, if you have listened to this debate tonight, the colleagues that I serve with are explaining that there truly is a crisis. Unfortunately, there are those who claim that it is a manufactured crisis. Despite what the colleagues from the other side of the aisle say, it is not a manufactured crisis. It is not a new crisis, but it is an ever-growing crisis.

Let me tell you that I have had experience and understand the border from many years ago. While stationed in the United States Marine Corps in Yuma, Arizona, I actually worked at a site called P111 that was 3 miles off the Mexican border in Arizona. Every night, people would come across. Thinking they were seeing a border

fence, they would climb into the compound. Every night, we would have to call border security, and they would pick them up and take them back.

We talked about the crisis of drugs coming across. Let me tell you about the crisis that occurred at that time. Some very evil people would watch the desert, and they would kill these people trying to come across the border, who would then just be left because there was no ID for them.

But we can secure our border. It is an argument that has been going on in this House and in this Nation for some time.

Many of you who are older will remember that Ronald Reagan actually argued and put forth the idea with Tip O'Neill, the idea that they would do immigration reform, which Tip wanted, as long as they could secure the border, which the President wanted. Tip O'Neill got what he wanted. The President didn't get what he wanted, because the House didn't pass the funding.

Mr. Speaker, it is time we passed the funding. We have to end this shutdown, and we have to secure our border. But it takes a good-faith effort on both sides to negotiate. When Speaker PELOSI says she offered \$1 toward the physical barrier, she is not negotiating in good faith.

It is very sad, because I am concerned about those people who work for us in this government who are not receiving a paycheck. Everybody who is speaking on this floor tonight is. But they are also concerned about the pictures that we see here and the problems that we see.

In this House last year, we worked on legislation dealing with the opioid crisis, but our largest supplier of opioids is at that southern border. Over 90 percent of the opioids and heroin that comes in and that kills the people of the United States is coming across because we don't have the ability to secure that border with a physical barrier.

There is one difference right now between when NANCY PELOSI and CHUCK SCHUMER supported a barrier along that border. The only difference is who is sitting in the White House. You can like him; you can hate him; but the reality is this issue is not about him. It is about the citizens of this United States. It is about what is doing right by the citizens that send us here. To watch political football being played in this House and watch what occurs is simply mind-boggling.

I had a town hall meeting the other night, and we let both those for and those against speak and ask questions. By the time it was said and done, over 66 percent of the people I was talking to believed that we must secure this border with a physical barrier.

Plain and simple, let's stop playing politics, and let's fund the government and our border. We can do both. The people of America need to know and understand that, because I know my

colleagues who are speaking here tonight do understand it.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is right. We can do both. We are all committed to doing that. That is why we are here. We are working for the American public, and I believe we will get this done.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague and good friend from Alabama, MARTHA ROBY.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman and my friend as well for holding this Special Order tonight. I agree with the comments my colleagues have made here on the floor this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to underscore the severity of the situation at our southern border. We are in the midst of a real crisis, and we must act now.

According to Homeland Security, in the last 2 months, our Border Patrol has apprehended roughly 140,000 illegal immigrants at the southern border. This is an increase of 86 percent over the same period last year. Additionally, there were more than 25,000 families apprehended last November. This is the highest monthly number ever recorded by Border Patrol.

Mr. Speaker, here in Congress, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle are talking about this issue as though it is something new. This is not a new issue. For the past decade, the people who I represent in southeast Alabama have consistently expressed to me their frustrations with our country's illegal immigration problem.

I believe now is the time that we must use every tool available to enhance border security. And we must do it now. We cannot wait another decade.

I really appreciate the gentlewoman taking this time, her leadership on this issue tonight, and her giving me the opportunity to speak.

□ 1745

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you for coming and sharing. You made so many great points. And just the sheer number of people who are coming across, we just say those numbers, but I heard the other day, it is like 2,000 a day.

In my district—I have a very rural district—there are a lot of towns that don't have 2,000 people in them. So if I picture one of my towns that has 2,000 people in it, that is how many that are coming across every day, the southern border, 2,000 people a day.

We have just got to address this. I agree with you, we have got to do it now. And thank you so much for coming.

I would like to now yield to the gentleman from South Carolina, Representative DUNCAN, my good friend, to come here and share his thoughts from South Carolina and why he thinks this is a real crisis, and then why we need to deal with it right now.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, first off, let me thank the gentlewoman for hav-

ing this Special Order on a very, very important issue.

South Carolina is as far away from the Texas border, the southern border, as almost any State. We do have an international border with the port of Charleston. We have airports there. But on Tuesday, the President carefully explained the reality on our southern border.

Plain and simple, we have a real and tangible national security crisis on our hands with illegal immigration, drug smuggling, human smuggling, sex trafficking, and terrorist threats, terrorists attempting to infiltrate our country through our poorest and unsafe southern border. These are people who aren't from Central or South America. There have been people of all nationalities apprehended on our southern border.

The President should be applauded for looking at every angle and every out-of-the-box idea to answer his constitutional duty to the American people to secure our Nation. This is about national security. It is not just about illegal immigrants wanting to come into our country to work and provide for their family; this is about national security.

We all know we have an epidemic drug problem in this country, and the majority of the drugs are coming across our southern border. Sex trafficking and human trafficking, in general, are immense in our southern border region.

And we do know that the Quds Force, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Special Elite Forces, the Quds Force, have tried to come across our southern border, apprehended and thwarted by an undercover DEA agent on the Mexican side of the border that stopped that. That Quds Force operative wanted to come to this city, wanted to come to Washington, D.C., to assassinate the Ambassador from Saudi Arabia at a restaurant where a Member of this body could have been eating.

The threat of terrorism is real. The illegality and illegal activities happening on our southern border are real. It is what the people want. It is what they expect from the Commander-in-Chief, to make sure that our Nation is safe. They want a true leader, a problem-solver. President Trump has proven that he is a problem-solver in private business, and he is applying that as Commander-in-Chief.

Congressional Democrats have been unwilling to secure the border, even though a lot of them voted for the 2006 Secure Fence Act, but they failed to fund it. So the show vote, if you look at their rhetoric, they believed in securing the border. Now it is time to put the money there to truly do it.

Seventy-nine Senators voted for that as well, the 2006 Secure Fence Act. And because of Democrats' unwillingness to fulfill their constitutional Article I duties, the government remains partially shut down.

This isn't politics. This is national security. It is time to build the wall,

secure our border, stop the illegal activities, a national security issue to protect us and our fellow citizens. We owe it to the American citizens to step up and secure this Nation.

I applaud the President and I applaud Mrs. HARTZLER for having this Special Order and giving us Members a chance to voice our support for what is going on with the administration trying to secure this country.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Well said. Well said. I thank the gentleman; that was great.

Now, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, Representative BRIAN BABIN. He is right there at the border. So what does the gentleman have to say?

Mr. BABBIN. I was at the border this past weekend.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Really?

Mr. BABBIN. I certainly was.

Mr. Speaker, as a Representative from the 36th District of Texas, I made a promise to my constituents and the American people to secure the southern border, and I intend to keep my promise.

The last 2 months alone, Border Patrol agents have apprehended roughly 140,000 illegal aliens on the southwest border, which is a staggering 86 percent increase from this time last year alone. Without question, funding to build the wall is crucial, and now is our chance.

In December of 2018, Border Patrol agents apprehended more than 27,000 members of family units, the highest monthly total on record, a number which has been on a steady incline for months. I have seen this with my own eyes.

Mr. Speaker, last month, I joined my Republican colleagues here in the House and voted to fully fund the government and secure money for the border wall. Regrettably, the Democrats blocked this commonsense legislation and are now unwilling to negotiate with us or the President.

The crisis at our southern border is a dire national security and humanitarian concern, and a solution must not be delayed any longer. The border encompasses approximately 2,000 miles; but with too many of those miles left open, we are hurting our border States, and, quite frankly, the entire Nation is put at risk. It is past time for the Democrats to come to the table with a serious offer so that we can move forward toward meaningful border security.

Simply put, we have very little idea who is coming across the border, what their intentions are, and we have to get a handle on this. Criminal organizations, cartels, and others who wish to harm us are easily entering our country undetected.

Indeed, 500 Texans have died at the hands of illegal criminals in Texas alone. And Houston, which I represent part of, is the number one port of entry for sex trafficking in the United States, a very dubious, indeed, record there.

I am willing to fight for this, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

I thank my friend, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER), for the time.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague from North Carolina, Representative ROUZER, to share.

And while he is coming, I just want to thank the gentleman from Texas for sharing that. That is just heartbreaking that 500,000 Texans were killed at the hands of illegal aliens. But we can fix that.

So I thank Representative ROUZER for being here. What does the gentleman have to say tonight about this?

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentlewoman from Missouri for leading this Special Order and her great leadership in so many respects and, particularly, in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no question about it. Our Nation is in the midst of a humanitarian and national security crisis at our southern border, one that is growing by the day, and its impact is far-reaching.

Unfortunately, many of these illegal aliens are very dangerous individuals with criminal records, members of gangs, and others coming for nefarious purposes who are exploiting the loopholes and current immigration laws. This has led to an increase in human trafficking and a lethal spike in drug trafficking that is striking rural and urban communities, alike, all across this great land.

During the past 2 years, ICE officers made 266,000 arrests of aliens with criminal records, including those charged or convicted of 100,000 assaults and nearly 30,000 sex crimes.

Data shows that 31 percent of women and nearly 17 percent of men are sexually assaulted en route to the border. The situation is so bad that nearly 70 percent of migrants are victims of some form of violence during their travel.

Now, let's talk about the drugs.

Heroin and fentanyl are hitting rural and urban America in epidemic proportions. Just this past year, there was a 73 percent increase of fentanyl and 22 percent increase in heroin brought across the southern border. In fact, approximately 90 percent of the heroin brought into this country is smuggled across.

According to the Center for Disease Control, in 2017 alone, more than 70,000 lives were lost due to drug overdoses. They published this just this past December 18, more than 70,000 lives.

The drugs coming in across the border are destroying lives, separating families, and robbing this country of great talent that is so badly needed. Almost every business owner I talked to tells me what a hard time they have trying to find workers because, in so many cases, they can't pass a drug test.

My home State of North Carolina also suffers greatly from the prevalence of human trafficking. In so many cases, this, too, starts at the southern border.

Here is the bottom line: Criminal organizations and others are utilizing illegal immigration as a way to make billions in profit and cause harm to countless victims in the process. A barrier in the right places makes a lot of common sense. The President is asking for a little more than 230-some square miles of steel barrier out of almost 2,000 miles of border. This shouldn't even be a debate. Give me a break.

Mr. Speaker, this is a crisis that requires bipartisan action. I applaud President Trump and his commitment to securing the border, and I am proud to stand with him until it is done.

I urge our Democratic colleagues to come to the table. This is a negotiation. This is a process. Come to the table and let's work it out, and let's do what is right for the American people.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the conversation that we have had tonight, sharing with the American people the facts and the stories of some people in our district about why this is so important.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

FINANCIAL CHALLENGES FAMILIES ARE EXPERIENCING BECAUSE OF THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. Porter) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PORTER. Mr. 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 gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to describe the enduring financial challenges that families are experiencing because of the President's government shutdown.

I know how terrifying it is when your livelihood is suddenly taken away. I grew up during the 1980s farm crisis and watched as my neighborhood bank closed. Everyone in my town felt a real sense of panic and of loss.

Farmers were being foreclosed on and losing farms that had been in their family for generations. There were sui-

cides and the kind of social pain and personal pain that comes with economic hardship. While the town eventually recovered, the people and the community were changed forever.

I understand how devastating a financial crisis can be, and I understand how one missed paycheck can spiral. I know this from my own childhood during the farm crisis and from the nearly two decades I have spent studying families on the brink of bankruptcy.

Federal workers are now questioning whether working for the Federal Government is a stable paycheck. They are wondering if their family, if their kids can count on this administration. Families are wondering how long they can afford to wait for the shutdown to end, and they are having hard discussions at the dinner table about whether to leave the Federal workforce in search for a new job.

Tomorrow, 800,000 Federal workers and their families will miss paychecks, plunging employees into uncertainty. About 42,000 of those Federal workers are in my home State of California. More than 5,000 of these unpaid workers live in my district, and many of them are hurting.

With each missed paycheck comes missed payments on bills and missed payments on loans. Families will be hit with late fees and interest, often in the double or even triple digits.

Despite having no paycheck, Federal workers still have urgent expenses—prescription drugs, gas, childcare, groceries—and those who are still required to report for work incur costs to get to and from their workplaces.

This past spring, the Federal Reserve found that 40 percent of Americans don't have the cash to pay for an unexpected \$400 expense without having to sell a belonging or borrowing money. Those families also don't have the cash to go without paychecks.

Families may feel forced to consider taking out a payday loan to get quick cash to meet their expenses. In the past 2 years, more than 10 percent of Americans have gone to a payday lender, even though the interest rates are incredibly high and the national average is almost 400 percent interest. In California, the average rate is 460 percent.

□ 1800

In Virginia, where even a larger percentage of Federal workers live, the average payday loan is over 600 percent.

For workers living paycheck to paycheck, the shutdown and its missed paychecks can easily spiral into bankruptcy. Even if we provide Federal workers with backpay, which we should, it will not make those hurt by this shutdown whole.

When the government reopens, it won't be able to help Federal workers who incur late fees or hits on credit reports during the shutdown. It won't pay interest on new loans taken out by Federal workers.