

July 25, 2017

House of Representatives
Washington DC, 20515

Re: Oppose H.R. 3219 Security Minibus – Vote No on Border wall

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our coalition of almost 90 environmental, faith, immigration, and civil rights organizations, we are writing to strongly urge you to oppose funding for the continued construction of a border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. The construction of a border wall serves as a symbol of hostility towards immigrants, and undermines the civil rights of communities living along our southern border. It also imposes environmental costs and natural disaster threats on border communities, especially indigenous communities, harms native wildlife and wastes tens of billions in taxpayer dollars.

As the House moves to consider the Fiscal Year 2018 Security Minibus, H.R. 3219, we are profoundly concerned about the inclusion of \$1.6 billion slated for border wall. In addition to spending billions of taxpayer dollars, adding funding for the border wall in this legislative package undermines a fair and transparent legislative process. Instead of allowing legislators and the public to fully consider the impacts of funding wall construction, the Majority is using rushed and underhanded legislative maneuvers to circumvent the vast and legitimate opposition that exists for this measure, even within their own party.

Including border wall funding in a Security Minibus is based on the false premise that our borders are somehow violent and insecure. This false premise has 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. The fact is that communities along the border are some of the safest in the country. According to the FBI's Uniformed Crime Reports, cities on the border are safer than cities away from the border. Places like El Paso, Texas have long topped the lists of safest cities for their low crime and violence. Additionally, according to the American Immigration Council, communities with more immigrants are likely to be safer than places with fewer immigrants.

Border walls are an ineffective tool in curbing undocumented migration between the United States and nations south of the border. Rather than deter migration, the current 650-mile barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border has forced vulnerable migrant populations to pursue more dangerous routes of travel. The continued construction of a border wall portrays an attitude of hatred and animosity towards our neighboring nations. Additionally, construction of this wall would undermine indigenous border communities, potentially destroying elements of their history, archeology, and culture. Border security measures must consider the historic Tribal lands and families occupying the southern border.

Finally, the current proposal in Fiscal Year 2018 Security Minibus calls for the construction of 60 miles of levee border wall in the South Texas Rio Grande Valley; 28 miles would be levee-border wall, with 2.9 miles slated to be built in the Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge. This Refuge is home to diverse wildlife species, ecotourism opportunities, and rich natural beauty. When levee border walls are constructed, they negatively impact wildlife migration, pose severe flooding risks, destroy natural habitats, and lead to potential increased extinction rates. In order to construct existing border-walls, dozens of laws protecting our environment, public health, and sacred natural lands were waived. Our nation's natural habitats, vibrant wildlife, and healthy ecosystems are an unacceptable sacrifice to make for ineffective security measures.

For all of the above reasons, we strongly urge you to vote NO on the Fiscal Year 2018 Security Minibus, and oppose funding for border walls, levees, or additional infrastructure along the southern border of the United States.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Civil Rights

Mi Familia Vota
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
HONOR PAC
UnidosUS (formerly NCLR)
American Civil Liberties Union
Asian Americans Advancing Justice Atlanta
The City Project
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans
(NCAPA)
League of United Latin American Citizens
EPCF

Community Groups

Southern Border Communities Coalition
Indivisible
SER Jobs for Progress National Inc.
Junta for Progressive Action
National Black Justice Coalition
Education/Higher Education
National Education Association
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
(HACU)

Environmental/ Environmental Justice

Earthjustice
Wildlands Network
Sierra Club
International League of Conservation Photographers
Students for a Just and Stable Future
Earthworks
Friends of the Earth
Environmental Protection Information Center
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Center for Biological Diversity
Jesus People Against Pollution
Food Empowerment Project
San Juan Citizens Alliance
Ocean Futures Society
SustainUS
Natural Resources Defense Council
Southwest Environmental Center
Conservationist Wilderness Areas Committee
Defenders of Wildlife
Clean Water Action
West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Air and Safe Jobs
NextGen America
La Union Hace La Fuerza
Comite Civico del Valle

Religious/Faith Organizations

American Friends Service Committee
Frontera de Cristo
Friends Committee on National Legislation
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Ajo Samaritans
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Peace Center
American Friends Service Committee
Reformed Church of Highland Park
Cruzando Fronteras, Southern Arizona Interfaith
Southside Presbyterian Church
Church World Service
School Sisters of Notre Dame
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington
Office
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Institute Justice
Team
National Justice for Our Neighbors
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Latino Commission on AIDS
Hispanic Health Network

Human Rights/Women's Rights

National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
OneAmerica
Green Valley/Sahuarita Samaritans
Coalicion Derechos Humanos
National Immigrant Justice Center

No More Deaths
Architects, Designers, Planners For Social
Responsibility (ADPSR)
Lidia' DelPiccolo- Morris
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
(NAPAWF)
Tucson Samaritans
People Helping People in the Border Zone
Friends of Broward Detainees

Immigrant Rights

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy
Coalition
Detention Watch Network
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
End Streamline Coalition

Labor/Workers Rights

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
(APALA)
Jobs With Justice
Arkansas United Community Coalition

Latino Civil/Human rights/ Latino Labor

Hispanic Federation
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Latinos for a Secure Retirement

LGBTQ Rights

National Center for Transgender Equality
Equality California
Entre Hermanos