

BORDER WALL

ISSUE TOOLKIT





Photo Credit: Krista Schlyer

WHO WE ARE:

We are a growing coalition of 160 organizations representing civil rights, faith, environmental, indigenous, LGBT, and border communities working together to protect the community, culture, land, wildlife, and environmental well-being of the border region.

WHAT WE BELIEVE:

Everyone is responsible for protecting and preserving the communities' cultures, land, wildlife, and environmental well-being of the border region.

We reject the false narrative that the border is a violent and insecure place. We believe this narrative is used inappropriately to justify and advance anti-immigrant, anti-border, pro-criminalization, and anti-environmental legislation that has negative economic, civil rights, and environmental impacts on the border region.

Border communities are home to the safest cities in the nation and some of our country's most stunning mountains, rivers and wildlife refuges. Part of the beauty of our borderlands lies in the rich history

etched into the region's stunning landmarks. Our government should protect these lands, preserve the shared histories of the region, and respect the rights of the roughly 15 million people who live, play and work in border communities.

OUR WORK:

We oppose President Trump's "Border Security and Immigration Improvement" Executive Order signed on January 25, 2017 to expand or replace the border wall. Barriers already exist along more than 650 miles of the border between the United States and Mexico. The order would further militarize the border by adding additional ICE and Border Patrol agents to Trump's deportation force. The wall and border militarization is opposed by civil rights, border, religious, environmental, and indigenous communities—as well as private-property and business owners who live on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Partners: [LULAC](#), [Hispanic Federation](#), [ACLU](#), [Earth-justice](#), [Sierra Club](#), [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#), [GreenLatinos](#), [Defenders of Wildlife](#), [Southern Border Communities Coalition](#)

OVERVIEW

Each August, Members of Congress go home to meet with constituents to engage in conversations around what is happening in DC. This is a time for feedback—to help set future priorities and receive updates on what has happened during the congressional work period. This is the perfect opportunity to engage with your representative on the issues that matter most to you and your communities. Many Members of Congress will take your feedback into consideration when returning to DC and often the seed for legislation is planted in those moments.

At this time, with the controversial “Trump wall” on the forefront in DC, Members of Congress are divided over the issue—and it’s the constituents’ right to challenge them on this debate. We encourage you to attend a town hall or schedule a meeting with your representative’s office to discuss the wall. In this guide, you will be equipped with a comprehensive communications guide to engage your Member of Congress. This includes prompts for office calls, talking points for meetings, sample opinion pieces and letters to the editor (LTEs). Please let your Member of Congress know that the wall is not what we want. Our hope is that you are armed with the knowledge and empowerment to talk one-on-one with your Member on these issues.



Photo Credit: Krista Schlyer

BACKGROUND

On January 25th, Trump signed an Executive Order with plans to vastly expand the existing U.S.-Mexico border walls. During the Bush administration, former Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff waived more than three dozen laws to build the existing border wall—including the Endangered Species Act, Wilderness Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. Habitat set aside for endangered species, including the Ocelot, Jaguar, and Sonoran Pronghorn, has been fragmented, and will be damaged even further by expanding the wall.

The human cost of expanding the walls would also be immense; the plot to target immigrant families would shatter lives and shred the fabric of this country. The proposed border wall is nothing short of an attempt to undo local efforts to protect our friends, neighbors, colleagues, families, and ourselves—forcing millions to live in fear. In addition, the wall has proven ineffective, unnecessary, and has done more harm than good. The existing border wall has been costly and ineffective. It is an expensive solution in search of a non-existent problem.

The Trump Administration called for \$1.6 billion in border wall development for 60 miles of the U.S.-Mexican Border. These walls are slated for the Rio-Grande Valley and the Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge as well as outside of San Diego, California—where prototypes of Trump’s wall will be placed.

FINAL ASK

Get a commitment from your Member of Congress to oppose any appropriations that finances Trump’s border wall and mass deportation agenda.

GENERAL TALKING POINTS

- On January 25th, Trump signed an Executive Order with plans to vastly expand the existing U.S.-Mexico border walls. This has now included attempts to waive more environmental rules in addition to the Endangered Species Act, Wilderness Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. This will be detrimental to ocelot, jaguar, and Sonoran pronghorn habitat—species at risk.
- The human cost of the border wall is immense, causing unnecessary deaths and dividing border communities.
- The Congressional Research Service reports that border walls have had “no discernible impact” on immigration or smuggling, while costing taxpayers billions of dollars at a time when immigration from Mexico is at its lowest point since the 1990s.
- President Trump has called for walling off the entire U.S.-Mexico border with a concrete barrier that would stand 30-feet tall. Solid barriers have already been built along hundreds of miles of the U.S.-Mexican border—spanning from California to parts of Texas. Most of the currently unwalled border is in Texas, and building walls there would require condemning land from hundreds of private landowners and municipalities.
- Big Bend National Park, Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, and other federal lands would be carved up by these new walls. Habitat and endangered species that they protect would be severely impacted.
- Due to the Real ID Act of 2005, the Secretary of Department of Homeland Security has the ability to waive any law in order to build border walls, roads, and infrastructure as quickly as possible. The Bush Administration used this authority to waive more than three dozen laws along the southern border, including the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and Clean Air Act along with other bedrock environmental laws putting wildlife and the public health of communities along the border at risk. Trump has doubled down on this risky behavior, waiving 33 important laws along about 15 miles of our borderlands near San Diego.



Photo Credit: Krista Schlyer

- The latest cost estimate for these useless and destructive border walls is \$26.1 billion.
- New walls would make it even more difficult for wildlife to move across the border including animals such as the jaguar and ocelot—which have begun to return to various parts of the U.S. after a long absence. This barrier would severely jeopardize game animals that support local economies.
- Sixty-three percent of people living within 350 miles of the southern border oppose the idea, according to a [Pew Research Center survey](#).
- Just last month, the GAO reported that “CBP cannot measure the contribution of fencing to border security operations along the Southwest border.”
- The southern border region is home to some 15 million people living in border counties in California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. These communities, which include cities such as San Diego and El Paso, are among the safest in the country despite political narratives according to FBI crime statistics.

6 REASONS TO OPPOSE ANY BORDER WALL FUNDING...

1. COST

THE BORDER WALL IS EXPECTED TO COST \$66.9 BILLION TAXPAYER DOLLARS.¹

The \$3 billion in immigration enforcement funds for FY-18 could instead:

- Create 45,000 new middle-class jobs²
- Build 184 new elementary schools, costing ~\$16.3 million each³
- Provide 10 million life-saving HIV/AIDS treatments under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief⁴

2. PUBLIC OPINION

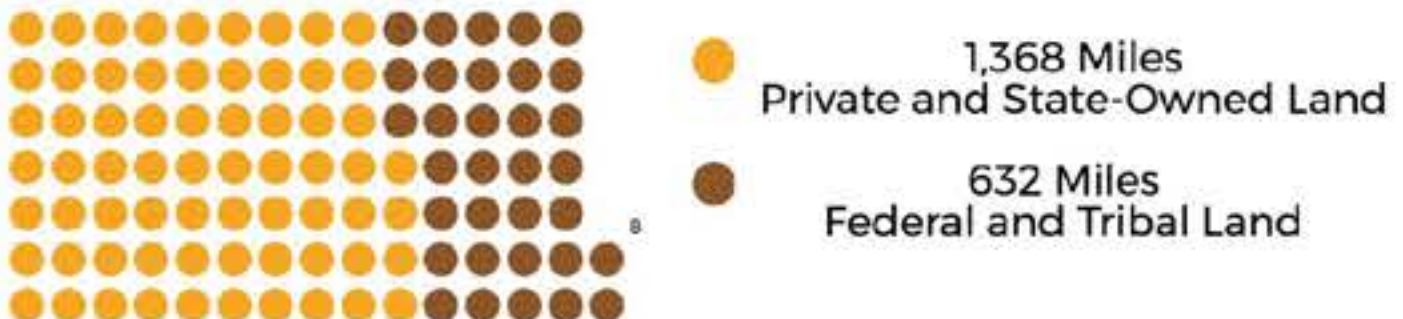
61% OF AMERICANS OPPOSE "BUILDING A WALL ALONG THE ENTIRE BORDER WITH MEXICO."⁵

When asked: How Important is it to Build a Wall Along the U.S.-Mexico Border as a Goal for U.S. Immigration Policy?



3. LAND CONFISCATION

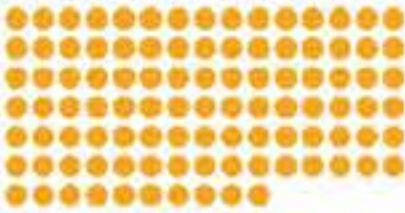
MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF THE BORDER IS ALREADY OWNED BY STATES AND PRIVATE PARTIES.⁷



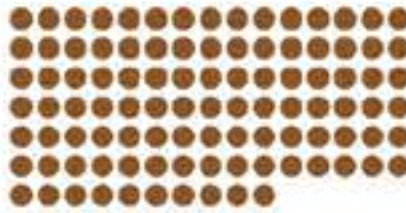
4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

THE BORDER WALL WILL CAUSE IRREPARABLE DAMAGE TO WILDLIFE AND ECO-SYSTEMS ALONG SOUTHWEST BORDER. *A border wall would:*

Negatively impact:⁹



111
Endangered Species



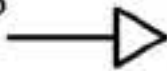
108
Migratory Birds

Add 7.8 million metric tons of CO2 to the atmosphere¹⁰

5. INTERNATIONAL TREATY OBLIGATIONS

IN 1970, THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO SIGNED A TREATY THAT RESTRICTS CONSTRUCTION ALONG THE RIO GRANDE AND PROHIBITS DISRUPTING THE RIVER'S NATURAL FLOW.¹¹

63% of the U.S.- Mexico border is marked by the Rio Grande River



A 1970 boundary treaty governs structures along the Rio Grande and Colorado River



It requires that structures cannot disrupt the flow of the rivers, which flow across Texas and 24 miles in Arizona and define the U.S.- Mexican border



6. NEEDLESS PROJECT

THE BORDER IS PROTECTED BY FENCING, VEHICLE BARRIERS, AND STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGY.

Since 2001, an additional 17,000 border patrol agents have been deployed to the Southern Border¹²

2001- 4,000 Agents



2017- 21,000 Agents



Through the 1033 surplus program, DHS has received over 300,000 pieces of equipment from DOD¹³

"The net flow of migration from Mexico, both legal and not, has actually decreased"- PEW Report¹⁴

Sources

1. "Potential Wall Cost of \$65.7 Billion Concerns McCain: After Committee Staff Briefing | U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill of Missouri | U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill of Missouri | Rep., 19 Mar. 2017. Web. 17 July 2017.
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3. "School Costs Did Not Rise." School Planning & Management, n.d. Web. 17 July 2017.
4. "The Case for Strategic Health Diplomacy: A Study of PDRFAE - AHA Catalog - NCBI." National Center for Biotechnology Information, U.S. National Library of Medicine, n.d. Web. 17 July 2017.
5. Sub, Erik. "Less Than Half the Public Views Border Wall as an Important Goal for U.S. Immigration Policy." Pew Research Center, Fact Tank: News in the Numbers, Web. 6 Jan 2017.
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#NoWall Coalition

STATE OF THE BORDER

~700 MILES OF BORDER WALL ALREADY EXIST¹

"Tactical Infrastructure" along the border includes:²

- Primary Pedestrian Fencing
- Secondary Fencing
- Tertiary Pedestrian Fencing
- Vehicle Fencing

1 MILE OF PEDESTRIAN FENCING = \$6.5 MILLION DOLLARS³

EVERY REPRESENTATIVE FROM BORDER DISTRICTS & EVERY SENATOR FROM FROM BORDER STATES HAS VOICED OPPOSITION TO THE WALL⁴



Senator Dianne Feinstein
 Senator Kamala Harris
 CA- 51 Rep. Juan Vargas



Senator John McCain
 Senator Jeff Flake
 AZ-2 Rep. Martha McSally
 AZ-3 Rep. Raul Grijalva



Senator Tom Udall
 Senator Martin Heinrich
 NM- 2 Rep. Steve Pearce



Senator John Cornyn
 Senator Ted Cruz
 TX-15 Rep. Vicente Gonzalez
 TX-16 Rep. Beto O'Rourke
 TX-28 Rep. Henry Cuellar
 TX-34 Rep. Filemon Vela
 TX-23 Rep. Will Hurd

BORDER PATROL EMPLOYS A "DIGITAL WALL"⁵ It includes:



107
Aircraft



11,000
Underground
Sensors



8,000
Cameras



175
Mobile
Surveillance Units



84
Boats

Sources

1. Fleischner, N., & Sonneland, H. K. (2016, September 16). Explainer: The History and Future of Hurdles to a U.S.-Mexico Border Wall
2. Graham, Matt, and Lazaro Zamora. Border Security Assets Border Security Assets . . . Issue brief.
3. Fleischner, N., & Sonneland, H. K. (2016, September 16). Explainer: The History and Future of Hurdles to a U.S.-Mexico Border Wall
4. Meckler, Laura, and Kristina Peterson. 2017. "Border Lawmakers Balk at Donald Trump's Wall Request." Wall Street Journal.
5. Jacobo, J., & Marshall, S. (2017, January 26). Nearly 700 Miles of Fencing at the US-Mexico Border Already Exist

THE BORDER WALL IS EXPECTED TO COST TAXPAYERS \$66.9 BILLION DOLLARS:¹

The \$3 billion in immigration enforcement funds for FY-18 could instead:²



VISTA
Volunteers In Service To America

Support over 153,000 new AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers, at an average cost of \$19,585 per person

MEXICO WILL NOT BE PAYING FOR THE WALL³

Straining ties with Mexico is a bad idea considering:

Mexico was the United States'⁴ 2nd largest goods export market in 2016



↑ ↑ ↑⁵
Price of goods would increase

1,200,000⁵
Jobs would be jeopardized



1 out of 29⁷

"American jobs depends on preserving an economic relationship with the U.S.'s southern neighbor."

Sources

- 1. "Potential Wall Cost of \$66.9 Billion Concerns McCaskill Aher Committee Staff Briefing | U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill of Missouri" U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill of Missouri. N.p., 28 Mar. 2017. Web. 19 July 2017.
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THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER IS MARKED BY^{1,2}

6 National Parks



3 mountain chains

2 largest deserts in North America



700 species of vertebrates



25,000,000 ACRES protected public lands



500 species of birds

1,260 MILES OF THE RIO GRANDE & COLORADO RIVER³

A border wall in the Rio Grande/Colorado River floodplains does and will further:⁴

Divert natural water flow

Cause significant, catastrophic flooding

Cause debris build up post-flood and destruction/erosion of land near the border

Lead to more intense flooding in the future

BORDER BARRIERS REDUCED ROAMING RANGE FOR SPECIES BY AS MUCH AS 75%⁵

Habitat fragmentation:⁶



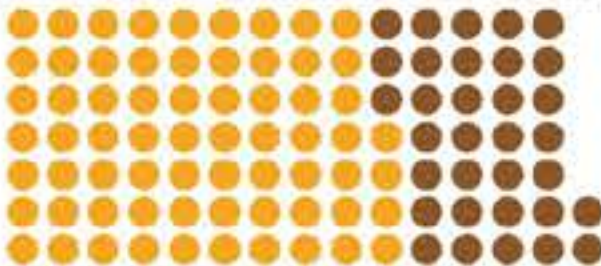
Sources

1. Milliken, G. (2017, January 26). Trump's Mexican Border Wall Would Be an Ecological Disaster
2. National Parks Maps. (n.d.).
3. IBWC Clean Rivers Program. "About the Rio Grande." International Boundary & Water Commission.
4. Donnell, L. (2017, February 17). The Environmental Consequences of A Wall on the U.S.-Mexico Border
5. Gaskill, M. (2011, August 2). United States Border Fence Threatens Wildlife
6. Silva, D., & Gamboa, S. (2017, April 22). Trump's Border Wall 'Catastrophic' for Environment, Endangered Species: Activists

*Fourth Amendment*¹

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF THE BORDER IS ALREADY OWNED BY STATES AND PRIVATE PARTIES²



1,368 Miles
Private and State-Owned Land

632 Miles
Federal and Tribal Land

36 FEDERAL LAWS HAVE BEEN WAIVED IN THEIR ENTIRETY TO BUILD THE PRESENT WALL³

- National Environmental Policy Act
- Endangered Species Act
- Clean Water Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Clean Air Act
- Archaeological Resources Protection Act
- Safe Drinking Water Act
- Noise Control Act
- National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978
- Arizona Desert Wilderness Act
- Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act
- National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act
- Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
- Administrative Procedure Act
- Otay Mountain Wilderness Act of 1999
- California Desert Protection Act
- National Park Service Organic Act
- National Park Service General Authorities Act
- Religious Freedom Restoration Act
- National Forest Management Act of 1976
- Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act of 1960
- Solid Waste Disposal Act
- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
- Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act
- Antiquities Act
- Historic Sites, Buildings, and Antiquities Act
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
- Farmland Protection Policy Act
- Coastal Zone Management Act
- Wilderness Act
- Eagle Protection Act
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act

\$78,000,000 TAX PAYER DOLLARS HAVE BEEN SPENT TO COMPENSATE PRIVATE LANDOWNERS⁴



Sources

1. Legal Information Institute. "Fourth Amendment." Cornell Law School.
2. Government Accountability Office. 2015. SOUTHWEST BORDER Issues Related to Private Property Damage.
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4. Jan, Tracy . 2017. "Analysis: Trump's border wall will require fight to take private land." Chicago Tribune.

March 23, 2017

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of civil rights, faith, environmental, and indigenous organizations and communities, we write to express our opposition to any efforts to expand the extensive, nearly 650 mile -long border wall that already exists between the United States and Mexico as specified in the Border Security and Immigration Improvement Executive Order (1/25/17).

Instead, we urge you to support legislation such as H.R. 837, the Build Bridges Not Walls Act and H.R. 739, the This Land Is Our Land Act in the House - as well as the PROFILED Act in the Senate - that prohibit the use of taxpayer dollars to build the wall, ensuring that Congress remains a guardian of civil rights, a good steward of taxpayer dollars and the responsible custodian of the integrity of our wildlife and public lands.

The false narrative of a violent and insecure border region has long been used to justify and advance anti-immigrant, anti-border, pro-criminalization, and anti-environment legislation that has negative economic and civil rights impacts on border communities. However, the fact is that border cities are some of the safest in the country and that communities with more immigrants are likely to be safer than places with fewer immigrants.

The wall, increased militarization of the border region, the criminalization of immigrants, and the destruction of wildlife habitat are all tools of politicians who seek to advance an extreme and profit driven agenda at the expense of our communities. Moreover, these measures have nothing to do with the security of the border region or our nation.

The latest move to advance this administration's anti-immigrant agenda is President Trump's Executive Order(EO) directing the construction of a wall on our southern border. This EO is not just bad policy that will do nothing to make us safer and squander billions of dollars, but it is also a divisive decision opposed by civil rights, border, religious, environmental, and indigenous communities, and private -property and business owners who live and work along the U.S.-Mexico border. Latinos in particular see the wall as anti-immigrant, anti-Latino, and anti-Mexican.

Additional construction of the border wall is expected to cost \$21.6 billion according to the latest estimates from the Department of Homeland Security. In spite of the administration's unfounded assurances that another sovereign country will be made to foot the bill, the President has no ability to make that happen and should not make such false promises to the American taxpayers.

Further construction of a border wall will harm the environment that border communities cherish and depend on. It will further hurt wildlife; destroy sensitive habitat for endangered species; damage the natural flow of floodwaters; lead to costly litigation with landowners, Native American communities, and other stakeholders; and threaten the economic, social, and cultural ties between the United States and Mexico. Your leadership is needed to put an end to the unnecessary expansion of a southern border wall which, at its core, is simply another manifestation of this Administration's anti-immigrant sentiment dressed up as public policy.

Your support for legislation such as H.R. 837, the Build Bridges Not Walls Act and H.R. 739, the This Land Is Our Land Act in the House - as well as the PROFILED Act in the Senate - is critical. The Build Bridges Not Walls Act would protect taxpayers by prohibiting the implementation of President Trump's Executive Order to build a wall on our U.S.-Mexico border using taxpayer dollars. The This Land Is Our Land Act would bar the construction of any wall or fence on Federal lands controlled by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture or Interior. Similarly, the PROFILED Act includes language rescinding the construction of the border wall and other provisions.

We strongly urge you to support these three pieces of legislation and are counting on you to help fight any legislative attempts to authorize or fund additional, and unnecessary construction of a wall at our southern border. For more information, please contact Luis Torres, Director of Policy and Legislation, at latorres@lulac.org.

Signatories 

#NoWall Coalition

LETTER SIGNATORIES

League of United Latin American Citizens
Advocates for Youth
African American Ministers in Action (AAMIA)
Alliance for African Assistance
Alliance for Citizenship
Alliance San Diego
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
Americans for Immigrant Justice
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
Arkansas United Community Coalition
Arlington Street Church (Boston) - Social Action Committee
Aro Inc.
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Association of Latinos/Latinas Motivating Action (ALMA)
Azul
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Bioarch, LLC
Calpulli Mexican Dance Company
CASA
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Black Equity, Inc.
Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance
Chinpa, League of Conservation Voters
Church World Service
Coalition for Hispanic Family Services
Colectivo Accion Latinade Ambiente
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights Comité Civico Del Valle
Comunidades for a Better Environment
Community Science Institute - CSI
Conference of Major Superiors of Mali
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
Defenders of Wildlife
Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Earthjustice
EJAC
El Taller Latino Americano
Endangered Species Coalition
Entre Hermanos
Equality California
Equality New Mexico
Esperanza Peace and Justice Center
Farmworker Justice
FLAS, Inc.
Food Empowerment Project
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Peace Center
Friends of Inland Detainees
Friends of Friendship Park (GLAD)
GreenAlinos
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
Hispanic Federation
Hispanic Health Council
Hispanic Health Network
Hispanos Unidos De Buffalo Inc.
HONOR PAC
Human Rights Campaign
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
Immigration Equality Action Fund
Interfaith Worker Justice International
Indian Treaty Council
International League of Conservation Photographers
Islamic Center of San Diego
Jesus People Against Pollution
Junta for Progressive Action, Inc.
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission of the Sisters of Saint Francis
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office, Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg
Kino Border Initiative
Klamath Forest Alliance
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
Latino Commission on AIDS
Latino Decisions
Latino U College Access
LatinoJustice FRLDEF
Latinos for Secure Retirement
Latinos in the Deep South
La Union del Pueblo Entero
Faithwalkin Confessionario del Maroon Bellineye

Leadership Team of the Felician Sisters of North America
Long Island Wins
Los Jardines Institute
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Mazzoni Center
Mi Familia Vota
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza
National Education Association
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Institute for Latino Policy (NILP)
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Park Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Mexico Environmental Law Center
New York Immigrant Coalition
Noble Renewables Group of the West
NoMAA (Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance)
North County Immigrant Task Force
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
OneAmerica
One Colorado
Pangea Legal Services
Pax Christi USA
Pride at Work
Pride for Youth
Puerto Rico Para Todos
Reformed Church of Highland Park
Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)
Rio Grande International Study Center (RGISC)
Rosendale Recycles
SAVE
School of the Americas Watch
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN)
Services Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sierra Club
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Institute Justice Team
Sky Island Alliance
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southern Border Communities Coalition
Southern California Immigrant Project
Southwest Environmental Center
Spanish Speaking Elderly Council - RAICES
Texas Organizing Project
The Dream Corps
The DC Center for the LGBT Community
The Green Valley/Sahuarita Samaritans
The New York Immigration Coalition
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
third horizon consulting
Tri-Valley CAREs
Truth: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Turtle Island Restoration Network
UnLocal, Inc.
United Latinx Fund
United Methodist Women
U.S.-Mexico Foundation
Valley AIDS Council
Verde
Violence Intervention Program
Voces de la Frontera
Voces Verdes
Voto Latino
We Stay/Nos Quidamos
West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Air and Safe Toys
West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project
WildEarth Guardians
Wildlands Network
WVMA

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Now that we know these issues, what to do next?

TAKE ACTION

1. **Attend town halls and public events** with your Member of Congress and make your voice heard. You can find your town hall here at <https://townhallproject.com/>
2. **Call and tweet your Member of Congress** and request visits from their local offices
3. **Write an opinion editorial or letter** to the editor of your local media outlets in support of funding that protects border communities, immigrants, and refugees.
4. **Host a march, rally, vigil or public event** which showcases support for immigrants, border communities, and refugees in your community

Tips for Town Hall or In Person Meetings with YOUR Member of Congress

1. **Stay focused:** your job is to make the Member of Congress give an answer to your question and to convey that you and the community are watching their votes.
2. **Tell a story:** The most compelling thing you can do is share your experience along with your questions. Be honest, vulnerable and open.
3. **Have an ask:** You will want to ask a very clear question that is actionable and can be verified.

Try to stay away from yes and no answers. With questions like “Will you stand for me?”, you will get a yes. Instead ask “Will you commit to voting against funding for the wall? Questions like these provide for direct answers and keep them from dancing around the issue.

4. **Engagement:** Don’t let your Member of Congress give you a standard talking point, require them to acknowledge you and your humanity—these issues matter.
5. **Be supportive:** If you are not comfortable asking a question or engaging with the Member, it is perfectly ok. Be supportive of your neighbors and friends and encourage folks in the group—your very presence shows that you care about the various issues.
6. **Thank them:** After a town hall or in-person meeting, send a note, post a Tweet, or call the office to let them know that you are grateful for the meeting and their willingness to listen. If they did not directly answer your question or did not commit to voting against your issue, express your disappointment.

Quick reminders: Get there early, practice your introduction, story and question and remember you will only have about 2 mins to speak. ENJOY!

SAMPLE IN-DISTRICT MEETING OR TOWN HALL QUESTIONS

House Member Question:

- On January 25th, President Trump signed an Executive Order that called for the building of a border wall along the southern border and the increase of a mass deportation force to remove 11 million undocumented Americans. Will you commit to reject any effort to build a wall or fencing infrastructure that will have devastating impact along the border?
- In the House, Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham has introduced the Build Bridges Not Walls Act ([H.R. 837](#)), and Rep. Adriano Espaillat has introduced the This Land is Your Land Act ([H.R. 739](#)). Both will prohibit the building of infrastructure along the U.S.-Mexican border on public lands. I see that you are not on the bill, will you stand with your colleagues and support these two bills, reject the wall and protect our public lands?

Senate Member Question:

- Will you join Sen. Tom Carper's bill [S. 688](#), which rescinds President Trump's Executive Order to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexican border? And will you oppose using federal funds to pay for a wall along the southern border?
- Will you commit to not using federal funds to pay for a wall along the Southern Border of the United States?

CALLS AND TWEETS TO YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

TELL CONGRESS: Reject funding for the border wall, immigration detention, deportation and border militarization.

In the President's 2018 Budgetary Request, The Trump Administration has called for \$1.6 billion in Border Wall development for 49 miles of the U.S.-Mexican Border, and Congress has proposed even more funding. These walls are slated for the Rio-Grande Valley and the Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge as well as outside of San Diego, California, where the Prototype of Trump's walls will be placed. In addition to this request for monies on the border wall, the President has also requested \$4.5 billion in additional funds to expand his deportation force—both addi-

tional ICE and Border patrol agents—to tear apart families and communities, detain 51,379 people and militarize communities living along the southern border.

Congress must reject any funding measures for increased border militarization, border infrastructure, mass immigration detention and deportation.

CALL SCRIPT

Sample Script: Hello, My name is *[state your name]* I am your constituent from *[city/town]*, and I urge you to reject monies that would expand building border fencing and wall along the Southern border, build up President Trump's deportation force of ICE and Border Patrol agents and tear families and communities apart. My community also welcomes refugees and immigrants and I urge you to reflect these values.

You should also share a story about standing in solidarity for border communities.

REQUESTING A VISIT WITH YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS LOCAL/DISTRICT OFFICE

To schedule a district meeting you will need to contact the Congressperson's scheduler; you can find that information by calling their district office.

Once you have the contact information, send an email to request a meeting.



Photo Credit: Krista Schlyer

SAMPLE MEETING REQUEST

Dear Scheduler,

I am writing to request a visit with Rep./Sen. *[name]* in district the week of *[dated]* at their *[pick an office closest to you]* to discuss funding for the border wall and detention and immigration enforcement.

A group of constituents, representing *[communities/organizations]* would like to meet with *[representative/senator]* to talk about the impact this funding will have on our community.

Please let me know as soon as you can about Rep./Sen. *[name]* availability on the week of *[date]*.

Thank you for your time and attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Name

Profession

Community, organization, affiliation—if applicable

City, state, Zipcode

List of who will attend the meeting

Special note: Make only one visit request per group.

SAMPLE TWEETS

- A border wall will do nothing to make us safer. It will destroy critical wildplaces & wildlife. Think we need a wall? Think again. #NoBorderWall @tagmember
- Border communities and their environment can be destroyed by flooding. Who's to blame? Border walls. NoBorderWall @tagmember
- Border communities are not war zones. @tagmember: build bridges, not walls & Vote no on any wall funding #NoBorderWall
- [ACCOUNTABILITY TWEET] Disappointing! Rep. Hurd put politics over his district by voting to fund Trump's wall. He opposed it before but backpedaled when it counted
- Trump's useless wall will cost \$70 billion. What useful things can be done in your district for that kind of money?
- [ACCOUNTABILITY TWEET] .@tagmember voted to waste \$1.6 billion on Trump's useless wall. What useful things can be done in your district for that kind of money?
- Border communities deserve better than a hateful wall separating them. @tagmember: can we count on you to stop it? #NoBorderWall
- Cross-border commerce fuels jobs across America. @tagmember: build bridges, not walls & Vote no on 1.6B #NoBorderWall
- Sneaking #BorderWall funds into House minibus wastes taxpayer \$, undermines transparency. #VoteNo @tagmember
- \$1.6B #BorderWall will threaten world-renowned wildlife refuge.#NoBorderWall & @Tagmember
- Daily commerce btwn San Diego, Tijuana = \$2.1M. Better ROI to build bridges, not walls. @Tagmember Vote #NoBorderWall <https://goo.gl/41JitF>
- Roughly 55k HP computers imported daily in Santa Teresa, NM. #VoteNo on #BorderWall & invest in ports @Tagmember <https://goo.gl/AC9TQx>
- Wall is an un-American symbol of division in a nation of immigrants. #VoteNo @Tagmember on the border wall

[Pictures to attach to tweets](#)



LTE'S OP-EDS: WRITING OPINION EDITORIALS AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR FOR LOCAL MEDIA OUTLETS

One great way to get the attention of Members of Congress is to write an Opinion-Editorial and a letter to the editor. Here's how:

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Recent reports: You will want to find an article or story that relates to the story you would like to tell, and make sure the story is only a few days old.

Ask for action: You will want to make a specific ask to policymakers, you should mention your Member of Congress by name to make sure they see it.

Include facts: It's best to use facts with citations. Statistics they can be helpful in moderation, but too many numbers can become confusing.

Tie together: You should bring in your personal connection and approach to the issue. Clearly state how you are connected, whether through institutions or community, why this is relevant to you, and what the point you are trying to make is.

HOW TO SUBMIT OP-EDS OR LTES

Keep it short: News publications like letters that are short and to the point. You should check for word limits. If you can't find one, keep it to 150 or less for LTE's or 750 words for Op-eds

Write in your own voice: A publication is more likely to make an impression if it comes from you. Do not be afraid to tell your story and make your case from the heart and head.

Submit it to the newspaper: Submit the letter directly to the newspaper and follow up by phone or email if you do not get a response within a week or two. Put the letter in the body of the email to make it easy for the editorial staff to read.

Report back: If you have published, email a link to [\[general email address\]](#) so we can track the impact of the letters. Also continue to call Members of Congress to continue the conversation.

[Sample Faith Op-ed From the Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#)

[Sample Faith LTE-The Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#)

[Sample Immigration Op-ED- from Southern Borders](#)

[Sample Environmental LTE](#) and [How-To Write an LTE from Sierra Club](#)

MATERIALS /ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Executive Order Community Letter](#) and [Budget Community Letter](#)
- Fact sheets (LULAC, NPCA, EJ, Faith Groups, ACLU)
 - Sierra Club: [Damage Caused by Border Walls](#)
 - Sierra Club: [Environmental Impacts Caused by Walls](#)
 - Defenders of Wildlife: [Borderwall/wildlife](#)
 - [Private Property and the Border wall](#)
 - [Types of Border wall](#)
 - ACLU: [Background on CBP and Discrimination](#)
 - ACLU: [Curbing the Unchecked Power of CBP](#)
 - ACLU: [100-Mile Rule](#)
 - Interfaith Immigration Coalition: [Border Letter](#)
 - Interfaith Immigration Coalition: [What our faiths say about Border Policies](#)
 - Interfaith: [Coalition Advocacy Toolkit](#)