



## Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

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July 26, 2017

Dear Representatives,

I write on behalf of the Committee on Migration of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to express our opposition to including funding for a dramatic increase in construction of border fencing in the fiscal year 2018 appropriations package that the full House of Representatives is scheduled to take up this week.

As you know, the House Committee on Appropriations included approximately \$1.6 billion in funding for border fencing construction in H.R. 3355, its proposed Fiscal Year 2018 Homeland Security Appropriations Act, and there are strong indications that the House intends to include this funding in an unrelated appropriations package that the House plans to take up this week. This funding has been described by the Administration, and others, as a “down payment” on the Administration’s plan to construct a wall along the entire U.S. border with Mexico.

The bishops respect the right of the federal government to control our borders and ensure security for all Americans. However, we oppose the construction of a wall like the one that is envisioned by this proposed appropriation. Indeed, we fear that construction of such a wall would put immigrant lives needlessly in harm’s way, could increase the risk of women and child migrants being trafficked, and destabilize the many interconnected communities that live peacefully along the border. Moreover, an expenditure of the amount of funding necessary to construct such a wall does not reflect a proper prioritization of scarce federal funds in a time of fiscal austerity.

We urge that the House reject any plans to include funding for a “down payment” for the construction of the Administration’s proposed border wall in the fiscal year 2018 appropriations package that it takes up this week.

Sincerely,

Most Rev. Joe S. Vásquez  
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration