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Daily Media Summary January 26, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Media coverage sustained of the Senate investigation on the illegal online sales of opioids and approximately 75 outlets referenced CBP in their coverage.
- The discovery of a tunnel near downtown El Paso received widespread coverage from local El Paso media sources. Outlets stated Border Patrol agents' investigation of the tunnel is ongoing and its purpose is currently unknown. *El Paso Times*, *KVIA-TV*, and *KFOX-TV* reported the discovery.
- Coverage of the border security and immigration debate sustained as President Trump proposed a path to citizenship for 1.8M dreamers in exchange for \$25B worth of border security measures. National outlets, such as *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Associated Press*, and *Politico* covered the development.

TOP NEWS

1. **'We are getting inundated': Report tracks fentanyl shipments through US Postal Service**
(Sinclair Broadcasting Group) ... Leandra Bernstein

VIDEO: As a result of the shipping data, Customs and Border Control (CBP) has been able to stop large amounts of fentanyl from ever entering the country through the mail system. CBP executive assistant commissioner of field operations Todd Owen said on Thursday that his agents have gone from seizing 50 pounds of fentanyl shipped in international mail and express courier in 2015 to stopping 335 pounds of fentanyl in 2017. "At our largest international mail facility at JFK airport, CBP officers have made more fentanyl seizures in the first 3-1/2 months [of fiscal year 2018], than they have all of last year," Owens told lawmakers. Much of that success has been related to the postal service demanding foreign postal operators, particularly in China, provide shipping data. Despite the higher rate of interdictions of mail and express packages as well as increased seizures at the U.S.-Mexico border, Owens is not satisfied. "The trends continue to go up," he said, describing the volume of fentanyl entering the country is "overwhelming."

2. **75-foot tunnel found along El Paso international border, border agents say**
(KFOX-TV; 92k uvm; El Paso, TX) ... Jamel Valencia

VIDEO: Chief Patrol agent Aaron Hull with Border Patrol El Paso sector said agents patrolling around a water treatment plant were notified of a makeshift tunnel north of the



Sante Fe International Bridge. Hull said agents were notified of the tunnel when employees from the Texas Department of Transportation discovered it. TxDOT employees reported a "cave-in" that happened during construction along a roadway, according to border agents. The tunnel was found at an El Paso Water Treatment Plant on Canal Road northwest of the Chihuahuita neighborhood. Agents with the Confined Space Teams learned that the tunnel measured 25 yards into Mexico. Hull says concrete is being poured to fill the tunnel and they are working with federal, state and local authorities to figure out what the tunnel was used for.

3. Trump Proposes Citizenship for Dreamers in Exchange for Wall, Other Concessions

(Wall Street Journal; 43.6M uvm) ... Michael C. Bender

VIDEO: President Donald Trump proposed a path to citizenship for 1.8 million undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children, if lawmakers agree to create a \$25 billion fund to expand barriers along the Mexican border and implement other deep changes to the immigration system. The White House suggested the proposal moved Mr. Trump a step closer to the Democrats, who have championed the cause of the young immigrants known as Dreamers, but the plan includes demands they have fiercely opposed. The Trump plan also risks the ire of hard-liners who oppose any such pathway to citizenship. ... The administration is also seeking policy changes that would limit the rights of children arriving at the border alone, as well as quicker removal of people already in the U.S. illegally. It also wants more border agents and immigration judges.

NEWS INDEX

BORDER SECURITY

Along U.S. Borders

4. Maine ACLU questions immigration checks at Bangor bus station

(Portland Press Herald; 2.1M uvm; South Portland, ME) ... Megan Doyle

The American Civil Liberties Union of Maine is asking federal officials to hand over records related to citizenship checks at two major transportation hubs in Maine. Zachary Heiden, the legal director of the ACLU of Maine, said passengers boarding a Concord Coach bus at the Bangor Transportation Center last week were met by U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents asking about their citizenship. Immigration inspections at transportation hubs are not a new practice. U.S. Border Patrol, which is part of Customs and Border Protection, has the authority to conduct citizenship checks without a warrant within 100 miles of the nation's land and coastal borders. That includes the entire state of Maine. Ten other states – Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont – lie entirely or almost entirely in that 100-mile zone, the ACLU said.

5. Border Patrol agents arrest convicted child sex offender



(KOLD-TV; 596k uvm; Tucson, AZ)

Casa Grande Border Patrol agents arrested a Salvadorian national, 51-year-old Alex Lopez-Garcia, Tuesday evening, Jan. 23, in an area west of Three Points. According to a CBP news release, Lopez illegally entered the country in a remote area with six other people and was arrested after agents on all-terrain vehicles tracked and apprehended the group with the assistance of an Air and Marine Operations helicopter. After the group was arrested, processing agents learned Lopez was a repeat sex offender in Fairfield, California; with several convictions of sexual offenses against children for which he was sentenced to 60 months incarceration.

6. Border Patrol investigates tunnel found after cave-in near Downtown El Paso

(El Paso Times; 534k uvm; El Paso, TX) ... Daniel Borunda

VIDEO: The U.S. Border Patrol and other agencies are investigating a tunnel discovered Thursday after a cave-in near Downtown El Paso, officials said. A Border Patrol statement said that the purpose of the makeshift tunnel is unknown and that the agency is trying to determine how long the tunnel had been abandoned. The tunnel was found after a cave-in during highway construction near the water treatment plant west of the historic Chihuahuita neighborhood, the Border Patrol said. ... "U.S. Border Patrol officials welcome any assistance from community members to report known information about this tunnel," the agency said in a statement.

7. Salvadoran gang member arrested by Border Patrol

(KVOA-TV; 273k uvm; Tucson, AZ) ... Faye DeHoff

Border Patrol agents assigned to the Douglas Station arrested a Salvadoran gang member with an extensive criminal history. Agents patrolling west of Douglas Tuesday night arrested 42-year old Mario Guardado-Urquillo shortly after he entered the country illegally. During processing, agents uncovered Guardado's extensive criminal history, which included aggravated homicide and violent evasion of authorities in his native country of El Salvador. Further investigation revealed his membership in the 18th Street Gang. Multiple tattoos on Guardado's body demonstrated common gang symbols.

8. Brazilian national wanted for murder arrested near Fort Myers, Border Patrol says

(Naples Herald; 48k uvm; Naples, FL) ... RJ Roan

A Brazilian national wanted for murder in his home country was arrested near Fort Myers, U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials said Wednesday. Border Patrol agents arrested Antonio Marcos Da Silva on Jan. 18, along with the help of ICE and ERO agents, the agency said in a Wednesday evening news release. Da Silva was wanted by Brazilian authorities for allegedly shooting and killing his wife during a domestic dispute in 1998. A tip led CBP officials to believe that Da Silva was hiding in



the U.S. to avoid a prison sentence, stated the release. “Vigilant agents are working tirelessly to apprehend individuals that enter the United States unlawfully and could cause harm in our local communities,” said U.S. Border Patrol Miami Sector Division Chief Frank Miller in the release. “U.S. Border Patrol Miami Sector has significant, ongoing collaborative partnerships with law enforcement partners across Florida and this is just the latest example.”

9. U.S. Border Patrol Checks on Buses Increasing Across Maine

(Maine Public Radio; 19k uvm; Lewiston, ME) ... Patty Wight and Fred Bever

AUDIO: The U.S. Border Patrol is running daily citizenship checks on buses traveling from Fort Kent toward the state's interior and making periodic checks on buses originating in Bangor. Civil rights advocates say these checks may be in violation of protections outlined in the U.S. Constitution. Daniel Heibert, chief patrol agent for the Houlton sector, says the agency has the authority to make such checks anywhere within 100 miles of the border, a standard which encompasses the entire state of Maine. "Our purpose for boarding any conveyances, a bus specifically in this case, would be to question anybody – anybody – about their right to be or remain in the United States, whether they are an alien or not," says Heibert. "That's kind of the gist of it. We would have to have a reasonable suspicion to think that somebody isn't a citizen to continue questioning."

10. Ports and Border: Sex offender caught trying to re-enter U.S.

(Nogales International; 85 uvm; Nogales, AZ)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at the Mariposa Port of Entry referred a 31-year-old U.S. woman, presently living in Nogales, Sonora, for further inspection of her Honda sedan. A drug-sniffing dog then alerted officers to almost 41 pounds of cocaine, worth nearly \$462,000, in the vehicle's rear quarter panels.

Ports of Entry

11. Cocaine, meth traffickers increasingly using vulnerable US seaports to smuggle drugs

(Fox News; 32.5M uvm) ... Talia Kirkland

VIDEO: The Port of Philadelphia, a nondescript shipping facility tucked in between Pennsylvania and New Jersey, is known for its imports of perishables like produce, meat, and dairy. But in recent years, to the chagrin of law enforcement officials, it's become known for something else: a major drug destination. Law enforcement officials say cocaine, fentanyl and methamphetamines are pouring into the cargo port at an alarming rate. A recent bust at the Philadelphia port by Customs and Border Protection, which found 700 pounds of cocaine hidden in a furniture shipment from Puerto Rico, underscores the disturbing new trend. ... “There’s no silver bullet to catching a drug smuggler,” says Edward Moriarty, Customs and Border Protection's acting director for the area port of Philadelphia. Moriarty said dealers are taking advantage of existing supply chains and using legitimate shipments to keep their illegal drugs flowing into the



country. And as soon as law enforcement officials create new technology to curb the drug flow, traffickers find a loophole. "It's sort of like a cat and mouse game," Moriarty said. "But that's where technology comes into play. We are constantly updating our X-ray systems, cameras, and advance intelligence." Not only do large shipments pose a threat to Philadelphians, the city's proximity to wide-scale cocaine markets like New York, Pittsburgh, Youngstown, and Cleveland increase its vulnerability. "Every port, not just Philadelphia, is susceptible to smugglers, and drug dealers will use any means, person, or condition to sneak contraband into the U.S.," Moriarty said.

12. Two arrested after attempting to smuggle meth into the U.S. near Yuma
(KOLD-TV; 596k uvm; Tucson, AZ)

Both a man from Mexico and a woman from Somerton, AZ are facing narcotics smuggling charges after Border Patrol officers found drugs in their vehicles, according to a U.S. Customs and Border Patrol news release. Both incidents happened on Tuesday, Jan. 23 at Arizona's Port of San Luis near Yuma. The first occurred in the morning when an 18-year-old Somerton woman was pulled for secondary search, after a CBP canine alerted to her KIA sedan. Officers searched the vehicle and found more than 43 pounds of methamphetamine in the vehicle's gas tank. The bundles were worth an estimated \$130,000 according to CBP. A few hours later the second incident occurred, when a 24-year-old man from Mexico underwent a further search of his Saturn SUV after a CBP canine alerted officers. This time officers discovered nearly 53 pounds of methamphetamine in the vehicle's spare tire and spare tire area. The bundles were worth an estimated \$159,000.

13. Customs agents seize 2,000 children's toys bound for Harrisburg that pose potential choking hazard
(WPMT-TV; 443k uvm; York, PA) ... Keith Schweigert

The CPSC determined that the toys violated the small parts requirement of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act, and ordered the toys seized. "Customs and Border Protection will continue to work closely with our trade and consumer safety partners to seize imported merchandise that pose potential harm to American consumers, and especially for toys that pose a potential choking hazard to young children," said Dianna Bowman, CBP's Area Port Director for the Area Port of Baltimore. "We hope that this seizure raises consumer awareness about the very real danger of unsafe products and urge consumers to remain vigilant when buying toys for young children." According to the CPSC, there were an estimated 240,000 toy-related injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments during 2016, and an estimated 85,200 (35 percent) of those cases happened to children younger than five years of age. "As the nation's border security agency, Customs and Border Protection enforces hundreds of laws for many different agencies, including laws governing consumer safety. It's one way in which CBP contributes to helping to keep Americans safe," said Casey Owen Durst, CBP's Field Operations Director in Baltimore, the agency's operational commander in the Mid-Atlantic region.



14. CBP finds pot hidden in "canned meat"

(WKBW-TV; 318k uvm; Buffalo, NY)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers stopped more than 1.2 pounds of marijuana from entering the U.S. Monday. CBP says officers were inspecting a commercial shipment that arrived at the Lewiston Bridge commercial warehouse when they found cans labeled as canned "Moose" and "Husky". The officers opened the cans and found the marijuana inside. "CBP officers remain vigilant and work hard to keep our communities safe," said Acting Port Director Cary Frieling. "Our officers' experience, combined with the use of available tools, continues to keep dangerous drugs from entering our country."

15. CBP officers seize over \$770K in illegal narcotics

(KGNS-TV; 87k uvm; Laredo, TX) ... Justin J. Reyes

VIDEO: U.S. Customs and Border Protection seized over \$770,000 worth of illegal narcotics during two separate actions. According to CBP, on January 21st officers at the Colombia-Solidarity Bridge cargo facility referred a 2017 Freightliner tractor trailer to secondary inspection. The driver of the vehicle was a Mexican citizen from Monterrey, Nuevo Leon. During the inspection, officers found eight packages, which contained 25 pounds of alleged meth hidden in within the tractor. The narcotics had an estimated street value of \$350,000. On January 20th CBP officers at the Lincoln Juarez Bridge referred a 2010 Chevy Captiva to secondary inspection. The vehicle was driven by a 33-year-old man from Nuevo Laredo. When officers searched the vehicle they found seven packages of 18.52 pounds of alleged heroin and four packages, which contained 47,063 pills of alleged oxycodone. The heroin had an estimated street value of \$420,000 and the oxycodone had an estimated street value of \$1.8 million. CBP officers seized the narcotics and arrested both drivers.

16. U.S Customs seizes \$143,000 from three Ghanaians

(Citi FM; Accra, Ghana)

"Customs and Border Protection encourages travelers to be completely honest when reporting all their currency during an inspection with a CBP officer, or be prepared to face severe consequences," said Daniel Mattina, CBP Area Port Director for the Area Port of Washington Dulles. "The best way for travelers to hold onto their currency is to fully comply with our nation's currency reporting laws." Following each currency seizure, CBP officers provided a humanitarian monetary release of \$1,111 to the man who departed the U.S. on Sunday, \$826 to the man who departed on Saturday, and \$831 to the man who arrived to the U.S. on Sunday. CBP released all three men to continue to travel. "CBP officers not only ensure that inbound travelers and cargo comply with U.S. laws and regulations, but they also conduct outbound examinations to safeguard the revenue of the U.S. These inspections protect against unreported exportations of bulk U.S. currency, which often can be proceeds from alleged illicit activity," said Casey Owen Durst, Director, CBP's Field Operations Director in Baltimore "These significant



currency seizures are a direct reflection of our continuing commitment to enforcing federal currency reporting requirements.”

BORDER WALL

17. Trump's border wall would devastate entire ecosystem, environmentalists say

(Fox News; 32.5M uvm) ... Maggie Kerkman

VIDEO: President Trump’s proposed border wall would cut through the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. The refuge is a 2,000-plus acre forest that is popular with birders and home to a variety of wildlife. “For its size,” said Jim Chapman, who is with the Friend of the Corridor, a group that supports the refuge, “this has the largest diversity of plants and animals of any refuge in all of North America.” Chapman worries if the border wall is built, there will be an environmental tragedy. He said when the river floods, as it does about every decade, animals which couldn’t fly out would be trapped.

18. Media warming up to Trump's border wall

(Washington Examiner; 4.8M uvm) ... Eddie Scarry

President Trump’s campaign pledge to “build a wall” on the southern border is beginning to look like it could become a reality, even to many in the media who first thought it was an empty slogan, but are now coming around to the idea. As talks over immigration between the White House and Congress ramped up this month, Democrats have signaled an openness to providing funding for a wall, and the idea has caught on among commentators and newspapers.

TRADE

19. An End To NAFTA May Not Be As Painful For Canada As Some Have Feared

(Forbes; 29.8M uvm) ... Patrick Lortie

While there will no doubt be some disruption, it is likely to be transitory as new trading patterns evolve in the absence of NAFTA. Air travel, for one, is not as dependent as other transportation modes on the U.S. and will continue to be greatly facilitated by the Canada-U.S. Open Skies Agreement. With respect to goods, we see transportation and logistics players moving rapidly to take advantage of the new opportunities brought on by an increasing East-West trade flow. In addition, both Canada and the U.S. are signatories of the “new” WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. Tariffs aside, the implementation of these accepted rules should greatly streamline current customs procedures, to the obvious benefit of all transportation modes.

20. USCG says no to tenders from foreign-flag ships used for excursions

(Seatrade Cruise News) ... Anne Kalosh



Foreign passenger vessels operating in the United States are increasingly using small vessels stored aboard ship for excursions, particularly in remote areas such as Alaska. A new US Coast Guard field notice confirmed this is not allowed since it violates coastwise trading rules under the Passenger Vessel Services Act. The notice said US Customs and Border Patrol has consistently held that these non-coastwise-qualified boats may be used only as tenders and, as such, need to meet all these conditions: They must arrive and depart US territorial waters on the cruise ship, must be used solely to transport passengers between ship and shore and may be used only when the CBP port director is satisfied it's not safe or feasible for the cruise ship to berth at a pier.

21. Federal Circuit Denies Lower Duty Rate for Chinese Aluminum Extrusion

Importer

(Trade and Manufacturing Monitor) ... Heather Doherty

Earlier this month, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ("Federal Circuit") denied an appeal by Capella Sales & Services Ltd., an importer of aluminum extrusions from China, in which the company challenged the countervailing duty margin applied to its entries at liquidation, arguing that a lower rate should have been applied by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

22. Cisco files legal challenge against counterfeiters

(Securing Industry) ... Phil Taylor

Cisco says its brand protection team actively monitors the marketplace to identify sellers of counterfeit products and takes steps to curb their activity, and also works closely with Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to stop counterfeits at the border, identify sellers of counterfeit to demand cessation of that activity, and pursue legal action. It recommends that customers buy Cisco products only from authorized partners or directly from Cisco in order to minimize the risk of purchasing counterfeits.

23. International Trade And Energy Law Alert - President Trump Imposes Safeguard Tariffs On Imports Of Solar Cells And Modules

(Barnes & Thornburg LLP) ... Christine J. Sohar Henter, Ralph Dudziak, and William P. Ewing

President Trump's tariffs followed closely the recommendation of his Trade Representative and of the U.S. International Trade Commission, both of which rejected the 50 percent tariffs requested by the U.S. companies. Second, the Proclamation t also directed the imposition of a quota for solar cell imports. The quota exempts the first 2.5 gigawatts of imported solar cells from the annual tariff. This quota is constant for the four years of the safeguard tariff, and it will be allocated among all countries. Details regarding the quota allocation are anticipated by the end of January and will likely address quota certification requirements and "warehoused" products, if outside the U.S. Customs territory.



24. Transborder SkyBridge \$230m development can fly on US-Mexico trade growth

(The Loadstar; London, United Kingdom) ... Ian Putzger

The \$230m scheme is based on the imminent establishment of a joint US-Mexican customs facility at Phoenix-Mesa Airport to expedite customs clearance, the first of its kind, according to SkyBridge. The venture's management expects this to produce lively cargo activity that could grow to as many as 10,000 annual flights by 2036. Currently, Phoenix-Mesa has some passenger services by low-cost carrier Allegiant Air. The projections have raised some eyebrows. "You've got to have lift to places where the cargo is going. Otherwise people may just as well truck to Los Angeles," said Ray Brimble, CEO of aviation property developer Lynxs. He recalled efforts elsewhere to establish an air cargo gateway by building up charters that did not succeed: "You need scheduled service," he said. The concept of a joint US-Mexican customs installation has also found resonance in Southern California. In September, US Customs and Border Protection announced it was looking to establish a pilot programme at Otay Mesa, south of San Diego, for companies that are listed in the Free And Secure Trade clearance programme for low-risk shipments entering the US from its NAFTA neighbours.

TRAVEL

25. Cleveland Hopkins airport renovates customs area in advance of new Iceland flights (photos)

(The Plain Dealer; 11.5M uvm; Brooklyn, OH) ... Susan Glaser

It's good news for travelers who found the previous customs process time-consuming and cumbersome. Buses, which transported arriving passengers from the secure side of the airport to baggage claim, won't be needed any more. Instead, the airport plans to reinstall Transportation Security Administration screening machines inside the customs area, allowing international passengers to pass through security before exiting through Concourse A. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection area (also referred to as the Federal Inspection Service area, or FIS) at Cleveland Hopkins is located at the end of Concourse A, which is where both Wow Air and IcelandAir will set up gates in advance of their May flights.

26. Port Canaveral's 30-year plan calls for three new cruise terminals

(Orlando Sentinel; 4.8M uvm; Orlando, FL) ... Richard Tribou

VIDEO: The razing and recreation of Terminal 3 is already in the works, and that's the one targeting a 2019 opening. That is the current terminal for port-of-call ships visiting for the day, but when redone, will have customs and border-control facilities. Adjacent to that is a smaller Terminal 2, where the Victory Cruises gaming ship operates. That is the location targeted for the 2025 revamp. The potential eighth terminal's location has yet to be determined.

27. Travelers Must Agree To Supply Passwords Or Risk Having Their Phones Confiscated By Border Agents



(Get.com; 650k uvm) ... Scott Dylan

Are you ready to share your passwords with a border agent? Most frequent travelers are already familiar with the increased security measures and screenings happening at airports in the United States. Many are also familiar with the fact that they may need to turn over electronic devices for inspection when asked. However, the full list of rules regarding what border control agents can and can't do with tablets, phones and other devices has been a little bit foggy for many travelers. It turns out that border agents can do a lot more than most people are aware of. Border agents can ask to view what's on your electronic devices. A new policy change from the United States Department of Homeland Security is about to take things a step further. Find out what you should expect the next time you travel into the United States.

28. Traveling lawyers get new protections in device searches at border

(American Bar Association Journal; 437k uvm; Chicago, IL) ... Lee Rawles

Hundreds of American lawyers will be traveling to Vancouver, British Columbia, for the ABA Midyear Meeting next week. As they pass through U.S. and Canadian customs, they and their electronic devices can be searched. But through the efforts of the ABA, the Department of Homeland Security has recently clarified its policies on how it intends to protect privileged information during its searches. The ABA contacted Homeland Security in May with its concerns about the potential for violations of attorney-client privilege at the nation's borders in a letter written by then-ABA President Linda Klein. Klein said the ABA was concerned about the breadth of the authority given to U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents to search lawyers' electronic devices "without any showing of reasonable suspicion." She asked that DHS clarify the directive on electronic device search and seizure, originally written in 2009, to protect attorneys and their clients. "We recognize that security at the nation's borders is of fundamental importance, and we acknowledge that lawyers traveling across the border with laptops and other electronic devices containing confidential client documents and other information could become subject to routine searches by CBP and [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] agents," Klein wrote. "But just as border security is fundamental to national security, so too is the principle of client confidentiality fundamental to the American legal system."

29. Travel Tip: How Facial Recognition is Used Around the World

(Peter Greenberg Worldwide)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection will soon begin to use facial recognition technology to screen incoming passengers. But the technology is already being used in many other locations. In China, ATMs are starting to use facial recognition to match your face to your account before you withdraw cash. Facial recognition at some city intersections now identifies jaywalkers. At a Beijing Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet, a face reader estimates customers' ages and moods to recommend menu items. Not to be outdone, a comedy club in Barcelona uses facial recognition technology to track how much



audience members enjoyed each show. It adds about 38 cents to their bill every time they laugh. That can get expensive—and I'm not laughing.

30. Netherlands, U.S. Again Negotiate American Passport Checkpoint At Schiphol

(NLTimes.nl; The Netherlands) ... Janene Pieters

The Netherlands restarted talks with the United States on opening an American passport checkpoint at Schiphol airport, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Justice and Security confirmed to broadcaster NOS. The initial talks on this matter were halted by the previous Dutch government after president Donald Trump banned people from multiple Muslim countries from entering the U.S. "Measures are now being taken that we do not agree with and we pressed the pause button", the Justice State Secretary Klaas Dijkhoff said at the time. These negotiations restarted in June, the spokesperson confirmed to NOS after the broadcaster asked about it. The talks are currently held on an official level. Politicians will become involved once there is an "official agreement", the spokesperson said. When this will happen, is not yet clear. Having an American passport checkpoint, with American customs officers, at Schiphol will mean that people flying from Amsterdam to the United States won't have to have their passports checked again at the American airports. Prime Minister Mark Rutte previously stated that such a checkpoint at the Amsterdam airport would be good for the Dutch economy, according to NOS.

WORKFORCE

31. Former Customs, Border Protection officers sentenced for marriage fraud

(Houston Chronicle; 16.3M uvm; Houston, TX) ... Jose R. Gonzalez

Two former U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers were sentenced Thursday in Del Rio for their role in a marriage fraud scheme, according to a news release from U.S. Attorney's Western District of Texas office. A federal judge sentenced Isabel Metzler, 46, to six months in federal prison followed by three years of supervised release and her husband, Luis Morales, 37, to five years probation. The pair had worked as customs and border officers at the Eagle Pass Port of Entry. Metzler was ordered to pay a \$7,500 fine. Morales must pay a fine of \$5,000, according to the press release.

32. Customs and Border Protection boss who's 'seen it all' gets congressional award

(Staten Island Advance; 1.5M uvm; Staten Island, NY) ... Kayla Simas

A Prince's Bay resident with a law enforcement bloodline who oversees Customs and Border Protection (CBP) operations at John F. Kennedy International Airport was honored with a Congressional Recognition Award on Thursday by Rep. Daniel Donovan. Francis J. Russo, who has worked at JFK since 1995, directs about 1,700 employees and oversees the agency's anti-terror and national security operations. "I have a family legacy," he said during the ceremony in Donovan's New Dorp office. "My dad was in the FBI, my brother is in the FBI -- it runs in the family, and I'm happy to



continue the tradition." Last year, his team processed 16 million inbound international passengers and \$86 billion worth of cargo. They effected 14,000 narcotics seizures, including 300 involving heroin, cocaine and fentanyl. "In the last 23 years, I have seen a lot and can tell many stories," Russo said. "From smuggling techniques of narcotics ranging from internal -- ingesting balloons and having surgeries -- to hiding the narcotics in prosthetic devices, to heroin in the wheels of a luggage. I've seen it all."

33. Career Fair/Grad Fest scheduled for Feb. 6

(Natchitoches Times; Natchitoches, LA) ... David West

Northwestern State University will hold its annual Spring Career Fair and Grad Fest Tuesday, Feb. 6 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Friedman Student Union. Spring Career Fair is for juniors and seniors at NSU who want to explore career opportunities, full-time jobs, internships, graduate and professional schools, career paths and volunteer opportunities. ... Participating organizations and businesses include Alliance Compressors, Baton Rouge City Police, Boise Cascade, Camp Fern, Cane River Creole National Historical Park, Crest Industries, LLC, CSRA, Inc., Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Jean Simpson Personnel, Louisiana Army National Guard, Louisiana Cat, Louisiana Methodist Children's Home, Louisiana Tech University, Louisiana Workforce Commission, LSU and LSUS Online Graduate Degrees, Mississippi College School of Law, NSU Alternative Certification Programs, PhysAssist Scribes, Sabine Medical Center, Southern Scripts, LLC, Tyler Fredieu State Farm, USDA NRCS and U.S. Customs and Border Protections and Weyerhaeuser.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

34. Facing embarrassment, postal and other federal officials insist their opioid-detection efforts are improving

(The Plain Dealer; 11.5M uvm; Brooklyn, OH) ... Stephen Koff

Facing an embarrassing Senate report, postal and other government officials maintained Thursday they have stepped up mail detection to find illegal and deadly drugs sent from abroad. But they also acknowledged holes in their multi-agency, layered detection systems that allow opioids to get through. ... Todd Owen, an executive assistant commissioner for Customs and Border Protection, or CBP, said more data would mean more detection and prevention. "The lack of a mandate for advance manifest data on all parcels, as well as the sheer volume of mail and potentially hazardous nature of various types of illicit drugs, present challenges to CBP's interdiction efforts in the international mail environment," Owen said.

35. Fentanyl is lethal and almost impossible to keep out of the country

(The Economist)

IN A cavernous warehouse near Los Angeles International Airport, United States Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officers process six packages per second. As cardboard boxes and manilla envelopes from around the world stream through x-ray machines, officers with handguns tucked into their waistbands scan screens for



anomalies in the images. Last summer officers at the warehouse found three live King Cobras coiled into aerated potato-crisp cans. On a recent morning they found nothing creepy or crawly, only bags full of dried orange skins and Chinese meat snacks disguised as candy. Mostly, however, they found drugs: counterfeit Viagra, vials of steroids and small plastic bags full of unidentified white powders. Officers are particularly worried about one drug: fentanyl. Kevin McAleenan, the acting commissioner of CBP, says the drug is the agency's priority.

36. Probe: Chinese opioid sellers exploit US postal service flaw
(Associated Press)

China said Thursday it is ready to work with the United States in fighting illicit opioid shipments after congressional investigators found that Chinese opioid manufacturers exploit weak screening in the U.S. Postal Service to ship large quantities of illegal drugs to American dealers. "Anti-drug coordination is one of the highlights of China-U.S. law enforcement cooperation," foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said at a regular briefing. "We stand ready to work with the U.S. to enhance our coordination in this field." ... The U.S. Postal Service said it has made dramatic progress in the last year in total packages with opioids seized by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

OPINION

37. Death and Morality Collide on the U.S. Border
(Bloomberg; 43.7M uvm) ... Francis Wilkinson

Scott Daniel Warren, a volunteer with a group called No More Deaths, was arrested in Arizona last week after allegedly supplying undocumented immigrants with food, water and clothes. Border Patrol agents had staked out a building near the desert where Warren delivered aid to two men. The Border Patrol and No More Deaths appear to have a symbiotic, if not particularly constructive, relationship. The group describes itself as a "coalition of community and faith groups, dedicated to stepping up efforts to stop the deaths of migrants in the desert and to achieving the enactment of a set of Faith-Based Principles for Immigration Reform."

38. Build the wall and make drug traffickers pay for it -- Democrats and Republicans should support this
(Fox News; 32.5M uvm) ... Sen. Bill Cassidy

VIDEO: Immigration was a defining issue of the 2016 election. President Trump ran on building a border wall, enforcing the law and making our immigration policy protect American families and benefit American workers, instead of endangering and undermining them. These promises stood in stark contrast to President Obama's unilateral, unconstitutional executive order on immigration, known as DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). He went around Congress and effectively changed the law on his own, giving DACA recipients a false sense of security instead of a permanent solution. ... If agencies like Customs and Border Protection, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Treasury improved their information sharing, leveraged big



data and ramped up apprehension efforts, we may be able to seize billions of dollars from drug traffickers, strike a major blow against the illicit opioid supply, and fully pay for construction of the wall and additional border security measures.

39. Trump's Border Wall Is Counterterrorism Tool

(Newsmax; 10.8M uvm) ... Deroy Murdock

As the bench-clearing brawl over border security roars on, it would behoove wall advocates to broaden their pitch. A wall would slash illegal immigration on the southern frontier. It also would bolster U.S. national security and counterterrorism. Not every illegal immigrant dodges Gila monsters and skirts cacti in search of the American dream. Beyond old-fashioned killers, such as the remarkably brutal MS-13 (Mara Salvatrucha) gang, "special interest aliens" hail from nations rife with militant Islam, including Iran, Pakistan, and Syria. Most of these border jumpers may be perfectly harmless, but the risk that even a few may crave American blood is a needless gamble.

IMMIGRATION

40. White House jumps back into Dreamer battle with citizenship offer

(Politico; 23.9M uvm) ... Rachael Bade, Burgess Everett, and Lorraine Woellert

President Donald Trump on Monday will propose a pathway to citizenship for 1.8 million undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children — a key concession to Democrats that he hopes will win their support for a massive border wall with Mexico. In a call with White House surrogates and Hill staffers Thursday afternoon, senior White House adviser Stephen Miller outlined the new framework, which also calls for dramatic restrictions on legal immigration as well as \$25 billion for border security. ... The White House will also ask for additional money to hire more U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents as well as immigration judges, attorneys and prosecutors. And the administration will propose closing what the official called legal "loopholes" that "make it almost impossible to deport those immigrants who show up illegally."

41. Left seethes at Trump's 'hateful,' 'white supremacist' immigration plan

(Washington Examiner; 4.8M uvm) ... Pete Kasperowicz

Groups supporting increased immigration and a pathway to citizenship for millions of illegal aliens reacted violently to the Trump administration's proposal, and accused Trump of pursuing a racist agenda. "Today the White House released a hateful proposal that would slash legal immigration to levels not seen since the racial quotas of the 1920s, eliminate legal channels for African immigrants, and spend \$25BIL for a wasteful border wall + increase in Border Patrol and ICE agents," the ACLU tweeted.

OF INTEREST

42. Corruption in the Region: Former East Chicago city councilman Frank Kollintzas, infamous for sidewalks-for-votes scandal, remains at large after fleeing to Greece in 2005



(The Times of Northwest Indiana; 1.1M uvm; Munster, IN) ... Bill Dolan

U.S. Customs and Border Protection reported Swissair sold a ticket from Chicago's O'Hare International Airport to Zurich, Switzerland, to a man who presented a non-American, possibly Greek, passport to the airline in the name of Fotios Kollintzas. Authorities believe Kollintzas, who was 62 when he bolted, fled to Greece, a nation that doesn't return American fugitives who receive Greek citizenship.

43. How a simple traffic stop in Gautier turned into an immigrant smuggling case

(Sun Herald; 856k uvm; Gulfport, MS) ... Robin Fitzgerald

In this case, the police officer who stopped the 2003 Dodge Ram on Nov. 28 called the U.S. Border Patrol, court papers show. The eastbound pickup was speeding in a construction zone near mile marker 58. A Border Patrol agent found Vargaz had a passport from Mexico and his passengers had Mexican ID cards. Vargaz said he knew his passengers had no permission to be in the U.S., and said he was being paid \$200 per person to drive them from San Antonio, Texas, to Greenville, S.C., a court paper said. Vargaz picked them up at a McDonald's restaurant in San Antonio. Alonso told Border Patrol he paid \$30 for help to cross the border and he paid \$2,300 for a ride east from Texas. The other five in the truck were also taken into custody. Vargaz pleaded guilty Monday to conspiracy to transport undocumented immigrants ... Chief Border Patrol Agent Joseph Banco, who leads the Border Patrol's New Orleans Sector, said the communication between all levels of law enforcement shows that cooperation disrupts smuggling operations and "reduces the ability of criminal organizations to exploit transportation routes."

44. TJ businesswoman who says she was a 'blind mule' gets new drug-smuggling trial

(San Diego Union-Tribune; 493k uvm; San Diego, CA) ... Kristina Davis

When she crossed at the Otay Mesa Port of Entry the morning of her arrest, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer testified that there was a noticeable bulge in the backseat. When the officer probed the seat further, finally stabbing the upholstery with a screwdriver, Urias sat staring forward, both hands on the wheel, without reaction, he testified. When asked if she wanted to cooperate with investigators in an interview, she said, "The thing is I don't even know what's going on," according to court records.

45. Immigration Crackdown Raises Fears of Seeking Health Care

(Roll Call; 430k uvm) ... Rebecca Adams

In an early January internal memo, Border Patrol Acting Chief Carla Provost said agents can expedite transit around a checkpoint during immediate emergency operations, and she reminded agents they can use their judgment about whether to take patients into custody. Officers should consider the sensitive locations policy before doing any follow-up interviews at a hospital, said Provost. But she did not prohibit officials from taking



patients at a medical treatment facility into custody. Border Patrol spokesman Carlos Diaz said in an email that the memo changed no policies and that people in ambulances will still be reviewed at checkpoints.

46. Vt. migrant workers concerned about immigration crackdown

(WCAX-TV; 319k uvm; South Burlington, VT) ... Eva McKend

VIDEO: The nationwide crackdown on undocumented immigrants is being felt in the Green Mountains. According to ICE, 110,568 people were detained in the U.S. in 2017 - a 42-percent increase from the year before. That increase has Vermont dairy workers worried. "Francisco was a really good guy. He was a hard worker who was responsible and reliable," said Salvador Ubaldo, a dairy farm worker. January 1st -- Salvador and Olga Ubaldo's colleague and friend Francisco Rosendo Casarrubias was picked up by the feds on his way to a Franklin County dairy farm. ICE says Border Patrol spotted the 25-year-old walking with his backpack about 10 miles from the Canadian border when they became suspicious and detained him. Casarrubias entered the country legally but overstayed his visa.

47. Traffic Stop Reveals Keeping Immigration Enforcement Separate From Police May Be Impossible

(Voice of San Diego; 146k uvm; San Diego, CA) ... Maya Srikrishnan and Mario Koran

San Diego County Sheriff's deputies this summer pulled over an undocumented married couple and contacted Border Patrol, who took them into custody. Now, the family has filed a claim with San Diego County, arguing the June traffic stop violated their constitutional and civil rights. They're seeking \$2 million in damages for separating family members and causing undue hardship. The claim is a precursor to a lawsuit. The county has 45 days to evaluate it and respond.

48. Man arrested in connection with 2017 homicide on San Luis Street

(KGNS-TV; 87k uvm; Laredo, TX)

A man on the run wanted in connection for a Laredo murder is arrested in California. Eighteen-year-old Joe Landin allegedly shot and murdered 32-year-old Jose Roberto Capetillo back in August 8th of 2017. Police found Capetillo's body on the sidewalk of a family member's home with several gunshot wounds to his upper body. After the shooting, police say Landin fled to California where he remained on the run. On December 12th Customs and Border Protection agents apprehended Landin as he was attempting to cross the border from Tijuana to San Diego, California. Landin was extradited to Laredo from California and is now being charged with murder.

49. Public Keeps Clean Ocean On The Horizon

(Imperial Beach Eagle & Times; 8k uvm; Coronado, CA) ... Toni McGowan



Residents of Imperial Beach and Coronado have the opportunity to impact Tijuana River sewage as members of the Citizen Forum Board, being seated by the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC). Publicized Minute 320 came from work done with the Citizen Forum in 2015. The Forum meets four times per year. At the December 7, 2017 Forum, with 80 members of the public present, including representatives from Customs and Border Protection, USIBWC Commissioner Ed Drusina made comments and answered questions and advised that the Forum's purpose is to enable a two-way flow of information only.

50. Criminal alien who escaped custody gets pen time

(Big Bend Now; 2k uvm; Marfa, TX)

A collaborative Far West Texas law enforcement partnership is responsible for the three years and eight-month sentencing in federal prison of Jesus Manuel Villa-Olivas on December 11, 2017, according to a Border Patrol news release. ... "Continued cooperation and collaboration with all of our law enforcement partners in the Big Bend area is vital to mutual success. Texas Department of Public Safety and the United States Attorney's Office were vital in the apprehension and prosecution of this criminal alien. This Federal Prison sentence sends a strong message to other criminal aliens that there are consequences for their illegal acts," said Big Bend Sector Chief Patrol Agent Robert L. Boatright.

51. One dead after woman drives vehicle off ferry ramp

(Anacortes American; Anacortes, WA) ... Jacqueline Allison and Briana Alzola

One woman is dead after driving her vehicle into the water off the ramp at the Anacortes Ferry Terminal, according to Washington State Patrol Trooper Heather Axtman. No other passengers were in the vehicle, which crews say was under 41 feet of 48-degree water for more than 4 hours. Authorities have not yet confirmed the identity of the driver and are still investigating the incident. The woman drove off the ramp about about 9:34 a.m. today. It was pulled from the water by a tow truck at about 2 p.m. The vehicle, a Jeep Cherokee, broke through the ferry staging area crossing arm and drove off the ramp, which was slightly raised at the time, at top speed, Axtman said. No ferry was docked there. The vehicle was launched from the ramp and landed on the water upside down. A U.S. Customs and Border Protection dive team located the vehicle about 1 p.m. and confirmed the driver inside had died.

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

OF NOTE

- In the most retweeted post within the social media conversation, the American Civil Liberties Union characterized the White House's immigration proposal as "hateful" and cited border wall funding and an increase in Border Patrol agents as examples. The tweet garnered 2.8k retweets, 3.2k likes, and 497 replies.





- The top shared URL linked to a *Tucson Sentinel* article titled, “No More Deaths volunteer arrested, charged with harboring immigrants”. The second most retweeted post, also by the American Civil Liberties Union, linked to the article. 603 users shared the *Tucson Sentinel* article.
- The tweet by the @CustomsBorder account to receive the highest engagement highlighted the rescue of 29 illegal aliens by Laredo Sector Border Patrol agents. The tweet linked to the corresponding local media release. The post received 45 retweets, 49 likes, and 9 replies.

ABOUT THIS REPORT. Articles in this report were published during the 24 hours preceding the report date unless otherwise specified. Dissemination figures and bylines might not be available for all articles. Location is noted for local outlets.



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Daily Media Summary February 20, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- *The Intercept* reported that former Border Patrol agent Cantú's book "The Line Becomes a River," enjoyed critical acclaim, but its publication is not without controversy. Critics accused him of "profiting off migrant pain" and called on Bay area bookstores to cancel book readings. Cantú responded "To be clear: during my years as a BP agent, I was complicit in perpetuating institutional violence and flawed, deadly policy. My book is about acknowledging that, it's about thinking through the ways we normalize violence and dehumanize migrants as individuals and as a society."
- *KTVK-TV* reported that Border Patrol agents seized approximately 25 pounds of methamphetamine, 5 pounds of cocaine, and 5 pounds of heroin during an immigration stop near Yuma, AZ. The narcotics have an estimated street value of \$218,000.
- *Virgin Islands Consortium* reported CBP officers and AMO agents seized 25lbs of cocaine off of a private vessel arriving at Las Craobas. "AMO crews dedicate many hours in the maritime environment to detect and deter smuggling attempts within a very complex environment," said Johnny Morales, Director of Air Operations.

TOP NEWS

1. **A Border Patrol Memoir Gets Caught Up in the Deportation Fight**
(The Intercept; 5.3M uvm) ... Ryan Devereaux

In the week since "The Line Becomes a River" was released, Cantú has appeared in a nonstop string of media interviews. The book has enjoyed critical acclaim, but it has not been without controversy. In California, Bay area activists called on local bookstores to cancel Cantú's readings on the grounds that he was a cop, and cops deserve no sympathy, particularly at time when millions of immigrants across the country are living in fear of law enforcement. The readings were not cancelled. In Austin, Texas, demonstrators called Cantú a "traitor," and accused him of profiting off migrant pain. The radical news website It's Going Down, further argued that Cantú possess an "insidious ability to minimize complicity," and that he has "built his career and fame as a writer through participating in the culture of cruelty that typifies Border Patrol."... Responding to the criticism he's received, Cantú tweeted last week, "To be clear: during my years as a BP agent, I was complicit in perpetuating institutional violence and flawed, deadly policy. My book is about acknowledging that, it's about thinking through



the ways we normalize violence and dehumanize migrants as individuals and as a society.”

2. Border patrol agents seize \$218K in narcotics near Yuma
(KTVK-TV; 1.1M uvm; Phoenix, AZ)

Border patrol agents seized about \$218,000 in narcotics Wednesday morning during an immigration stop near Yuma, officials said. Wellton Station Border Patrol agents stopped a 2007 Toyota Corolla near Avenue 20E and Old Highway 80 in Dome Valley. A canine alerted border patrol agents, which led to the discovery of nearly 25 pounds of methamphetamine, 5 pounds of cocaine and 5 pounds of heroin, according to a news release from the U.S. Customs Border Protection. The male driver, the vehicle and the drugs were processed per Yuma Sector guidelines, according to the news release.

3. AMO Seizes 25 Pounds Of Cocaine Inside Private Vessel In Puerto Rico
(Virgin Islands Consortium)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations (AMO) agents seized 25 pounds (11.4 kilos) of cocaine in a backpack concealed inside the center console of a private vessel arriving at the Las Croabas boat ramp on Wednesday. The estimated wholesale value of the seized narcotics is \$175,000. The outlet quoted Johnny Morale, director of Air Operations “AMO crews dedicate many hours in the maritime environment to detect and deter smuggling attempts within a very complex environment.”

NEWS INDEX

BORDER SECURITY

Along U.S. Borders

4. Crossing the border to gain an American education
(KOAT-TV; 814k uvm; Albuquerque, NM) ... Sandra Ramirez

VIDEO: Hundreds of students enrolled in New Mexico schools don't live in our state. In fact, they don't even live in this country and you are paying for their education. Reporter Sandra Ramirez traveled to the U.S.-Mexico border near Columbus to find out why it's happening... When pregnant women living in Mexico deliver their babies in New Mexico those kids are born American citizens. Other kids though are forced to live in Mexico because someone in their family has been deported. Our state constitution says they're all entitled to an American education.

5. Road Runner: As feds ponder solution, Ruby Road repairs have costliest year yet
(Arizona Daily Times; 431k uvm; Tucson, AZ) ... Murphy Woodhouse



The Government Accountability Office paid a visit to Arivaca in 2017, which was part of a larger look at the roads the U.S. Border Patrol uses for its operations. Precise figures aren't available, but residents estimate that federal agents account for most of Ruby Road's scant traffic. That's why many residents would like to see the feds chip in a bit. County officials interviewed by the GAO said they have to spend an additional \$23,000 every year on the road due to Border Patrol use.

6. Several apprehensions of migrants reported during five-day period
(Brownsville Herald; 75k uvm; Brownsville, TX)

Thirty-one migrants were found concealed in vehicles by U.S. Border Patrol agents at the Falfurrias checkpoint within a five-day span, according to a news release. Agents discovered 11 migrants Feb. 9 concealed in a pickup truck, and 19 migrants hidden in a commercial tractor trailer Tuesday. The migrants were from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, the news release stated. During the weekend, Border Patrol agents found a combined 60 migrants in two Starr County stash houses. On Tuesday morning, Hidalgo County sheriff's deputies also found approximately 18 migrants at a stash house in rural Peñitas, according to a social media post by the sheriff's office.

Ports of Entry

7. CBP will install a new canopy at DeConcini Port of Entry
(KGUN-TV; 193k uvm; Tucson, AZ) ... Ivan Rodriguez

VIDEO: Thousands of travelers will soon be affected by delays at the DeConcini Port of Entry. According to a release by the U.S. Customs and Protection the new canopy is expected to be built within the next week. "CBP is committed to improve the ports efficiency. Sometimes this requires infrastructure enhancements and construction that may cause delays," said interim Port Director Michael Humphries. "We will continue to make every effort to minimize impacts to the travelers and ask for everyone's patience." CBP suggests people take the Mariposa crossing during peak traffic hours and to check wait times on the border before traveling.

8. Ceremony celebrates bond between Laredo and Sister City
(Laredo Morning Times; 70k uvm) ... Julia Wallace

On Saturday morning, the Juarez-Lincoln International Bridge was not a means of crossing from country to country, but, for a few hours, a meeting place. Completely cleared of its usual traffic, uniformed officers and hundreds of people from the U.S. and Mexico crowded the vehicle lanes, staying on their respective sides... And then one by one or two by two, U.S. dignitaries walked from Laredo's side of the bridge, their Mexican counterparts walked from Nuevo Laredo's side, and they united in the very middle to share a symbol of friendship between the two countries: an embrace, an abrazo... The ceremony's speaker this year, CBP Acting Commissioner Kevin K. McAleenan, pointed out that this show of international respect and friendship between young people signifies a hope for the future. "These young people lead us by our



example. They reflect the optimism of youth. They represent our confidence that we will remain close as nations. And their youth reminds us of what's at stake as we look to the future together, and the importance of carrying on these traditions of good neighbors for many decades and generations to come," McAleenan said.

BORDER WALL

9. Rubber pellet grenades and pizza: How San Diego spent \$50K for supplies prepping for Trump's border wall prototypes

(San Diego Union-Tribune; 493k uvm) ... Greg Moran

VIDEO: Warned of possibly violent protests over construction of border wall prototypes last fall, San Diego police bought an array of less than lethal weapons, newly released city records show. Weeks before the project began the city purchased hundreds of rounds of pepper spray, as well as crowd-dispersing grenades and tear gas. In all the city spent \$50,000 on supplies, most of which were not needed. There were no protests during the construction.

TRADE

10. Commerce starts AD/CVD investigations on Chinese cast iron soil pipe

(American Shipper; 58k uvm) ... Brian Bradley

The Commerce Department is starting antidumping and countervailing duty investigations into imports of cast iron soil pipe from China, Commerce announced Friday. The Cast Iron Soil Pipe Institute (CISPI) petitioned for duties on Jan. 26...If Commerce preliminarily determines dumping and/or unfair subsidization, it will instruct U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to collect cash deposits from all U.S. companies importing cast iron soil pipe from China, Commerce said.

TRAVEL

11. Why U.S. Travel Media Won't Tell People to Visit Russia

(Skift; 1.1M uvm; New York, NY) ... Robert Reid

Russia's been in the news a lot lately —just not the travel news. Normally, year-end "best of" annual travel lists – like Lonely Planet's enduring Best in Travel series or the New York Times' 52 Places to Go – give extra weight to destinations celebrating big anniversaries or hosting major world events...But in 2018, Russia is not getting love from publishers, which comes as a surprise since so much has been happening there. In 2014, Sochi hosted the Winter Olympics, and 2016 marked the centennial of the iconic Trans-Siberian Railway. In addition, this year 11 Russian cities are set to host the World Cup...While the editors may be playing coy, one possible reason for a possible Russian "blockade" — subconsciously or otherwise – is that it's never been an easy country to visit...Then again, one could argue the best case against recommending travel to Russia can be found in the U.S. State Department's travel warning...In the



warning, Russia is flagged for incidents of “terrorism and harassment,” specifically in the Crimea and the Caucasus areas, including Chechnya.

12. \$30 million Customs and Border Protection facility approved at NY Stewart International
(International Airport Review)

Stewart International Airport will undergo a major expansion with the addition of a \$30 million permanent U.S. Customs inspection area to handle the airport’s significant rise in international passengers over the past year, under a measure approved today by the Port Authority’s Board of Commissioners... “Economic development is one of the Port Authority’s fundamental missions and expanding Stewart International Airport to handle more international customers does exactly that,” said Board Chairman Kevin O’Toole.

WORKFORCE

13. Border Patrol Citizens Academy taking applications
(Del Rio News-Herald; 10k uvm)

The United States Border Patrol Del Rio Sector will be holding its 2018 Customs and Border Protection Citizens Academy. The academy is designed to give the public a better understanding of the objectives of the U.S. Border Patrol and how it operates.

OPINION

14. Trump can reap the full benefits of tax reform by keeping NAFTA intact
(Houston Chronicle; 16.2M uvm) ... Chet Thompson

President Trump clinched a historic victory with tax reform. Now he needs to avoid making a historic mistake by quitting NAFTA, one of the most important pro-growth policies of the last three decades... It would be foolish at this time to forfeit the full benefits of tax reform by closing our borders to two of our top trading partners.

15. The trouble with tariffs
(Washington Times; 10.8M uvm) ... Ed Feulner

The stronger economy we’re enjoying now is no accident. Lower taxes, more jobs and fewer regulations are creating a much-needed boost. So why do we still have one foot on the brake? I’m referring to trade. Protectionist measures act as a drag on our progress. Indeed, they threaten to undo much of it. Consider the tariffs and quotas that the Trump administration recently slapped on imports of solar cells and modules, large residential washers, and washer parts. The price? As researcher Tori Whiting notes in a Daily Signal article, we get fewer jobs (roughly 23,000 American jobs this year, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association), higher prices for U.S. consumers, and retaliation from America’s trading partners.



16. Border Fantasy Legislation Threatens Wildlands

(The Wildlife News) ... George Wuerthner

One of the only good things about the failure of Congress to agree upon the future of DACA recipients (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) is that Trump's fantasy about a border wall was not funded yet (which you may remember Mexico was going to pay for)...However, yet another lesser known aspect of the Border Wall controversy is the recent introduction of legislation designed to facilitate construction of infrastructure, roading, surveillance stations, and more within 100 miles of any American border without any environmental or other regulatory laws... it would give Homeland Security and the Customs and Border Protection agencies, almost unlimited ability to vacate and violate with immunity many of our most precious environmental law and our most sacred landscapes including national parks, wilderness areas, and wildlife refuges.

IMMIGRATION

17. Inside an Immigration Roundup: Crying Children, Closed Doors, Coffee

(Wall Street Journal; 43.6M uvm) ... Alicia A. Caldwell

Gathered in an underground parking garage before dawn on a chilly February morning, a group of eight armed immigration officers listened closely to the details of seven people wanted for immigration violations...Soon, they would drive into densely packed neighborhoods across the city to find and arrest the men at their homes. If someone runs, the lead officer instructed, don't chase "unless they are right there." Across the country, groups like this one—called fugitive operations teams—are tracking and arresting illegal immigrants living in the U.S. The operations are a crucial piece of President Donald Trump's promise to crack down on illegal immigration, and have intensified under his administration.

18. What's next for DACA recipients as deadline approaches?

(The Hill; 11.9M uvm) ... Rafael Bernal

Both "Dreamers" and their employers are worried about how the wind-down of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program will affect them, as a Trump administration deadline to find a deal on the immigrants approaches. The Senate failed to pass a legislative replacement to the DACA program Thursday, leaving Congress with few legislative options and only four legislative days before President Trump's March 5 deadline. Recipients of the program, who were brought to the country illegally as children, won't automatically lose their benefits at once after March 5.

19. Farmington Couple Gets Stay

(Yale Daily News; 164k uvm; New Haven, CT) ... Malcolm Tang

It was supposed to be a vigil. The Farmington community had gathered on the night before the expected deportation of Kris and Tony Huang. But that night, the crowd



learned the Huangs had been granted a stay of deportation, and sorrow soon became celebration. On Thursday afternoon, following the efforts of local communities and state officials, the Huangs, a Farmington couple scheduled for removal the next day, was granted a stay by the federal Board of Immigration Appeals.

20. Protest planned after immigration arrest of dairy worker

(VT Digger; 153k uvm; Montpelier, VT) ... Elizabeth Hewitt

Migrant Justice is planning a protest this week against the detention of a farmworker by immigration authorities near the Vermont-Canada border earlier this month. The group, which represents immigrant farmworkers, says that Jose Luis Cordova Herrera, a 40-year-old father of three, was arrested by Border Patrol as he was leaving a dental appointment on Feb. 8. Border Patrol confirmed that an agent arrested a Mexican national and turned him over to Immigrations and Customs Enforcement on that date, but said the encounter did not happen near a health center...Migrant Justice is planning a rally to protest the arrest outside the health center in Richford on Tuesday.

DHS NEWS

21. Top State Election Official Pushed DHS Secretary To Explain Why Trump Contradicts Intelligence Officials On Russia

(HuffPost; 22.9M uvm) ... Sam Levine

A top state election official pressed Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen on Friday to explain why President Donald Trump continues to downplay the threat of Russian hacking while the nation's intelligence agencies and members of the president's Cabinet warn that Russians are likely to interfere again...Nielsen said the president recognized the interference, but declined to further elaborate, according to Condos. The Vermont secretary of state, who is the president-elect of the National Association of Secretaries of State, said he had a similar exchange with Christopher Krebs, a DHS official who oversees cybersecurity for the department. Condos has previously made similar public comments about the contradicting messages sent by the intelligence community and White House. DHS did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the exchange.

22. Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Request Aims to Advance DHS Mission

(Homeland Security Today; 47k uvm; McLean, VA) ... Krysta Dodd

The budget reflects a request of \$47.5 billion in discretionary spending for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which is an increase of \$3.5 billion, or 7.8 percent, from President Trump's FY 2018 budget. Border security and immigration reform top the spending priorities with \$1.6 billion toward the development of 65 miles of a new border wall system in southern Texas, and \$164 million put toward the development of 750 new Border Patrol agents and 153 support staff. However, there is more to the budget than just border protection: there are also efforts to enhance national and public security by enforcing immigration laws, which includes \$5.1 billion to



be put toward implementation and removal efforts along with \$571 million for 2,000 new Immigration and Customs Enforcement law enforcement officers and 1,312 support staff. Additional funds are also being funneled to U.S. Coast Guard's efforts to recapitalize their fleet.

OF INTEREST

23. Gulf cartel boss captured in Mexican state bordering Texas

(FOX News; 32.5M uvm) ... Alfredo Pena

Mexican marines have captured an alleged top boss of the Gulf drug cartel in the northern border state of Tamaulipas. A statement from the Mexican navy says the suspect it identifies only as Jose Alfredo, with no last name, was arrested in the city of Matamoros, which is across from Brownsville, Texas. It describes him as the "presumed leader of a criminal organization in the region." A government official with knowledge of the case confirms the man detained Monday morning is Jose Alfredo Cardenas, nephew to former Gulf cartel leaders Osiel and Antonio Cardenas. The former is in a U.S. prison, while the latter was killed by Mexican security forces in 2010. The official was not authorized to discuss the case publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

24. Improvised Explosive Device Found at Border Bridge to Texas

(Breitbart; 19.1M uvm) ... Ildefonso Ortiz and Brandon Darby

Mexican authorities have confirmed the discovery of an active improvised explosive device (IED) at one of the international bridges connecting the border cities of Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas—the headquarters of the ruthless cartel known as Los Zetas. Mexico's Attorney General's Office issued a statement in regards to the recent discovery of the IED. The information released by Mexican authorities does not reveal the date that the bomb was left at the bridge, but confirmed that the explosive was active. The IED was left at the Las Americas International Bridge, also known as Bridge One. Neither the City of Laredo nor U.S. Customs and Border Protection has released any information in relation to the IED at the port of entry.

25. After Pressure From Trump, Honduras Seeks To Ramp Up Its Fight Against MS-13

(Daily Caller; 11.9m uvm) ... Will Racke

A Central American country convulsed by gang violence is pledging to work closely with the U.S. to contain the spread of MS-13, two weeks after President Donald Trump suggested cutting foreign aid to governments in the region...In Honduras, at least, Trump's tough talk appears to have had the opposite effect. The office of Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández released a statement on Tuesday promising to work with U.S. authorities to target MS-13. "The government of Honduras expresses its full disposition to deepen bilateral cooperation with the U.S. government for the shared objective of combating the transnational criminal organization the MS-13," the document stated.



26. Symposium brings awareness to migrant deaths in Arizona

(Arizona Daily Wildcat; 3.3M uvm; Tucson, AZ) ... Jahnavi Akella

A symposium on the growing issue of migrant deaths is being held on Feb. 17, at 4pm is a follow-up discussion to the 2016 book *Migrant Deaths in the Arizona Desert: La Vida no Vale Nada*, published by The University of Arizona Press. "People are dying. Daily, almost. And no one seems to care; certainly not the government," [University of Arizona sociology professor Celestino Fernandez] said during "And the Deaths, Disappearances and Deportations Continue... No Vale Nada La Vida," a symposium held at the Global Justice Center on Saturday, Feb. 17. The event sought to bring attention to the physical and social dangers faced by migrants who cross the Sonoran Desert into Arizona. The symposium was a follow-up to "Migrant Deaths in the Arizona Desert: La vida no vale nada," a 2016 book written by various UA scholars.

27. No Platform for Border Patrol

(Indybay; 88k uvm; San Francisco, CA) ... Chinga la Migra

Francisco Cantú will be discussing his book "The Line Becomes a River" at Green Apple's 1231 9th Aveune location in San Francisco on Monday, February 19 at 7:30 pm. Cantú spent years as a Border Patrol field agent and intelligence officer, working for a racist organization that has facilitated the deaths of over 7,000 people and the disappearance of thousands more. His book further capitalizes on that cruelty and Cantú's claim that the Border Patrol does "good work" normalizes the state violence that has created a crisis of death and disappearance in the US-Mexico borderlands. Join us at Green Apple Books this Monday to stand in solidarity with migrants: say NO to racist state propaganda and to all those who commit violence against Black, indigenous and dispossessed people. What we stand for in the airports and the streets, we must also stand for in the bookstores.

28. New charges filed against No More Deaths volunteer

(Tucson Sentinel; 54k uvm) ... Paul Ingram

A grand jury has expanded on the charges filed against a No More Deaths volunteer who was arrested in January and charged with harboring two people suspected of being in the country without authorization. Scott Daniel Warren, 35, now faces up to 10 years in prison, or more, after a grand jury indicted him on two counts for harboring illegal aliens and one count of conspiracy to transport and harbor illegal aliens...If convicted and sentenced to consecutive terms, Warren could face more than two decades behind bars.

29. City of Calexico begins border mural renovation

(KYMA; 21k uvm; Yuma, AZ) ... Billy Khang

VIDEO: Starting this week, the city of Calexico began renovation to the border mural which stretches two miles long. The mural was created in the early 1990's thanks to the



city, Calexico Art Commission, school districts and community. "That part of our fence, here in Calexico is a very old part of the fence, that does need to be replaced. It appears that this has been in the works since 1999 where Border Patrol has been requesting that, that part of the fence be replaced with a more practical type of fence, which is fence that would be more close to what we have in downtown Calexico."

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

OF NOTE



- The most retweeted post within the CBP social media conversation was by the @VP account. It referenced Vice President Pence's visit to the U.S.-Mexico border and discussed his then upcoming Monday interview on *Fox and Friends*. To date, the post garnered 1.5k retweets, 7.2k likes, and 964 replies.

- The top shared URL linked to an 11 February Reuters article titled, "U.S. border patrol agent may have died from fall, not attack: memo". 840 users shared the URL.



2 replies.

- CBP highlighted ways users can help combat human trafficking. The tweet linked to ice.gov/tips and provided a 1-866 number for users to call if they suspected human trafficking. @CBP embedded a video on human trafficking in the post. The post received the highest engagement for the account and garnered 81 retweets, 106 likes, and

ABOUT THIS REPORT. Articles in this report were published during the 24 hours preceding the report date unless otherwise specified. Dissemination figures and bylines might not be available for all articles. Location is noted for local outlets.



The Daily Media Summary (DMS) and the links contained herein are being provided solely as a convenience and to afford CBP officials a broad awareness of the day's traditional, digital and social media coverage of CBP. The views and opinions expressed in the DMS, the sources cited, and the links contained herein do not necessarily represent the opinions, views, policies or positions of the U.S. Government, DHS, CBP or the Office of Public Affairs.

Daily Media Summary May 1, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- *The Wall Street Journal* reported immigration officials started processing some asylum-seeking immigrants from the migrant caravan a day after reporting that the port of entry was full. *The Hill* reported DOJ filed criminal charges Monday against 11 individuals believed to be part of the caravan. The report noted ACLU's alleged rights violations of asylum seekers. *Washington Times* reported "tense" conditions at the border calling it a "border stand-off." *The Guardian*, *NBC News*, *ABC News* and, *the Los Angeles Times*, quoted CBP commissioner Kevin McAleenan, "We have reached capacity at the San Ysidro port of entry," and the agency lacked "sufficient space and resources" to process "persons travelling without appropriate entry documentation". Coverage noted McAleenan's position that CBP did not violate US and international law by refusing to process asylum seekers, it simply lacked the capacity. Heavy coverage of the migrant caravan sustained across national and international media with articles in *Fox News*, *Daily Beast*, *Breitbart*, *The Independent.ie*, and *Times of India*.
- *The Washington Post* reported Pence's tour of the border. The story gained coverage across national media in the *Los Angeles Times*, *CNN*, *ABC News*, and the *San Diego Tribune*. Much of the coverage of Pence's visit included reporting on the migrant caravan.
- *The Guardian* reported an analysis of more than a decade of official data revealed the US government paid out more than \$60m in legal settlements where border patrol agents were involved in deaths, driving injuries, alleged assaults and wrongful detention.

TOP NEWS

1. **Border patrol violence: US paid \$60m to cover claims against the agency**
(The Guardian; 157M; United Kingdom) ... Sarah Macaraeg

Exclusive: analysis of more than a decade of official data reveals government paid settlements after deaths, alleged assaults and wrongful detention. The US government has paid out more than \$60m in legal settlements where border patrol agents were involved in deaths, driving injuries, alleged assaults and wrongful detention, an analysis of more than a decade of official data reveals. The Guardian analysis comes after border agent Lonnie Swartz was last month cleared on a murder charge in connection with the death of 16-year-old José Antonio Elena Rodríguez who died after Swartz fired 16 times across the border from Arizona into Mexico. According to the American Civil Liberties Union's Chris Rickerd, who monitors CBP nationally, the settlements hint at



larger patterns of misconduct that go unchallenged. “There’s a whole web of things that make this a particularly hard road,” said Rickerd, citing fear among border communities whose livelihoods often rely on crossing checkpoints. He also noted the border patrol’s refusal to adopt the use of body cameras as a barrier to evidence gathering; and a federal claims process which relies on a person’s willingness to take the US government to court, after first being ignored or rejected by the agency. When asked whether civil complaints give rise to internal reviews, a CBP spokesperson said they do not, because the agency would already have reviewed any incident involving injury or death, according to policy. The Department of Homeland Security’s office of inspector general said that only in very rare instances of matters of significant public interest and importance will the office review any issue related to civil litigation.

2. Immigration Officials Begin Processing Caravan of Migrants at U.S. Border
(Wall Street Journal; 44M uvm) ... Alicia A. Caldwell

U.S. immigration officials said late Monday that they have started processing some asylum-seeking immigrants from a caravan of Central Americans more than a day after reporting that the port of entry was full. U.S. Customs and Border Protection said in a statement that it expected the delays in processing to be temporary. A caravan of nearly 200 Central American migrants has been waiting to ask for asylum since arriving at the border crossing in Tijuana on Sunday afternoon. Customs and Border Protection didn’t say how many people were allowed to ask for asylum Monday. The Justice Department, meanwhile, said 11 people from the caravan were being charged with illegally crossing the border, a federal misdemeanor levied against foreigners caught crossing into the U.S. without going to a legal border crossing. It isn’t illegal to go to a U.S. port of entry and ask for asylum. Organizers of the migrant caravan that arrived in Tijuana last week have denied that anyone in the group tried to cross the border illegally, and suggested anyone arrested by the U.S. Border Patrol was unrelated to the group.

3. DOJ files charges against 11 suspected 'caravan' members for illegal border crossing
(The Hill; 12M uvm; Washington, DC) ... Brett Samuels

The Department of Justice (DOJ) filed criminal charges on Monday against 11 individuals believed to be part of a so-called caravan of Central American migrants seeking asylum in the U.S. The DOJ said in a press release shared by ABC News that border patrol agents apprehended the individuals a few miles west of the designated border crossing in San Ysidro, Calif. “The United States will not stand by as our immigration laws are ignored and our nation’s safety is jeopardized,” Attorney General Jeff Sessions said in a statement. The arrests came one day after the group of roughly 200 Central Americans arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border. However, they were unable to enter at the border crossing near San Diego, Calif., because the facility was already at capacity. A Customs and Border Patrol spokesperson said in a statement that the agency began processing undocumented persons at the facility on Monday, and that other asylum-seekers would need to remain in Mexico until space opens up. Homeland



Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen had previously warned that the federal government would prosecute migrants who crossed the border illegally.

4. Border standoff: Caravan organizers vow to outlast U.S. government
(Washington Times; 11M uvm; Washington, DC) ... S.A. Miller and Stephen Dinan

The U.S. government says it's all full-up at the San Ysidro port of entry and can't process the caravan participants. They'll have to wait their turn — or give up and remain in Mexico, or head home to Central America. Caravan organizers, though, vow to outlast the U.S. government. They say they're stunned American officials weren't prepared to handle them, given that the caravan has made front paged news for more than a month. But if it takes waiting in order to get in the asylum line, that's what the caravan's participants will do. The group posted an email address and phone number for Sidney Aki, the port director for CBP, and urged supporters to send messages demanding action. "CBP is the largest law enforcement agency in the country, and is able to detain, transport and incarcerate thousands of people in a day, but is pretending that they don't have the 'capacity' to accept 150 refugee parents and children whose arrival has been anticipated and communicated weeks in advance," Pueblo Sin Fronteras said. Border agents said the caravan is playing it smart so far. If participants they had rushed the border, they could have been arrested for attempting to enter illegally. Instead they are waiting for permission to present themselves. Both sides are acting within the law — leading to the standoff.

5. Pence tours border wall as migrant caravan seeks asylum nearby
(Washington Post; 44M uvm; Washington, DC)

VIDEO: Vice President Pence visited the Calif. and Mexico border on April 30, and said immigrants coming into the U.S. are "oftentimes victims."

NEWS INDEX

BORDER SECURITY

Along U.S. Borders

6. Kirstjen Nielsen tells Fox News more than a dozen known or suspected terrorists try to enter US each day
(Fox News; 32M uvm; New York, NY) ... Catherine Herridge

VIDEO: More than a dozen known or suspected terrorists are trying to get into the U.S. on any given day, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen told Fox News, citing new internal department data. "People think of border security in very different ways but to me it's very simple: border security is national security," Nielsen said. "What we see at the Department of Homeland Security, we see 15 terrorists either planning to travel or actually traveling to the United States each day, known and suspected terrorists. So that means they are coming through our legal land, port and air but they could be coming



across that (southwest) border." In New York City for a series of recent closed-door threat and intelligence meetings, Nielsen spoke exclusively with Fox News at Ground Zero -- not far from the October 2017 attack where an ISIS-inspired terrorist used a truck to kill eight people along the West Side Highway. "Using the Internet, terrorist groups are encouraging followers to bring your own weapon, use a car, use a truck, use a knife, something you can easily pick up, and go and commit chaos and murder," Nielsen explained.

7. Pence arrives in California to tour border barrier while, just 100 miles west, migrants seek asylum

(Los Angeles Times; 24M uvm) ... Andrea Castillo, Hailey Branson-Potts, and Sandra Dibble

In the Imperial Valley, Vice President Mike Pence was taking a heavily secured tour of the construction site for a border barrier and lauding local Border Patrol and Customs and Border Protection employees, who presented him with a piece of the original Border Patrol fence as a gift. Meanwhile, a two-hour drive west, a caravan of Central American immigrants who drew the ire of President Trump was waiting at the Tijuana-San Diego crossing to ask for asylum in an emotional, theatrical scene marked by uncertainty. A small group of protesters near the Border Patrol station in El Centro held up signs, including one that read, "A border fence won't save us." "We have reached capacity at the San Ysidro port of entry for CBP officers to be able to bring additional persons traveling without appropriate entry documentation into the port of entry for processing," Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan said in a statement. "CBP officials are required to balance the resources necessary to both facilitate entry for the hundreds of thousands of travelers who arrive daily to the U.S. while also enforcing our nation's immigration laws in a safe and orderly manner," McAleenan added.

8. Bangladeshi Nationals Continue to Cross Texas Border

(Breitbart; 19M uvm; Los Angeles, CA) ... Bob Price

Border Patrol agents in the Laredo Sector continue to see significant numbers of Bangladeshi nationals illegally crossing the border from Mexico into South Texas. Since the fiscal year began in October, Laredo Sector agents arrested 209 Bangladeshi nationals after they crossed the border. Last week, agents arrested nine Bangladeshis who crossed the border illegally into South Laredo, Texas. The arrests occurred in two separate events on April 24 and 27, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Officials stated that the Laredo Sector continues to have the largest number of Bangladeshi apprehensions. "When we talk about the different groups that are crossing into an area, what we're trying to draw attention to is a more comprehensive look at our threat picture," Acting Chief Patrol Agent Jason D. Owens told Breitbart Texas during a recent phone interview. "We need to stay away from just focusing on the family units and Unaccompanied Alien Children that are coming from Central America and Mexico. What the men and women of the U.S. Border Patrol are dealing with on a daily basis is so much more complex than that." "When we talk about the different groups that are crossing into an area, what we're trying to draw attention to is a more comprehensive



look at our threat picture,” Acting Chief Patrol Agent Jason D. Owens told Breitbart Texas during a recent phone interview. “We need to stay away from just focusing on the family units and Unaccompanied Alien Children that are coming from Central America and Mexico. What the men and women of the U.S. Border Patrol are dealing with on a daily basis is so much more complex than that.”

9. Cartel Tunnel to California Discovered in Mexico

(Breitbart; 19M uvm; Los Angeles, CA) ... Robert Arce

A cross border narco-tunnel leading into Calexico, California, from Mexicali was discovered shortly after 11 am on Sunday. La Cronica reported the tunnel was discovered in colonia Santa Clara inside a residence located approximately 140 yards from the U.S. border after state police responded to a tip. Upon the arrival, police observed three individuals removing various packages from the residence and placing them into a truck. The state officers examined the packages and discovered they contained a substance believed to be methamphetamine or “ice.” Authorities secured the residence and requested assistance from the Federal Police and Mexican Army. Preliminary information released by the Secretariat of National Defense (Mexican Army-SEDENA) reveals the tunnel was approximately 740 yards in length, crossing into the U.S. with a passageway into the tunnel from one of the rooms inside the residence. The tunnel reportedly features a pulley system and investigators also found sacks filled with soil believed to have been extracted from underground structure. The truck at the scene was believed to transport bags of soil for disposal. The total amount of suspected methamphetamine located was 460 grams. Investigators also seized an AK-47 rifle.

10. Border Patrol Agents Find Migrants Abandoned in South Texas Desert

(Breitbart; 19M uvm; Los Angeles, CA) ... Bob Price

Border Patrol agents assigned to the Laredo Sector found six illegal immigrants in various stages of distress after they illegally crossed the border from Mexico. Most of the migrants were abandoned by their cartel-connected human smugglers. Agents assigned to the Laredo South Station received a call for help on Saturday from a pair of illegal immigrants who became lost on a ranch near Freer, Texas. The ranch is located about halfway between the border town of Laredo and Corpus Christi on U.S. Highway 59. Freer is about 60 miles from the Mexican border. Agents responded to the call and located two illegal aliens who said they became lost in the brush. The two subjects were identified as Mexican nationals. Agents said the men were in good health at the time of their recovery, according to U.S. Border Patrol officials. “These events illustrate how the men and women of the United States Border Patrol not only serve to protect our borders, but are also committed to the preservation of life and assist anyone in need,” Assistant Chief Patrol Agent Gabriel H. Acosta said in a written statement.

11. Border Patrol Union President Thanks 'Fox & Friends' For Calling Migrant Caravan Immigrants Criminals

(Newsweek; 9M uvm; New York, NY) ... Marie Solis



The Trump administration has been keen to portray migrants traveling to the United States border in a Mexican caravan as lawbreakers and wrongdoers—and Fox & Friends is doing its part to broadcast that message, according to the head of the National Border Patrol Council. In a Monday interview with the Fox News morning show, Brandon Judd, the council's president, commended Fox & Friends hosts for being "out front" in painting the migrants seeking asylum in the U.S. as people entering the country illegally. "Your show has been great and out front in saying these people are going to come here and break the law," Judd said. "And so, the left-leaning outlets, the fake news if you will, what they're trying to do is they're trying to portray this as a legal process. Well, if you do it legally, the United States has the right to say, 'Well, no. Don't come in this way.'" Judd pointed out that Customs and Border Protection has already exercised that right by turning away dozens of Central American migrants traveling with the caravan, telling them that the San Ysidro port of entry has "reached capacity." CBP Commissioner Kevin McAleenan told the roughly 50 people who were denied admittance that they "may need to wait in Mexico."

12. "We're Gonna Take Everyone" — Border Patrol Targets Prominent Humanitarian Group As Criminal Organization

(The Intercept; 5M uvm) ... Ryan Devereaux

The Border Patrol's Tucson Sector declined to comment on the recently filed materials, referring The Intercept's questions, initially sent Friday, to the U.S. attorney's office. The U.S. attorney's office refused to say whether an investigation has been opened into No More Deaths as an organization, citing office policy. By Monday, the documents had been removed from the federal government's online database of court records. For those working to address the humanitarian crisis along the border, the documents underscore the challenges of continuing that work in the Trump era. Echoing the sentiments of her fellow No More Deaths volunteers, Kate Morgan-Olsen, abuse documentation and advocacy coordinator for the organization, said the records disclosed in Warren's case confirmed what the group has always suspected: that the government views her organization as a target. "The documents, particularly the text messages, show what we thought was the case, which is that there is some sort of investigation into our organization," she said. Border Patrol agents and humanitarian groups in Arizona, such as No More Deaths, have long operated with an understanding that spaces used to save human lives are generally off limits to law enforcement. The verbal agreement upheld by Border Patrol agents in the Tucson Sector and volunteers in the area is built on a set of written principles modeled after Red Cross guidelines on the treatment of humanitarian aid organizations, which include a passage that reads, "Medical treatment provided by humanitarian aid agencies should be recognized and respected by government agents and should be protected from surveillance and interference."

13. Border Patrol union president: Caravan migrants sitting on fence have 'no regard for our laws'

(Washington Examiner; 5M; Washington, DC) ... Anna Giaritelli



VIDEO: The fact that dozens of migrants who are part of a caravan from Central America chose to climb and sit on top of the border fence at Tijuana, Mexico, over the weekend is proof they have no regard for U.S. laws, according to the president of a union that represents America's Border Patrol agents. "These people have absolutely no regard for our laws. Them sitting on our fence, they are in the United States, so they made an illegal entry into the United States. They are sitting on our fence. This is a fence that we have to maintain. They have absolutely no regard for our property. They have absolutely no regard for our laws and a picture is worth a thousand words. Thank goodness that everybody is now seeing how these people act," Brandon Judd, national president of the National Border Patrol Union and a 20-year Border Patrol veteran, told Fox News on Monday. Over the weekend, hundreds of caravan members set up camp on the Mexico side of the fence, just miles south of San Diego. The group refused to leave after U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials informed them they cannot process that many asylum seekers in a day, a move Judd said was done only because of President Trump's instruction to end "catch-and-release" policies that were used during former presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama's administrations.

14. BORDER SHOWDOWN: Migrant 'Caravan' Arrives at US CUSTOMS in San Diego
(Hannity.com)

Hundreds of migrant workers from Central America ended their month-long journey through Mexico and arrived at the US border Sunday; attempting to cross into San Diego and claim asylum-status as early as Monday morning. Despite weeks of legal drama and comments from the President demanding Mexican authorities disband the 'caravan,' the undocumented immigrants are poised to file paperwork with federal agents; hoping to receive legal-resident status in the US. US authorities have so-far refused entry to the Central Americans, saying the customs checkpoint has "reached capacity." "At this time, we have reached capacity at the San Ysidro port of entry for CBP (Customs and Border Protection) officers to be able to bring additional persons traveling without appropriate entry documentation into the port of entry for processing," Commissioner Kevin McAleenan told Fox News in a statement.

He said the immigrants "may need to wait in Mexico as CBP officers work to process those already within our facilities."

15. 25 immigrants found inside Laredo stash house
(Laredo Morning Times; 71k uvm; Laredo, TX)

Border Patrol agents along with Homeland Security Investigations responded to a request for assistance from the Laredo Police Department regarding suspicious activity at a residence on Westchester Drive on Wednesday. A total of 25 undocumented immigrants, included men, women and children, were found inside the residence. They were determined to be from Mexico, Guatemala and El Salvador. "The partnerships in Laredo between the United States Border Patrol, Homeland Security Investigations and the Laredo Police Department continue to show results in disrupting criminal



organizations from operating in South Texas. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to prosecute those responsible and prevent individuals from being subjected to deplorable conditions," said Laredo Sector Assistant Chief Patrol Agent Gabriel Acosta.

Ports of Entry

16. Members of migrant caravan remain defiant after US again denies border entry

(Fox News; 32M uvm; New York, NY) ... William Lajeunesse

VIDEO: About 200 migrants trying to cross the U.S. border remain stalled in Mexico while American officials refuse to admit most, if not all, of them. About two dozen women, young children and transgender migrants were escorted toward the processing center by Mexican officials on Sunday – but they were stopped just as they reached the border. Dozens of others remained camped either on blankets. They are prohibited from approaching the San Ysidro border crossing near San Diego. A U.S. Customs and Border Protection official said the border facility had reached capacity. Members of the caravan said they would not give up, setting up a possible showdown with the U.S. Irineo Mujica of Pueblos Sin Fronteras, the group organizing the caravan, says the U.S. refusal to process the migrants is a "farce" aimed at avoiding having to deal with the Central American asylum seekers. The developments came as Vice President Pence toured a 30-foot replacement fence in Calexico, Calif. From the beginning, the migrant caravan juggled a double-edged sword. It welcomed publicity but not the criticism that came with it. After President Trump criticized them as a symbol of lax U.S. laws and false claims of persecution, its leaders doubled down, attacking Trump personally as insensitive and indifferent. Attorney General Jeff Sessions has called the caravan "a deliberate attempt to undermine our laws and overwhelm our system." Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said asylum claims will be resolved "efficiently and expeditiously" and warned that anyone making false claims could be prosecuted.

17. Smugglers abandon tiger cub in duffel bag on Texas border

(KRON-TV; 437k uvm; San Francisco, CA)

Three people trying to enter the U.S. illegally on the Texas border Monday abandoned a tiger cub inside a duffel bag. U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents along the Rio Grande River near Brownsville found the tiger cub apparently unconscious inside the bag as the three smuggling suspects returned to Mexico. The 3 to 4-month-old cub was turned over to the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville. Earlier in the day, in another unusual encounter, agents came across an alligator on a boat ramp they regularly use and took a photo of the gator staring them down.

BORDER WALL

18. The great test for Trump's border wall: Texas' Rio Grande Valley

(Los Angeles Times; 24M uvm) ... Molly Hennessy-Fiske



"We do not have control," said Manual Padilla Jr., the Border Patrol's sector chief for the Rio Grande Valley. In the area around Roma, he said, traffic has shifted to where the agency does not have sufficient personnel, technology and infrastructure — including a wall. But where and how to build the wall? That's the complicated question in the Rio Grande Valley, the busiest stretch of the southern border for migrant apprehensions and marijuana seizures. "Locations ... are operationally driven," Border Patrol officials said in a statement, noting that the agency "considers strategic objectives, border census data, and the feasibility of constructing physical barriers along the border." Agency officials and experts analyze that material and additional factors — such as risk and intelligence — to decide where to build. Munoz, 65, and her husband would rather see more agents sent to patrol the area than a wall, which they said won't stop smugglers. "It's nonsense," said husband Israel Cantu Amador, also 65. "Iron gates, wooden gates — they're going to come through."

19. First Members Of Caravan Trump Vowed To Stop Are Allowed To Seek US Asylum

(BuzzFeed; 18M uvm; New York, NY) ... Adolfo Flores

After waiting for a full day, the first eight members of a caravan of Central Americans who spent the last month traversing Mexico were allowed to request asylum in the United States. Until the eight were allowed to present themselves shortly before 7 p.m., US immigration officials had said the San Ysidro border crossing, one of the busiest US ports at the southern border, didn't have the capacity to take even a single applicant — and even turned away people unrelated to the Central American caravan. There was no immediate explanation for what led to the decision to take the eight Central Americans, or when others might be allowed to surrender to US authorities. Three mothers, four of their kids, and an 18-year-old man were allowed to ask for asylum in the US. As many as 200 members of the caravan are expected to eventually ask for asylum, at a border crossing that normally sees 90,000 people cross into the US each day, 20,000 of those on foot. However, it is uncertain how long it might take for all those seeking asylum to apply. There were 24 people — mostly women and kids, as well as some men — waiting when the initial eight were offered the chance to ask for asylum. Now, 16 remain. CBP, the nation's largest federal law enforcement agency, said it processed several hundred people at the San Ysidro port of entry in the past week, including many Mexican citizens who arrived at the port of entry to claim asylum ahead of the caravan's arrival. On Monday night, the group of 24 caravan members waiting to seek asylum was getting ready for another cold night at the port of entry when a CBP supervisor said they would take eight people.

20. Congressman Introduces 'Make Sanctuary Cities Pay for the Wall Act'

(Independent Journal Review) ... Caleb Hull

VIDEO: In response to the increased popularity of sanctuary cities in California in particular, one congressman has the perfect response: legislation titled "Make Sanctuary Cities Pay for the Wall Act." Rep. Robert Pittenger (R-N.C.) made the announcement in a press release on Monday... If passed, the legislation will withhold



“certain federal funds and grants from jurisdictions that forbid their law enforcement officials from sharing information with federal immigration officials or complying with an immigration detainer.” Both the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and NumbersUSA have endorsed Pittenger's bill.

TRADE

21. Trump Postpones Steel Tariff Decision for EU, Other U.S. Allies

(Wall Street Journal; 44M uvm) ... Michael C. Bender and William Mauldin

President Donald Trump eased trade pressure on top U.S. allies Monday, giving the European Union and some nations outside the bloc more time to negotiate deals that would exempt them from U.S. steel and aluminum tariffs. The White House said broad tariffs of 25% on steel and 10% on aluminum—already in effect against China, Russia, Japan and others—won't take effect for the EU Tuesday as previously planned. Instead, Europe will have an additional month to keep talking with the U.S. about a new pact to avoid the tariffs. As expected, Canada and Mexico were given an extension, also until June 1, while talks about rewriting the North American Free Trade Agreement proceed. The White House said it has agreements in principle with Argentina, Brazil and Australia to avoid the tariffs. While the details haven't been finalized, the countries have agreed to quotas, and their exports won't face U.S. duties on Tuesday, a senior administration official said. The Trump administration is backing broad restrictions on the trade of metals to limit the direct and indirect effects of Chinese steel and aluminum production on the U.S. market. “In all of these negotiations, the administration is focused on quotas that will restrain imports, prevent transshipment, and protect the national security,” the White House said in a statement.

22. Decision time: Tonight we'll find out whether Trump wants a trade war with Europe

(Washington Post; 44M uvm; Washington, DC) ... Heather Long

President Trump has until midnight to decide whether the European Union gets smacked with tariffs on steel and aluminum. To put it another way, the United States could very well be in a trade “spat” with some of its closest allies by the time people walk their dogs Tuesday morning. “If Trump doesn't exempt Europe, we'll get in a trade war with the E.U. countries. They are not going to let this pass,” said C. Don Johnson, a Democratic former congressman from Georgia and U.S. trade negotiator for the Clinton administration. Despite the smiles and many warm embraces last week between Trump and President Emmanuel Macron of France and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, the E.U. and United States have fundamental disagreements on trade. Trump says the United States has been treated unfairly for years, especially by China and Germany. Europe thinks Trump is trying to blow up the entire rules-based trade system that the United States pushed everyone else to join in the 1980s and early 1990s.



23. Timing of trade war with China could hurt US industries the most, says Alibaba co-founder

(CNBC; 26M uvm; Englewood Cliffs, NJ) ... Chloe Aiello

The threat of a trade war between the U.S. and China comes just as China's shifting economy could provide an opportunity for U.S. exports, according to Alibaba Executive Vice Chairman Joseph Tsai. "The trade war comes at a very ironic time," Tsai said on CNBC's "Closing Bell." "There are now 300 million Chinese consumers that are demanding and desiring to buy from all over the world, so there's a great opportunity for producers from America, from Europe, to sell to China, and access this large consumer-base." Tsai, who co-founded e-commerce giant Alibaba, warned that U.S. businesses are already hurting from the tariff standoff. "It's already happening, and it's because soon after the U.S. put on tariffs on some Chinese products, China felt that it had no choice but to retaliate," he said. Among those immediately affected, Tsai said, are industries surrounding major U.S. exports, like soybeans. Tsai isn't as concerned about smaller U.S. business owners, which is why he thinks Alibaba will be fine.

WORKFORCE

24. Border Patrol Agent Arrested After Allegedly Pawning Night Vision Goggles, Say Police

(Breitbart; 20M uvm; Los Angeles, CA) ... Ildefonso Ortiz and Brandon Darby

A U.S. Border Patrol agent in the Laredo, Texas, faces state theft charges after allegedly pawning his government-issued night vision equipment after claiming it was stolen. Laredo Police arrested 24-year-old Luis Enrique Aranda in Eagle Pass, Texas, on a warrant charging him with state jail felony theft, the Laredo Morning Times reported. The case followed a short investigation by Laredo Police and U.S. Border Patrol that was triggered when an off-duty agent reportedly spotted a set of night vision goggles like the ones used by the agency at a local pawn shop and told a supervisor. The equipment allows agents to see at night without the aid of flashlights and are valued at approximately \$2,700.

25. Border Patrol agent who shot at suspected maquina robber under investigation

(Laredo Morning Times; 71k uvm, Laredo, TX) ... César Rodriguez,

An internal investigation is underway on the U.S. Border Patrol agent who shot at a suspected robber following a robbery of a maquina in Laredo, federal officials said. The agent, whose name was withheld, remains on duty, said Assistant Chief Patrol Agent Gabriel H. Acosta. Acosta said the agent was on duty when he responded to suspicious activity and encountered suspects of an armed robbery of Big Bear Amusement, 301 Market St. "One of the individuals actually raised a gun. Our agent, fearing for his life, shot at the robber," Acosta said. "With a use of force incident that any of our agents may have it is investigated internally with the Office of Professional Responsibility." This week, Laredo police arrested two brothers, Rodolfo Ramos, 23,



and Ricardo Ramos, 27, in connection with the robbery. They are also accused of robbing another 8-liner establishment, Winners Amusement, on San Bernardo Avenue.

Each was charged with five counts of aggravated robbery with a firearm. The investigation continues as more arrests are pending.

26. Death penalty possible for Laredo Border Patrol agent accused of murder
(Laredo Morning Times; 71k uvm, Laredo, TX) ... Joana Santillana

The testimony and evidence presented during the two-day bond hearing of a suspended supervisory Border Patrol agent in Laredo accused of killing his 27-year-old lover and their 21-month-old child shed more light on the way the homicide investigation initially unfolded. After hearing over 15 hours worth of testimony, 406th District Court Judge Oscar J. Hale Jr. ruled last Monday that Ronald Anthony Burgos-Aviles, 28, will remain at the Webb County Jail until the outcome of his case is decided by a jury. Hale said that due to the age of the child and the fact that there were two victims, there was clear and strong evidence that this would be a capital murder case. The court found that based on the totality of the circumstances and the evidence, a jury could find that Burgos-Aviles should be sentenced to death.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

27. Hassan to evaluate border efforts to stop drug trafficking
(Associated Press)

Democratic U.S. Sen. Maggie of New Hampshire is traveling this week to the U.S.-Mexico border to evaluate efforts underway to combat the trafficking of illicit drugs. Hassan is a member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which has oversight on a number of border functions. She will receive briefings from Drug Enforcement Administration and U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents and discuss how Congress can better support their efforts to detect, intercept, and halt the trafficking of fentanyl and other illicit drugs. Hassan also will meet with Mexican officials to build upon existing partnerships focused on combating the opioid epidemic and strengthening national security.

28. Bipartisan legislation to assist law enforcement identify fentanyl, illegal substances
(Homeland Preparedness News; 17k uvm; Washington, DC) ... Aaron Martin

A new federal grant program would help state and local police departments purchase screening equipment that can rapidly identify fentanyl and other dangerous substances in the field under a bill introduced in the U.S. Senate on Thursday. Under the Providing Officers with Electronic Resources (POWER) Act, S. 2763, the U.S. Department of Justice would administer grants to help state and local authorities purchase portable screening equipment that's currently used along the southern border. The bipartisan measure was introduced by U.S. Sens. Rob Portman (R-OH), Sherrod Brown (D-OH),



Marco Rubio (R-FL), Charles Schumer (D-NY), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), and Ed Markey (D-MA). Using laser technology portable screening devices are able to detect and identify thousands of dangerous substances, some through packaging. The POWER Act aims to draw down the backlog of drugs that are currently awaiting laboratory testing and to advance prosecution.

29. How synthetic opioids can radically change global illegal drug markets and foreign policy

(Brookings) ... Vanda Felbab-Brown, Jonathan P. Caulkins, and Keith Humphreys

If U.S. consumption shifts from plant-based to synthetic drugs and U.S. policy does not give up on source country control efforts altogether, those efforts will become even more complicated. In contrast to Latin American drug-producing countries, it will be much harder for the United States to persuade synthetic-drug-producing countries such as China and India to crack down on their illegal production for multiple reasons, not the least being their far greater power relative to the United States and other countries where they may ship illegal synthetics. Also, U.S. interests with China and India are far more complex, and include global geopolitical competition, nuclear security, counterterrorism, other security interests, trade, and global warming. Thus, a drug control agenda with such countries will need to compete against vital national interests to a far greater extent than is the case with Colombia, Peru, or Myanmar.

30. The Race to Learn What's Really Happening in the Opioid Crisis

(CityLab) ... Linda Poon

Cities and towns are on the front lines of an epidemic they don't fully understand. Their experimental solutions—from real-time maps to sewer robots—highlight how urgent the crisis has become. Cary will be the first in the U.S. to tackle opioids through something called sewage-based drug epidemiology. The field is relatively new, but it's increasingly being employed across the globe to find traces of substances like marijuana and cocaine in human waste. With a \$100,000 grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies's Mayors Challenge, Cary officials have partnered with the MIT-affiliated company Biobot to deploy small robots into the sewage system to collect samples of the city's waste. The samples will be measured for their concentration of opioid metabolites, which get flushed out of bodies after opioid consumption. The devices will extract samples from the 200,000 gallons of wastewater that flow through each sample area—gathering information for areas of roughly 5,000 homes each. That will help researchers determine a baseline level of opioid consumption.

OPINION

31. Cooper: Trump is building a wall of untruth

(CNN; 30M uvm; Atlanta, GA)



VIDEO: CNN's Anderson Cooper breaks down the Trump administration's repeated claims that construction on a new border wall has begun.

32. Malkin: Asylum system has turned into a complete joke

(Fox News; 32M uvm; New York, NY)

VIDEO: CRTV host calls for comprehensive immigration reform as migrants in caravan reach the U.S. border. Malkin rips Michelle Wolf for mocking Sarah Sanders.

33. 'Talk About Blaming the Victim': Tucker Battles Jorge Ramos over US' 'Responsibility' to Accept Illegals

(Fox News Insider; 264k uvm; New York, NY)

VIDEO: Tucker Carlson debated Univision anchor Jorge Ramos, who said America has a responsibility as the "richest and most powerful country in the world" to show "compassion" and take in illegal immigrants from a Honduran caravan and elsewhere. Ramos said America has a "long history of being accepting" to immigrants until the presidency of Donald Trump. Carlson said he, like Trump, would like to see America "revert to a country of laws." He challenged Ramos to explain why the members of the hundreds-strong caravan should be accepted on the basis of political asylum. Ramos said it is America's responsibility to accept people who are reportedly fleeing violence. Carlson said at least one member of the caravan professed his allegiance to MS-13 and others sat atop a border wall in Tijuana, across from San Ysidro, Calif. and waved Honduran flags.

IMMIGRATION

34. Thomas Homan, leader of immigration crackdown under Trump, is retiring as head of ICE

(Los Angeles Times; 24M uvm) ... Joseph Tanfani

The Trump administration's top immigration enforcer said Monday that he will retire in June, avoiding what promised to be a rough Senate fight for confirmation as director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Thomas Homan, who began his 34-year career as a Border Patrol agent in Campo, Calif., has been an aggressive advocate for President Trump's immigration crackdown, using ICE agents to arrest anyone in the country illegally and speaking out harshly against so-called sanctuary cities and other impediments. Homan announced his decision Monday as he was about to accept an award in New York from an association of federal law enforcement officers. "It has been the honor of my life to lead the men and women of ICE for more than a year," Homan said in a statement, calling his decision "bittersweet." He added: "My family has sacrificed a lot in order for me to serve, and it's time for me to focus on them."

35. Acting ICE Director departs amid frustrations over immigration deal

(Daily Republic; Solano, CA)



The acting director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Thomas Homan, announced his retirement Monday, and his departure was driven in part out of frustration that his agency was cut out of negotiations with Congress over protecting so-called Dreamers, two people familiar with the situation told McClatchy. Homan, 56, the latest agency chief to quit the Trump administration, had planned to announce his retirement while being honored at the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association Foundation in New York Monday night. But ICE released a statement from Homan after McClatchy and other news outlets reported he was leaving. "The decision to leave federal service after more than 34 years is bittersweet, but my family has sacrificed a lot in order for me to serve and it's time for me to focus on them," he said. An ICE official disputed that the Dreamer negotiations prompted Homan's departure. "As Mr. Homan made clear, his decision to retire was driven by family and personal considerations," said Elizabeth Johnson, a spokeswoman for ICE. In a public statement, Nielsen congratulated Homan for a long career that was to be highlighted Monday evening when he receives the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association Foundation's "National Law Enforcement Leader of the Year" award. "I know Tom is looking forward to spending more time with his family, who made their own sacrifices in order for him to lead ICE. I thank them for sharing Tom with a grateful nation," Nielsen said.

36. S.F. Supervisors to Condemn Inhumane Detainee Treatment at SFO

(KQED-TV; 1M uvm; San Francisco, CA)

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors planned to vote Tuesday on a resolution condemning the inhumane treatment of detainees held at San Francisco International Airport (SFO). Supervisor Hillary Ronen is leading the push for the immediate adoption of the resolution, as well as an independent investigation into the detainment of a well-known human rights activist from the Philippines. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) detained Jerome Aladdin Succor Aba on April 17 as he was on his way to Washington D.C., where he was scheduled to speak about issues facing the Philippines' Muslim and indigenous populations. CBP issued a statement denying the allegations. "These allegations of torture and religious discrimination made by Mr. Aba are false. CBP exercised discretion, allowing Mr. Aba to voluntarily withdraw his application for admission into the United States. CBP did not issue a removal order for Mr. Aba and he waited overnight to be returned on the next available flight in the CBP waiting lounge, along with several other travelers."

OF INTEREST

37. Canadian, American officials working to stop Nigerians from using U.S. visas as ticket to Canada

(The Globe and Mail; 12M uvm; Canada) ... Teresa Wright

Canadian officials in Nigeria are working with the U.S. on developing tools to flag Nigerians applying for U.S. visas who may be at "high risk" of crossing illegally into Canada across the U.S. border. So far this year, the majority of illegal migrants arriving in Canada are Nigerians who have recently been issued U.S. travel visas. "It is apparent



that they obtained those visas with the express intent to actually go to Canada,” said Hursh Jaswal, communications director for Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen. “They land in the United States, where they stay for a very short period of time, and then make their way to Canada.” That’s why Canada is now working with its American counterparts to try to stop Nigerian travellers to the United States from using their U.S. visas as a ticket to Canada – a practice Jaswal calls an “abuse of U.S. visas for the purpose of asylum.” Canadian officials in Nigeria are now working directly with their U.S. counterparts to develop assessment indicators that would flag cases “deemed to be high risk,” Jaswal said.

38. Screen Muslims Like a Real Customs Officer In This New AR Experience

(Vice; 1M uvm; Brooklyn; NY) ... Justin Caffier

The creators of 'Terminal 3' hope the experience will challenge users preconceived notions of Muslims. Developed in partnership with immersive media experience company, RYOT, and bolstered by a \$25,000 Unity for Humanity grant from game engine company, Unity, Terminal 3 premiered at last month's Tribeca Film Festival. The AR experience asks festival-goers to assume the role of an airport border officer screening people who appear to be Muslim as they return to the US from indeterminate nations. After asking your traveler a dozen or so questions and weighing their answers, you're left with one final decision: let them into the country or detain them for further questioning. Seated across from an empty chair, Terminal 3 participants don a Microsoft HoloLens headset that seats a glitchy, jagged holographic body across from them. Aside from this interviewee, the only graphics that appear on the lens for the duration of the experience are text questions that need to be asked aloud to proceed. The interactivity is limited, with only two questions to choose from for each round of inquiry, one typically more sterile and the other more personal. But one never feels handcuffed by the lack of options as this interactive element is merely a vehicle to the subject's answers, the focal point of the experience.

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

Overall

- Social media volume increased from 14,631 total posts to 18,018 total posts. Twitter accounted for 92% of posts.
- The top shared URL (1,280+ shares) linked to *the Sean Hannity Show* blog post, “Border Showdown: Migrant ‘Caravan’ Arrives At Us Customs In San Diego.”
- The second top shared URL (870+ shares) linked to *The Intercept’s* article “We’re Gonna Take Everyone’ Border Patrol Targets Prominent Humanitarian Group As Criminal Organization”

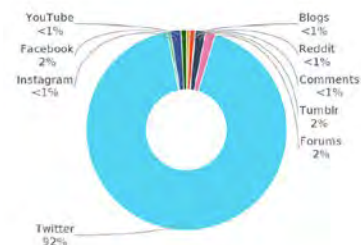


Figure 1 - Social Media Posts by Platform



Twitter

- A tweet from @VP Pence “Important visit to our southern border today...” garnered 1,500+ retweets
- Sean Hannity’s tweet linking to his blog post “Border showdown in San Diego” gained the second most engagement with 1,200+ retweets
- The tweet from @RodStryker, “Caravan of ILLEGALS is climbing over the border fence...” with embedded video of migrants at the border wall remained a top tweet with 810+ retweets



- INSTAGRAM post from @liberalbull, “Caravan of Illegal Migrants Arrive at the US-Mexico Border, Turned Away by Border Patrol” garnered 3,260+ likes



ABOUT THIS REPORT. Articles in this report were published during the 24 hours preceding the report date unless otherwise specified. Dissemination figures and bylines might not be available for all articles. Location is noted for local outlets.



The Daily Media Summary (DMS) and the links contained herein are being provided solely as a convenience and to afford CBP officials a broad awareness of the day's traditional, digital and social media coverage of CBP. The views and opinions expressed in the DMS, the sources cited, and the links contained herein do not necessarily represent the opinions, views, policies or positions of the U.S. Government, DHS, CBP or the Office of Public Affairs.

Daily Media Summary

May 8, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- *New York Times* reported the Trump administration's new zero-tolerance order. Undocumented immigrants who illegally enter the U.S. now face criminal prosecution. *Washington Post* noted parents who bring their children face smuggling charges and separation from their families while awaiting trial. Coverage included Attorney General Jeff Sessions' statement that border is not open. *CNBC* reported Sessions' statement that DHS would now refer "100 percent of illegal southwest border crossings to the DOJ for prosecution." Story reported nationally and internationally in *Fox News*, *The Hill*, *New York Daily News*, *HuffPost*, *The Japan Times*, and the *Latin American Herald Tribune*.
- *Daily Beast* and *Los Angeles Times* covered immigration advocate and activist reactions to the zero-tolerance policy. *Los Angeles Times* reported activists denounced the new policy to separate parents from children, and they expected to challenge it in court. The report quoted Ali Noorani, executive director of the National Immigration Forum, "It's clear this administration wants to use families who are fleeing violence as a pawn in a larger strategy to end immigration to the U.S.." *Daily Beast* quoted executive director of Children's Rights, Sandy Santana, "Needlessly ripping kids, toddlers, babies away from their parents is inhumane, barbaric and unconstitutional."
- The *Union Leader* covered Sen. Maggie Hassan's trip to the border last week. Hassan met with DEA and CBP agents in El Paso and McAllen, Texas. The report included Hassan's statement, "It's really clear from talking with border patrol experts that we need more tools at our disposal at the border to combat the flow of drugs." The report also noted Hassan met with Mexican and U.S. officials in Mexico City. The story was covered regionally in the *Concord Monitor*, *New Hampshire Public Radio*, *NH1 News*, and the *Eagle-Tribune*.
- *The Intercept* reported an alleged CBP attempt to "illegally unmask a rogue Twitter account." The report cited documents, released last week by the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press reveal a partial timeline of the abortive investigation. Emails showed how an unsupervised CBP agent improperly attempted to force Twitter to produce records on a particular user without a court order. *The Intercept* suggested information hinted at a potentially wider misuse of summonses, not only by CBP, but also by ICE and other agencies. CBP told the inspector general it would revise policies about 1509 summonses and retrain staff on their proper usage.

TOP NEWS



1. Homeland Security Warns It Will Prosecute More Undocumented Immigrants

(New York Times; 30M uvm) ... Miriam Jordan and Ron Nixon

The Trump administration announced Monday that it is dramatically stepping up prosecutions of those who illegally cross the Southwest border, ramping up a “zero tolerance” policy intended to deter new migrants with the threat of jail sentences and separating immigrant children from their parents. “If you cross the Southwest border unlawfully, then we will prosecute you. It’s that simple,” Attorney General Jeff Sessions said in announcing a policy that will impose potential criminal penalties on border crossers who previously faced mainly civil deportation proceedings — and in the process, force the separation of families crossing the border for months or longer. The new policy could flood the immigration courts, already suffering severe backlogs, and create new detention space shortages for federal agencies that even now have been forced to release many undocumented immigrants until their cases can be heard. Mr. Sessions said he has dispatched 35 additional prosecutors and 18 immigration judges to the Southwest border region to help handle expanding caseloads.

2. ‘Inhumane’: Advocates Decry the Separation of Families at Border

(Daily Beast; 23M uvm) ... Julia Arciga

VIDEO: “If you are smuggling a child then we will prosecute you, and that child will be separated from you as required by law,” Sessions said, according to NBC News. “If you don’t like that, then don’t smuggle children over our border.” One protester with a megaphone interrupted Sessions during his announcement. “Are you going to be separating families?... Why are you doing this? Do you have a heart? Do you have a soul?” he shouted. “You’re an evil, evil, evil man!” After their parents are charged, children will be turned over to the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Refugee Resettlement, which will refer them to relatives or to shelters, according to NBC News. “Needlessly ripping kids, toddlers, babies away from their parents is inhumane, barbaric and unconstitutional,” Sandy Santana, executive director of Children’s Rights, told The Daily Beast in a statement. “An administration that purports to uphold family values is callously inflicting devastating trauma on children and families in service of its punitive immigration policies.” “We do not, have not, and never will support the separation of families,” said Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference. “In fact, we will condemn it in the strongest terms.” “This proposed policy is fundamentally un-American, cruel, and breaches U.S. and international child welfare and refugee principles and laws. Family separation will only further traumatize those already fleeing harm, and will inhibit their ability to access a legal process to which they have a right,” the letter read. “Secretary Nielsen, we implore you to respect the principles of family unity and liberty in our immigration and border enforcement policies.” The response from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, dated March 26th, pointed to situations where children were given to adult strangers to “pose as families.” “Furthermore, those who pay smugglers in an effort to evade our immigration laws are funding the very groups that also traffic in



weapons and drugs, exacting a horrible toll on both the people here in the United States and our neighbors,” read the response.

3. DHS to push for criminal charges against all border jumpers

(Washington Times; 11M uvm) ... Stephan Dinan

Move marks major escalation in border security push. The Trump administration said Monday it will now pursue criminal charges against every migrant nabbed jumping the U.S.-Mexico border, putting serious teeth behind President Trump’s goal of stiffening immigration enforcement. While most border jumpers will face charges for illegally entering the U.S., parents who bring their children with them as they sneak across could face smuggling charges, Attorney General Jeff Sessions said. That could mean they will be separated from their children while they await their trials — and serve sentences. “Our goal is to have the whole world know this border is not open. Don’t come unlawfully,” Attorney General Jeff Sessions said while standing at the border in San Diego, alongside U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement chief Thomas D. Homan. Prosecutions have long been the exception rather than the rule, with most people who jump the border put into civil deportation proceedings. But illegal entry is a misdemeanor crime and attempting to sneak back in after a previous deportation is a felony. Mr. Homan and Mr. Sessions said it’s time the government start treating them as such. Immigrant-rights activists reacted with horror at the prospect of enforcing those laws, and particularly the prospect that illegal immigrants could have to be separated from their children when they end up in jail. Angelica Salas, executive director of the Coalition for Humane Immigration Rights, called it “by far the most wicked and cruel” decision Mr. Trump has made on immigration.”

4. After visit to U.S.-Mexico border, Hassan calls for more agents, technology to stop drugs... but no wall

(Union-Leader; 318k uvm; Manchester, NH) ... Dave Solomon

More border patrol agents and better technology are needed to stop deadly drugs from coming across the U.S.-Mexican border, according to Sen. Maggie Hassan, who spent last week touring the border region. While some improvements to the physical barriers along the border may be needed, Hassan said, issues surrounding staffing and technology dominated her discussions with border protection agents and their supervisors on both sides of the border. Hassan met with Drug Enforcement Administration and U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents in El Paso and McAllen, Texas, and also traveled to Mexico City, where she met with a number of Mexican and U.S. officials, she said. “It’s really clear from talking with border patrol experts that we need more tools at our disposal at the border to combat the flow of drugs,” Hassan told reporters in a conference call Monday. “Consistently, across the board, what I heard from Customs and Border Protection folks is they need more personnel, first and foremost,” said Hassan. “And they need more infrastructure, including better roads and all-weather roads that can get them to the border faster in remote places.” More agents are needed to control traffic in both directions, according to Hassan. “Our ports of entry need to be expanded and staffed up, especially when it comes to south-bound traffic,



because we need to interdict cash and weapons coming out of our country back to Mexico,” she said.

5. How Customs And Border Protection Illegally Tried To Unmask A Rogue Twitter Account

(The Intercept; 5M uvm) ... Shawn Musgrave

When the department of Homeland Security’s attempt to unmask an irksome Twitter account imploded last year, few within the agency were surprised, according to newly released records. “Why would we do this?” one official asked in early April 2017 after Twitter filed a complaint in federal court, according to the heavily redacted emails. The short-lived investigation into @ALT_USCIS, an anonymous account that claims it’s run by a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services employee, sparked an uproar over First Amendment encroachments and potential abuses of power last year, including from members of Congress. New documents, released last week by the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press after it sued the DHS and Customs and Border Protection, reveal a partial timeline of the abortive investigation. But more importantly, the emails show how a seemingly unsupervised CBP agent improperly attempted to force Twitter to produce records on a particular user without a court order — completely disregarding whether the summons was legal. “These documents make clear that the CBP needs to focus on real security issues, rather than abusing its authority to discover the identity of a whistleblower,” said Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., who demanded answers from CBP Commissioner Kevin McAleenan last year.

NEWS INDEX

BORDER SECURITY

Along U.S. Borders

6. 29-year fugitive arrested trying to walk into US from Canada

(Associated Press) ... Matt Volz

A fugitive who fled international drug trafficking charges 29 years ago was arrested last month when he tried to walk into the U.S. from Canada in hopes of visiting his family, authorities said Monday. Montana residents driving near the international border spotted Jacob Moritz, age 71 or 72, and another man emerging from the woods early April 15, said U.S. Customs and Border Protection spokesman Bill Kingsford. Moritz was one of four defendants indicted in 1989 for smuggling marijuana, hashish and heroin into the U.S. from Jamaica, Morocco, Colombia, Thailand and Lebanon, but he and two other co-defendants disappeared before authorities could apprehend them. Moritz wouldn’t cooperate with the Border Patrol agents who detained him, and they only learned his identity and the New York warrant for his arrest after fingerprinting him.

7. Stiffened U.S. Approach to Illegal Border Crossings Will Separate Families

(Wall Street Journal; 44M uvm) ... Laura Meckler and Alicia A. Caldwell



The Trump administration plans to step up the prosecution of parents who cross the U.S. border illegally with their children, separating more families in hopes of deterring such crossings, officials said. The policy has been under review since the earliest days of the Trump administration and is part of the agency's drive to punish people who arrive in the U.S. illegally and deter migrants from applying for asylum. Attorney General Jeff Sessions formally announced the policy in San Diego on Monday afternoon. "I have put in place a zero tolerance policy for our Southwest border. If you cross the border illegally, we will prosecute you. It's that simple," Mr. Sessions said, with protesters demonstrating in the background. Children will be treated as if they had arrived in the U.S. without an adult. Unaccompanied children from countries other than Mexico and Canada are placed with family or in shelters while their cases are considered by immigration courts, a process that can take years. Under current policy, many families are released together while their asylum cases are processed. About 700 children have already been separated from their parents, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. The new policy is expected to result in far more children separated.

8. Tougher US border enforcement policy to separate more families
(CNBC; 26M uvm) ... Jeff Daniels

A strict new enforcement plan by the Trump administration will mean more parents caught illegally crossing the U.S. border will get prosecuted and separated from any children accompanying them. "I have put into place a zero tolerance for illegal entry on our southwest border," said Attorney General Jeff Sessions in remarks Monday at the San Diego border. "If you cross the border unlawfully, then we will prosecute you. It's that simple." Added Sessions, "If you smuggle illegal aliens across our border, then we will prosecute you. If you are smuggling a child, then we will prosecute you. And that child maybe separated from you as required by law." Sessions said the U.S. Department of Homeland Security would now be "referring 100 percent of illegal southwest border crossings to the Department of Justice for prosecution. We need legality and integrity in our immigration system." Hecklers could be heard drowning out some of Sessions comments during his remarks at Monday's news conference. "This is not about family separation," said the DHS official, who didn't wish to be named. "This is all about referring people for prosecution who break our nation's immigration laws." But the DHS official conceded one effect of the tougher new policy is it will result in separation of families who illegally cross the southwest border.

9. Children are likely to be separated from parents illegally crossing the border under new Trump administration policy
(Los Angeles Times; 24M uvm) ... Joseph Tanfani and Cindy Carcamo

All immigrants who cross the border illegally will be charged with a crime under a new "zero tolerance" border enforcement policy, Atty. Gen. Jeff Sessions said Monday, launching a crackdown that could overwhelm already-clogged detention facilities and immigration courts with hundreds of thousands of new cases. Sessions also said that families who illegally cross the border may be separated after their arrest, with children



sent to juvenile shelters while their parents are sent to adult detention facilities. Until now, border agents tried to keep parents and their children at the same detention site. The new policy is expected to send a flood of deportation cases — and legal challenges — into federal courts. It also could put thousands more immigrants in detention facilities and children in shelters, and is likely to strain an immigration system that has struggled to keep up with a surge in enforcement under President Trump. Until now, individuals apprehended while crossing illegally were often simply bused back over the border without charges. That was especially common for people without criminal records or previous immigration violations. "This border is not open. Don't come unlawfully.... Make your claim. Wait your turn," Sessions said Monday, speaking to reporters at Border Field State Park, which straddles the U.S.-Mexico border near Imperial Beach in San Diego County. "We cannot take everyone on this planet who is in a difficult situation." Immigration activists denounced the new policy to separate parents from children, and said they expected to see it challenged in court. Past court decisions have put severe restrictions on the government's ability to detain children for immigration violations. "It's clear this administration wants to use families who are fleeing violence as a pawn in a larger strategy to end immigration to the U.S.," said Ali Noorani, executive director of the National Immigration Forum, an advocacy group.

10. Interior sending officers to assist patrolling the US, Mexico border

(The Hill; 12M uvm; Washington, DC) ... Miranda Green

The Interior Department is sending its law enforcement officers to help the Department of Homeland Security secure the U.S.– Mexico border, according to an internal email obtained by The Hill. The announcement from the U.S. Park Police (USPP) Planning Unit and National Park Service (NPS), sent last Thursday, says that officers from both agencies will assist the Border Patrol along the southwest border starting May 13 as part of "Secretary [Ryan] Zinke's offer of assistance to the Department of Homeland Security." USPP officers are traditionally tasked with policing NPS property around Washington, D.C., New York and San Francisco. According to the guidance, officers will be sent in rotating groups and spend "approximately 21 days" at two national park and monument sites located on the U.S.–Mexico border: Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument in Arizona and Amistad National Recreation Area in Texas. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke called his decision to deploy Interior law enforcement officers to the southern border "the first of many steps Interior will take to secure the homeland."

11. Border Patrol Refuses to Return \$41,000 Seized from Woman Who Hoped to Open Medical Clinic

(National Review; 12M uvm; New York, NY) ... Jack Crowe

Customs and Border Protections (CBP) seized \$41,000 from a Nigerian-born Texas woman in October of last year as she was passing through the Houston airport on her way to start a medical clinic in her home country. Anthonia Nwaorie, a 59-year-old nurse, was never charged with a crime and CBP never pursued civil-forfeiture proceedings against her. But the agency is nevertheless refusing to return the funds, which Nwaorie spent years saving up, unless she signs a so-called "hold harmless



agreement” forfeiting her right to sue and forcing her to reimburse the government for “costs incurred in the enforcement of any part of this agreement,” according to a report in the Texas Tribune. Many people who have their property seized never get their day in court, as the authorities are entitled to keep what is confiscated under a process known as “administrative forfeiture.” So long as the government is not challenged in court — a rare occurrence considering the socioeconomic status of many subjected to the policy, according to IJ attorneys — they can retain the seized property indefinitely without ever charging the property’s rightful owner with a crime. Nwaorie says her plans to open a medical clinic in Nigeria have been suspended pending the conclusion of her legal battle.

12. 'Operation Big Rig' targets human smugglers

(KSAT-TV; 1M uvm; San Antonio, TX) ... Jessie Degollado

VIDEO: Border Patrol agents at the Interstate 35 checkpoint north of Laredo know all too well about last July’s doomed trailer that went through undetected. “I don’t think any of us wants to see that happening or occurring again,” said Enrique Martinez, Laredo North’s acting patrol agent in charge. Operation Big Rig, an effort by the South Texas Corridor of Joint Task Force West that was launched in November 2017 after the tragedy, is trying to prevent yet another one. In 2003, Texas saw the nation’s worst case in Victoria, Texas. Nineteen people died inside that tractor-trailer. Operation Big Rig includes outreach at trucking schools trying to discourage drivers from doing what James Bradley did. He was sentenced to life in prison for last summer’s deaths of 10 people.

13. Three U.S. citizens suspected of smuggling meth and heroin, border patrol report states

(Desert Sun; 900k uvm; Palm Springs, CA) ... Alena Maschke

VIDEO: The U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agents at the checkpoint on Highway 86 had a busy weekend, seizing methamphetamine and heroin on three separate occasions. The weekend’s biggest bust by CBP agents occurred Friday when officers seized 70 wrapped bundles of methamphetamine after a canine team had flagged a truck transporting the drug, according to the report. Hidden in the rear quarter panels of the vehicle, officers found more than 76 pounds of methamphetamine, with an estimated retail value of more than \$250,000, the report states. On Saturday, border patrol agents conducted an immigration inspection on a Greyhound bus, when they found an unclaimed bag in an overhead compartment that held close to 10 ounces of heroin. According to the report, agents were able to identify a suspect and arrested a man they believed brought the bag onto the bus but did not identify it as his luggage. In the weekend’s last seizure of narcotics, agents found 11.5 pounds of methamphetamine split up into 19 packages and hidden in the firewall of a sedan, according to the report. All suspects arrested this weekend were confirmed to be U.S. citizens and were turned over to the appropriate law enforcement agencies, the report states.



14. This State's National Guard Has Been Quietly Battling Cartels On The US-Mexico Border For Decades

(Task & Purpose; 629k) ... Curt Prendergast

Months before the Trump administration called for Guardsmen to be sent to the U.S.-Mexico border, an Arizona Air National Guard plane flew toward a suspected mountainside cartel scout site on the Tohono O'odham Reservation. The suspected scouts fled as the plane and a U.S. Customs and Border Protection helicopter approached, allowing Border Patrol agents to make two arrests, according to a criminal complaint filed in December in U.S. District Court in Tucson. While large-scale deployments of the National Guard to the border in 2006, 2010, and 2018 periodically spark discussions of the military's role on the border, federal court records and state reports show the Arizona National Guard has played a quiet role in border enforcement for nearly three decades. In recent years, Guard members with the task force, formerly known as the Joint Counter Narco-Terrorism Task Force, operated cameras, flew reconnaissance aircraft and conducted engineering work for CBP and local law enforcement, the annual reports show. They also analyzed data on criminal activity for Homeland Security Investigations in Phoenix, Tucson, and Yuma.

15. Drug smuggling and human smuggling heading straight for the U.S. border

(KABB-TV; 446k uvm; San Antonio, TX) ... Yami Virgin

VIDEO: During the week we are going to be talking about the immigrants around the world that risk their lives going through Panama's jungle to reach the American Dream. It's a small country that is battling drug smuggling and human smuggling heading straight for the U.S. border. The numbers of seizures of cocaine are staggering and the immigrants who are found on their way to our border come as far as India and China. It's one of the most dangerous jungles in the world. The Darien Gap is what separates part of Panama from Colombia. It is the biggest obstacle for drug trafficking cartels to get their cocaine from South America to the U.S. border. The fight to keep cocaine and drug money out falls on the shoulders of Panamanian Law Enforcement; Senafront. By air, \$7,000,000 stopped from entering the country in eight suitcases. It is drug money coming through Honduras from the U.S., with its final destination possibly Colombia. By sea, 176 packages of cocaine, weighing about a kilo each, Panamanian border province of Guna Yala. By land the fight comes here with the Panamanian border patrol, or Senafront. We met him in a small town where the Pan-American highway ends.

16. Chief judge: Arizona federal courts too swamped to add more border prosecutions

(Arizona Daily Star; 431k uvm; Tucson, AZ) ... Perla Trevizo

Federal district courts in Arizona are already working at capacity and can't take more prosecutions, their chief judge said Monday. He was responding to the U.S. attorney general's announcement that the Department of Homeland Security is now referring 100 percent of unauthorized border crossings for prosecution. "We can only do what we do



now,” said U.S. District Court Judge Raner Collins. “We are at our limit.” Last fiscal year, the Border Patrol made nearly 39,000 apprehensions in its Tucson sector and close to 13,000 in its Yuma sector — numbers that could potentially mean doubling the number of prosecutions if everyone is prosecuted. While a person can be apprehended more than once in a given year, the recidivism rate among the agency’s arrestees has decreased significantly over the years. “If you cross this border unlawfully, then we will prosecute you,” Attorney General Jeff Sessions said Monday. “It’s that simple.” This includes parents who come with their children. “If you are smuggling a child, then we will prosecute you and that child may be separated from you as required by law,” Sessions said. “... So if you’re going to come to this country, come here legally. Don’t come here illegally.” In the first four months of the year, the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project, an Arizona-based organization that provides free legal services to those in immigration detention, has seen 176 cases of adults separated from relative minors, and the majority are parents, said Lauren Dasse, the group’s executive director. It had 213 cases in all of 2017, she said, up from 190 the previous year. “We have concerns, especially when we talk about prosecuting every single immigrant,” Dasse said. “If you are fleeing extreme violence and you are trying to keep your family safe, to know that you may be separated from your children for months or years once you reach the border, that’s a terrible choice to have to make as a parent,” she said. It could lead to more parents choosing to be deported and potentially facing serious harm or death if they return to their home country, rather than pursuing their cases for asylum, she said.

17. Court filings shed light on arrest of No More Deaths volunteer
(Arizona Daily Star; 431k uvm; Tucson, AZ) ... Curt Prendergast

New details are emerging on the January arrest of a border-aid worker in Ajo on human-smuggling charges and the legal arguments surrounding the arrest, one of the first in more than a decade. Border Patrol agents arrested Scott Warren, a 35-year-old volunteer with Tucson-based No More Deaths, at a humanitarian-aid station in Ajo on Jan. 17. Agents also arrested two Central American men and alleged Warren was smuggling them into the United States. Warren was indicted in February by a federal grand jury on two counts of harboring and one count of human-smuggling conspiracy. Warren is the only border-aid worker in Southern Arizona known to have been arrested on human-smuggling charges since 2005. In a rare glimpse inside Border Patrol operations, recent federal court documents show agents narrating via text messages the events leading up to the arrests. A search warrant request filed five days after the arrests provides a more formal version of events. Court documents also show defense lawyers and federal prosecutors hashing out the legality of the search of the property in Ajo, known as the Barn, and whether Warren’s religious beliefs protect him from prosecution.

18. Mayors share ‘friendship hug’ at border to celebrate sisterhood agreement
(Nogales International; 231k uvm; Nogales, AZ)

Sharing a “friendship hug,” or “abrazo de la amistad,” Nogales, Ariz. Mayor John Doyle and Nogales, Sonora Mayor Cuauhtemoc “Temo” Galindo embraced across the yellow



line that marks the U.S.-Mexico border at the Dennis DeConcini Port of Entry on Monday morning. The two mayors met at the border to honor the seventh anniversary of the original signing of the sisterhood pact between the governments of the two cities of Nogales. They were joined by officials from both sides of the border, including Michael Humphries, acting port director in Nogales for U.S. Customs and Border Protection; Mexican Army General Salvador Cervantes; and Ricardo Santana Velasquez, the Mexican consul in Nogales. Speaking of unity, teamwork and the benefits of joining forces across the border, the two mayors spoke to a small crowd gathered underneath a Mexican flag just south of the dividing line. They told listeners that the Ambos Nogales sisterhood is an example to both nations and the world of friendship and mutual across borders.

19. Laredo Sector Border Patrol Agents Arrest DACA Recipient in Possession of a Firearm

(KGNS-TV; 87k uvm; Laredo, TX)

Border Patrol Agents from the Hebbronville Station arrested a subject identified as a Deferred Adjudication for Childhood Arrivals recipient. Agents discovered a fully loaded handgun and several magazines with ammunition in the subject's vehicle. The subject, who was determined to be from the country of Mexico, was processed for Removal Proceedings as a violation of his DACA conditions. The firearm, magazines and ammunition were turned over to Homeland Security Investigations.

20. Border Patrol Agents Discover 36 Illegal Aliens in a Stash House

(KGNS-TV; 87k uvm; Laredo, TX)

Border Patrol Agents along with the Laredo Police responded to a request for assistance from Homeland Security Investigations regarding suspicious activity at a residence in East Fremont Street in Laredo, Texas. A total of 36 illegal aliens were found inside the residence. The subjects were determined to be from the countries of Guatemala, Mexico, El Salvador and Honduras. Homeland Security Investigations is leading the case. All subjects were processed accordingly.

21. FBI investigating attacks on Border Patrol agents in south Laredo

(Laredo Morning Times; 71k uvm; Laredo, TX)

The FBI is investigating two incidents involving human and drug smugglers attacking Border Patrol agents in south Laredo. In one case, drug smugglers threw rebar spikes at agents and in the other, human smugglers in a Suburban struck a vehicle occupied by an agent. On Tuesday, agents attempted to perform a vehicle stop on a black Chevrolet Suburban, which failed to yield. To avoid arrest, the occupants of the vehicle began throwing handmade rebar spikes at the agents. A Border Patrol vehicle was struck and sustained damage from the rebar spike. Agents attempted to pull over a gray Chevrolet Suburban, which failed to yield and struck a Border Patrol vehicle. The Suburban continued into a nearby neighborhood, striking a parked vehicle and a fence at the intersection of Ireland and Texas streets. The driver, passenger and four



occupants absconded from the scene and were immediately apprehended. A Border Patrol agent was taken to the hospital for treatment as a result of the Suburban striking the Border Patrol vehicle. The FBI is investigating this case. "These events illustrate the dangers the men and women of the United States Border Patrol face every day in securing our border. Criminal organizations have no regard for human life and pose a threat to law enforcement and the community," said Laredo Sector Acting Deputy Chief Patrol Agent Anthony Scott Good.

22. Agents apprehend convicted sex offender near downtown Calexico

(KYMA-TV; Yuma, AZ) ... Crystal Bedoya

VIDEO: Border Patrol agents apprehended a convicted sex offender near downtown Calexico who was suspected of illegally entering the United States Friday. Agents noticed a man climbing the international border fence at around 11 p.m. who was then arrested. A record check identified the man as Clemente Zazueta Lizarraga, a 37-year-old Mexican national. Zazueta had been previously arrested for Mischievous/Lewd or Lascivious acts with a minor and a count of second-degree burglary in Merced County in November 2005. He was convicted and received a twelve-month sentence as well as 36 months of probation. Zazueta was processed for re-entry after removal. "On a daily basis, our agents continue to arrest and remove threats like this from our communities," said Assistant Chief Patrol Agent David S. Kim.

Ports of Entry

23. Wanted fugitive apprehended by CBP officers at Laredo port of entry

(KGNS-TV; 87k uvm; Laredo, TX)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers, working in collaboration with Mexican authorities took custody of a male subject at the Gateway to the Americas International Bridge. The man was discovered to have an outstanding state arrest warrant for homicide issued in Gaithersburg, Md. The fugitive apprehension occurred on Monday, May 7 at the Gateway to the Americas International Bridge when Mexican authorities escorted Ruel Francis Dempster II, a male 30-year-old Liberian citizen, to CBP officers at mid-bridge. After escorting the subject to secondary, subsequent biometric verification through law enforcement databases confirmed that the subject had an outstanding warrant for homicide out of Montgomery County Police Department in Gaithersburg, Md. and a probation violation warrant from U.S. Marshals Service Headquarters in Arlington, Va. CBP officers confirmed the identity of the subject and Homeland Security Investigations agents transported the fugitive to Webb County Jail in Laredo, Texas.

24. Laredo Sector Border Patrol Agents Seize Over \$1.7 Million Dollars in Cocaine

(KGNS-TV; 87k uvm; Laredo, TX)



Border Patrol agents seized over 53 pounds of cocaine at the Border Patrol Checkpoint on Interstate Highway 35, north of Laredo, Texas. Agents referred a white Honda Odyssey to secondary after a Border Patrol canine alerted to the presence of narcotics. A further search of the vehicle resulted in the seizure of 22 bundles of cocaine. The cocaine was estimated to have a value of \$1,715,200.00. The driver and passenger, both Mexican Nationals, were arrested and turned over to the Drug Enforcement Administration.

25. CBP highlights efforts to intercept dangerous pests at Area Port of Baltimore

(Homeland Preparedness News; 1k uvm; Washington, DC) ... Aaron Martin

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agriculture specialists at the Area Port of Baltimore have conducted 3,534 container searches since January, issuing 360 emergency action notifications and executing 625 actionable interceptions of commodities. The Area Port of Baltimore has witnessed steady gains in cargo volume in recent years. It handled 38.4 million tons of general cargo in 2017, its third most on record, and was ranked the first in the nation regarding the handling of cars, light trucks, farm and construction equipment, and sugar. "Customs and Border Protection's agriculture specialists at the Port of Baltimore are the first line of defense against pests and diseases that could enter the United States and create potential harm to our nation's agriculture resources," Adam Rottman, the acting CBP area port director for the Area Port of Baltimore, said. "It is imperative to the CBP mission to detect and stop pests and diseases at the border before they can be spread elsewhere." "A critical element of the Customs and Border Protection mission is to keep invasive and dangerous pests out of the United States," Casey Owen Durst, the field operations director in Baltimore for CBP, said.

BORDER WALL

26. US Border Patrol eyes murals painted by deported veterans on Mexico border wall

(Stars and Stripes; 1M uvm; Washington, DC) ... Nikki Wentling

Navy veteran Amos Gregory, a muralist working in San Francisco, was inspired in 2013 to paint an upside-down flag on the border wall dividing San Diego and Tijuana — a distress signal that Gregory described as the perfect symbol to represent the plight of deported veterans. Over the years, the mural has become a backdrop for their fight to return to the U.S. Nearly five years after Gregory, 48, and a group of deported veterans finished the mural, U.S. Border Patrol has taken renewed interest in it. The agency is taking stock of paintings on the border wall because of complaints from the public about "graffiti," said William Rogers, the supervisory border patrol agent in San Diego. A few weeks back, the chief patrol agent for Border Patrol's San Diego office called a group of deported veterans in Tijuana, named the Unified U.S. Deported Veterans, and Hector Lopez answered the phone. Lopez, 54, is one of the veterans who helped paint the mural with Gregory. "He told me that it was U.S. government property and that we need to either cover it up or paint [the flag] the right way," Lopez said. "And if we didn't do it,



then they would come across and do it themselves.” Based on that phone call, Gregory believes Border Patrol is specifically targeting the mural of the American flag. “There’s a focus on that particular mural and the message,” Gregory said. However, Rogers said the agent contacted Lopez and artists who worked on other murals to “offer them a voice” before the chief patrol agent decides whether to remove the paintings.

TRADE

27. U.S., China Set for Trade Brawl in Geneva

(Bloomberg; 44M uvm) ... Bryce Baschuk

VIDEO: The U.S. and China are set to clash in Geneva on Tuesday as envoys from the world’s two largest economies address the World Trade Organization amid threats of a trade war. Chinese Ambassador Zhang Xiangchen will criticize Washington’s proposed tariffs on \$150 billion of Chinese goods as well as levies on steel and aluminum that went into effect in March, according to an agenda of the meeting. Zhang’s U.S. counterpart, Dennis Shea, is expected to defend the measures and find fault with Beijing’s retaliation. The debate comes just after a U.S. team led by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin ended trade negotiations in China with little progress other than agreeing to keep talking. The White House said on Monday that Chinese President Xi Jinping’s top economic adviser, Vice Premier Liu He, will travel to Washington next week for follow-up trade talks. Meanwhile, data released on Tuesday in Beijing showed the trade surplus with the U.S. isn’t showing any signs of disappearing, despite U.S. President Donald Trump’s threats of tariffs. The surplus increased to \$22.2 billion in April, the first time that the gap has widened since November, according to Customs Administration data compiled by Bloomberg.

28. A NAFTA deal in May? Negotiators will try, but it's no sure thing

(Jamestown Sun; 70k uvm; Jamestown, ND)

VIDEO: Cabinet-level negotiators from the three NAFTA nations meet again in Washington this week to attempt a breakthrough on the trade deal. It won't be easy. Several contentious issues remain unresolved after more than eight months of talks between the U.S., Mexico and Canada to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement. Discussions resume Monday, May 7, for what U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, Mexican Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo and Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland hope to be the home stretch of negotiations for a deal this month. Despite insisting that he wants to secure a deal in the coming weeks, Lighthizer hasn't shown signs of softening on proposals that Canada and Mexico see as damaging to their interests. Guajardo and Freeland, meanwhile, have pledged to stand their ground. "You can't say to the other side of the table, 'You give us everything we want, and by the way the clock is ticking, so you only have 24 hours to do it,'" said Carla Hills, the former U.S. Trade Representative who negotiated NAFTA under President George H. W. Bush in the early 1990s. "It just won't work that way." Lighthizer is pushing to get a NAFTA deal to meet deadlines for the U.S. House and Senate to debate and approve an agreement this year. Waiting until 2019, when a new Congress



takes over, "changes the whole way you have to kind of construct the deal," he said last week.

29. U.S. Customs hopes to set e-comm standards

(American Shipper; 54k uvm; Jacksonville, FL)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is hoping to "lead and facilitate" international e-commerce standards as it is submitting to the World Customs Organization (WCO) a two-page document intended to pare down a draft WCO framework of e-commerce standards released in December, CBP Trade Policy and Programs Executive Director John Leonard said at a trade conference last week. Speaking at the National Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association of America (NCBFAA) Annual Conference in Rancho Mirage, Calif., on Wednesday Leonard noted that "every customs administration in the world" is considering e-commerce's role, and that the WCO in December "rather suddenly" released a draft framework of standards based on work it had done in other countries.

WORKFORCE

30. Tyler Police to hold Peace Officer Memorial Service

(KLTV-TV, 837k uvm; Tyler, TX) ... Whitney Mayfield

The Tyler Police Department will hold a Peace Officer Memorial Service next week. The service will be held on Tuesday, May 15, 2018, at 12 p.m. on the downtown square in Tyler. All Peace Officers and citizens are encouraged to attend this service to pay tribute to fellow Texas Peace Officers who made the supreme sacrifice while performing their duties from May 15, 2017 to May 15, 2018. The following Fallen Officers will be recognized at the service: Border Patrol Agent Isaac Morales, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Border Patrol Agent Rogelio Martinez, U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

31. Tucson Border Patrol holds Annual Border Safety Initiative

(Sonoran News; 49k uvm; Tucson, AZ)

Tucson Sector Border Patrol officials held their annual Border Safety Initiative event in Amado, Arizona, to promote messaging about the dangers migrants face when illegally crossing into the United States. Every year, the Border Patrol partners with consulates from various countries, media entities, and stakeholders to educate would-be migrants on the risks associated with crossing through Arizona's Sonoran Desert. This year's event was held in a remote location west of Interstate 19 and simulated a short-haul extraction by an Arizona Department of Public Safety Ranger helicopter. Afterwards, participants hiked a half-mile through the desert to witness a second rescue involving a U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations UH-60 Blackhawk and flight crew. Both simulated rescues demonstrated how the Border Patrol and their law enforcement partners work together to save lives. In addition to hearing remarks from Chief Patrol Agent Rodolfo Karisch, other guest speakers included Pima County Sheriff



Mark Napier, Arizona DPS Aviation Commander Terry Miyauchi, and Aguilas del Desierto representative Ellie Ortiz. Chief Karisch told attendees, “We want to prevent tragedy by raising public awareness to alert migrants of the dangers associated in crossing the border through the desert or being placed in perilous situations by smugglers. We must continue to work together in a collaborative effort to reach potential migrants in their homes, before they make that fateful decision to leave and unknowingly risk their lives.”

OPINION

32. The Border Patrol Needs a Few Good Writers

(Center for Immigration Studies; Washington, DC) ... David North

Like many law enforcement agencies, the Border Patrol's press releases are needlessly wooden. They routinely leave out colorful detail, often use excess verbiage, and are often badly written, as a recent press release from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP, which includes the Border Patrol) makes clear. The Border Patrol's agents, in addition to enforcing the immigration law, often risk their necks to save the lives of law-breaking illegal aliens; often they are angels of mercy dressed in khaki. Their efforts warrant better prose than they get. Further, and more importantly, it is useful from a policy perspective that this federal agency be seen as playing the positive role it does play in the borderlands. I look at this from the point of view of someone who has spent some time on the southern border doing immigration research, and away from the border as both a reporter and as a government publicist...my suggestion that the Border Patrol recruit a couple of good writers, and perhaps a good editor, is not made in a vacuum. As I reported earlier, it has issued a contract worth a third of a billion dollars to a consulting firm to recruit more agents. A tiny portion of those funds could be used to find the needed writers among those currently on the Border Patrol staff, or outside the agency. To close on a more upbeat note, I should add that CBP has started issuing some of its press releases in Spanish; this is long overdue, and totally appropriate as it is the language spoken by 90-plus percent of those seeking to cross the southern border illegally. Given my inadequate Spanish I asked my colleague Kausha Luna to look over some of the releases in that language. She said that the Spanish was correct, but that they looked like they had simply been translated from the English-language originals. Too bad, I had been hoping that they were more interesting than that.

IMMIGRATION

33. A Controversial Jail in The Dalles Says It Will Stop Turning Over Undocumented Immigrants to ICE Agents

(Willamette Weekly; Portland, OR) ... Katie Shepard

The Northern Oregon Regional Corrections Facility in The Dalles says it will no longer honor requests from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to detain undocumented immigrants until federal agents can pick them up. The jail, which is funded by four Oregon counties, will continue to house immigration detainees once they are in ICE custody. The major policy change, first reported by OPB, comes after the



facility settled a lawsuit with a Hood River man who said he had been illegally detained for 20 hours while the jail waited for immigration agents to take him into federal custody. In 2014, a magistrate judge in Portland ruled that a jail that cooperated with an ICE detainer had violated a woman's fourth amendment rights, leading to several Oregon sheriffs to abandon the practice. The jail, known as NORCOR, has long honored ICE detainers, which are formal requests that ask jails to hold someone suspected of violating immigration laws until an immigration agent can book the inmate on federal charges, even if that person would otherwise have been released. NORCOR, which serves Gilliam, Hood River, Wasco and Sherman counties, received 105 detainers between November 2014 and October 2017, according to records provided to WW by ICE.

DHS

34. Some states await election security audit

(Associated Press) ... Christina A. Cassidy

The government's slow pace in conducting the reviews has raised concerns that the nation's voting systems could be vulnerable to hacking, especially after U.S. intelligence agencies warned that Russia plans to continue meddling in the country's elections. Among those still waiting for Homeland Security to conduct a risk assessment is Indiana, one of four states with primaries on Tuesday. Its ballot includes several hotly contested races, including a Republican primary for U.S. Senate.

Indiana Secretary of State Connie Lawson said she is confident state officials have done what they can to safeguard Tuesday's voting, but acknowledged: "I'll probably be chewing my fingernails during the entire day on Election Day." Like other states, Indiana used a private vendor to conduct a risk assessment and is one of 33 states and 32 local election offices that are receiving remote cyber scanning services from Homeland Security to identify vulnerabilities in their networks. The concerns aren't just theoretical. The nation's intelligence chiefs warned earlier this year that Russia remains interested in disrupting U.S. elections after a multipronged effort to interfere two years ago. That included attempts to hack into the election systems of 21 states. Election officials in nine of those states said they were still waiting for a DHS risk assessment, according to a nationwide Associated Press survey.

35. Senate panel advances Trump's DHS cyber pick

(The Hill; 12M uvm; Washington, DC) ... Morgan Chalfant

President Trump's choice to lead the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) cybersecurity and critical infrastructure protection efforts advanced from a key Senate panel on Monday. Senators on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee approved Christopher Krebs's nomination on Monday by a voice vote, according to a committee aide. His nomination will now go before the full Senate. Trump has tapped Krebs to serve as undersecretary of the National Protection and Programs



Directorate (NPPD), the Homeland Security unit that protects civilian federal networks and critical infrastructure from cyber and physical threats.

36. Homeland Security shooters are dumping .308 for this long-range round

(Military Times; Vienna, VA) ... Todd South

The Department of Homeland Security plans to get rid of all its 7.62mm NATO, or .308 caliber, long-range rifle ammunition and replace it with an intermediate caliber that Special Operations snipers will field next year — the 6.5mm Creedmoor. Speaking Monday during a panel at the National Defense Industrial Association Armament Systems Symposium here, Devin Patterson, a DHS engineer, told the audience that the switch would give their “tactical observers,” civilian speak for snipers, a more accurate round for their sensitive security missions.

OF INTEREST

37. ‘Heinous and violent’: MS-13’s appeal to girls grows as gang becomes ‘Americanized’

(Washington Post; 44M uvm) ... Michael E. Miller and Justin Jouvenal

VIDEO: For 15 years, the girls lived parallel lives. Left behind in El Salvador by mothers bound for the United States, they grew up a few miles apart in San Vicente, entering adolescence just as the city sank into gang violence. They fled within weeks of one another, traveling north in 2014 along the same smuggling route before ending up in the Washington suburbs. It was there that Venus Romero Iraheta and Damaris Reyes Rivas finally met, after becoming entangled in the same violent street gang, MS-13. And it was there, in a wooded park in Springfield, Va., that Venus stabbed Damaris 13 times. Even amid a nationwide surge in MS-13 slayings, the 2017 killing stood out. Female victims are nothing new for MS-13, which is infamous in Central America for making young women choose between rape and execution. But in a gang as chauvinistic as it is fearsome, female killers are almost unheard of. As Iraheta, now 18, awaits sentencing for murder later this month, authorities say the killing may be a sign of growing female involvement in MS-13 in the United States. Becoming a homegirl once provided some protection, said Tom Ward, an anthropologist who spent much of the 1990s hanging out with MS-13 in Los Angeles, where the gang was founded, for his book, “Gangsters Without Borders.”

38. Mexico Is Actually Clamping Down On Immigration Near Border With Central America, Despite Trump's Claims

(Newsweek; 9M uvm) ... Robert Valencia

VIDEO: Contrary to what President Donald Trump has tweeted in recent weeks, Mexico is actually clamping down on illegal immigration near its southern border with Central America. As part of a strategy called the “Southern Border Plan,” implemented in 2014, Mexico has been deploying migration agents, soldiers, marines and local police to create a type of containment zone in the Chiapas state, near the border with



Guatemala, according to NPR. Thanks to U.S. support, the plan has deported more than 500,000 Central Americans since its inception—including nearly 82,000 people in 2017—based on data provided by Mexico's Interior Department. Since 2015, Mexico has deported more Central Americans on a yearly basis than U.S. authorities have—and most of them do not travel past the Chiapas state, NPR noted. Despite the numbers, Trump tweeted on April 1 that “Mexico is doing very little, if not NOTHING, at stopping people from flowing into Mexico through their Southern Border, and then into the U.S.” He then added that “they laugh at our dumb immigration laws. They must stop the big drug and people flows, or I will stop their cash cow, NAFTA. NEED WALL!”

39. Mexico Deploys A Formidable Deportation Force Near Its Own Southern Border

(KNPR-FM; 247k uvm; Las Vegas, NV) ... James Fredrick

AUDIO: Rather than amassing troops on its border with Guatemala, Mexico stations migration agents, local and federal police, soldiers and marines to create a kind of containment zone in Chiapas state. With roving checkpoints and raids, Mexican migration agents have formed a formidable deportation force. Since the Southern Border Plan launched, Mexico has deported more than half a million Central Americans, including almost 82,000 last year, according to data from Mexico's Interior Department. Since 2015, Mexico has deported more Central Americans annually than U.S. authorities have, in some years more than twice as many. It's such an effective force that even some government officials try to give migrants workarounds. "We often tell migrants to travel at night," says Ana Carolina Rodas, who runs the state government's local migration assistance office in Ciudad Hidalgo, the small town that abuts the Guatemala border. "There are fewer migration officials or checkpoints at night, so it's less likely they'll be detained and deported." In recent years, nearly half of migrants detained in Mexico don't make it past southernmost Chiapas state.

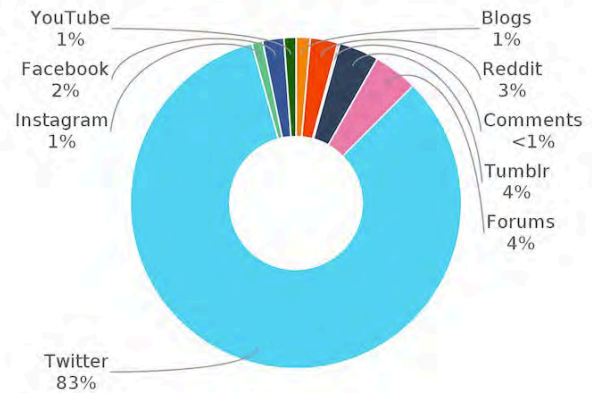
SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

Overall

- Social media volume increased 18% yesterday, up to 5,047 total posts. Twitter accounted for 83% of total posts.



- The top URL (297 shares) linked to a May 4 article in *Slate* “Bad Day for CBP: A New Hampshire court just delivered a humiliating blow to Trump’s Customs and Border Protection agency.”
- The second top shared URL (280 shares) linked to a May 5 *Breitbart* article “Border Patrol Agents Arrest 15 More Bangladeshi Nationals in South Texas.”



Twitter

- The top two tweets linked to the same two top shared URLs. Journalist @mjs_DC's tweet linked his own article in *Slate* “Bad Day for CBP....” It received 459 retweets, 1k likes, and 15 replies.
- @AMike4761's tweet linked to the *Breitbart* article “Border Patrol Agents Arrest 15 More Bangladeshi Nationals in South Texas.” It received 155 retweets, 163 likes, and 13 replies.

ABOUT THIS REPORT. Articles in this report were published during the 24 hours preceding the report date unless otherwise specified. Dissemination figures and bylines might not be available for all articles. Location is noted for local outlets.



The Daily Media Summary (DMS) and the links contained herein are being provided solely as a convenience and to afford CBP officials a broad awareness of the day's traditional, digital and social media coverage of CBP. The views and opinions expressed in the DMS, the sources cited, and the links contained herein do not necessarily represent the opinions, views, policies or positions of the U.S. Government, DHS, CBP or the Office of Public Affairs.

Daily Media Summary May 29, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- National, international, and local outlets sustained reporting on the shooting of Claudia Gonzalez. *Newser*, the *Rio Grande Guardian*, *Crime Report*, *KVEO*, *KGNS*, and *Free Malaysia Today* covered USBP's alleged revision to its account of the incident and the 'call for justice' from immigration activists and the Gonzalez family. The hashtags #SayHerName and #ClaudiaPatriciaGomezGonzalez trended across social media.
- Coverage of reports on the 1,500 "missing" migrant children sustained. Articles in the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *National Review*, and *Quartz* focused on an investigation into the accuracy of claims made in the initial reports. The hashtag #WhereAreTheChildren continued to trend on Twitter.
- *KXAS* featured in-depth reporting on USBP workload at the Rio Grande Valley Border. The report included an interview with RGV Sector Chief Manuel Padilla Jr.

TOP NEWS

1. **Border Patrol Revises Description of Fatal Shooting in Texas** (Associated Press)

The U.S. Border Patrol has revised its description of an agent-involved shooting in Texas that killed a woman who was part of a group that illegally entered the country. The agency initially said Wednesday that the lone agent fired his gun after being attacked "by multiple subjects using blunt objects." But Border Patrol said Friday that the group ignored the agent's demands to get on the ground and "rushed him." The first statement describes the woman killed as "one of the assailants," while the second calls her "one member of the group." Agency spokeswoman Sara Melendez says she can't address specific questions about the releases but notes they usually do a follow-up statement after the initial one. Guatemala's foreign ministry identifies the woman killed as Claudia Patricia Gomez Gonzalez.

2. **The U.S. lost track of 1,475 immigrant children last year. Here's why people are outraged now.** (Washington Post; 44M uvm) ... Amy B. Wang

VIDEO: Reports of federal authorities losing track of nearly 1,500 immigrant children in their custody. Scathing criticism over children being taken from their migrant parents at



the border. Proposed rallies. In the past week, outrage about treatment of children taken into U.S. custody at the Southwest border has reached a fever pitch, exploding in a barrage of tweets and calls to action with the hashtags #WhereAreTheChildren and #MissingChildren. How accurate are certain claims circulating online? What do those children have to do with the Trump administration's new immigration enforcement policies? How many families are being separated? And why is there so much outrage about it now? We take a look at how the story has snowballed.

3. 'Why did you kill my child?' Border Patrol shooting of Guatemalan woman stirs protests.

(Washington Post; 44M uvm) ... Samantha Schmidt

Hearing the gunshot, Marta Martinez rushed out of her home in Rio Bravo, Tex., and began recording a video on her phone. She saw a woman lying motionless on the ground, bleeding from the head, Martinez said in the Facebook live video. She saw a Border Patrol agent holding a gun. "Why did you shoot the girl? You killed her," she yelled in the video. "She's there. She's dead. I saw you with the gun!" "How are you going to shoot a girl in the head?" Martinez shouted.

4. Did the Trump Administration Separate Immigrant Children From Parents and Lose Them?

(New York Times; 30M uvm) ... Amy Harmon

Did the Trump administration separate nearly 1,500 immigrant children from their parents at the border, and then lose track of them? No. The government did realize last year that it lost track of 1,475 migrant children it had placed with sponsors in the United States, according to testimony before a Senate subcommittee last month. But those children had arrived alone at the Southwest border — without their parents. Most of them are from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, and were fleeing drug cartels, gang violence and domestic abuse, according to government data. Officials at the Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees refugee resettlement, began making calls last year to determine what had happened to 7,635 children the government had helped place between last October and the end of the year. From these calls, officials learned that 6,075 children remained with their sponsors. Twenty-eight had run away, five had been removed from the United States and 52 had relocated to live with a nonsponsor. The rest were unaccounted for, giving rise to the 1,475 number. It is possible that some of the adult sponsors simply chose not to respond to the agency. Losing track of children who arrive at the border alone is not a new phenomenon.

5. Family Grieves as Border Patrol Changes Shooting Account

(Newser; 5M uvm; Miami, FL) ... Neal Colgrass

The Guatemalan family of a young woman killed by a Border Patrol agent says they want justice—but the events leading to her death aren't totally clear, NBC News reports. "Why did they do this to her?" the mother of Claudia Patricia Gómez González, 19, tells



Telemundo between sobs. "They should have just sent her back home." González was apparently shot dead last week by a US Border Patrol Agent in Rio Bravo, Texas, close to the Mexican border. US Customs and Border Protection initially said a group of migrants assailed the agent with "blunt objects" and he fired back, "fatally wounding one of the assailants," but an updated release says the migrants "ignored his verbal commands and instead rushed him," so he fired off a shot, "striking one member of the group." The FBI and Texas Rangers are investigating the shooting as the agent, still unnamed, remains on administrative leave, CNN reports. As for González, she had traveled almost three weeks from her home in San Juan Ostuncalco, Guatemala, to earn money to reunite with her boyfriend. "This is not the first person dying in the United States," her aunt said at a news conference Friday. "

6. For border agents, 'last stand' is 300 miles of Texas-Mexico border

(KXAS-TV; 2M uvm; Fort Worth, TX) ... Scott Friedman and Jack Douglas Jr.

VIDEO: Over the past year, more than 137,000 undocumented immigrants were caught along this 300-mile stretch, the "RGV," representing nearly 40 percent of all such apprehensions along the southern border. "This is the last stand," said Manuel Padilla, sector chief for the Border Patrol. The Border Patrol is also fighting a staffing battle, losing agents faster than replacements can be hired. In the RGV, the patrol is short 90 agents, while nationwide there are more than 2,000 vacancies. Despite shortages, Padilla said the patrol still can respond quickly to illegal crossings, though "I can tell you, we may have some lapses in time."

NEWS INDEX

BORDER SECURITY

Along U.S. Borders

7. Stunning images show where the US detains migrants crossing the southern border

(Reuters) ... Daniel Brown

VIDEO: Former Obama speechwriter Jon Favreau appeared on Sunday to criticize the Trump administration's new policy of prosecuting immigrants who cross the southern US border illegally — an action that would inevitably separate children from their families. Favreau tweeted a picture of immigrant children being held in what looked like a cage at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention center in Arizona. While Favreau may have bungled the tweet, there have been widespread allegations of mistreatment and poor conditions at immigration detention centers across the US for years, which have sparked riots, hunger strikes and more. The majority of the following photos were taken in May 2017 at the immigration center in the desert city of Adelanto, California, which is the largest immigration detention center in the state.

8. Cell phone video captures knife-wielding man killed by police

(KSWB-TV; 441k uvm; San Diego, CA) ... Jason Sloss



Three police officers in the Nestor community of San Diego shot dead a knife-wielding 42-year-old man, who had also drawn the attention of some U.S. Border Patrol agents, a police lieutenant said Monday. Police received a call at 10:52 p.m. Sunday about a man with a knife at Hollister Street and Tocayo Avenue who was walking back and forth into the street and into traffic, San Diego Police Lt. Anthony Dupree said. "Upon arrival at the location, the first officer located the male, who was being contacted by Border Patrol agents," Dupree said. "The Border Patrol agents were flagged down by a citizen regarding the male. The male had a knife in his hand and did not comply with commands to drop the knife." Additional San Diego police officers arrived at the scene and the officers as well the Border Patrol agents drew their weapons while repeatedly asking the man to drop the knife. They eventually used bean bags and tasers that were ineffective, he said, adding that additional commands to drop the knife were not heeded.

9. 9 arrested during Border Patrol checkpoint on I-93 in New Hampshire
(WFXT-TV; 16k uvm; Boston, MA) ... Michael Saccone

VIDEO: 9 people were arrested during a Memorial Day weekend Border Patrol checkpoint on I-93 in Woodstock, New Hampshire. A spokesperson for U.S. Customs and Border Protection told Boston 25 News those arrested were charged with violations of immigration law. Ginna Schonwald was on her way back home with a friend on Sunday when they came across the checkpoint. "We were kind of like scrambling to get out documents, but they didn't ask for them," Schonwald told Boston 25 News. Schonwald said the Border Patrol agent looked in their car and asked if they were U.S. citizens. When they replied they were, he said "ok" and let them continue on their way. "I thought we were waved through because we were white and if we had not been white, I think we would have been asked to show some documentation," Schonwald said. "It felt like racial profiling."

10. Community Honors Life of Migrant Woman and Other Lives Lost at the Border
(KVEO-TV; 17k uvm; Brownsville, TX) ... Jose Saenz

VIDEO: Members of the Laredo Immigrant Alliance, like Karina Alvarez, also organized the vigil to raise awareness about incidents like the one Gonzales was involved. They claim these type of incidents happen more often than what most people think. "It angered the whole community, and we can see the same sentiment across the United States. We just want to make note of that... that this is not an isolated incident. There are many incidents that have happened. The only difference is that this one was video tape," said Alvarez. Much like the victim's family back in Guatemala, these groups of activist that showed up in Laredo are seeking justice for Gonzales. "We are asking that the FBI and the Texas Rangers thoroughly investigate this and hold this border patrol agent accountable for the loss of the life of Claudia Gonzales," said Alvarez. The immigration advocacy groups also encourage the community to report any injustices they may encounter with law enforcement agencies.



11. Cross-Border Sewage Update – More Entities Sue The US Government

(Coronado Eagle & Journal; 6k uvm; Coronado, CA)

Over the last two weeks, several events have occurred that seem to portend movement toward a more critical mass of support for cleaning up the Tijuana River, its Valley and our beaches. First, on May 11, Ed Drusina, the Commissioner who oversaw the US IBWC, was removed from his position. Dedina and others had been calling for his dismissal for some time - most recently his removal was called for by Citizens Against Sewage in a March 9 press conference that it hosted with former Border Patrol Agent Josh Wiley, who reportedly contracted flesh-eating bacteria while in training. About Drusina, Christopher Harris, Director of Legislative and political affairs for National Border Patrol Council, Local 1613, said, "I think personally he is a nice guy ... my problem is with an agency that has self-determined, arbitrarily and unilaterally that its job is only to run sewage treatment plants ... So, he allowed that agency ... to narrow their purview. You can't do that. You don't have a job and say I'm only going to do what I really like to do."

Ports of Entry

12. ANRA replacing Diablo East septic tank system

(Del Rio News Herald; 11k uvm; Del Rio, TX) ... Karen Gleason

The first of two major infrastructure projects slated for the Amistad National Recreation Area is nearing completion. The project is the replacement of two aging 6,000-gallon septic tanks that service the Diablo East Marina, including its fish cleaning station and two of its restrooms, as well as the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Port of Entry at Amistad Dam and the offices and housing units of the International Boundary and Water Commission, said Amistad National Recreation Area (ANRA) Superintendent Chris Ryan.

13. Boaters returning to the country need to come forward

(The Intelligencer; 153k uvm; Doylestown, PA) ... Todd McHale

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is alerting boaters arriving in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware that if they venture outside the United States they need to comply with federal reporting requirements. Federal law requires the master or person in charge of a vessel, such as a pleasure boat or yacht, regardless of size, to report their U.S. arrival immediately to the nearest CBP facility. This requirement applies to all boats regardless of country of registration. "It has been a long winter, and Customs and Border Protection wants to remind vessel operators, especially those arriving from Canada or returning to our area after wintering over in the Caribbean, how and where to report their U.S. arrivals," said Joseph Martella, director for the Area Port of Philadelphia. He added that the agency will continue marina visits throughout the boating season to verify compliance.

BORDER WALL



14. Sgt. Joey Jones: Illegal Immigrants Should Be 'Championing' a Border Wall
(FOX News Insider; 264k uvm)

VIDEO: Wounded veteran and veterans advocate Johnny "Joey" Jones said Monday that illegal immigrants should be "championing" President Donald Trump's plan for a border wall with Mexico. Jones, who lost both legs working as a Marine Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician in Afghanistan in 2010, was the day's "#OneLuckyGuy" on Outnumbered. He said that the most important thing to many illegal immigrants is the prospect of gaining citizenship or legal residency status.

TRADE

15. Exclusive - Poultry push: U.S. seeks end to China import ban - sources
(Reuters) ... Dominique Patton

The talks come as the two sides near a deal that could see China cut tariffs on car imports and buy more American farm goods in return for Washington lifting its ban on U.S. firms supplying Chinese telecoms gear maker ZTE Corp. U.S. President Donald Trump appeared to confirm the ZTE reprieve in a tweet late on Friday, and agriculture is expected to be at the centre of the talks in Beijing starting on Saturday, said another source who was not authorised to talk to media. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) did not respond to requests for comment on Monday, which was a national holiday. China's General Administration of Customs, which handles quarantine issues for agricultural imports, did not respond to a fax seeking comment on the issue. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs did not respond to a fax seeking comment.

TRAVEL

16. CDC officials take precautions as Ebola outbreak spreads
(Washington Times; 11M uvm) ... Tom Howell Jr.

With Ebola once again flaring up in an African country, U.S. health officials have briefed border officers about potential danger from travelers, and U.S. airports are beginning to issue warnings about the deadly disease. Authorities say there's no immediate danger and they're better prepared should the outbreak begin to spread beyond the Democratic Republic of Congo. But the briefings and precautions are part of an effort to get out in front of the risks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say electronic signs at more than 20 airports — from Seattle to San Juan, Puerto Rico, — urge travelers arriving on indirect flights from Congo to know the symptoms of Ebola, monitor themselves and contact a doctor if they feel sick. And roughly 6,500 Customs and Border Protection officers have received pre-shift briefings raising awareness. "I would just say this is prudent, pro-active outreach and education. We know that information is helpful," Deputy CDC Director Anne Schuchat told The Washington Times. "We think the most important feature right now is intensive outreach at the source where the outbreak is occurring. That's really where the emphasis right now."



17. Customs And Border Control Computers Go Down At Logan And Other Airports

(WBZ-TV; 27M uvm; Boston, MA)

VIDEO: Customs and Border Control computers go down at Logan and other airports. A computer outage at Logan on Monday held up passengers at customs and border control.

WORKFORCE

18. Jackman fire Saturday likely electrical in origin

(Central Maine Today; 697k uvm) ... Colin Ellis

Firefighters from the Jackman-based Moose River Fire & Rescue Department received mutual aid from Rockwood Fire & Rescue Department, the West Forks Volunteer Fire Department, the Bingham Fire Department, and the Solon Fire Department. There were 22 firefighters on scene. Moose River Fire & Rescue Department's ambulance service division sent one ambulance and three paramedics. A deputy with the Somerset County Sheriff's Office and an agent with the U.S. Border Patrol provided traffic control during the fire. Main Street was closed for several hours during the fire. Moose River Lumber Company provided a crane to pull down the burning walls on the second and third floor so firefighters to extinguish the flames. Jarvis said due to the damage, many parts of the building were unstable, so it was not safe to put firefighters throughout the building.

19. Laredo Police Department holds K9 competition

(KGNS-TV; 86k uvm; Laredo, TX)

VIDEO: As part of the fourth annual K9 Competition, local law enforcement and surrounding communities came together to showcase their K9 programs. A total of 33 teams took part in the competition. The four-legged officers had to find as many narcotics hidden in multiple items scattered inside a local school gym. K9 Coordinator for Border Patrol, Oscar Trevino says, "We like to participate in this type of events because it displays our detention k9, and they are a very big part accomplishing CBP's Mission." The teams had three minutes to locate all of the items and the team with the most points took home the top prize. The winning team got a trophy and second and third place got a plaque.

20. Border Patrol graduates 11 from citizens academy

(Del Rio News Herald; 11k uvm; Del Rio, TX) ... Megan Tackett

The Del Rio Border Patrol Sector recently graduated a handful of local residents from a program that provides regular citizens with insight to the daily operation of a Border Patrol agent. The Border Patrol's eight-week Citizens Academy ended on May 17 with a graduation ceremony at BP headquarters on Dodson Avenue that recognized 11 individuals for completing the program.



21. Special Olympics torch will be carried through Ferndale Wednesday

(Discover Ferndale; Ferndale, WA)

Members of several law enforcement agencies will be running and biking across Washington State as they participate in the annual Law Enforcement Torch Run carrying a torch used to ignite the "Flame of Hope" that watches over the Washington Special Olympics. The route will bring participants and their supporters through Ferndale Wednesday morning, May 30th. The torch will be carried during its trip through Whatcom County by representatives from multiple law enforcement agencies including Border Patrol, FBI, Whatcom County Sheriff's Office and Ferndale Police Department.

OPINION

22. W. Kamau Bell: These are the people our nonsense US border policy ignores

(KITV-TV; 319k uvm; Honolulu, HI)

VIDEO: Specifically, I'm taking you to Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora, Mexico - one city divided into two by an imaginary line that we think is real because we are taught in schools it is called a border. And on that border is a wall, or a fence, or a barrier, or whatever you want to call it (depending on what you are trying to prove in your conversation). And the people I meet in this episode -- people who live on each side of the border -- seem like they are always the last ones considered in that conversation. Among all the many discussions I had in this episode (and we packed a lot of them in), there was one that pointed out the ludicrous nature of the whole border debate our President and the GOP have forced us to take part in. I sat down with Edward D. Manuel and Verlon M. Jose, respectively the chairman and the vice chairman of the Tohono O'odham Nation. The Tohono O'odham are the indigenous people of the Nogales area. Their land extends into both countries, the United States and Mexico. But (and it's a big "but"), the Tohono O'odham lived in this area way before there was a United States or a Mexico. Their land existed for generations, and then an imaginary line split it in two. The border makes it incredibly challenging for their people to just live on their land. As Manuel succinctly put it to me, "We didn't cross the border. The border crossed us."

IMMIGRATION

23. New trial date for border volunteer accused of harboring migrants

(Associated Press)

The trial for Scott Daniel Warren had previously been set for early June, but it has since been moved to Sept. 11. Warren was arrested in January after federal agents conducted surveillance on a building in Ajo where two immigrants were given food, water, beds and clean clothes. He's a volunteer with the group No More Deaths. He has pleaded not guilty to the charges. His arrest came after the group released videos of a



Border Patrol agent kicking over water jugs meant for immigrants and of another agent pouring water on the ground.

24. How Federal Authorities Track Undocumented Minors

(NPR; 22M uvm)

AUDIO: These children are - for the most part they are older teenagers - you know, 14, 15, 16 - who have fled violence in Central America - El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras - often gang violence. So fleeing gangs, not members of gangs as a general rule - who have been apprehended at the border, usually presented themselves, and are taken into the custody of Customs and Border Patrol and then placed in the care of the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement until they can be reunited with a sponsor in the United States and then go through the legal processes. So, you know, over 90 percent of those cases are joining close family members, eventually, after those relationships can be verified. So I would argue that for particularly those children who are joining a parent or a close family member, calling them lost is - it might be, you know, misinterpreting the facts.

25. The problem with the narrative about 1,500 children “lost” by US immigration authorities

(Quartz; 16M uvm; New York, NY) ... Ephrat Livni

The story of the 1,500 missing children, Duffy notes, is being conflated with news that border patrol agents are increasingly splitting parents and kids who arrive in the US together, leading to extensive and traumatic separations. That's a different issue: The “missing” kids showed up at the border alone. Confusing the two circumstances, and demanding an ORR crackdown, only jeopardizes the safety of the most vulnerable undocumented immigrants and could lead to more family separations, prosecutions by ICE, and deportations.

DHS

26. The dubious statistic getting the DHS secretary in trouble with President Trump

(Washington Post; 44M uvm) ... Salvador Rizzo

VIDEO: The president is unhappy with Nielsen and judges her by the number of people caught trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border, The Post reported. President Trump feuds with members of his Cabinet all the time. What's curious here is that he seems to have chosen a dubious performance metric for the homeland security secretary. Basically, he's saying Nielsen is bad at her job because U.S. officials are catching more undocumented immigrants at the border this year than in 2017. Let that sink in for a minute. Trump apparently wants border agents to be catching fewer people instead. What we have here is a Catch-22, brought on by the president's iffy use of data. U.S. Customs and Border Protection reports monthly on the number of people who were apprehended trying to cross the southern border. If this number rises, what does it mean?



27. Department of Homeland Security moves to finally rescind the International Entrepreneur Rule

(TechCrunch; 12M uvm; San Francisco, CA) ... Jonathan Shieber

After nearly a year of protest and litigation, the Department of Homeland Security finally announced late last week that it was moving ahead with plans to rescind the International Entrepreneur Rule, which would have allowed immigrant founders of startups to remain in the U.S. for up to five years. "The average American worker is more likely to lose than to gain from immigration restrictions," Giovanni Peri, a professor of economics at the University of California, Davis told The New York Times in an interview last year. Entrepreneurial ambition and technical skills are increasingly seen as necessary components for a globally competitive economy, and through a series of recent regulations (including this rescission of the International Entrepreneur Rule) the Trump Administration is blocking the U.S. from building the best engine for economic growth, according to many economists.

OF INTEREST

28. Jim Carrey, Celebs Compare Trump's Border and Immigration Policy to the Holocaust

(Breitbart; 19M uvm) ... John Binder

Actor Jim Carrey and several celebrities took to Twitter this week to call President Trump's efforts to stop illegal immigration "torture," "inhumane," and "un-American." In a series of online posts, multiple Hollywood celebrities slammed the Trump administration after Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced efforts to end the "Catch and Release" program by detaining border-crossing parents while their migrant children are placed in safe homes by the Department of Health and Human Services. The effort will allow federal officials to detain border-crossing parents until their immigration hearings, rather than being released into the interior of the U.S. The plan is also designed to deter the massive surge in illegal immigration over the past few months at the southern border.

29. Encounters in viral videos show Spanish is still polarizing in the US

(San Francisco Examiner; 1M uvm)

"When we're living in a world where symbols become dividing lines, language can be one of those," said Brian Levin, director for the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino. In this environment, two recent incidents seared themselves into the long tradition of people being berated for speaking Spanish, while also illustrating the power of video and social media to launch a counterattack. In one case, New York attorney Aaron Schlossberg yelled at Latino restaurant workers at a Fresh Kitchen in Manhattan for speaking Spanish and threatened to report them to Immigration and Customs Enforcement. "My guess is they are not documented, so my next call is to ICE to have each one of them kicked out of



my country,” Schlossberg said in the recorded incident. “I pay for their welfare. I pay for their ability to be here. The least they can do ... is speak English.” The same week as the New York incident, a Border Patrol agent was recorded stopping two women in Montana and asking them for identification.

30. MS-13 is a street gang, not a drug cartel – and the difference matters (Tucson Sentinel; 54k uvm) ... Steven S. Dudley

That misconception is fueling failed U.S. policies that, in my assessment, will do little to deter MS-13. In October 2017, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that pursuing the Mara Salvatrucha, a Salvadoran gang also known as MS-13, was “a priority for our Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces.” “Drugs are killing more Americans than ever before, in large part thanks to powerful cartels and international gangs and deadly new synthetic opioids like fentanyl,” Sessions told the International Association of Chiefs of Police on Oct. 23. He concluded that “perhaps the most brutal of these gangs is MS-13.”

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

Overall

- Social media activity decreased by 46% to 46,021 posts. Twitter comprised 63% of total posts.
- The top URL (7.1k shares) linked to a July 6, 2016 *The Memory Hole* [article](#), “Photos: Inside Border Patrol’s Detention Centers.”
- The second top URL (7k shares) linked to the August 22, 2016 *The Memory Hole* [article](#), “150 More Photos: Inside Border Patrol’s Detention Centers.”

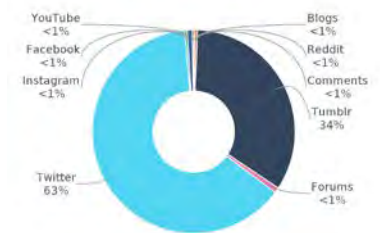


Figure 1 - Social Media Posts by Platform

Twitter

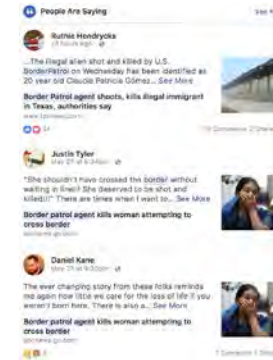
- The top [tweet](#) from @AltGov2 linked to both of the top URLs. The post garnered 11.1k retweets, 8.7k likes, and 598 replies.
- The second top [tweet](#) from @NathanHRubin, founder of *Millennial Politics*, criticized detention and holding centers, the formal policy of “breaking-up families,” and the alleged abuses of force against migrants. The post garnered 5.1k retweets, 9.9k likes, and 235 replies.
- The hashtag #WhereAreTheChildren referencing the 1,500 ‘missing’ children continued to trend with increased use.

- **INSTAGRAM:** #SayHerName trended with users on Instagram. The hashtag garnered 158,442 posts. The Hashtag #ClaudiaPatriciaGomezGonzalez garnered 278 posts.





- **FACEBOOK:** The storyline of Claudia Patricia Gomez Gonzalez, trended on Facebook in Facebook articles, videos, and in “People are saying.”
- **YOUTUBE:** The storyline of Claudia Patricia Gomez Gonzalez sustained on YouTube with high engagement. A [video](#) post from *Complex Media* (2.3M subscribers) garnered 30,245k views since 27 May.



ABOUT THIS REPORT. Articles in this report were published during the 24 hours preceding the report date unless otherwise specified. Dissemination figures and bylines might not be available for all articles. Location is noted for local outlets.



The Daily Media Summary (DMS) and the links contained herein are being provided solely as a convenience and to afford CBP officials a broad awareness of the day's traditional, digital and social media coverage of CBP. The views and opinions expressed in the DMS, the sources cited, and the links contained herein do not necessarily represent the opinions, views, policies or positions of the U.S. Government, DHS, CBP or the Office of Public Affairs.

Daily Media Summary August 7, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- *The New York Times* featured an interview with Commissioner McAleenan discussing the role of CBP.
- Over 40 regional, national, and international outlets covered allegations made in a Government Accountability Office report that CBP did not accurately assess the costs of the border wall construction. Outlets that reported the storyline included *The New York Times*, *CNN* and *CNBC*.
- *CBS News* reported that illegal northern border crossings increased 142 percent from last year. Over 20 national outlets, including *The Hill*, *The Daily Caller*, and *SF Gate*, covered the *CBS* report findings.
- *Northern California Record* reported that a man employed as a seized property specialist with USBP filed a suit on July 19 over allegations of racial discrimination.
- *The Texas Tribune* covered the “rollback” of the zero tolerance policy and included a statement by Commissioner McAleenan made in June.

TOP NEWS

1. **Kevin McAleenan Says the Border Patrol Doesn't Make the Laws**
(The New York Times; 29.8M uvm) ... Audie Cornish

As commissioner of Customs and Border Protection, you were among those who helped implement this policy to detain and prosecute parents caught crossing the border illegally, which led to the child separations. Do you have any regrets about how that was implemented? I think we have a responsibility to protect families and children. In 2014, when we first started seeing significant arrivals of family units, about 14 percent of our total traffic that year was family units. This year it's 25 percent... Surely you can see why people are doubting that right now. The narrative now is that the Border Patrol orphaned hundreds of children. It's just not true. There was no intent for indefinite and certainly not permanent separation. There's an intent to enforce the law at the border. And that's not an individual agent's decision. That comes from the top of the administration.

2. **Trump's Border Wall Could Waste Billions of Dollars, Report Says**
(The New York Times; 29.8M uvm) ... Ron Nixon



The report, conducted by the Government Accountability Office, found that Customs and Border Protection, the agency responsible for construction of the wall, did not consider the cost of building along each segment of the border, which can vary depending on factors such as topography and land ownership. The report also found that the agency selected locations for barriers without fully assessing where they were needed to prevent illegal border crossings. "Without assessing costs, consistent with leading practices for capital decision making, C.B.P. does not have complete information for prioritizing locations to use its resources in the most cost-effective manner," the report said... Officials at Customs and Border Protection did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the report.

3. Government accountability watchdog scolds Customs and Border Protection over border wall prototype evaluation

(Washington Examiner; 4.7M uvm) ... Naomi Lim

VIDEO: The Trump administration failed to properly assess how best to deploy various prototypes for President Trump's much-discussed southern border wall, according to a U.S. Government Accountability Office report released Monday. The watchdog chided U.S. Customs and Border Protection — an agency within the Department of Homeland Security that has been tasked with constructing Trump's wall — for not conducting individual cost analyses for each location or segment along the border. This is because costs may fluctuate depending on "topography, land ownership, and other factors," the report states. "Without assessing costs, consistent with legal practices for capital decision making, CBP does not have complete information for prioritizing locations to use its resources in the most cost-effective manner," GAO wrote.

4. Illegal U.S. northern border crossings up 142 percent from last year

(CBS News; 26M uvm)

VIDEO: CBS News has learned the number of people caught illegally crossing the United States' northern border is up 142 percent. Border Patrol agents apprehended 445 people entering the U.S. from Canada during the first six months of 2018; that compares with 184 during the same period last year. The northern border is very easy to cross, which was actually the original intention. But it also makes it very difficult to secure. An unguarded metal fence is the only thing keeping smugglers from entering a remote corner of New York State — a small part of the physical security infrastructure along America's northern border. Norm Lague, the Border Patrol agent in charge here, says it's impossible to cover 100 percent of the entire 5,525-mile-long U.S.-Canadian border, the longest and busiest land boundary in the world.

5. U.S. Customs and Border Protection employee files discrimination suit

(Northern California Record; 20.3k uvm) ... Jenie Mallari-Torres

A man employed as a seized property specialist with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Department of Homeland Security has filed a suit over allegations of racial discrimination. David Huerta filed a complaint on July 19 in the U.S. District Court for the



Southern District of California against Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen alleging race discrimination. According to the complaint, the plaintiff alleges that Port Director Rosa Hernandez discriminated against him because of his Caucasian race and because he had previously filed three Equal Employment Opportunity Commission complaints against her in 2008, 2010 and 2014. He alleges that Hernandez falsified a supervisor statement to justify his May 2014 suspension and that he has been denied assignments that were given to Hispanic employees. The plaintiff requests a trial by jury and seeks judgment in his favor, order the defendant to remove the five-day suspension from his record, compensatory and punitive damages and all other relief the court deems just. He is representing himself.

6. Immigration "loophole" that Trump bemoaned returns after zero tolerance rollback

(The Texas Tribune; 1.7M uvm) ... David Yaffe-Bellany

Under the zero-tolerance policy, which the Trump administration announced in May, Border Patrol officers handed migrant parents who crossed the border illegally to the U.S. Department of Justice for prosecution. That process resulted in thousands of family separations, as immigrant children — who the government cannot detain for longer than 20 days under a 1997 consent decree known as the Flores Agreement — were transferred to shelters while their parents went to detention centers. But in late June, after President Donald Trump issued an executive order ending family separations, Border Patrol Commissioner Kevin McAleenan announced that agents had temporarily stopped referring adult migrants with children for prosecution. A Border Patrol spokesman confirmed last week that a “temporary suspension” remains in effect as the agency works with the Justice Department to “maintain family unity while enforcing prosecution efforts.”

NEWS INDEX

BORDER SECURITY

Along U.S. Borders

7. Faith Leaders Say They're Being Targeted For Leaving Water To Help Migrants

(HuffPost; 22.9M uvm) ... Carol Kuruvilla

A group of about 60 faith leaders and border activists hiked deep into a wildlife refuge in southwestern Arizona on Sunday, dropping plastic containers of water in the desert to save the lives of migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. The activists trekked in over 100-degree heat through the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge and delivered a total of 125 gallons of water, according to No More Deaths, a Unitarian Universalist ministry that provides water and first aid to migrants. Thousands of people have died in Arizona's deserts while illegally crossing the border, The Associated Press reports. No More Deaths says at least 128 bodies were recovered just last year, including 57 in the desert near Ajo, where clergy focused their action on Sunday. “It's absolutely tragic and



heartbreaking that we live in a nation where we criminalize people for exercising a right that we all implicitly have: the right to move,” stated Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Beth Ullenberg, a spokesperson for the Fish and Wildlife Service’s southwest region, told HuffPost that the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge works with federal, state and local agencies to “humanely address illegal immigration.” The refuge has set up 10 rescue beacons to help undocumented border-crossers in life-threatening situations contact U.S. Customs and Border Protection for help, she said.

8. National Guard Aids in Arrest of Illegal Border Crossers in Arizona
(Breitbart; 19.1M uvm) ... Bob Price

Arizona National Guard UH-60 helicopter aircrews came to the assistance of Tucson Sector Border Patrol agents searching a mountainous area for migrants who crossed the border illegally. The guardsmen, operating under Operation Guardian Support, teamed up with the Tucson Sector’s Mobile Response Team and a K-9 agent and provided transportation to the scene where a group of suspected illegal immigrants were reported to be marching through a remote mountainous area. The aircrew dropped off the ground search team and the K-9 quickly picked up the trail, according to Tucson Sector officials. The K-9 agent tracked the scent of the group and led agents to an area where four individuals wearing camouflage were found attempting to hide. The agents arrested the four illegal immigrants and arranged for transportation to the station where they would undergo a biometric background investigation.

9. Exclusive — Pakistani National Caught Sneaking Across Border into Texas
(Breitbart; 19.1M uvm) ... Bob Price and Brandon Darby

Border Patrol agents in the Del Rio Sector apprehended a Pakistani national who illegally crossed the border from Mexico into Texas. The Pakistani man was reportedly not attempting to seek asylum but to surreptitiously enter the country. A trusted source operating under the umbrella of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) who spoke with Breitbart Texas under the condition of anonymity and initially reported that agents assigned to the Comstock Station discovered a Pakistani national attempting to hide and avoid apprehension. The source said the Pakistani was not attempting to turn himself in to seek asylum, but was attempting to avoid detection. Del Rio Sector Public Information Office Dennis Smith later confirmed to Breitbart Texas via email that Del Rio Sector agents arrested “a 34-year-old Pakistani man who was found to be in the country illegally.” Smith said the Pakistani man was traveling with a group of five individuals from Mexico.

10. Border Patrol K-9 Finds \$1.6M in Cocaine at Texas Checkpoint
(Breitbart; 19.1M uvm) ... Bob Price

Border Patrol agents discovered approximately \$1.6 million in cocaine after a K-9 agent alerted to the possible presence of the drugs in an SUV. The agents made the seizure at an immigration checkpoint located about 80 miles inland from the Mexican border.



Agents assigned to the Falfurrias Immigration Checkpoint in Brooks County observed a Ford Explorer approaching for inspection on Sunday afternoon. The agents referred the driver of the SUV to a secondary inspection station. A K-9 agent alerted to the possible presence of drugs or human cargo during a walk around inspection of the Explorer, according to Rio Grande Valley Sector Border Patrol officials.

11. CBS Highlights Lack Of Security On Northern Border

(The Daily Caller; 11.9M uvm) ... Amber Athey

VIDEO: In one area, the border was separated only by potted plants and some small boulders. Elsewhere in a remote corner of New York, the border was protected only by a small gate that could easily be hopped or ducked under. "Does this represent the physical security infrastructure along the northern border? A gate with a lock?" Dahler asked. "This is a part of that, yes," a border agent replied with a sigh. "The northern border is much more vast," the agent later explained. "The terrain is very difficult to work in and we do not have the resources at our disposal that the southern border has." Dahler also found that some border checkpoints are unmanned at night and they "rely on local residents, patrols, and sensors to alert them to possible crossings."

12. People caught illegally crossing Canadian border rises by 142 percent

(The Hill; 11.8M uvm) ... Justin Wise

The number of individuals apprehended for illegally crossing the northern border has reportedly increased by 142 percent from last year. CBS News reported on Monday that Border Patrol agents caught 445 people entering the U.S. from Canada during the first six months of 2018. Just 184 individuals were apprehended for illegally crossing the northern border in the first six months of 2017. The network notes that the northern border is particularly easy to cross, which makes it very difficult for agents to secure. "It's a tough challenge to go ahead and take the limited resources we have and work in such a vast area," Norm Lague, a Border Patrol agent, told CBS, adding that it is impossible to cover the entire 5,525-mile-long northern border. About 400,000 people and over 1.6 billion goods legally cross the northern border each day, according to CBS News. In 2017, 3,027 people who were in the country illegally were apprehended by Border Patrol agents who work along the northern border.

13. Border Patrol agents find marijuana in abandoned boat

(KGNS-TV; 86.9k uvm; Laredo, TX)

Border Patrol along with the Texas Parks and Wildlife discovered over a thousand pounds of marijuana near Falcon Lake over the weekend. According to the Zapata Border Patrol, the incident happened on August 5th when agents responded to boat activity near Falcon Lake. Park officials informed agents that there was suspicious boat activity going on in the vicinity. When agents and Game Wardens responded, they found an abandoned boat that had 48 bundles of marijuana. The marijuana weighed about 1,074 pounds and had an estimated street value of \$859,888. The Texas Parks



and Wildlife Department seized the boat and the marijuana was turned over to Border Patrol.

14. Border Patrol agents foil alleged human smuggling attempt on I-35

(KGNS-TV; 86.9k uvm; Laredo, TX)

Border Patrol agents of the Laredo Sector thwarted an alleged human smuggling attempt involving 14 illegal immigrants traveling in three separate vehicles. According to Border Patrol, the incident happened on Friday, August 3rd when agents patrolling the highway encountered three vehicles exiting at different areas on I-35. The vehicles all failed to yield to agents' commands for a vehicle inspection. Border Patrol agents requested assistance from CBP Air and Marine who then notified DPS, the Encinal Police Department and the La Salle County Sheriff's Office regarding the vehicles. Agents were able to locate the white vehicle at mile marker 54 and apprehend all subjects inside the vehicle. Later on, La Salle County Sheriff's deputies located the red Sedan near Mile Marker 44. The individuals were determined to be from Mexico and Guatemala. The drivers of all three vehicles were United States Citizens.

15. Border Patrol Catches 60 Undocumented Immigrants

(KVEO-TV; 17.2k uvm; Brownsville, TX)

VIDEO: The number of undocumented immigrants doesn't appear to be slowing anytime soon. Over the weekend, U.S. border patrol agents patrolling along the river caught a group of 60 undocumented immigrants near Hidalgo. The group consisted of 25 family units, seven unaccompanied children, and two adults without family. The individuals were from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. They were taken in for processing.

16. Guatemalan Man Pleads Guilty Of Entering Maine Illegally From Canada

(WHQR-FM; 11.2k uvm; Presque Isle, ME) ... Gary Freeman

A Guatemalan man, who pleaded guilty to crossing into the U.S. from Canada, has been placed in removal proceedings. He faces prison time, a fine, and deportation. According to the U.S. District Court, 24-year old Henry Giovanni Paiz-Morales of Guatemala pleaded guilty and was sentenced by U.S. Magistrate Judge John C. Nivison to time served (five days). Paiz-Morales was found guilty of entering the United States from Canada in Sandy Bay Township, Maine at a location that was not designated for entry. The U.S. Border Patrol agents located and apprehended him shortly after he entered the United States. It was found that Paiz-Morales is a Guatemalan citizen and did not have any immigration documents allowing him to enter the U.S. He has been placed in removal proceedings at this time. Paiz-Morales faced up to 180 days in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Ports of Entry

17. Refugee Uber driver detained after ride across U.S.-Mexico border

(KGTU-TV; 2M uvm; San Diego, CA) ... Cassie Carlisle and Allison Horn



VIDEO: A Syrian refugee who took his Uber passenger across the U.S.-Mexico border into Tijuana was detained last week by Customs and Border Protection officers. Hussam Abdul Noor immigrated to San Diego one year ago and was in the process of applying for a green card to stay in the United States, according to his former coworker Wally Ghamraoui. Noor supported his wife and two children by working at a gas station in El Cajon. He had refugee employment authorization document. Two weeks ago, Noor began working as an Uber driver, Uber confirmed. Noor wanted the job because the pay was better, said Ghamraoui.

18. More improvements on the way to Veterans International Bridge

(KGBT-TV Online; 297.7k uvm; Harlingen, TX) ... Abril Preciado

VIDEO: The Veterans International Bridge is among the busiest Ports of Entry for commercial traffic, but the long waits that come with it could soon be a thing of the past. With shovels in hand, Cameron County broke ground on an \$800,000 expansion to the bridge's fast lane. It's expected to increase the capacity of commercial vehicles entering the United States and most importantly improve safety and flow of commercial traffic. "It'll be a safer more technological advanced examination. It will also speed up the transport of the vehicles," Cameron County Judge, Eddie Trevino Jr., said.

19. Border Patrol, Game Wardens recover \$800K worth of marijuana

(KRIS-TV; 196.5k uvm; Corpus Christi, TX)

Border Patrol Agents and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department officials recovered more than 1,000 pounds of marijuana on Sunday near Zapata. According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, agents from Zapata saw boat activity on the U.S. side of Falcon Lake. At the same time, officials at Falcon Lake State Park received a report of an abandoned boat in the same area. Agents and Game Wardens located the boat, and found 48 bundles of marijuana inside. CBP says a total of 1,074 pound of marijuana, worth an estimated \$859,888, was recovered. TPWD seized the boat, and the marijuana was turned over to Border Patrol for processing.

20. Border Patrol Arrests Sex Offender And Attempted Murder Suspect

(KMIR-TV; 44.5k uvm; Palm Desert, CA)

U.S. Border Patrol agents assigned to the Calexico Border Patrol station arrested a previously deported sex offender and a previously deported attempted murder suspect, with an active warrant, over the weekend. The first incident occurred on Friday at approximately 3:45 p.m., when agents apprehended a group of eight individuals after they illegally entered the United States, east of Calexico. During processing, record checks revealed that one of the individuals, Banales-Alvarado, Rodrigo, a 35-year-old Mexican citizen, has a previous conviction for a sex offense out of Huntsville, Texas in 2014. Banales was convicted of first-degree felony aggravated assault of a child, and was subsequently sentenced to five years confinement. The second incident occurred shortly after, when agents arrested a man after he illegally entered the country. At the



station, record checks revealed, Rosales-Leon, Omar, a 29-year-old Mexican citizen, has a felony warrant for attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon, and vehicle theft out of Imperial County. "These potentially dangerous men will not be free to cause further havoc on the public thanks to the United States Border Patrol and their fine work," said El Centro Sector Assistant Chief Patrol Agent David S. Kim.

21. Over \$1.5 Million in Methamphetamine Seized at International Bridge
(KVEO-TV; 17.2k uvm; Brownsville, TX)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at the Hidalgo International Bridge arrested a 43-year-old man from Pharr. The arrest was in connection with \$1,800,000 worth of methamphetamine discovered within the vehicle he was driving. On August 5, CBP officers referred a white 2006 Chevy pickup truck for further inspection at the bridge. With the use of non-intrusive imaging technology, officers discovered 24 packages of alleged methamphetamine concealed within the Chevy pickup. Officers seized the 128 pounds of narcotics and seized the vehicle. The adult male was released to the custody of Homeland Security Investigations agents for further investigation.

22. Installation Underway Of Facial Recognition ID Technology At Anzalduas Port of Entry
(KURV-AM; 15.8k uvm)

The Anzalduas port of entry bridge is getting facial recognition technology. The installation began yesterday. Once completed, the Customs and Border Protection staffers will be using it to ID every single individual perspective border crosser. CBP spokesperson Maribel Sáenz, says everything should become operational around the end of this month.

23. Londoner who flew to US for graduation celebration is sent back after airport visa mix-up
(Evening Standard; United Kingdom) ... Ben Morgan

A volunteer charity worker who was due to celebrate her graduation with a holiday to the US was accused by customs officials of planning to work illegally and put on a plane home. Charlotte Hockton, 22, was travelling to Cape Cod, New England, where she was going to spend the summer with family friends at a campsite they run. She had just completed a degree in fine art at Leeds Beckett university. Her plans were halted abruptly when she was stopped by US customs officials at Logan Airport, Boston, and, after an interrogation lasting nearly two hours, she was sent back to London. She said a misunderstanding with officials made them think she was travelling to work in America without the relevant visa. Miss Hockton, who grew up in Hampstead and now lives in Hertfordshire, said it was an "awful" ordeal. "It was a nightmare. I was tired, my flight had been delayed for four hours and I was taken to one side at passport control," she said.

BORDER WALL



24. Report: Trump admin in danger of wasting billions on border wall

(CNN; 29.7M uvm) ... Rene Marsh and Gregory Wallace

VIDEO: The Trump administration is at risk of wasting some of the billions of dollars it wants to spend on the US-Mexico border wall, according to a watchdog report released Monday. The Government Accountability Office concluded that the Department of Homeland Security has not conducted a full analysis of the costs of building the wall. Department officials have also not properly documented their plans for building a portion of wall in the San Diego area. Because of the shortfalls, "DHS faces an increased risk that the Border Wall System Program will cost more than projected, take longer than planned, or not fully perform as expected," GAO wrote.

25. Antonio Sabato Jr: I'm An Immigrant And I Support Trump's Wall

(The Daily Caller; 11.9M uvm) ... Stephanie Hamill

VIDEO: Actor, immigrant and California congressional candidate Antonio Sabato Jr. says he fully supports President Donald Trump's promised wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. President Trump is threatening to shut down the government if lawmakers don't fully fund his proposed border wall and enact his immigration priorities. "We need to put America and Americans First," said Sabato. "It's time to build a nice wall to prevent human trafficking, drug trafficking and so much more coming into the country," he said. Sabato says he's been viciously attacked in Hollywood and attributes the loss of work in his industry over his conservative views and his support for President Trump. Sabato, a Republican, is running against incumbent Democrat Julia Brownley to represent California's 26th congressional district. He says he's running because he wants to give back to the country that gave him his freedom and opportunities.

26. GAO says Trump admin hasn't conducted full analysis of border wall costs

(The Hill; 11.8M uvm) ... Emily Birnbaum

A House homeland security spending bill released last month offers \$5 billion to build the wall, while its version in the Senate allots \$1.6 billion. Trump has warned he might shut down the government in the fall if he does not get more than the Senate's proposal. The GAO report notes there have been fences and walls at the U.S.-Mexico border since the 1990s, but tracks the additions that have been proposed or added since 2017. The report recommends that Homeland Security analyze future costs of additions to the wall and says that the department has agreed to do so. U.S. Customs and Border Protection has tested eight prototypes when considering designs for border barriers, the report notes, assessing each for security and costs. Four of the prototypes are made of concrete. Trump's immigration policies have undergone greater public scrutiny since reports emerged in recent months that his hard-line "zero tolerance" policy resulted in the separation of more than 2,500 children from their parents while the adults await prosecution for illegally crossing the border.

27. DHS cut corners to start building Trump's border wall

(The Washington Times; 10.8M uvm) ... Stephen Dinan



Homeland Security cut corners in deciding where to build President Trump's border wall, and still hasn't been able to put any of the new designs the president demanded into operation, the government's chief watchdog said in a new report Monday. The new administration was more interested in getting started on wall-building than in a cost-benefit analysis to figure out the best locations to stem the flow of people and drugs, the Government Accountability Office said. And the \$20 million spent to build eight prototypes of Mr. Trump's new border wall designs — including four concrete walls, at the president's request — appear to have done more to warn officials what not to do. All four concrete designs would create "extensive" challenges if they were to be deployed along the tricky border terrain. And two of the non-concrete designs also were rated tough to build. None of the eight designs were deemed project-ready, the GAO concluded. The government now says it won't adopt any of the eight designs, saying instead that it has learned lessons and will try to incorporate those into future wall-building plans.

28. DHS invests \$20 million in border wall prototypes, fails to account for rough terrain

(The Washington Times; 10.8M uvm) ... Stephen Dinan

The Department of Homeland Security invested \$20 million in the contest to build prototypes for President Trump's border wall, only to discover that most of them were impractical for the tough terrain along the U.S.-Mexico line, the government's chief watchdog said Monday. U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the agency overseeing the project, also cut corners in deciding where to build the first miles of the wall last year and still doesn't have a good method for evaluating the costs and benefits for where new segments should be built, according to investigators at the Government Accountability Office. The findings, which come as Mr. Trump is threatening to shut down the government unless he gets a massive infusion of cash for more wall-building in Congress' fiscal 2019 spending bills, could damage the White House's efforts. "To be blunt, this administration has no clue what it is doing and must be held accountable," said Rep. Bennie G. Thompson of Mississippi, the top Democrat on the House Homeland Security Committee. The administration said it is committed to construction and that the illegal flow of people and drugs has dropped dramatically where fencing has been erected.

29. Man Falls Off Border Wall, Seriously Injured

(KNSD-TV; 2M uvm; San Diego, CA) ... Andrew Johnson

A man was found seriously injured behind the Gran Plaza Outlet Mall Sunday night after he fell off the border wall. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents found him around 9 p.m. CBP quickly called paramedics and started providing first aid. The man fractured both of his femurs and may have a back injury, CBP said. CBP had him airlifted to a medical center in Palm Springs. The new International Border Wall stands 30 feet tall in this area. CBP said the man was trying to enter the country illegally.



TRADE

30. Tariff fallout: Reports show trade dispute affects companies

(Associated Press) ... Joyce M. Rosenberg

Manufacturing companies including small businesses say they're paying higher prices for raw materials and seeing longer wait times for deliveries of goods that must go through customs because of new U.S. tariffs on imports from big trading partners. That comes in a report last week from the Institute for Supply Management, showing that manufacturing remained strong in July, but the industry group's members are feeling the effects of the trade disputes. "Respondents are again overwhelmingly concerned about how tariff-related activity, including reciprocal tariffs, will continue to affect their business," ISM executive Timothy Fiore said in a statement.

31. US-China 'beer war' likely to go flat as drinkers' preference for local brews takes the fizz out of proposed tariffs

(South China Morning Post; China) ... Chad Bray

VIDEO: The US is considering adding new tariffs of up to 25 per cent on thousands of Chinese imports, including beer, as it seeks to reduce a US\$376 billion trade imbalance and counter what it claims is unfair trade activity by China. Last week, China said it would add retaliatory tariffs on US\$60 billion of US imports, including beer. That will barely take the fizz out of anybody's beer.

TRAVEL

32. An Airline Scans Your Face. You Take Off. But Few Rules Govern Where Your Data Goes.

(The New York Times; 29.8M uvm) ... Catie Edmondson

The data the airlines collect is used to verify the identity of passengers leaving the country, an attempt by the department to better track foreigners who overstay their visas. After passengers' faces are scanned at the gate, the scan is sent to Customs and Border Protection and linked with other personally identifying data, such as date of birth and passport and flight information. For its part, Customs and Border Protection has said it will retain facial scans of American citizens for no longer than 14 days. But the agency has said it cannot control how the companies use the data because they "are not collecting photographs on C.B.P.'s behalf." "C.B.P. is a federal agency. It has a responsibility to protect Americans' data, and by encouraging airlines to collect this data, instead they are essentially abdicating their own responsibility," said Jennifer Lynch, a senior staff attorney with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a digital rights nonprofit.

33. San Jose airport 1st on West Coast to use facial recognition tech for international passengers

(KTVU-TV; 2.1M uvm; Oakland, CA) ... Jesse Gary



VIDEO: San Jose International Airport on Monday became the first airport on the West Coast to use facial recognition technology for all international flights that scans a person's eyes and nose against photos used when passengers took for their passports. The facial biometrics system has been used since June for arriving international passengers and will be used starting this fall, for all departing international travelers. Facial recognition uses a digital image or a video capture to verify or identify a person.

34. Why confidence matters in facial recognition systems

(GCN; 161.5k uvm; Vienna, VA) ... Matt Leonard

Perhaps the most visible use of facial recognition technology has been efforts by the Transportation Security Administration and Customs and Border Protection, which are testing systems at Los Angeles International Airport. and other major airports to verify identities of international passengers. TSA told GCN that facial recognition "is still in the development and testing phase." Before making it into the airport for the pilot phase, the technology "undergoes a thorough and rigorous testing and evaluation process in a laboratory setting," Michael McCarthy, a spokesperson for the TSA, said in an email. "The information gathered during pilot tests helps determine whether a technology may move forward in the testing process or whether it requires additional development and testing in a laboratory environment," he said.

WORKFORCE

35. Federal Horse Patrols Used to Deter, Rescue People Crossing Illegally

(KRGV-TV; 275.4k uvm; Weslaco, TX) ... Carolina Cruz

VIDEO: A local police chief says they've partnered with Border Patrol to deter and rescue people crossing into the U.S. illegally. The Sullivan City police chief says there's been a slight uptick in illegal crossings in the area. He tells KRGV's Carolina Cruz with limited resources, they rely heavily on Border Patrol. Just last month, a father and son were found abandoned and dehydrated in the brush. The father was taken to the hospital where he later died. The new certified horse patrol includes two supervisory Border Patrol agents and two local police officers.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

36. College Student Sentenced to 7-Plus Years for Fentanyl Smuggling

(Times of San Diego; 159.9k uvm) ... Alexander Nguyen

college student from Tijuana was sentenced Monday to more than seven years in prison for playing a key role in a foiled smuggling attempt that led to one of the largest-ever seizures of fentanyl on the Southwest border. Flavio Diego Rivera Davalos, 20, received the 87-month custody plea through terms of a plea agreement in which he admitted to transporting about 77 pounds of the super-potent opioid painkiller — an amount, according to U.S. authorities, that could have led to 800,000 fatal overdoses. Davalos was arrested at San Ysidro Port of Entry on Dec. 8, after driving his 2010 Ford Focus into the facility with the stated purpose of visiting an outlet mall just north of the



international line, according to prosecutors. Alerted by a service dog to the presence of possible contraband in the car, U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers searched it, finding 31 packages of fentanyl stashed in the firewall, quarter panels, back seat and a speaker box.

37. White Lines, Black Epidemic

(The American Conservative; 123.7k uvm; Arlington, VA) ... Charles Fain Lehman

While supply in Colombia may have risen, it's not obvious that the volume of cocaine actually in the United States has substantially increased. Of the 21 DEA field divisions, only three saw a greater cocaine availability in 2016 as compared to 2015, and just four reported a "high" rather than "moderate" availability of cocaine in the first half of 2016. Other indicators of an increased supply of cocaine are similarly mixed. Data I obtained from U.S. Customs and Border Protection indicate that the amount of cocaine seized along the southwestern border—through which much Colombian cocaine passes—has risen by about 50 percent since 2013, but is still at levels below 2009 and 2010, when cocaine overdose rates were relatively low. And the number of samples of cocaine reported by law enforcement to forensic laboratories—reasonable proxy for the quantity of illicit cocaine in the country—rose slightly but actually remains near historic lows...Beyond basic supply and demand, we can observe critical trends in the kinds of substances black users of cocaine are consuming. Kilmer and Midgette highlight the surge in overdose deaths that involve both cocaine and opioids, especially fentanyl. A study in the American Journal of Public Health attributes almost the entirety of the population-wide increase in cocaine overdose deaths to deaths also involving opioids.

IMMIGRATION

38. Trump to nominate Vitiello for top job at ICE

(The Washington Post; 43.6M uvm) ... Nick Miroff

The White House announced Monday that President Trump intends to nominate Ronald D. Vitiello to head the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, potentially averting a confirmation showdown by choosing an experienced law enforcement official for the role. Vitiello, a 30-year veteran of the U.S. Border Patrol, was named acting director of ICE last month. Trump's previous pick for the job, Thomas Homan, stepped down after his nomination process stalled and Republican leaders did not bring his confirmation up for a vote in the Senate. Homan, an unabashed defender of the president's immigration policies, was a lightning rod for criticism, and Vitiello could still see considerable opposition from Democrats infuriated by the administration's "zero tolerance" policy, which separated migrant families at the border. ICE is the agency that detains and deports foreigners and immigrants. Its Homeland Security Investigations division targets drug traffickers, gang members and other international criminals.



39. Iraqi refugee charged in Colorado cop shooting had 'lengthy criminal background,' but was never deported, DHS official says

(FOX News; 32.5M uvm) ... Katherine Lam

VIDEO: An Iraqi refugee with a “lengthy criminal background” managed to avoid deportation despite a string of crimes, culminating in the shooting of a Colorado cop Thursday, a Department of Homeland Security official said. The official told Fox News that Karrar Noaman Al Khammasi, 31, was granted an RE1 refugee status in 2012 and has remained in the United States since then. Al Khammasi traveled to the U.S. in December 2012 on a flight from Istanbul, Turkey, to Chicago, Ill. “Al Khammasi has a lengthy criminal background dating back to November 05, 2013 with various felony and misdemeanor charges ranging from criminal extortion, trespassing, assault, parole violations, and contempt of court, to felony weapon offenses as recently as January 09, 2018,” the official said. The Iraqi refugee, who is being held without bail, was charged with attempted murder after he shot Colorado Springs Officer Cem Duzel in the head early Thursday morning. The cop was in critical but stable condition as of Saturday.

40. How Trump Radicalized ICE

(The Atlantic; 23.9M uvm) ... Franklin Foer

AUDIO: Then came the election of Donald Trump. Suddenly, in the warehouses where many of the Mauritians worked, white colleagues took them aside and warned them that their lives were likely to get worse. The early days of the administration gave substance to these cautions. The first thing to change was the frequency of their summonses to ice. During the Obama administration, many of the Mauritians had been required to “check in” about once a year. Abruptly, ice instructed them to appear more often, some of them every month. ice officers began visiting their homes on occasion. Like the cable company, they would provide a six-hour window during which to expect a visit—a requirement that meant days off from work and disrupted life routines. The Mauritians say that when they met with ice, they were told the U.S. had finally persuaded their government to readmit them—a small part of a global push by the State Department to remove any diplomatic obstacles to deportation.

41. Trump nominates top border official to run ICE

(The Washington Times; 10.8M uvm) ... Stephen Dinan

President Trump on Monday nominated Ronald D. Vitiello, a former head of the Border Patrol, to run ICE, the embattled agency responsible for deportations. Mr. Vitiello is currently acting chief at ICE after a 30-year career on the border, where he was a line agent and later oversaw the start of Mr. Trump’s wall construction as deputy commissioner of Customs and Border Protection. Confirming a new director for ICE is likely to be difficult given that climate. Indeed Mr. Vitiello’s predecessor as acting chief, Thomas D. Homan, languished for months without a hearing or vote. Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen pleaded with the Senate to move speedily to confirm Mr. Vitiello. “Deputy Director Vitiello’s leadership experience, combined with the unique



perspective that comes from more than 30 years in law enforcement, makes him especially qualified to hold this important position,” she said.

42. Trump administration appeals DACA ruling; DOJ seeks first win in legal tussle

(The Washington Times; 10.8M uvm) ... Stephen Dinan

The Trump administration filed notice late Monday that it is appealing last week’s ruling that ordered it to restart the Obama-era DACA deportation amnesty in full. The move had been expected, but the speed the Justice Department showed signals an interest in teeing the case up for quick action at the appeals level, and perhaps eventually back at the Supreme Court. Attorney General Jeff Sessions, in a statement hours before the appeal was announced, had teased the move, chiding courts for encroaching on the administration’s powers. The case is part of a wide-ranging legal battle over DACA, which President Obama announced in 2012, claiming executive powers to create a program to grant hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrant “Dreamers” tentative legal status and work permits, entitling them to Social Security numbers and some taxpayer benefits. The Trump administration tried to use a memo — the same method the Obama administration used to create DACA — to phase it out.

43. Refugee charged with murder was in ICE custody in 2016

(The Washington Times; 10.8M uvm) ... Stephen Dinan

An Iraqi refugee now charged with attempted murder of a Colorado police officer was actually in ICE custody in 2016, but was ordered released thanks to a court decision that ruled his previous convictions for assault and a host of other crimes weren’t serious enough to deport him. Authorities say Karrar Noaman al Khammasi, charged last week after a shootout with Colorado Springs officers, could have been ousted from the country during the Obama administration, but for a series of judges’ rulings that set him free to continue a five-year-long crime spree. His arrest also raises tough questions about the refugee program at a time when the Trump administration is eyeing major new constraints on the number of people let in each year. Mr. Khammasi was admitted to the U.S. in 2012 as a refugee from Iraq, according to a Homeland Security official. His first criminal encounters began a year later and he’s totaled at least nine encounters with police, The Colorado Springs Gazette reported.

44. Demonstrators arrested after blocking entrance to private prison headquarters

(Think Progress; 7.4M uvm) ... Rebekah Entralgo

VIDEO: Dozens of protesters descended on Nashville, Tennessee Monday to block the entrance of CoreCivic, a private prison company that contracts with the federal government to detain immigrants. According to some media reports, the group plans to stay there for days, some members chaining themselves to large metal barrels weighted with concrete. They are calling for the abolition of the multi-billion dollar company.



45. ICE Uses Cruelty and Fear to Encourage Self-Deportation

(Washington Monthly; 440k uvm) ... Nancy LeTourneau

ICE quickly built a sprawling, logistically intricate infrastructure comprising detention facilities, an international-transit arm, and monitoring technology. This apparatus relies heavily on private contractors. Created at the height of the federal government's outsourcing mania, DHS employs more outside contractors than actual federal employees. Foer goes on to describe how the deportation force created by ICE has operated, until the Trump administration, with a huge chip on their shoulder. Part of that stems from the agency's recruitment of retired military and border patrol agents who prefer to work in major cities rather remote areas along the southern border. Otherwise, they are the so-called "low man on the totem pole" when it comes to federal law enforcement positions. The result is that among all federal agencies, ICE ranked 288th among 305 last year when it comes to employee satisfaction. Adding to that were the changes the Obama administration made to priorities following the failure of Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

46. Government Kept Migrants in Custody Long After They Were Ordered Released

(Voice of San Diego; 142.2k uvm) ... Maya Srikrishnan

The U.S. Marshal Service told the defense attorneys on Aug. 1 that the delay in releasing Valladores-Cantor and several others was due to an "accidental error in their tracking system that caused a delay in sending the release orders to [the Western Regional Detention Facility]" and said that the individuals would all be released that day, according to the motion. The Marshals said "they had taken steps to ensure that this particular error did not reoccur." But by Thursday, Federal Defenders of San Diego learned that Valladores-Cantor and others remained in custody. "The evidence in front of me shows that I sentenced him to time served on July 27," Major said during the hearing. "Any reason why I shouldn't order that he be released immediately?" The federal prosecutor did not provide a reason. "I've ordered them to be released today," Major said. "I ordered them to be released Friday. So, make it happen, Government."

DHS

47. Worries Mount Over Drone Safety After Venezuela Attack

(The Wall Street Journal; 43.6M uvm) ... Andy Pasztor and Dustin Volz

Drone industry and law-enforcement officials are struggling to find common ground over expanding flights and protecting public safety, a debate thrust into the public spotlight by a reported assassination attempt on Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. The Federal Aviation Administration is projecting a fourfold increase, from more than 110,000 currently, in the number of commercial drones flying in U.S. skies in the next five years. U.S. law-enforcement officials, however, want to delay widespread operations until reliable defensive systems are developed. Saturday's attack with unmanned aircraft in Caracas was a reminder for the drone industry and U.S.



government officials over the potential security threats even readily available commercial drones can pose.

48. DHS Reversal Reopens Asylum Cases for 87 Iranian Christians and Other Religious Minorities

(The Washington Free Beacon; 1.1M uvm) ... Susan Crabtree

The Department of Homeland Security has re-opened the asylum applications of a group of 87 Iranian Christians and other religious minorities who have been marooned in Austria for more than a year awaiting a final decision. Lawyers for the group said the latest DHS action, which they were notified about last week, reversed an earlier blanket denial of their refugee applications back in February and could be a breakthrough in allowing them to reunite with other family members already living in the United States. "We were very happy to hear that the government re-opened these cases, and we're hoping this will bring them closer to being able to reunite with their families," Mariko Hirose, who serves as the litigation director for the International Refugee Assistance Project in New York, told the Washington Free Beacon.

49. Kirstjen Nielsen: Private sector needs to help the US respond to cyber threats

(CNBC; 26M uvm) ... DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen

A few keystrokes, thousands of miles away. Suddenly, the lights are out, communications systems are down and it's unclear what happened or who is responsible. This is the new world of digital destruction. Cyberattacks against our critical infrastructure — the energy grid, emergency services, telecommunications, the financial services sector and more — have the potential for catastrophic effects disrupting our very way of life. We are facing an urgent, evolving crisis in cyberspace. Our adversaries' capabilities online are outpacing our stove-piped defenses. In fact, I believe that cyber threats collectively now exceed the danger of physical attacks against us. In short, our digital lives are at risk. And we need bold action to fight back.

OF INTEREST

50. Have you been affected by Trump's zero tolerance immigration policy? Tell us

(The Guardian; 14.6M uvm)

We want to shine a light on the lasting repercussions of the policy by telling the stories of those affected, from the migrants themselves to the public employees tasked with implementing assembly-line justice. Have you, your family or someone you know been arrested and/or deported at the US-Mexico border since April 2018? Do you work in the US immigration system (Customs & Border Patrol, detention centers, Ice, US attorney's office, federal defenders etc)? Has your community been disrupted by the increase in immigration prosecutions? We'd like to hear from you. You can get in touch by filling in the encrypted form below – anonymously, if you wish.



51. You Should Stream: In This PBS Doc, Detained Kids Recount What It's Like to Not Know If They'll Ever See Their Parents Again

(Remezcla; 258.9k uvm; Brooklyn, NY) ... Manuel Betancourt

VIDEO: The Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy at the border — the one that led to countless families being separated and many children left away from their parents at detention centers — deserves every ounce of our outrage. But, as the journalists working at PBS's Frontline understand, the images of kids in cages can't truly be explained without looking at the bigger picture of current-day life at the border. One of their recent episodes, titled "Separated: Children at the Border," chronicles a year-long investigation into these forceful separations. Produced by Marcela Gaviria, the documentary follows correspondent Martin Smith as he guides us in answering the question on everyone's minds: how did immigration policy in the United States reach this point?

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

Overall

- The hashtags #AbolishICE and #FamiliesBelongTogether continued their seven-week trend across social media platforms. The trend currently shows no signs of slowing.
- The hashtag #BuildTheWall trended due to the trending border wall storyline in top news.
- The top URL (834 shares): *Breitbart* [article](#), "Exclusive — Pakistani National Caught Sneaking Across Border into Texas."
- The second top URL (416 shares): August 4 *The New York Times* [article](#), "Restraint Chairs and Spit Masks: Migrant Detainees Claim Abuse at Detention Centers."

Twitter

- The top [tweet](#) from Muslim activist, @_SJPeace_, shared an embedded video of USBP allegedly asking passengers on a Trailways bus in NY if they are U.S. citizens. The post garnered 3.8k retweets, 2.5k likes, and 372 replies. The video garnered 60.8k views.
- The second top [tweet](#) from activist, @sahiuawal, also embedded the video shared in the top tweet. The post garnered 904 retweets, 897 likes, and 187 replies.

Instagram

- The hashtags #AbolishICE (49.6k post attributions) and #FamiliesBelongTogether (147.9k post attributions) sustained as the top trending hashtags with an average increase of 300-600 post attributions each in the last 24 hours. The hashtags increased being used together in post attributions.
- A [post](#) from USBP canine, @K9graf (1.5k followers), garnered 206 likes.

Facebook



- #AbolishICE sustained across Facebook photos, videos, posts, and in “People are saying,” at a high volume for a second month.

YouTube

- A video from Ofdubkiller, “Unprofessional border patrol agent in buffalo ny.” garnered 85 views. The video includes strong language.

ABOUT THIS REPORT. Articles in this report were published during the 24 hours preceding the report date unless otherwise specified. Dissemination figures and bylines might not be available for all articles. Location is noted for local outlets.



The Daily Media Summary (DMS) and the links contained herein are being provided solely as a convenience and to afford CBP officials a broad awareness of the day's traditional, digital and social media coverage of CBP. The views and opinions expressed in the DMS, the sources cited, and the links contained herein do not necessarily represent the opinions, views, policies or positions of the U.S. Government, DHS, CBP or the Office of Public Affairs.

Daily Media Summary August 11, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Coverage of the appointment of Carla Provost as the new Chief of USBP sustained. Several outlets, to include *Breitbart*, *KSWB-TV*, and *Townhall Magazine* reported this storyline.
- *The Hill* reported family separations took place before President Trump took office, and quoted Carla Provost as saying, "under all four administrations I have worked under, we have separated families for different reasons."
- DHS Sec. Nielsen visited Redding, CA to update the public on the Carr fire in Shasta County. Nielsen called the scenes of devastation, "heartbreaking," and thanked firefighters and other personnel who are battling the wildfires. *The State* and *The Charlotte Observer* reprinted an article by *The Associated Press*, while original reporting was done by local outlets *KTUU-TV* and *Record Searchlight*.
- *CNN*'s Vanessa Yurkevich reported on what it is like to be a recruit at the USBP Academy under the new training curriculum and featured a video of her talking to recruits. *KEYT-TV*, *WTHI-TV*, and *WJXT-TV* reprinted the *CNN* article. Another *CNN* video of Yurkevich showed her attempting various aspects of a recruit's training.
- CBP arrested an 81 year-old woman who attempted to smuggle \$870,000 worth of heroin into the U.S. Over 30 national, regional, and local outlets reported this storyline, including *The Associated Press*, *FOX News*, *USA Today*, and *US News & World Report*.

TOP NEWS

1. **The Latest: Winds still driving Southern California fire** (Associated Press)

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen asked residents to prepare for future emergencies and thanked firefighters and other personnel battling California's deadliest wildfire this year. Nielsen spoke Friday at a press briefing in Redding, California, to update the public on the Carr Fire in Shasta County. The fire was 51 percent contained as of Friday morning and was burning into remote and rugged forest land. Grass, brush and trees are so dry from years of drought and recent heat that the potential remains for the fire to grow. It sparked nearly three weeks ago. Nielsen said she saw "truly heartbreaking" scenes of homes reduced to ash and fences replaced with caution tape. The Carr Fire has killed six people, including two firefighters, and burned more than 1,000 homes.



2. Woman, 81, busted smuggling \$870G of heroin across US-Mexico border, cops say

(FOX News; 32.5M uvm) ... Lucia I. Suarez Sang

An 81-year-old woman was busted attempting to smuggle 92 pounds of heroin -- valued at more than \$870,000 -- across the U.S.-Mexico border near San Diego, officials said. A U.S. Customs and Border Protection detector dog at the Tecate border crossing reportedly alerted officers Wednesday to the driver-side rocker panel of a 2011 Chrysler 200 trying to enter the U.S. from Mexico at about 11:30 a.m. In the side rocker panels, officers said they discovered 34 wrapped packages of heroin. The woman, who authorities said is an American citizen but did not otherwise identify, was arrested and turned over to Homeland Security. CBP officers seized the vehicle. San Diego Customs and Border Protection Director of Field Operations Pete Flores said in a statement drug "cartels will try and manipulate anyone to smuggle their narcotics through the ports of entry." "CBP officers are aware of the many tactics used by the cartels and remain ever vigilant to stop anyone attempting to smuggle narcotics," he added.

3. CNN reporter attempts Border Patrol boot camp

(CNN; 29.7M uvm)

VIDEO: CNN's Vanessa Yurkevich went to the Border Patrol Academy in Artesia, New Mexico, to train with recruits who are participating in a new six-month program.

4. Inside Border Patrol academy, agents are taught to be humanitarians first

(CNN; 29.7M uvm) ... Vanessa Yurkevich

VIDEO: On his first day of training to become a Border Patrol agent, Isidro Urbina was given a card with a photo of a fallen agent on it. It's a tradition on the first day of class here at the Border Patrol Academy. All new recruits get a different card -- a "silent partner," they're called -- as a way of honoring the 127 agents who have died in the line of duty while reminding them of the dangers of the job. The agents-in-training will carry the cards throughout their career. Urbina is proud to wear the card in the chest pocket of his uniform, over his heart. But he doesn't need the reminder. The man in the photo is his uncle. "I don't want to quit, because I know he's watching," Urbina said. "He was 34 years old when he died, and I'm 34 years old entering the Border Patrol. It feels like I'm finishing what he started." Urbina's uncle, Roberto Duran, was killed when he lost control of his vehicle and crashed one morning while returning from his overnight shift in the field. That was 16 years ago. Now Urbina is picking up where his uncle left off. He is training to become a Border Patrol agent at one of the toughest law enforcement academies in the country. And he'll be deployed at a time when the eyes of the world are on federal authorities' treatment of immigrants at the US-Mexico border.

5. Trump Admin Names First Female Border Patrol Chief

(Breitbart; 19.1M uvm) ... Breitbart Texas



For the first time in the agency's 94-year history, the U.S. Border Patrol will have a female chief, Carla Provost. The new chief's service record places her in border sectors in Texas, Arizona, and California. Provost will take the reigns as the 18th chief after decades of active service in several positions. She first came on duty in January 1995 as a member of Class 277. Her initial station was in Douglas, Arizona, part of the Tucson Sector. She quickly rose up the ranks in 1998 with a promotion to Supervisory Border Patrol Agent and then Field Operations Supervisor in 2001. By 2006, Provost was transferred to the Yuma Sector as an Assistant Chief Patrol Agent. She was agent in charge of the Welton Station in Yuma in 2009 and later served as Deputy Chief Patrol Agent of the El Paso Sector in 2011. Two years later, she led 1,200 employees in the California El Centro Sector. Shortly before her ultimate promotion, she worked as the Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Internal Affairs and Acting Chief. Provost won numerous awards throughout her tenure and also served as a firearms and post-academy law instructor. The new chief hopes her role will encourage more women to join the green line, according to AZ Central. "The Border Patrol has been at about 5 percent of women my entire career ... But I can tell you we are seeing more and more women rise through the ranks and into senior positions. And I believe that this will help with the recruitment."

6. Border patrol chief: Family separations began long before Trump
(The Hill; 11.9M uvm)

VIDEO: Newly appointed Customs and Border Protection chief Carla Provost, in an interview that aired on Friday, defended separating families that illegally crossed the border by saying the practice has been in place since long before President Trump took office. "Under all four administrations I have worked under, we have separated families for different reasons," Provost told Hill TV's Buck Sexton on Wednesday on "Rising." "Obviously, the welfare of the child is of utmost concern for us. And we are still separating if that is of concern. If the parent or the guardian has a serious, criminal history, we will still separate them as well," she continued. The Trump administration has faced backlash for its zero tolerance policy, which calls for the prosecution of all adult migrants caught illegally crossing the U.S. southern border and resulted in migrant children being separated from their families. President Trump gave in to bipartisan pressure in June and signed an executive order allowing migrant children and their parents to remain together in custody. Provost said on Thursday that there was never a family separations "initiative," but rather a prosecution initiative under the zero tolerance policy.

7. After Carr Fire, officials working to find temporary housing
(Record Searchlight; 823k uvm; Redding, CA) ... David Benda

VIDEO: With heightened concern about the availability of temporary housing for Carr Fire victims, federal, state and local authorities are weighing options that include bringing in travel trailers and mobile homes — even using old motels to house displaced families and individuals. On Friday, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen toured the damage wreaked by the fire and afterward spoke at a press conference at



the Shasta District Fair grounds in Anderson. She said the fire storm, which generated a tornado clocked at 143 miles per hour with temperatures reaching 2,700 degrees, was unprecedented. “It shows us that as we continue to see the effects of weather, the effects of climate and environment, we need to continue to prepare for additional hazards,” said Nielsen, who thanked first responders while praying for the victims and survivors.

8. Carla Provost officially named first woman to lead Border Patrol
(KSWB-TV; 441k uvm; San Diego, CA) ... Kelli Johnson

US Customs and Border Protection announced Thursday that acting US Border Patrol Chief Carla Provost will be dropping the “acting” and officially named chief of Border Patrol — the first woman to hold the position. Calling it a “historic” announcement, CBP Commissioner Kevin McAleenan introduced Provost at a news conference Thursday saying, “Carla is an agent’s agent” and that he and Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen have “unwavering confidence” in her ability to lead the agency. “I don’t know if it’s possible to be both humbled and proud at the same time, but those are certainly the emotions I’m feeling,” Provost said. Reflecting on the historic nature of her appointment, the more than 20-year veteran of Border Patrol noted that “many women ... paved the way” for her appointment. “I can guarantee you this, I may be the first female chief of the Border Patrol, but I am certain I will not be the last,” Provost said.

NEWS INDEX

BORDER SECURITY

Along U.S. Borders

9. Despite crackdown, immigrants flowing through Arizona border
(Associated Press) ... Astrid Galvan

The 3-year-old boy with a bowl haircut and striped shirt silently clung to his father in the back of a U.S. Border Patrol truck. Their shoes still muddy from crossing the border, the father and son had just been apprehended at a canal near a border fence in Arizona on a muggy night in July. Before the father, son and two older children could make it any farther, a Border Patrol agent intervened and directed them through a large border gate. The father handed over documents that showed gang members had committed crimes against his family, one of the ways immigrants who seek asylum try to prove their cases. After a wait, he and his children were hauled away in a van to be processed at a Border Patrol station about 20 miles away in Yuma. The encounter witnessed by The Associated Press illustrates how families are still coming into the U.S. even in the face of daily global headlines about the Trump administration’s zero-tolerance immigration policies. The flow of families from Central America is especially pronounced in this overlooked stretch of border in Arizona and California.



10. Inside a Texas Detention Facility for Immigrant Families

(Wall Street Journal; 43.6M uvm) ... Alicia A. Caldwell

In the past 10 months, more than 25,000 immigrant mothers and their children caught illegally crossing into the U.S. at the border with Mexico have spent their first weeks in the country living in a sprawling compound of trailers, tents and playgrounds. The children go to school most days and their parents meet with lawyers and immigration advocates who volunteer at the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center. Almost everyone will ask for asylum in the U.S., a process that could take several years. For most, the stay will last no more than 20 days, because of a federal court ruling that bars the government from detaining children with their parents for any longer. The South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley and a second family detention center about 95 miles to the east in Karnes have become focal points in President Trump's continuing efforts to crack down on illegal immigration and quickly deport people caught crossing the border illegally. Both are operated by contractors and overseen by ICE.

11. India nationals illegally crossing the US-Mexico border in record numbers, pay smugglers up to \$25G

(FOX News; 32.5M uvm) ...William Lajeunesse

VIDEO: The surge of Central Americans crossing into the U.S. claiming asylum is no secret around the world. Just a snapshot of those caught entering on any given day is stunning – Nigeria, Romania, Nepal – in addition to the hundreds of Mexicans, Guatemalans and Hondurans. But one of the fastest-growing groups of illegal immigrants come not from the barrios of South America or the slums of Africa, but mega-sized cities in India – 8,000 miles away from the tiny town of El Centro, California, where a handful of Indian nationals are illegally entering the U.S. every day, officials say. "It's a common misconception that we just arrest Mexicans - that couldn't be further from the truth," said El Centro agent Justin Casterhone. "We arrest people from all over the world." Unable to obtain H1b visas, which are given to highly skilled workers, because of a crackdown on the visas by the Trump administration, and because of a fear that Sikhs are coming under attack by fundamentalist groups in their country, Indians are heading to the U.S. -- illegally -- in droves.

12. Photos: Google Maps Capture Illegal Immigrants Entering Texas from Mexico

(Breitbart; 19.1M uvm) ...Idelfonso Ortiz and Brandon Darby

Close to two dozen migrants crossing into Texas from Mexico are captured in satellite images available in Google Maps. The images were taken in an area immediately north of the Rio Grande near the Anzalduas Bridge—commonly known as Rincon Village. The area is considered a busy corridor used by the Gulf Cartel to move individuals typically from Central America into Texas. This week, Rio Grande Valley U.S. Border Patrol Sector Chief Manuel Padilla revealed his agents apprehended a total of 680 migrants in



one day. The individuals entered the country illegally and half of those detained were family units and unaccompanied children, Padilla stated.

13. Science put at risk along U.S.-Mexico border

(Think Progress; 7.4M uvm) ... Kyla Mandel

Off the southern coast of California, just across the border from Tijuana, Mexico, dolphins swim around the fence that juts out into the Pacific Ocean. "They don't really care," said Jeff Crooks, a University of San Diego scientist who has been doing research along the U.S.-Mexico border for the past 16 years. The border fence here was built long before President Trump's campaign promises to "build a wall." Barriers run for 46 miles separating San Diego County from Mexico; near the end, it runs along the southern part of a giant salt marsh system where Crooks works, studying the Tijuana estuary. And while the habitat he and his team are studying isn't bisected, the towering line of metal and steel stretching across the coastal hills pays no attention to the winding Tijuana river system.

14. Asylum Seekers Find Following Rules Holds No Assurances

(VOA News; 4.7M uvm; Washington, D.C.) ... Aline Barros

They were separated for almost four months. Although they crossed the border at a legal point of entry, Capi and his 12-year-old daughter Jamie were separated — and this was in March, a month before the Trump administration implemented its zero-tolerance policy requiring family separations. Capi (not his real name) traveled from Honduras and entered the United States with Jamie at Hidalgo, Texas. They walked across the international bridge, presented themselves to a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer, and asked for help. The father and daughter were classified as "arriving aliens" once they were presented to a CBP officer. The pair was following the law: "If you are seeking asylum, go to a port of entry. You do not need to break the law of the United States to seek asylum," Kirstjen Nielsen, U.S. homeland security secretary, said during a June briefing at the White House. "If an adult enters at a port of entry and claims asylum, they will not face prosecution for illegal entry. They have not committed a crime by coming to the port of entry." The father-daughter duo did everything by the book, yet they were separated.

15. Video: Man falls from 30-foot Calexico border wall, breaks legs

(KGTV-TV; 2.0M uvm; San Diego, CA) ... Mark Saunders

VIDEO: A man was airlifted to the hospital Sunday after illegally climbing over a section of Calexico's border and falling. The man, who U.S. Customs and Border Protection said had crossed over illegally sometime just after 8 p.m., broke both of his legs and sustained a back injury from the 30-foot fall from atop the border wall. Video shows the man climbing over and falling to the ground, where he lay motionless.



16. Children Received Inhumane Treatment After Being Separated From Their Families At The Border

(WGBH-TV; 1.2M uvm; Boston, MA) ... Jason Turesky

AUDIO: Despite a reunification deadline of July 26th, the government has failed to reunite 559 children with their families after they were separated at the border, according to a recent court filing from the Trump Administration. Susan Church, an immigration lawyer at Demissie and Church, and Jeff Goldman, an attorney at Jeff Goldman Immigration, joined Boston Public Radio Friday to discuss just some examples of the extreme conditions these children have faced while being held in detention centers and shelters. Before being sent to a shelter, the children are held in a customs and border protection holding cell for up to five days, said Church. According to one of her clients, the conditions of these holding cells were abysmal. Church told Boston Public Radio that her client's daughter was told "if she didn't behave she would never see her mother again." "One of my clients described [the holding cell] as over 50 kids in a room, in a 12 by 12 room. There wasn't even room to sit down... The only fresh air they would get in is when the officers would open the door to yell at them to shut up, or be quiet, or they called the donkeys or other names," Church said. The shelters children are put in after the holding cells are not much better, says Church. "One little girl got woken up every morning by them pulling her ponytail," she said. Church believes that the only way people can rationalize treating children like this is by dehumanizing them. "I personally think at this point in time - this is a much deeper psychological issue - they need to view these people as the lowest of the low, as trash, and to treat them as inhumanely as possible in order to justify what they are doing to them," she said.

17. Tornillo tent shelter open extra 30 days, no plans to increase capacity, says Rep. Blanco

(El Paso Times; 534k uvm; El Paso, TX) ... Madlin Mekelburg

The temporary tent shelters for immigrant children at the port of entry in Tornillo will stay open for at least another month at their current capacity, according to state Rep. César Blanco. Blanco and five other members of the Mexican American Legislative Caucus of the Texas House visited the facility on Friday to meet with federal officials and leaders from BCFS, the San Antonio-based nonprofit currently running day-to-day operations. More: Commander of tents at Tornillo, Texas, calls family separations 'dumb, stupid' The facility was scheduled to close on Monday, the date when the federal government's latest contract with BCFS was slated to expire. But a spokesperson with the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families said the government will continue operations in Tornillo for an additional 30 days, setting the new closing date for Sept. 13.

18. Border Patrol seizes \$1.3M worth of marijuana

(KRIS-TV; 196k uvm; Corpus Christi, TX)



Border Patrol Agents in the Rio Grande Valley seized more than 1,600 pounds of marijuana in three failed smuggling attempts recently. On Thursday, agents in Rio Grande City were responding to reports of suspicious activity when they found an abandoned vehicle loaded with bundles of marijuana. Border Patrol says the drugs weighed more than 275 pounds and was worth an estimated \$220,500. Early Friday morning, agents in Rio Grande City saw a Ford Expedition driving away from the Rio Grande, near La Rosita, Texas. As agents approached the vehicle, the suspect drove off and eventually bailed out. Border Patrol arrested the driver and confiscated nearly 470 pounds of marijuana worth an estimated \$375,000. A short time later, agents in McAllen followed tracks to the 13 bundles of marijuana abandoned in the brush after a Border Patrol air unit observed 14 subject leave the area and flee to Mexico. Border Patrol says the marijuana weighed approximately 890 pounds and was worth an estimated \$712,000.

19. Border Patrol arrests two at Spokane Intermodal Bus Station

(KXLY-TV; 193k uvm; Spokane, WA) ... Elena Gardner

U.S. Border Patrol agents arrested two Mexican nationals at the Spokane Intermodal Bus Station Tuesday. While performing regular duties, the agents found out the Mexican nationals were in the U.S. illegally. Through further questioning, they learned that one of them had illegally entered the U.S. on August 4, near Sumas, Washington, and then traveled to Canada from Mexican and legally obtained a Canadian work permit. The two people were taken to the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma. "U.S. Customs and Border Protection uses a layered approach in enforcing Border Security. Our efforts on the border are the first of many layers," stated Chief Patrol Agent Henry Rolon. "When it comes to security, a layered approach is always more effective. The bottom line is, entering the United States at a location other than a designated port of entry is a violation of law."

20. U.S. Border Patrol agents find nearly 60 pounds of cocaine at South Texas checkpoint

(Corpus Christi Caller-Times; 190k uvm; Corpus Christi, TX) ... Alexandria Rodriguez

A K-9 put its nose to work as a Ford pickup entered a U.S. Border Patrol checkpoint. The K-9 alerted agents at the Sarita checkpoint, and the pickup was sent to secondary inspection, according to a news release. That inspection proved the K-9's nose was on point when narcotics were found in the pickup. Agents discovered about 60 pounds of cocaine, which is worth about \$1.9 million, the release states. The driver, a U.S. citizen, was arrested. The case is being referred for prosecution.

21. Faith floods the desert: Humanitarian aid is never a crime

(People's World; 60k uvm) ... Rabbi Brant Rosen

I've just returned from a weekend at the border in the southern Arizona desert where I participated in a delegation of 60 faith leaders from around the country in an initiative



called “Faith Floods the Desert,” supporting the movement No More Deaths/No Mas Muertes (NMD). It was a powerful and at times overwhelming experience. I’ll try to do my best to do it justice here. As I mentioned in my previous post, No More Deaths is an organization that provides humanitarian relief to migrants, mobilizes search and rescue operations for disappeared migrants, and documents how border enforcement pushes migration into some of the most remote and dangerous areas in Arizona’s deserts. “Faith Floods the Desert” was an initiative sponsored jointly between NMD, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, and the Unitarian Universalist Association in response to the increasing criminalization of migrant relief work by the U.S. government. Earlier this year Scott Warren, a humanitarian aid provider with NMD, and two people receiving humanitarian aid were arrested by U.S. Border Patrol. Now Warren is facing a federal felony charge, and eight other NMD volunteers have been charged with federal misdemeanor charges relating to their humanitarian aid work on the Cabeza Prieta Wildlife Refuge, a vast and remote stretch of land that shares 56 miles with the U.S.-Mexico border.

22. Congressman Valadao tours US-Mexico border

(KGPE-TV; 58k uvm; Fresno, CA) ... Alex Backus

VIDEO: Hanford Congressman David Valadao toured the U.S.-Mexico Border earlier this week. Congressman Valadao toured the Otay Mesa Detention Center, the Galvez Tunnel site and various border wall prototypes. Border Patrol and ICE Agents discussed various inspection methods and potential threats to our southern border. He traveled with Congressman Jeff Denham (R-CA) and Congressman Rodney Davis (R-IL). He spoke with CBS47’s Alex Backus about the trip.

23. Thousands Are Missing Or Dead Along The Border Meet The People Trying To Find Them

(NationSwell; 54k uvm) ... Joseph Darius Jaafari

Family members are left in the dark after loved ones vanish in the desert. In Tucson, one group works to identify the bodies. Tucson is a dustbowl. Flanked by mountains to the east and west, the city that was built in the middle of the Sonoran desert — known mostly for fire-red sunsets that cast shadows from long-armed saguaro cacti — can be deadly. When I visited in June, it wasn’t even summer yet, and midday temperatures were already kissing the tops of thermometers in the triple digits; the pool water at my hotel felt like tepid bathwater. For most people who live here, it’s the beginning of a season for barbecues under shaded awnings and pool parties, in a desperate attempt to stay cool. But for workers at the Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner, it’s the season of the dead.

24. Border Patrol Arrests 30th Sex Offender This Year

(KMIR-TV; 44k uvm; Palm Desert, CA)

U.S. Border Patrol agents assigned to the Calexico Border Patrol station arrested a previously deported sex offender shortly after 3 p.m. Thursday afternoon. The incident



occurred after agents encountered a man who had illegally entered the United States 18 miles east of the Calexico Port of Entry. Record checks revealed that the man, later identified as Jose Humberto Ojeda-Gutierrez, a 30-year-old Mexican national, is a previously convicted sex offender. The checks showed that Ojeda-Gutierrez had a misdemeanor conviction from April 2004, in Colorado, for Sexual Contact-No Consent with a juvenile. Ojeda-Gutierrez was sentenced to 40 hours of community service and one-year probation after the 2004 conviction. "Keeping our communities safe from dangerous criminals such as these is vital to our role as Border Patrol agents," said Chief Patrol Agent Gloria I. Chavez. Ojeda-Gutierrez is the 30th sex offender arrested by El Centro Sector in fiscal year 2018 and will remain in federal custody pending prosecution for violation of criminal law.

25. Man turned over to U.S. Border Patrol following crash
(Huron Daily Tribune; Bad Axe, MI)

A rollover accident lead to a 24-year-old man being turned over to the U.S. Border Patrol after local deputies learned he was in the country illegally, according to the Sanilac County Sheriff's Office. Shortly before 2 p.m. Wednesday, Sanilac Central Dispatch received a report of a single vehicle rollover accident on Juhl Road near Aitken Road in Flynn Township. According to Sanilac County Sheriff's Deputies, a 2000 Nissan Quest, being driven by a 24-year-old man, was traveling southbound on Juhl Road. The driver of the vehicle lost control on the gravel roadway before exiting the roadway, striking an embankment and overturning the vehicle. The driver, who was ejected during the collision, sustained multiple injuries. He was treated by Sanilac EMS before being transported to McKenzie Hospital for further treatment. Deputies were assisted on scene by the Brown City Fire Department. Alcohol is believed to be a factor in the accident, and the driver was not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the accident. During the investigation, it was also determined that the driver was unlicensed and was illegally in the United States. After the driver received medical attention, deputies turned him over to U.S. Border Patrol for further investigation on his citizenship status.

26. Border Patrol Rescues Undocumented Immigrants Attacked By Bees
(KVEO-TV; Brownsville, TX) ... Brenda Medina

VIDEO: A family of three were attacked by bees. Border patrol agents came across a Salvadoran mother, her teen daughter and ten year old son as a large swarm of bees attacked them near the Rio Grande. Responding agents used fire extinguishers to flush out the bees and bring all three to safety. An agent assigned to the RGV Mobile Response Team also suffered multiple bee stings. The family and agent were taken to the hospital.

27. Undocumented Children Receive Warm Gifts
(KVEO-TV; Brownsville, TX) ... Joanna Guzman



A group of elderly women made over 100 hand-made quilts for undocumented children separated from their parents. Together with U.S. Congressman Henry Cuellar's office, they delivered the quilts at the Border Patrol Processing Center in McAllen.

The volunteers sharing the importance of this humanitarian act. Becky Allen, San Marcos Unitarian Fellowship said, "We thought, why don't we just take them to the detention center, or the processing center and try to give them those quilts that were hand made and made with love instead of the sulfide things that they have." The organization says they chose to speak to Congressman Cuellar, because they're concerned about the way he addresses family separation issues.

28. 'Keep up the good work.' Once-critical judge praises Trump team's reunification efforts

(USA Today) ... Alan Gomez

VIDEO: The federal judge overseeing the reunification of more than 2,500 migrant families separated from their children praised the Trump administration on Friday for its work tracking down parents who had been deported. U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw has at times lashed out at government attorneys when he felt they were moving too slowly to complete the reunifications he ordered on June 26. But with most reunifications now completed and both sides focusing on the 386 parents who were deported, Sabraw sounded thrilled. "Both sides ... are really working collaboratively, which is absolutely essential," Sabraw said in his San Diego courtroom. That's a big change from a week ago, when Justice lawyers argued that the American Civil Liberties Union, which is representing the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, should be responsible for tracking down hundreds of parents deported to Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. Sabraw shot down that proposal, saying the government was "100 percent" responsible for finding the parents. He ordered the Trump administration to develop a comprehensive plan to do so.

Ports of Entry

29. Traveling While Muslim: The Case of the Exploding Chocolate

(Politico; 23.9M uvm) ... Qasim Rashid

After a week of exhausting travel in London, I wanted nothing more than to see my wife and children. Customs and Border Patrol at Dulles had other plans. On Aug. 6, I landed on UA919 from Heathrow to Dulles wearing my Ahmadiyya Muslim Community logo-embroidered press jacket. I cleared passport control with my Global Entry card, and called an Uber as I headed for the exit. That's when Customs and Border Protection, as one of the officers I encountered put it, "randomly selected" me for additional screening. What I experienced next involved harassment, threats of further interrogation, allegations that I was non-compliant and breaking the law, an attempt to confiscate my travel documents and childish stalling tactics — all courtesy of officials hired to protect Americans like me. There's a deep irony of my experience with the CBP that day. At an extremely busy Dulles airport, the CBP interrogation hall was virtually empty. A middle-aged white woman in a ponytail singled me out of the crowd.



30. U.S. Customs finds destructive moth eggs aboard ship in Baltimore

(Baltimore Sun; 4.7M uvm; Baltimore, MD) ... Sarah Meehan

Four egg clusters from a destructive moth species were found aboard a vehicle transport ship in Baltimore, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Agriculture specialists discovered Asian gypsy moth egg masses and a dead adult moth during a routine inspection aboard the M/V Gaia Leader. The moth and eggs were found July 25, and a U.S. Department of Agriculture lab confirmed they were Asian gypsy moths Aug. 7, according to a news release from U.S. Customs. The egg masses were removed and agriculture specialists treated the areas where they were found on the ship.

31. CBP finds heroin hidden inside pick up truck at Laredo port of entry

(KGNS-TV; 86k uvm; Laredo, TX)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection seized seven pounds of illegal narcotics at a Laredo port of entry. According to CBP the incident happened on August 5th at the Lincoln Juarez Bridge when officers encountered a 1994 Ford Lightning at the primary inspection lane. The vehicle was driven by a 22-year-old man identified as a United States Citizen. When agents searched the vehicle, a canine found three packages of heroin hidden inside the vehicle. The drugs weighed about seven pounds and had an estimated street value of \$159,000. CBP seized the narcotics and the vehicle; meanwhile, the driver was turned over to Homeland Security.

32. \$2.3 Million in Liquid Methamphetamine Seized at Anzalduas International Bridge

(KVEO-TV; Brownsville, TX) ... Brenda Medina

VIDEO: A Young man from Mission was arrested in a hard narcotic bust. CPB officers discovered more than \$2.3 million worth of liquid meth, this time at the Anzalduas international bridge. Officers referred a 2008 Dodge Ram driven by a 23 year old Mission man to secondary inspection. That's when they discovered 116 pounds of the liquid meth hidden inside the truck. Homeland Security Investigations are now handling the case.

BORDER WALL

33. Public Getting More Time To Comment On Upper Valley Border Wall Proposal

(KURV-AM; 15k uvm; McAllen, TX) ... J Salinas

Valley residents are getting some additional time to say what they think about the border wall proposed to slice through Hidalgo and Starr counties. The Customs and Border Protection Bureau has extended the public comment period for 30 days. The



extension is in response to a letter signed by more than 40 public interest and environmental groups that had requested an additional 60 days to comment on the border wall proposal. The letter pointed to the extensive economic and environmental impacts the wall would have on the Upper Valley. The Trump administration is proposing to build 25 miles of a combined levee fence through Hidalgo County, and 8 miles of bollard wall in Starr County. Commissioners of those two counties and Cameron County, as well as city commissions across the Valley, have passed resolutions opposing any border structure.

TRADE

34. In Times of Trade War, Companies Get Creative to Avoid Tariffs

(Bloomberg; 43.6M uvm) ... Andrew Mayeda and Mark Niquette

AUDIO: Facing the barrage of President Donald Trump's tariffs, Steve Katz is ducking for cover in the trade-war version of a demilitarized zone. Katz manages a plant at United Chemi-Con in Lansing, North Carolina, a village of about 150 people with no traffic signal. The facility, which makes capacitors for industrial and consumer products, is covered by a foreign-trade zone based in Greensboro. Trade zones are areas in or near ports of entry under U.S. Customs and Border Protection supervision that are generally considered outside of CBP territory. With the blessing of the U.S. government, companies can import goods into the zone with reduced duties on a case-by-case basis. That can be a vital tool for a company in times of trade war. To avoid U.S. tariffs on imported aluminum from Japan, Katz secured U.S. Customs approval to alter the activated area of the trade zone to include a shipping dock for exports. The company is also hoping to designate a new trade zone around its warehouse in California to avoid tariffs on Chinese imports sent outside the U.S.

35. Trump Threatens Tariffs on Canadian-Made Cars

(Wall Street Journal; 43.6M uvm) ... William Mauldin

President Trump on Friday threatened tariffs on Canadian-made cars if U.S. officials can't strike a deal with the country on overhauling the North American Free Trade Agreement. In a tweet, the president also said a Nafta deal with Mexico "is coming along nicely." Earlier Friday, U.S. officials met Mexican counterparts in Washington to resolve disagreements between the two countries on Nafta. The Trump administration has sought to portray Canada as dragging its feet in talks, part of what observers say is an effort to put pressure on Ottawa to make trade concessions. Canadian and Mexican officials and other people close to the talks say they expect senior Canadian officials to return to the negotiating table as soon as the U.S. resolves sensitive issues on auto trade and labor standards with Mexico.

36. Trump touts trade negotiations with Mexico, criticizes Canada

(Washington Examiner; 4.7M uvm) ... Katie Leach



President Trump touted on Twitter the progress made in his trade talks with Mexico while criticizing Canada's tariffs and trade barriers as "too high." In a Friday night tweet, Trump said his deal with Mexico is "coming along nicely" and negotiations with President-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador have been positive. "Deal with Mexico is coming along nicely," the tweet read. "Autoworkers and farmers must be taken care of or there will be no deal. New President of Mexico has been an absolute gentleman." He went on to push for more favorable terms with Canada, which has balked at some of the items the U.S. wants in its North American Free Trade Agreement negotiations. "Canada must wait. Their Tariffs and Trade Barriers are far too high. Will tax cars if we can't make a deal!" he wrote. Trump, a proponent of fair trade, has been a strong critic of NAFTA during his time in office and vowed to strike a better deal for the U.S.

TRAVEL

37. See a bison roundup in South Dakota; how to get a free sixth year of Global Entry

(Star Tribune; 10.8M uvm; Minneapolis, MN) ... Simon Peter Groebner

The U.S. government's Global Entry trusted-traveler program gives members fast clearance at customs, plus TSA PreCheck, for \$100 for five years. While completing the Global Entry interview recently at the airport, we discovered a little-known secret to getting the program for an extra year: Schedule the brief interview right after your birthday. Once approved, you get Global Entry and PreCheck benefits for five years after your next birthday. By all means, though, the best time to apply is in advance of a big trip. For more info and to apply, get started online at [ttp.cbp.dhs.gov](http://cbp.dhs.gov). Interviews at the U.S. Customs office at MSP are available beginning in late September.

WORKFORCE

38. Cross-border shootings and a border agent's immunity: Will the Supreme Court make final decision?

(FOX News; 32.5M uvm) ... Ray Bogan

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on Tuesday that the mother of a teenager shot and killed in Mexico by a Border Patrol agent standing in Arizona can sue for damages, and that the agent does not have immunity. But just five months earlier, in March, the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the family of another dead teenager, also shot by an agent in America while the teen was in Mexico, cannot sue. The two cases highlight how federal courts disagree over whether federal agents should have legal immunity at the border – and whether foreign nationals are protected by the U.S. Constitution. The cases could end up making their way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Those who believe border agents should not have immunity trumpeted this week's ruling, saying law enforcement agents are not above the law... Both courts had different interpretations of the 1971 case, *Bivens V. Six Unknown Named Agents*.



39. First Woman US Border Patrol Chief Appointed

(Townhall Magazine; 8.9M uvm) ... Timothy Meads

Carla Provost was officially appointed as US Border Patrol chief on Thursday, after successfully serving for more than a year as the agency's interim acting chief. Provost's appointment makes her the first woman in charge of the Border Patrol during its 90-year history. President Donald J. Trump originally appointed Provost in April 2017 to serve as the acting chair. Yesterday, Kevin McAleenan, the commissioner for Customs and Border Protection, appointed her to the full-time position. McAleenan stated, "Her career has been marked by her tendency to take on on the most challenging roles in the most challenging areas of our border and our agency." This appointment is not subject to Senate confirmation. According to US News, Provost "will be responsible for securing more than 6,000 miles of land borders with Mexico and Canada, and overseeing more than 19,000 agents — the vast majority of which are male."

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

40. Meth use on the rise as addicts try to get off heroin

(WCMH-TV; 1.1M uvm; Columbus, OH) ... Shawn Lanier

VIDEO: After millions of dollars have been poured into opioid epidemic, now many addicts are are going to a drug some have never used before. "People have switched over to meth so we've seen an increase in meth usage," said Jody Walker who is the executive director South Central Ohio Job and Family Services Walker told NBC4 he has seen an increase in meth usage by some of his clients. The Madison County Sheriff's Office says that the meth on the streets now is cheaper than heroin. Several other central Ohio agencies said they are seeing the same issue. "It's not going away and it's not getting better," said Timothy Richards who is the medical director with Life Spring Recovery in Newark. Richards said his recovery center has seen the presence of meth in his patients fairly recently. "It really seems to have increased dramatically I'll say within the last 6 to 8 months," said Richards

41. Opioid addictions among pregnant women on the rise in Minnesota

(KMSP-TV; 579k uvm; Eden Prairie, MN) ... Alex Lehnhart

VIDEO: - A new report by the CDC reports the number of women addicted to opioids during pregnancy has quadrupled in 15 years. It's a public health concern in the midst of the country's opioid epidemic - a rapidly rising rate of pregnant women addicted to opioids. "It's always surprising to see, but when you're working in it and seeing patients, in some ways you're not surprised because we knew it was an issue," said Adrienne Richardson, of Health Partners. According to the CDC's latest report, the issue shows no real signs of slowing. From 1999 to 2014, the number of women addicted to opioids at the time of pregnancy increased from a national average of 1.5 women for every 1,000 hospitalizations to 6.5 women. Minnesota reported roughly 4 opioid-dependent women for every 1,000. The highest reporting state was Vermont with 48.6 opioid-dependent women for every 1,000.



OPINION

42. Trump's Border Wall Boondoggle

(Bloomberg; 43.6M uvm) ... Editorial Board

AUDIO: By the scandalous standards of recent policy on immigration, it may seem like small potatoes. With a federal court demanding that separated parents and young children be reunited, and the Trump administration saying it doesn't know where all of them are, instances of ordinary incompetence might seem hardly worth mentioning. Even so, the findings of a new Government Accountability Office report on the building of a southern border wall shouldn't pass unnoticed. A plan that was a bad idea to start with is being carried out, according to the report, "without key information on cost, acquisition baselines, and the contributions of previous barrier and technology deployments." In every way, President Donald Trump's wall promises to be a monument to fiscal dereliction.

43. Trump's trade war is squeezing America's boat manufacturing industry and its workers

(Washington Examiner; 4.7M uvm) ... Bill Yeargin

It's that time of year when millions of Americans take to our lakes, rivers, and oceans in one of the few products that is, more likely than not, made in America: Boats. The recreational boating industry has been a stalwart of the American manufacturing sector for many decades, supporting 650,000 American jobs and nearly 35,000 businesses nationwide. But, with the Trump administration's recent — and constant — implementation of tariffs, American industries and their workers are at risk. Our company, Correct Craft, manufactures boats and engines in six factories across the U.S. Our team of nearly 1,300 workers is proud that we build products in the U.S. that are desired around the world. While we import some materials for our boats, our company is a significant net exporter. It's something we, and other marine manufacturers, are proud of: Great, American-made products. The last few years have been great for our industry. And, thanks to President Trump's historic tax reform, our outlook was even better. Today, I am less optimistic. We have found ourselves in the crosshairs of a trade war, one that will drown out the effects of tax reform and risk our industry's promising future, taking American workers and consumers down with it.

44. EDITORIAL: Border wall could endanger parks and wildlife's future

(The Monitor; 188k uvm; McAllen, TX) ... Editorial Board

Walls and fences of one form or another have been placed on the U.S.-Mexico border since Operation Gatekeeper was implemented more than 20 years ago. As President Trump's border wall plans progress, some might think federal officials could have learned more from the past. As it is planned now, Trump's additions will cut through Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park and the adjacent National Butterfly Center near Mission, imperiling the future of both. Texas Parks and Wildlife Director Carter Smith sent a letter asking U.S. Customs and Border Protection to look for alternatives to



current plans. The wall, Smith says, places all but the park's visitors' center and headquarters behind the wall, where access will be restricted to only landowners and law enforcers. Those plans "would certainly call into question whether TPWD could continue to safely operate as a state park" The state could lose the park if it can't maintain it. The family of Valley native Lloyd Bentsen, a former U.S. senator, treasury secretary and vice presidential nominee, ceded the 587 acres to the state for \$1 in 1944, stipulating that it be used "solely for public park purposes."

45. Frank Sharry to the U.S. Senate: Reject the Nomination of Ronald Vitiello to Head ICE

(YubaNet; 156k uvm; Nevada City, CA) ... Frank Sharry

As our generation's darkest moral scandal – the separation of innocent children from safety-seeking parents – continues to enrage the nation, the idea of rewarding one of its architects is unthinkable." The following is a statement from Frank Sharry, Executive Director of America's Voice: We strongly recommend that the Senate reject the nomination of Ronald Vitiello to head up Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). As our generation's darkest moral scandal – the separation of innocent children from safety-seeking parents – continues to enrage the nation, the idea of rewarding one of its architects is unthinkable. Vitiello, one of the DHS leaders responsible for the ongoing family separation crisis, needs to be held accountable, not promoted. With Vitiello in a leadership position, CBP has exhibited a stunning lack of planning, common sense and basic humanity in implementing its 'zero tolerance' policy. This policy has resulted in: children torn from their mothers' and fathers' arms; the detention of children in cages; parents tricked into deportation without their children; family separations with no system in place to reunite children and parents; the intervention of the federal courts to order that families be reunited; and an astounding 572 children still apart from their parents nearly two weeks after the court-ordered deadline.

IMMIGRATION

46. ACLU claims ICE withheld deported parents' contact info from lawyers

(The Hill; 11.9M uvm) ... Justin Wise

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is claiming that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for more than a month purposefully withheld hundreds of migrant parents' contact information from their lawyers. The ACLU made the allegation to HuffPost this week after it said the government finally gave it phone numbers for more than 400 parents who had been separated from their children due to President Trump's "zero tolerance" immigration policy. "The numbers have been [in the children's files] for a while, and we should have had them for a while," Lee Gelernt, the lead lawyer for the ACLU's lawsuit against ICE, told HuffPost. "Every day that we didn't get them is another day we didn't track parents down [and] weeks and months, potentially, where kids are potentially by themselves." Gelernt also said that he believes ICE had access to the phone numbers before the court-ordered family reunification deadline on July 26. He



added that the government eventually handed over the phone numbers on Aug. 7, which was about a week after it was asked to do so by the ACLU and a judge.

47. Melania Trump family immigration lawyer praises so-called 'chain migration'

(The Hill; 11.9M uvm) ... Justin Wise

The immigration attorney for first lady Melania Trump and her family delivered a passionate defense of so-called "chain migration" on Friday, saying that the policy, which Trump wants to change, is actually a "beautiful bedrock of immigration law." Attorney Michael Wildes made the statement during an appearance on CNN just one day after confirming that the first lady's parents, Viktor and Amalija Knavs, became U.S. citizens with help from their daughter. Melania Trump sponsored her parents for a green card, and the Knavs then applied for citizenship once they were eligible in a process Democrats have sought to call "family-based" migration, but which has been often labeled as "chain migration" by President Trump. The president has vehemently denounced the process on multiple occasions, asserting that it allows for people to bring dozens of family members into the country. "It's unconscionable to scare people into believing that," Wildes said, referring to Trump's views on the program. "You cannot bring nephews, you cannot bring nieces or uncles. You can't bring 32 people here." "This whole notion of chain migration actually is a beautiful bedrock of immigration law and policy called family reunification," he added.

48. Feds track down 299 deported parents in family separation case

(The Washington Examiner; 10.8M uvm) ... Stephan Dinan

The federal government has managed to reach nearly 300 illegal immigrant parents back in their home countries who were deported without their children, and has submitted a plan to try to figure out how to reconnect the families. Officials told a federal court in California Thursday night that about 500 children still remain separated and in government custody, two weeks after the deadline the judge set for reunifications. The parents who were deported without their children remain the largest sticking point, accounting for 386 children still in government-run dorms, covering 360 parents. Of those, the government has managed to make contact with 299 parents, but doesn't know how to reach 26 parents at all. The government said many of those parents had already agreed to leave their children in the U.S. when the adults themselves were deported — presumably, officials said, because the children could either gain legal status or disappear into the shadows in the U.S. But the American Civil Liberties Union, which has led the case challenging the government, said it doesn't trust those assurances. The ACLU has demanded the ability to contact those ousted parents and offer them legal help in changing their minds to demand reunification.

49. Exclusive interview with ICE director and tour of detention center

(KABB-TV; 67k uvm; San Antonio, TX) ... Yami Virgin



The public has not seen what's it's like inside the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley until Thursday. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement opened its doors to the media, escorting them around every aspect of the facility during a three-hour tour. It is home to 1,520 women and their minor children. It costs \$13 million a month to house them. "The reason this place was set up was so these people could go through the asylum process," said field office director, Daniel Bible.

Undocumented mothers and their children stay an average of 15 1/2 days. Bible said every effort has been made to make it as friendly as possible for the families who are waiting to hear the disposition of their immigration case. "As of midnight last night we can say the countries that are represented in here are Guatemala, México, El Salvador, Honduras, Armenia, Brazil, Nicaragua, Belize, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, and Romania," Bible said. "We wanted to be transparent and honest and show you what our facility is like there are people who are against family detention and for it as an immigration consequences how it operates and what you saw today is how it operates," Bible stated.

DHS NEWS

50. Homeland Security secretary visits ND to discuss drones

(INFORUM; 1.5M uvm) ... Emily Allen

Legislation in Congress will heighten North Dakota's role in protecting the U.S. by giving the Department of Homeland Security more authority to research and develop strategies against the misuse of unmanned aircraft, the head of the national agency said Thursday, Aug. 9, in North Dakota. Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen and U.S. Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., discussed the Preventing Emerging Threats Act of 2018 during her visit to Grand Sky, a Unmanned Aircraft System, or UAS, business park west of Grand Forks. "Technology has many, many benefits, but it can also be used for nefarious purposes," Nielsen told media and UAS leaders during her visit to Grand Sky. "What we see them doing are two things. One, they're using it to fly drugs over here. But secondly, they use it to surveil where my men and women are." The bipartisan bill with its own versions in the House and Senate will give the DHS security to counter drone misuse like those Nielsen mentioned—both Hoeven and U.S. Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D., say they helped introduce the legislation in the Senate. Nielsen said the bill will also help DHS with "mission gaps." "It's very difficult for us right now to have comfort that we have fully surveilled and understand where the risks are," Nielsen said. "This (drones) will enable us to do that."

51. DHS Spins the Border Numbers... Again

(Just Security) ... Andrew Boyle

The July border numbers were released on Wednesday and, once again, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) saw it as an opportunity to dissemble to the American people in the service of the Trump administration's immigration policies. The numbers show that in July there were 31,303 total apprehensions. This is a combination of 3,938 unaccompanied children, 9,258 persons arriving as part of a family unit, and



18,107 others. In a press release, DHS characterized this data by saying: "Southwest Border Migration numbers dropped in July for the second month in a row. This decrease shows that when there are real consequences for breaking the law, the conduct of those considering crimes will change." However, the month to month comparison is a red herring, and the facts don't bear the weight of DHS's preferred causative analysis.

OF INTEREST

52. Mexican citizen previously deported with long rap sheet arrested in US for 10th time

(FOX News; 32.5M uvm) ... Lucia I. Suarez Sang

A Mexican citizen who has been arrested by U.S. border agents at least nine times dating back to 2000 has been arrested for a 10th time. U.S. Customs and Border Protection in the Great Lakes region revealed Thursday that Sergio Nunez-Barrera, a previously deported convicted felon, was arrested Tuesday on an outstanding warrant on burglary charges by the Lapeer County Sheriff's Office. Agents were contacted by the Lapeer Police Department to help identify a suspect as part of an ongoing investigation, according to CBP. When border agents questioned the man, he reportedly admitted that he had crossed into the U.S. illegally from Mexico in 2014... CBP said that Nunez-Barrera was turned over to the Lapeer County Sheriff's Office and an immigration detainer was placed on him to be returned to immigration officials once he is released from the sheriff's custody. "This is [an] outstanding example of our law enforcement community working together and taking a criminal off the streets," Chief Patrol Agent Douglas Harrison said in a statement.

53. Jeff Sessions dines at Mexican restaurant before speech against immigration

(The Hill; 11.9M uvm) ... John Bowden

Attorney General Jeff Sessions dined at a decades-old Mexican restaurant on Friday before giving a speech on the dangers of uncontrolled immigration in Houston, Texas. The Houston Chronicle reported that Sessions' motorcade was spotted at La Mexicana, a restaurant known in the area for its authentic Mexican dishes. "I don't know why they picked this place," Zulema Gonzales, La Mexicana's general manager, told the Chronicle... Sessions later spoke that day at the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas, where he urged the public to support "common sense" immigration enforcement measures he said the Trump administration was employing. "This should be obvious: if we want to reduce violent crime we should reduce illegal immigrant crime," Sessions said Friday, according to the Chronicle. One Houston resident blasted Sessions on a Reddit thread Friday over the report... "Did Jeff Sessions actually go get breakfast tacos before talking about a nonexistent brown immigrant crime wave?"



54. People are donating their frequent flyer miles to reunite families separated at the US-Mexico border

(WITI-TV; 1.5M uvm; Milwaukee, WI) ... Andrew Boyle

Did you know you can donate your frequent flyer miles to help reunite families who were separated at the US-Mexico border? After a viral tweet this week from a woman who donated her miles, people have now donated more than 7.3 million frequent flyer miles to a non-profit organization whose main focus is reuniting families separated by political conflicts around the world... People have been stepping in to help separated families, and Wilensky's tweet highlighted another way to contribute. Wilensky's tweet received more than 139,000 likes, 31,000 retweets and hundreds of replies, with many asking, "How do I do this?" Wilensky followed with an answer: Miles4Migrants and a grassroots organization called Michigan Support Circle.

55. Victims identified from triple fatality wreck in Edinburg

(Brownsville Herald; 75k uvm; Brownsville, TX) ... Molly Smith

The 19-year-old driver involved in a fatal head-on collision that claimed three lives Thursday night may face criminal charges, according to Edinburg police. The preliminary investigation revealed that the driver, whose identity has yet to be released, is believed to have been under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the two-vehicle crash Thursday, said Lt. Oscar Treviño, spokesman for the Edinburg Police Department. Officers responded to a call of a major accident in the 300 block of East Monte Cristo Road at approximately 9:26 p.m., after the 19-year-old's 2006 Chevrolet Malibu veered into oncoming traffic, striking a 2014 Chevrolet Sonic. The Sonic's driver — 55-year-old Maria Isabel De La Garza of Edinburg — died at the scene along with her daughter, 33-year-old Marci Lou Powell of Edinburg, and grandson, 3-year-old Joshua Devin Powell of Edinburg. Another one of De La Garza's passengers, a 31-year-old woman whose identity has not been released by police, remained hospitalized in serious condition as of press time. The Rio Grande Valley Border Patrol Employee Association created a GoFundMe account for Aaron Powell, who lost his mother-in-law, wife and son in the crash. Powell is a support staff employee assigned to the Rio Grande Valley sector's Office of Information Technology, according to the GoFundMe page. The 19-year-old driver remains hospitalized in serious condition and under police watch, said Treviño, who noted the teenager likely will remain in the hospital for a few more days, at which point he will be charged.

56. Incident training prepares agencies for livestock disease outbreak

(High Plains/Midwest Ag Journal; 54k uvm; Dodge City, KS)

It's not every day you see an aircraft carrying 200 cows land at the Albuquerque International Sunport. But it could happen. And if it does happen, the New Mexico Agriculture Livestock Incident Response Team is ready to respond. Federal, state and local agencies came together recently in Albuquerque to host an animal husbandry and biosecurity exercise to prepare responders for a potential emergency incident involving livestock in New Mexico. The full-scale emergency exercise tested Emergency Support



Function #11, which is the Federal Emergency Management Agency's support function related to agriculture and natural resources. Individuals from the state, as well as Washington D.C., played major roles in the planning and execution of the exercise. Professionals from the following agencies participated: Albuquerque Fire Rescue; Albuquerque International Sunport; Albuquerque Police Department; Bernalillo County; EXPO New Mexico; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Federal Emergency Management Agency; New Mexico Department of Agriculture; New Mexico Homeland Security and Emergency Management; New Mexico Livestock Board; New Mexico National Guard; New Mexico State University (Extension Veterinarian, Veterinarian and Southwest Border Food Protection and Emergency Preparedness Center); Transportation Security Administration; and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

Overall

- The hashtags #AbolishICE and #FamiliesBelongTogether continued their seven-week trend across social media platforms.
- The top URL (1.8k shares): [Breitbart article](#), "Trump Admin Names First Female Border Patrol Chief."
- The second top URL (564 shares): August 9 [The Hill article](#), "Border patrol chief: Wall will 'most certainly' help secure southern border."

Twitter

- The top four tweets (5.3k + retweets, combined) discussed Carla Provost's appointment as the new Chief of USBP. The top [tweet](#) by @charliekirk11 garnered 10k retweets, 28k likes, and 484 replies.
- A [tweet](#) @MuslimIQ discussed his "random selection," by CBP officers on his return home from London. He goes on to say they allegedly threatened him with "intimidation tactics." The post garnered 24k retweets, 33k likes, and 1.1k replies.

Instagram

- The hashtag #AbolishICE garnered an additional 200 post attributions (50.4k+) in the past 24 hours.
- #FamiliesBelongTogether sustained at 148k post attributions.

Facebook

- #AbolishICE sustained across Facebook photos, videos, posts, and in "People are saying," at a high volume for a second month.

ABOUT THIS REPORT. Articles in this report were published during the 24 hours preceding the report date unless otherwise specified. Dissemination figures and bylines might not be available for all articles. Location is noted for local outlets.



The Daily Media Summary (DMS) and the links contained herein are being provided solely as a convenience and to afford CBP officials a broad awareness of the day's traditional, digital and social media coverage of CBP. The views and opinions expressed in the DMS, the sources cited, and the links contained herein do not necessarily represent the opinions, views, policies or positions of the U.S. Government, DHS, CBP or the Office of Public Affairs.

Daily Media Summary August 19, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The story of a Border Patrol agent who is accused of alleged sexual misconduct with a 14-year old illegal immigrant girl sustained. *Carbonated TV* and *Brinkwire* covered the storyline.
- *Center for Public Integrity* reported Customs and Border Protection have several lawsuits filed against them for alleged physically invasive body searches conducted at various airports and ports of entry nationwide. Tameika Lovell, one of the women who filed a suit, said the incident left her feeling, "violated, shocked and afraid." *Washington Post* reprinted the article.
- In an interview with *FOX News*, Chief Benjamine Huffman, head of Border Patrol Strategic Planning and Analysis, said border walls "have been very important to us," adding that in every place they have used walls, there has been a "huge difference." Huffman went on to say they have received funding for up to 40 miles of border wall, and "nearly 20 of that" has been completed. The interview garnered significant attention on Twitter. Three of the top five retweets linked to the *Fox News* interview.
- The *Arizona Daily Star* reported tensions between Border Patrol agents and activist group No More Deaths have increased since the arrest of group members in January. Border Patrol has said that while its main mission is to secure the border against illegal immigrants, one of its goals is also, "to preserve lives." Border Patrol agent Stephanie Dixon is quoted as saying, "We all care about human lives... we are all a humanitarian group at the end."
- Coverage of Arizona Gov. Ducey's planned attendance at a White House event honoring border patrol agencies increased. He is slated to speak on a panel about the role agencies play in border security. *U.S. News & World Report*, *KNXV-TV*, and *Plainview Daily Herald* reprinted an article by *The Associated Press*.

TOP NEWS

1. Ducey Heading to White House for Border Security Event (Associated Press)

Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey will attend a White House event honoring border patrol agencies with President Donald Trump on Monday. The evening event will honor employees of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection. Ducey, a Republican, will also speak on a panel about the role the agencies play on border safety. Ducey's re-election campaign has focused on border security



efforts. He has touted the creation of the Border Strike Force, a multi-agency collaboration effort that started in his first term. And he's come out strong against calls to abolish ICE.

2. Border wall construction progresses in New Mexico

(FOX News; 32.5M uvm)

VIDEO: Why is the wall so important? U.S. Border Patrol chief shares insight on 'Fox & Friends.'

3. Tension between activists, Border Patrol rise over water, food drops for migrants

(Arizona Daily Star; 431k uvm; Tucson, AZ) ... Rebecca Spiess

The projected high for this July day is 105, and hints of the coming heat already glimmer at 6:45 a.m. The old Ram pickup shudders along uneven roads often traveled by Border Patrol agents in southern Arizona. Saguaro dot a desolate landscape. Paige Corich-Kleim, a volunteer with No More Deaths, drives a truck packed with dozens of 1-gallon jugs of water and pallets of canned refried beans towards the U.S.-Mexico border. Volunteers have been making the journey, up to five days a week, for more than a decade to drop off water and food supplies in a controversial mission to save the lives of migrants making the trek from Mexico into the U.S. Corich-Kleim said water-drop spots are becoming more remote and that although the number of apprehensions at the border has dropped in the past year, the death rate remains disturbingly high. A strained relationship between the group and the Border Patrol, which arrested several No More Deaths members in January, has ratcheted tensions higher.

4. 'Shocked and humiliated': Lawsuits accuse Customs, Border officers of invasive searches of minors, women

(Center for Public Integrity; 151k uvm) ... Susan Ferriss

Tameika Lovell was retrieving baggage at New York City's Kennedy Airport when two female U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers stopped her for a "random search." It was Nov. 27, 2016, the Sunday after Thanksgiving, and the school counselor from Long Island had just arrived from a short Jamaica vacation. Lovell, who is black, had been stopped and felt profiled before, but this time a CBP supervisor began posing questions she hadn't heard previously. "Don't you think you're spending too much money traveling?" Lovell, 34, recalls him asking. What allegedly happened next is outlined in a harrowing civil lawsuit Lovell filled in March in federal court. And the assertions aren't unique, based on allegations in similar suits filed not just in New York but also in California, Arizona, Texas, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

5. Shocking video shows a border guard asking an illegal immigrant girl, 14, to take off her clothes

(Brinkwire)



Shocking footage of a young girl accusing a border patrol agent being told to remove her clothes has once again raised concerns at the federal level as well as among organizations that seek to protect those that attempt to come into the US without the proper documentation. Telemundo Noticias and NBC recently obtained video and audio as part of an investigation that looked into reports of abuse reported within the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, the biggest federal agency in the United State. The report was first released on May 22 by American Civil Liberties Union along with the International Human Rights Clinic at the University of Chicago Law School, and wasn't well received by the CBP officials. It contained 30,000 pages of documents, as well as hours of video and audio clips, detailing incidents, that also involved adults victims, dated between 2009 and 2014.

6. US Agent Accused Of Telling Illegal 14 YO Immigrant To Undress
(Carbonated TV) ... Shafaq Naveed

Disturbing footage of a 14-year-old illegal immigrant accusing a border patrol agent of sexual misconduct is raising concerns about the security of people who illegally enter the United States from war stricken and underdeveloped countries... A report by the American Civil Liberties Union and the International Human Rights Clinic released in may, reviewed complaints filed by the immigrant children against the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials, detailing disturbing allegations of cruelty and inhumane behavior. Telemundo Noticias and NBC obtained video and audio footage of the unnamed girl as part of an investigation conducted to reveal abuses by the CBP officials. In an alarming interview aired by Spanish broadcast network, the teenager claimed that a US Border Patrol agent ordered her to remove her clothes in a room that was full of other immigrants.

NEWS INDEX

BORDER SECURITY

Along U.S. Borders

7. Two Days, Two Pursuits, Eight Migrants and Two Smugglers in Custody
(Breitbart; 19.1M uvm) ... Bob Price

Tucson Sector Border Patrol agents arrested two human smugglers and eight migrants following two separate pursuits. In both cases, the smugglers failed to yield when the agents attempted to stop them for immigration inspections. Agents assigned to the Wilcox Station attempted to stop a Ford Fusion for an immigration inspection early Thursday morning. As the agents attempted to stop the vehicle on Highway 80 near Tombstone, Arizona, the driver sped away toward the high school, according to information provided to Breitbart Texas by Tucson Sector officials. The agents pursued the Fusion until it crashed through a gate at the high school and came to a stop. Five people bailed out of the car and fled on foot causing Tombstone High School to go into a lockdown status. The agents called in a helicopter aircrew from U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Air and Marine Operations to assist in the search for the fleeing



suspects. The agents arrested four illegal aliens and the suspected human smuggler a short time later and the school's lockdown was lifted.

8. Trump admin and ACLU to seek compromise on return of deported parents
(The Hill; 11.9M uvm) ... Tal Axelrod

A federal judge on Friday urged the government and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to reach a compromise on reuniting the families of detained migrant children who have parents that were deported, according to The Associated Press. The judge asked the government and the ACLU to discuss the possible return of parents who were deported without their children and to consider whether they could pursue asylum with the minors, as the ACLU has urged. U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw wrote that "hasty removal of these children and their parents at the expense of an ordered process provided by law" would not be in the public's interest and would inhibit minors' right to pursue the asylum process, according to the AP.

9. Border Patrol Halts Smuggling Attempt After Driver Flees From Checkpoint
(KRGV-TV; 275k uvm; Weslaco, TX)

VIDEO: A human smuggling attempt is brought to a halt after a driver refused to stop for inspection at the Falfurrias checkpoint. Friday morning, agents sent a car for secondary inspection after a K-9 alerted them to the vehicle. When directed towards the inspection area, the driver took off at a high rate of speed. Agents chased the vehicle and eventually arrested the driver and passenger. During a search, two people in the U.S. illegally were found hidden inside the car. The case is now being referred for prosecution.

10. Border patrol agents rescue 23 undocumented immigrants locked inside trailer
(WOAI-TV; 162k uvm; San Antonio, TX)

Border Patrol agents preventing a human smuggling attempt Friday found several undocumented immigrants in a trailer. Agents discovered 23 undocumented immigrants Aug. 17 locked inside a trailer at a checkpoint. Authorities cut the lock and found the 23 people from Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras in good health. The driver was arrested.

11. Border authorities find two bodies floating in Rio Grande
(KABB-TV; 67k uvm; San Antonio, TX)

Border Patrol agents found two dead people Saturday in the Rio Grande in a span of four hours. A local jogger notified authorities after spotting what appeared to be a body floating in the Rio Grande at about 11:30 a.m. Saturday. Agents working with the Laredo Fire Department, Webb County Sheriff's Office, Laredo Police Department, and Webb County Medical Examiner's Office recovered the body. The second incident happened at about 3:30 p.m. when agents were told another body was in the Rio



Grade, west of Mangana-Hein Road. Both bodies were turned over to the Webb County Medical Examiner's Office for identification.

12. Case involving public's right to take photos at U.S.-Mexico border will be heard in court

(Northern California Record; 20k uvm) ... Takesha Thomas

A California court has reversed a ruling that dismissed a First Amendment case involving the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The matter, involving the public's right to take photographs at the U.S.-Mexico border, will now be heard in court. In an Aug. 14 opinion, the panel of U.S. Court of Appeals 9th District judges ruled that the appeal could move forward. A policy enforced by U.S. Customs and Border Protection dealing with media and taking photographs needs further clarification in dealing with the public, according to the opinion. Attorneys for the Department of Homeland Security and the Customs and Border Patrol argued that, "Proper media request forms were not filed ahead of them taking photos. The government argued that, under these policies, any individual seeking to film or take photographs at ports of entry is required to obtain prior authorization." Judge Jay S. Bybee writing in part said, "Further factual development is required before the district court can determine what restrictions, if any, the government may impose in these public, outdoors areas... On the merits, we conclude that plaintiffs have stated First Amendment claims upon which relief can be granted. We vacate the judgment and remand for further proceedings."

13. Border Officials Are Still Defending Family Separations

(Davis Vanguard; Davis, CA) ... Chris Rickerd

Kevin McAleenan, the commissioner of Customs and Border Protection, recently gave The New York Times an interview. For those expecting some contrition from him for the lasting trauma inflicted by CBP on children taken away from their parents under the Trump administration's family separation policy, or empathy for the hundreds of kids still without their parents, his answers project callous defensiveness and alarming inaccuracy. McAleenan's Border Patrol agents are the ones who implemented family separation, so he has a responsibility to engage in straight talk about what happened and his views on the policy. Instead, however, McAleenan chose in the interview to be evasive and downright misleading, leaving a clear impression of CBP's sole "lesson learned": It's the public reaction to this vile policy that went wrong — not the actual damage it caused. When asked, "Do you have any regrets about how [family separation] was implemented?" McAleenan replied: "I think we have a responsibility to protect families and children. Well-intended efforts to enforce the law are not going to succeed if they lose the public trust."

Ports of Entry



14. Border crosser wanted in Uptown Dallas woman's slaying locked up in Laredo

(Dallas Morning News; 9.3M uvm; Dallas, TX) ... Samantha J. Gross

A Dallas man was arrested Thursday while trying to enter the U.S. in Laredo after border agents discovered he was wanted on a murder charge in Kaufman County. Eduardo Garcia, 25, was stopped at the Laredo Port of Entry because of an outstanding warrant for his arrest. A fingerprint check and database search confirmed his identity. Garcia was wanted in the killing of 34-year-old Anita Abreu, whose body was found wrapped in cloth and dumped near a road in Combine in September 2017... Garcia is being held in Webb County Jail on \$500,000 bail pending extradition to North Texas. Port director Alberto Flores said Garcia's arrest represents U.S. Customs and Border Protection's mission. "The processing and identity verification of a man with an outstanding murder charge exemplifies the agency's dedication," he said.

BORDERWALL

15. Trump's Border Wall Could Decimate These Rare Species

(Texas Observer; 151k uvm; Austin, TX) ... Naveena Sadasivam

From beautiful songbirds and stealthy cats to rock-like mussels and long-nosed bats, the 1,900 mile (3,000 km) Rio Grande supports a number of rare plants and animals, even in its current beleaguered state. The river itself is habitat for fish and mussels, and also plays an important role in sustaining what remains of a subtropical forest in South Texas, which is home to a host of threatened and endangered animals and plants. But the combination of habitat loss and disruptive border-security infrastructure is making an already fragile situation prone to an ecological breakdown. This is perhaps most keenly felt by two large cat species: the ocelot and the Gulf Coast jaguarundi. For the Texas populations of both cats to survive, they need to be able to cross back and forth across the river. But the Trump administration's plans for a border wall could make that increasingly difficult. Squeezed by fences and rapid urbanization, these animals face a perilous future. As do many other species that rely on this desert river.

16. New Mexico Completes More Than Half Of Its Border Wall Section

(One America News Network; San Diego, CA)

New Mexico completes construction of more than half of its barrier-wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. U.S. Customs and Border Control confirmed this week more than 11 miles of wall west of Santa Teresa has been built since the beginning of August. Officials touted support for the steel wall, saying the completed 20-mile structure will be more difficult to cross. Environmentalists are suing over the project, claiming it interferes with wildlife. The \$73 million New Mexico project, which began earlier this year, is part of President Trump's initiative to crackdown on illegal immigration and drug trafficking.

TRAVEL



17. BP Launches Facial Recognition Tech At San Jose Airport, More Airports **Next**

(Citizen Truth; 11k uvm; Venice, CA) ... Nike Omedo

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has installed facial recognition technology at the Mineta San Jose International Airport (SJC) in Silicon Valley. The technology is already being used to process international travelers entering and leaving the country and is one of the first major West Coast airports to implement the technology. The busy international airport is just a few miles from the headquarters of both Facebook and Google among other major tech companies. Beginning June 25, the Silicon Valley airport began to capture the profiles of international travelers coming into and out of the country. This fall, the facial recognition tech will be deployed to several other gates in the airport. "As one of the nation's main regions of innovation, Silicon Valley is at the forefront of transforming the travel experience through biometrics," said CBP Commissioner Kevin McAleenan in a statement. "CBP is excited to partner with SJC, which serves as another example of what we can achieve by advancing the entry/exit mandate through public-private collaboration, adding benefits for travelers and stakeholders across the air travel ecosystem."

WORKFORCE

18. Del Rio hosts Border Patrol explorers graduation (Del Rio News-Herald; 10k uvm; Del Rio, TX)

Del Rio Sector Border Patrol Headquarters recently hosted the 2018 Border Patrol Explorer Academy. Twenty-five Explorers graduated the academy earning them a place as team members at their respective post. "The Border Patrol Explorer Program benefits our communities by positively shaping and impacting our local youth," said Del Rio Sector Chief Patrol Agent Felix Chavez. "On behalf the men and women of Del Rio Sector, I congratulate the Explorer graduate class of 2018 for completing this portion of their training."

19. Area officers train in Madawaska to deal with armed assailants (Fiddlehead Focus; Fort Kent, ME)

Pink paint is splattered all over the walls of a condemned building on 11th Avenue where members of multiple local, state and federal law enforcement agencies have been participating in active shooter training this month. During the training, small groups of officers from participating agencies enter the building where instructors dressed as both armed assailants and civilians act out various scenarios to make the training as lifelike as possible. "If we were going into a real active shooter situation, [the officers] have to quickly identify bystanders and the shooter or shooters," Nathan Doody, a firearms instructor with the Van Buren Port of Entry, said after one of the sessions on Aug. 15. The active shooter training is organized by members of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Training continues through the month with officers participating from



a variety of agencies, including the Aroostook County Sheriff's Office and police departments from Fort Kent, Van Buren, and Madawaska.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

20. This E.R. Treats Opioid Addiction on Demand. That's Very Rare.

(New York Times; 28.6M uvm) ... Abby Goodnough

Every year, thousands of people addicted to opioids show up at hospital emergency rooms in withdrawal so agonizing it leaves them moaning and writhing on the floor. Usually, they're given medicines that help with vomiting or diarrhea and sent on their way, maybe with a few numbers to call about treatment. When Rhonda Hauswirth arrived at the Highland Hospital E.R. here, retching and shaking violently after a day and a half without heroin, something very different happened. She was offered a dose of buprenorphine on the spot. One of three medications approved in the United States to treat opioid addiction, it works by easing withdrawal symptoms and cravings... Highland, a clattering big-city hospital where security wands constantly beep as new patients get scanned for weapons, is among a small group of institutions that have started initiating opioid addiction treatment in the E.R. Their aim is to plug a gaping hole in a medical system that consistently fails to provide treatment on demand, or any evidence-based treatment at all, even as more than two million Americans suffer from opioid addiction.

OPINION

21. Fentanyl overdoses are killing Americans. The country must not accept business as usual.

(Washington Post; 43.9M uvm) ... Editorial Board

Graphic evidence of America's severe drug crisis played out over the past week. In a gruesome tableau on the New Haven Green in Connecticut, scores of people collapsed and were rushed to emergency rooms suffering violent reactions to synthetic marijuana. Meanwhile, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported preliminary estimates that more than 72,000 people died of drug overdoses in the United States last year, an increase of 9.5 percent from the year before. A big reason for the increase was illicit and deadly fentanyl, which has increasingly been cut into heroin and cocaine... But most of the overdoses and deaths are from illegally manufactured fentanyl, sold on the street for its heroin-like effects, often combined with heroin or cocaine, with or without the user's knowledge. It originates in China and cartels in Mexico, and some laboratory production may be occurring in the United States. Fentanyl-heroin combinations are a main driver behind the escalating death rates. A second crisis is the flow of illicit opioid painkillers from doctors and pharmacies to people who abuse the drugs. While by no means a crisis resolved, there is some evidence that these deaths may have reached a plateau with more strenuous efforts to control the pills, although it is still a huge



problem. Far more people are being killed each year by drug overdose in the United States than in car accidents. The country must not accept business as usual.

22. The border wall endangers the future of humanity and nature

(Albuquerque Journal; 461k uvm; Albuquerque, NM) ... Subhankar Banerjee, Joseph Cook, and Samuel Truett

On July 24, BioScience published a letter “Nature Divided, Scientists United: US—Mexico Border Wall Threatens Biodiversity and Binational Conservation” signed by more than 2,500 scientists from 43 countries. By devaluing conservation investment and science and bypassing environmental laws – like the Endangered Species Act and National Environmental Policy Act – the proposed expansion of the wall by the Trump administration will devastate wildlife by eliminating, degrading and fragmenting critical habitats, the letter highlights. This letter is the latest in a series of acts of resistance from scientists, scholars, environmental justice advocates and indigenous peoples living in the U.S.-Mexico borderland. All three of us live in this borderland and teach at the University of New Mexico (UNM). We have intimate knowledge of the ecological and human rights issues affected by the wall.

IMMIGRATION

23. ‘ICE arrested a man driving his pregnant wife to give birth. She drove herself to the hospital

(Washington Post; 43.9m uvm) ... Alex Horton

Maria del Carmen Venegas was on her way to deliver a baby boy, her fifth child, by Caesarean section in a planned operation Wednesday afternoon. Her husband, Joel Arrona-Lara, was driving her car to the hospital. Two SUVs swooped in to block the vehicle at a San Bernardino, Calif., gas station. They belonged to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the agents asked for Venegas’s identification, she later told CBS Los Angeles. She complied. The agents also asked for Arrona-Lara’s identification. The couple was in a hurry when they left, and his ID was at home, Venegas told Univision affiliate KMEX. The agents searched the car and led Arrona-Lara away in handcuffs, leaving his wife frantic. On Saturday afternoon, officials released previously undisclosed details about Arrona-Lara’s arrest. He is a Mexican national wanted in Mexico under a warrant issued for homicide charges and has been detained pending removal proceedings, according to a statement by ICE spokeswoman Lori Haley.

24. ICE says detained immigrant faces homicide charges in Mexico; wife disputes claim

(FOX News; 32.5M uvm) ... Amy Lieu

An illegal immigrant from Mexico who was arrested in California this week while driving his pregnant wife to a hospital was facing a warrant for his arrest in Mexico on homicide charges, officials with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) said Saturday.



But his wife disputed the ICE claim, saying her husband has never been in trouble with the law, KCBS-TV of Los Angeles reported. Maria del Carmen Venegas, 32, said she and her husband, Joel Arrona-Lara, 35, came to the U.S. 12 years ago from the city of Leon in the central Mexican state of Guanajuato. They do not have legal authorization to live in the U.S., she said. She said that because her husband was taken away by ICE at a gas station where the couple stopped on the way to the hospital, she was forced to drive herself there, where she gave birth to a boy -- the couple's fifth child, all born in the U.S. ... Emilio Amaya Garcia, director of the San Bernardino Community Service Center, said his nonprofit group is providing legal help to Venegas and Arrona-Lara, will file a motion Monday for an immigration court to set a bail hearing for Arrona-Lara and will ask that his removal proceedings be canceled. An attorney representing Arrona-Lara from the service center told KCBS-TV that the Mexican charges against him were unconfirmed. Garcia told the station that he has been contact with the Mexican consulate, which said it had no information regarding ICE's claim.

25. Former ICE agent arrested on sexual assault, rape charges, agency says
(FOX News; 32.5M uvm) ... Amy Lieu

A former special agent with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was arrested this week, accused of sexually assaulting one woman and twice raping another. ICE said in a statement that John Jacob Olivas, 43, had worked for the agency's Homeland Security Investigations unit in California and allegedly abused his position to convince the women to not report his "violent conduct," the statement said. The alleged crimes occurred in 2012, the statement said... Olivas joined ICE in 2007 and resigned in September 2015 after working as an HSI special agent for just over six years, the statement said. Olivas is charged with three counts of deprivation of rights, and could face up to life in prison if convicted.

26. ICE agents detain man driving wife to hospital
(CNN; 29.7M uvm)

VIDEO: Joel Arrona was driving his pregnant wife to the hospital for a planned cesarean section. When the couple stopped for gas, Arrona was detained by ICE agents.

27. Father faces deportation as 14-year-old son fights rare genetic disease
(ABC News; 24.1M uvm) ... Morgan Winsor

Santiago Rodriguez, 14, has been fighting a rare, life-threatening genetic disease since he was born, with his loving parents at his side each step of the way. Now, his father is facing a battle of his own — deportation. "Please help my family not be split apart," Santiago told reporters at a press conference earlier this week. "I don't know what I would do or be doing here without my dad. He's helped me through so much during my life, he's always been there to support me and everything, and I really need him." Julian Rodriguez and his wife, Diana Cortes, fled guerrilla violence in their home country of Colombia and sought asylum in the United States in 2000. They've lived in New London, Connecticut, ever since.



28. Judge halts full DACA restart

(Washington Times; 10.8M uvm) ... Stephan Dinan

The federal judge who had ordered the government to restart the Obama-era DACA deportation amnesty in full backed off his decision Friday and said the government does not, after all, have to begin accepting brand new applications. Judge John D. Bates acknowledged the legal mess that's arisen around DACA and said he didn't want to make it worse, so he issued a partial stay of his own ruling. That means that while illegal immigrant "Dreamers" who already have had DACA protections can apply for renewals, no brand new applicants can apply to start the process. Judge Bates also delayed part of his previous ruling that would have allowed those with DACA to apply for special protections known as advance parole — permission to travel outside the U.S. and then return — which can, in some cases, turn into a pathway to citizenship.

29.4 Key Facts About ICE, and What Could Happen If It's Abolished

(Daily Signal; 1.1M uvm; Washington, D.C.) ... Fred Lucas

U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement officials on Aug. 14 arrested and deported an illegal immigrant who is wanted in El Salvador on murder charges. Brian Alejandro Martinez reportedly had been arrested and freed several times in New Jersey and New York. ICE officials criticized authorities in Middlesex County, New Jersey, for releasing Martinez without notifying the federal agency. While Immigration and Customs Enforcement in recent years has had to contend with "sanctuary" policies by cities and counties that protect illegal immigrants, the agency now faces a push by some in Congress to abolish it... Primarily an immigration enforcement agency that doesn't operate on the border, Immigration and Customs Enforcement still performs other functions. Here are four major facts about ICE, and what could happen if it ceases to exist.

OF INTEREST

30. California Demands Trump, Congress Apologize to Illegal Aliens

(Breitbart; 19.1M uvm) ... Michelle Moons

California state legislators passed a resolution Thursday calling on Congress to formally apologize, and for President Donald Trump to join them in acknowledging wrongdoing in separating illegal alien family units at the border. State Senators Kevin de León, Richard Pan, and Scott Wiener authored the joint resolution that was scheduled for debate, and passed on Thursday. KPBS reported just three legislators opposed — Joel Anderson, Mike Morrell, and Jim Nielsen — while 29 approved it, and eight didn't vote. The California Senate resolution calls on Congress to specifically apologize to the children separated from the adult foreign nationals who illegally brought them across the U.S. border. It also petitions Congress and President Trump to acknowledge wrongdoing in separating illegal alien adults and children.



31. Machete-Armed Man Attacks Ex-Wife's Boyfriend After Crashing Into His Car

(KNBC-TV; 2.1M uvm; Universal City, CA) ... Chris Chan

VIDEO: A man armed with a machete threatened a Chula Vista family after he crashed into a car and then went on a violent rampage. Police got a report just after 8 p.m. of a man swinging around a machete and jumping up and down on a car along Sipes Circle near Palomar Street. Officers say the suspect crashed into his ex-wife's boyfriend's car and tried to stab the boyfriend through the window several times. The boyfriend eventually ran away but the suspect's ex-wife came out of the house. That's when the suspect started chasing her, police said. An off-duty Border Patrol officer in the area and drew his weapon on the suspect and he stopped chasing her, but when Chula Vista Police Department officers arrived he ran. Officers eventually caught up to the suspect a couple blocks away and arrested him. He was taken away in an ambulance with unknown injuries.

32. 'Perfectly built' Sonora-Arizona narco-tunnel discovered

(Mexico News Daily)

The Mexican army located a 230-meter narco-tunnel running under the United States border between San Luis Río Colorado, Sonora, and San Luis, Arizona, yesterday thanks to an anonymous tip. On the Mexican side the tunnel was found inside a building under construction and was described by a military source as being "perfectly built," equipped with ventilation and lighting systems, and its walls and ceiling covered with wood. Army General Raúl Guereca said today the tunnel was 1.3 meters high and nearly 18 meters below the surface of the ground. It was equipped with electricity, ventilation and small cars to transport drugs. Inside the house in Mexico images of the Holy Death and Jesús Malverde, the "narco-saint," were hanging on a wall. Narcos look to both figures for protection. At the other end, the tunnel terminates inside an abandoned fast food restaurant. No drugs were found on either side of the border or inside the tunnel, nor was anyone apprehended.

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

Overall

- The hashtags #AbolishICE and #FamiliesBelongTogether sustained across social media platforms.
- The top URL (376 + shares): August 16 *NBC News* [article](#), "Border inspector, former ICE agent face felony cases in California."
- The second top URL (151+ shares): August 18 *DML News* [article](#), "VIDEO: Driver caught in Florida with SUV packed full of illegal immigrants."

Twitter



- Three of the top tweets (1,450 + retweets, combined) linked to the *FOX News* interview with USBP Chief Benjamin Huffman. The top tweet by @realMAGAstevе garnered 1.1k retweets, 1.4k likes, and 27 replies.
- The second top tweet (418 + retweets) by Qasim Rashid, Esq. (@MuslimIQ) linked to the August 16 *NBC News* article, “Border inspector, former ICE agent face felony cases in California.” The post garnered 418 retweets, 513 likes, and 15 replies.
- The second top tweet from ICE (@ICEgov) linked to the second top URL. The post garnered 378 + retweets, 857 + likes, and 33 + replies.

Instagram

- #AbolishICE garnered an additional 200 post attributions (51.7k + post attributions).
- #FamiliesBelongTogether garnered an additional 100 post attributions (149.4k post attributions).

Facebook

- #AbolishICE sustained across Facebook photos, videos, posts, and in “People are saying,” at a high volume.

ABOUT THIS REPORT. Articles in this report were published during the 24 hours preceding the report date unless otherwise specified. Dissemination figures and bylines might not be available for all articles. Location is noted for local outlets.

Colibri Center for Human Rights



The following information was collected from the named organization's website.

Web: <http://www.colibricenter.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/colibricenterforhumanrights/?fref=ts>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/colibricenter>

POC: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Email

Phone

Address: 2825 E. District Street Tucson, AZ 85714

Mission:

Colibrí's Executive Director, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and Forensic Anthropologist, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) first began this work in 2006 as the Missing Migrant Project at the Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner. In 2013, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) co-founded the Colibrí Center for Human Rights to expand the Missing Migrant Project and create a more comprehensive effort for the entire U.S.-Mexico border. The Colibrí Center for Human Rights is a family advocacy nonprofit based in Tucson, Arizona. They work with families, forensic scientists and humanitarians to end migrant death and related suffering on the U.S.-Mexico border. Their work approaches the crisis on the border through a human rights perspective, focusing on three main program areas:

- Family Advocacy
- Arts and Storytelling
- Policy Reform

Activities:

The Missing Migrant Project

Colibrí's advocacy work is grounded in data, which has the power not only to find the missing and identify the dead, but also to educate on a larger scale. Since 2006, their Missing Migrant Project has been bridging the data gap that exists between medical examiners and families of missing. They work with families to create forensically detailed missing persons reports—specializing in often overlooked details like tattoos, prayer cards, belt buckles or other unique belongings—and then partner with forensic scientists and medical examiners to identify the dead. Colibrí has developed the first comprehensive system to track and compare missing and unidentified persons on the border. This data tool will allow Colibrí and their partners to facilitate more identifications, provide answers to families, and inform policy.

The Family Network

Through Colibrí's Family Network—an online advocacy tool that amplifies voices, and connects families to one another, to media, and to the larger immigrant rights movement—

Colibri also provides a safe space for support, communication, and organizing among those who have lost someone on the border.

Joint Endeavors:

USBP and Colibri have a working relationship as a result of the MMP. Colibri is present at the OME when MMP is examining recovered bodies.

Areas of Concern:

None to address

Last Updated:

January 19, 2017

Interactions:

NAME of CONTACT:

DATE of CONTACT:

PURPOSE of CONTACT:

NAME of CONTACT:

DATE of CONTACT:

PURPOSE of CONTACT:

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DHS MORNING BRIEFING

Prepared for the Office of Public Affairs (OPA)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

By TechMIS

www.TechMIS.com

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TO: Homeland Security Secretary & Staff

DATE: Wednesday, January 23, 2019 7:00 AM ET

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Department's mission. The inclusion of particular stories is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse the political viewpoints or affiliations included in news coverage.

Top News

Senate plans votes on competing bills to reopen government (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/22/2019 4:37 PM, Erica Werner, John Wagner and Jeff Stein, 9763K] Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) on Tuesday scheduled a pair of competing votes to reopen the federal government, announcing that he would bring up dueling proposals from President Trump and the Democrats that would amount to the first real action in the Senate since the shutdown began a month ago.

Neither measure looked likely to win the support from 60 senators needed to advance, and instead the votes Thursday threatened to accomplish little more than to provide each side with new ammunition to accuse the other of prolonging the nation's longest government shutdown. The result could be only to prove that some other solution is needed to end the partial shutdown, even as 800,000 federal workers face the loss of a second straight paycheck Friday.

Trump's proposal, which the president announced in a weekend speech from the White House, would open the government through Sept. 30 while providing \$5.7 billion for a border wall and giving temporary deportation protections to about 1 million unauthorized immigrants. But it also contains stringent changes to the nation's asylum rules, and Democrats who were already united against funding Trump's wall described these asylum provisions Tuesday as a new poison pill.

The Democrats' plan is a stopgap spending bill that would fund the government through Feb. 8 without providing any new money for the wall. That would let both parties negotiate on border security while the government is reopened, a respite Democrats have been demanding.

But the White House has consistently opposed reopening the government without getting wall money. And most Republicans have fallen in line with that stance, even though the Senate passed nearly identical legislation shortly before the shutdown began. At the time, many believed that Trump would support the proposal, only to see him publicly oppose it the next day.

Thursday's planned votes are a product of an agreement between McConnell and Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.). But even as the leaders announced the deal, they traded barbs in speeches on the Senate floor. McConnell accused Democrats of rejecting a reasonable proposal from Trump because of political opposition to the president, and Schumer argued that Republicans and Trump were operating in bad faith by including new asylum curbs and failing to consult with Democrats.

"On one side of the scale we have all of my Democratic colleagues' declarations that we must reopen the rest of the federal government and get federal workers their paychecks . . . And we have their stated desire to help out a number of individuals with a more certain immigration status," McConnell said. "That's one side of the scale. All that's on the other

side is the far left's political animus for the occupant of the White House. It is high time to get serious."

Schumer disputed McConnell's remarks.

"Now the president said his proposal was a reasonable compromise. In fact it is neither reasonable nor a compromise," Schumer said. "There was no serious negotiation with any Democrat about what went into the proposal. That's because the proposal was never intended to pass. It's only a thinly veiled attempt by the president to save face."

The acrimony on display on the Senate floor came as warnings intensified about the shutdown's economic consequences, and federal agencies such as the Transportation Security Administration and the Internal Revenue Service struggled to conduct their basic duties.

Some employees who are not getting paid but are supposed to report to work anyway because their duties have been deemed essential chose to stay home. Lawmakers from Virginia and Maryland, with large concentrations of federal workers, issued increasingly desperate calls for the shutdown to be over with — and yet there was still no end in sight.

Hoping to entice some Democrats to support his new proposal, Trump offered a three-year pause in his efforts to scrap rules that shield some immigrants from deportation. The rules are a Democratic priority, as they protect the "dreamers," a group that includes 700,000 young people brought illegally to the United States as children, who won temporary deportation protections under the Obama-era program formally known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

But Democrats accused Trump of offering a short-term solution to a problem he himself caused, and the Supreme Court on Tuesday weakened Trump's hand, taking no action to review lower-court rulings that had blocked Trump from ending DACA. If the court sticks to its normal procedures, even accepting the case at a later date would probably mean the justices would not hear arguments until the court's new term starts in October. That would probably keep the program in place until at least next year.

With the court seemingly keeping the program safe for at least a year, Trump's offer to suspend his efforts to end it became less appealing to lawmakers who were already skeptical.

Democratic opposition to Trump's proposal further solidified Tuesday as Democratic lawmakers and immigration activists dug into the Senate legislation and discovered that it contains dramatic new limits on the U.S. asylum program.

The legislation specifies that children younger than 18 from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala could not apply for asylum at the U.S. border and instead would be turned away, because of a new requirement that they apply from their home countries. The law would also set a new cap of 15,000 on the number of children who could qualify each year for the asylum program.

Additionally, the legislation says children could qualify for asylum only if they had a U.S.-based guardian to care for them. Immigration experts said the changes would effectively bar

Central American minors arriving at U.S. borders from access to asylum.

"It's an enormous restriction," said Greg Chen, director of government relations at the American Immigration Lawyers Association. "It pretty much shuts down access to asylum for Central American minors arriving at U.S. borders and will force thousands of children back into life-threatening danger."

A spokesman for McConnell's office directed questions about the proposed asylum changes to the administration. White House officials did not respond to a request for comment.

Meanwhile, House Democrats announced fresh plans to pass legislation this week that would reopen the government while blocking new wall funding, but Trump has repeatedly rejected similar bills, and McConnell has said the Senate won't take them up — leading Republicans, newly consigned to powerlessness in the House minority, to question why they were engaging in the exercise at all.

"Doing the same thing over and over is not likely to get us there," said Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.).

The impasse has left key parts of the federal government unfunded for more than a month, including the Treasury, Homeland Security, Interior, Agriculture and Justice departments. It has also threatened important government services, leaving the White House to repeatedly attempt to find ways to keep unfunded parts of the government functioning.

But Trump and his chief negotiating rival, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), both promised Tuesday morning that they would not give in.

In a morning post on Twitter, the president accused Democrats of playing "political games," exclaimed "No Cave!" and argued that construction of a wall along the Mexican border would lead to substantially lower crime rates and fewer drugs coming into the United States.

"Without a Wall our Country can never have Border or National Security," Trump wrote.

In response, Pelosi accused Trump and McConnell of "holding Americans hostage" by not acting on the House bills.

In a statement later in the day, she added: "Senate Republicans need to re-open government, not continue their complicity in the Trump Shutdown with a vote for the President's unacceptable border and immigration schemes that only increase the chaos and suffering at the border."

The Senate bill incorporates a few elements aimed at winning Democratic support, including some new humanitarian aid, \$12.7 billion in hurricane and wildfire disaster relief, and the three-year protections for about 700,000 dreamers, as well as 300,000 immigrants who came to the United States following natural disasters or other calamities in their home countries and who won "temporary protected status," a designation Trump is also moving to phase out.

In announcing his proposal in the White House speech Saturday, Trump touted it as a "common-sense compromise both parties should embrace."

"Our plan includes critical measures to protect migrant children from exploitation and abuse," Trump said, in a mention of the new asylum provisions. "This includes a new system to allow Central American minors to apply for asylum in their home countries, and reform to promote family reunification for unaccompanied children, thousands of whom wind up on our border doorstep."

But the changes cracking down on asylum seekers and other pieces of the immigration system drew angry and widespread condemnation from immigration activists.

Wendy Young, president of Kids in Need of Defense, a group that works with unaccompanied immigrant youths, said that under the proposed changes, "kids will lose their lives, plain and simple."

The legislation would also double fees for young immigrants to apply for protection under DACA and create new income requirements to qualify, in effect preventing very poor immigrants from being able to apply, according to United We Dream, a group that supports dreamers.

And it would increase by 20 percent the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency's budget for detention and enforcement, said Heidi Altman, director of policy at the National Immigrant Justice Center. This money could fund an additional 2,000 new ICE officers and 750 new border agents.

But the legislation also faces opposition from some on the right, including conservative commentator Ann Coulter, who has described it as "amnesty."

And some immigration restrictionists said they would like to see the legislation go even farther. For example, the proposal would allow the administration to tighten the process that allows asylum seekers to claim they have a "credible fear" of persecution in their home countries, said Chris Chmielenski, a spokesman for NumbersUSA, an advocacy firm that favors tighter immigration rules.

But NumbersUSA wants those changes to be made permanent in the Senate GOP proposal, along with changes that would allow the Department of Homeland Security to deport unaccompanied minors not from Canada or Mexico back to their home countries.

"It doesn't go far enough," Chmielenski said.

Senate Republicans take up Trump's border proposal (Politico)

[Politico](#) [1/22/2019 10:00 AM, Ted Hesson, 2577K]

Senate Republicans will pressure Democrats with a vote this week on a spending package that includes \$5.7 billion for President Donald Trump's border wall. But Democrats haven't budged in their opposition to the wall.

The ongoing government shutdown has delayed projects at major federal contractors.

The Supreme Court hasn't taken up DACA yet. Will it happen this week?

Los Angeles teachers remain on strike amid negotiations over pay and class size.

TRUMP'S BORDER PROPOSAL: Senate Republicans will vote this week on a bill that combines Trump's immigration proposal with \$12.7 billion in disaster aid and government funding through the end of the fiscal year, POLITICO's Caitlin Emma reports.

Trump announced on Saturday that he would back a three-year provisional status for DACA recipients and immigrants with "temporary protected status" in exchange for border wall funding, a surge in border agents, and other enforcement measures. (Never mind that Trump took away the very DACA and TPS protections he offered to restore.) Democrats panned the proposal, which also drew criticism from immigration hard-liners.

Still, Senate Republicans aim to plow ahead with a vote on the Trump plan, which will be packaged with disaster relief and government agency funding. The bill isn't likely to resolve the 32-day shutdown, Caitlin writes. Meanwhile, House Democrats will vote this week on their tenth bill to reopen the federal government.

WHERE'S THE DREAM ACT?: House Democrats are still discussing what should be included in the latest iteration of the Dream Act, an aide tells Morning Shift. The legislation, which would offer a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children, was introduced in the last session by Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Calif.), H.R. 3440 (115). Democrats aren't likely to introduce the new version for several weeks, the aide said.

CONTRACTORS FEEL SHUTDOWN SQUEEZE: The shutdown has sidelined some work by major government contractors, including Boeing, Rand Corp., and Booz Allen Hamilton, POLITICO's Bryan Bender and Ian Kullgren report. "Federal government contractors and consultants have furloughed tens of thousands of employees, and the numbers will only grow as the nearly month-long shutdown drags on," the pair write.

The funding lapse has hit small contractors, too. "One 70-person technology company, Tethers Unlimited, has had to lay off 20 percent of its workforce because it hasn't been paid," POLITICO reports.

E-VERIFY WORKERS RECALLED: USCIS employees who manage the E-Verify system will be recalled to work today, according to the agency. But while the workers will be put back on the payroll, they won't perform work related to E-Verify, which will remain offline due to the shutdown. USCIS is funded by fees, so it has largely continued to run during the lapse in appropriations.

Senate GOP Unveils Omnibus Bill to Fund Wall, Reopen Government (Roll Call)

[Roll Call](#) [1/22/2019 10:32 AM, Jennifer Shutt]

Senate Republicans have released a \$354.5 billion fiscal 2019 spending package that includes \$5.7 billion for border wall construction as well as temporary relief for enrollees in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program and immigrants receiving Temporary Protected Status.

The 1,301-page draft bill was released Monday night, and it includes parts outlined by President Donald Trump in his Saturday speech. It is expected to receive a vote in the Senate this week.

Democrats have already rejected the proposal, on grounds that the president should first sign stopgap funding to reopen the nine Cabinet departments that have been closed for the past month. They also oppose the three-year extensions of legal status for the roughly 1 million DACA and TPS recipients, which they argue ought to be permanent.

The measure also includes a three-year provision that would allow unaccompanied minors from Central American countries to apply for asylum, with the requirement that they apply while still in their home country. It would limit the number of minors who can apply for asylum to 50,000 annually. Of those applying, it would limit the number that can be approved each year to 15,000.

Additionally, asylum would have to be deemed "in the national interest," and anyone previously granted asylum whose status was eliminated before receiving a green card would be permanently banned from the country. The provisions were already drawing the ire of immigration advocates on Twitter late Monday.

"This bill would be one of the single-biggest dismantling of America's systems of humanitarian protections ever," wrote Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, a policy analyst at the American Immigration Council.

The lack of bipartisan support for the proposal virtually ensures that the partial government shutdown, which began on Dec. 22, will continue, as the 800,000 federal employees impacted by the funding lapse inch closer to missing yet another paycheck on Jan. 25. But the White House and GOP leaders are attempting to force a negotiation with Democrats, who have not yet offered their vision of what a border security package should look like.

"The President has proposed a serious compromise to end this shutdown," Senate Appropriations Chairman Richard C. Shelby, R-Ala., said in a statement announcing the package. "It would not only fund the government and secure the border, but also provide immigration reforms the Democrats have long supported."

The bill includes versions of the final seven fiscal 2019 spending bills as well as \$12.7 billion in disaster aid for victims of the 2018 hurricanes, wildfires and other calamities. That's slightly below what's in a \$14.2 billion House-passed package.

The \$70.4 billion Homeland Security title of the Senate bill would provide around \$15 billion more than the version the Senate Appropriations Committee approved last year.

Of that increase, \$8.3 billion is for Federal Emergency Management Agency disaster relief accounts, which is in addition to the separate emergency spending title of the package.

But the remainder reflects Trump's requests for border security, including \$4.1 billion more than the initial Senate bill contained for fencing along the Rio Grande Valley. The measure also would provide substantial increases sought by Trump to house immigrant detainees — enough for 52,000 detention beds, a nearly 25 percent boost over the prior fiscal year — along with funding for some 2,750 Border Patrol and law enforcement officers and to help care for migrant children in custody.

Mexico City, Ports of Entry

Other than on disaster assistance and Homeland Security, the Senate package is similar in many respects to a six-bill, \$271 billion measure the House is slated to take up this week. The House will likely consider Homeland Security funding separately this week, according to aides.

The Senate GOP bill, however, contains some differences with the versions introduced late last week in the House — versions that Democrats said reflected bicameral compromises reached last year.

For example, the Senate package drops an amendment that would have stripped a prohibition on funding for the U.N. Population Fund. The amendment, from Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., was adopted in committee last year by a vote of 16-15. The amendment also would have repealed the so-called Mexico City rule, which denies funding to foreign nongovernmental organizations that provide, promote or facilitate abortions. The Trump administration reinstated the rule in 2017 and expanded its application to the entire global public health budget.

The House version would keep a version of the Shaheen language.

In the Financial Services spending bill, the Senate's price tag appears roughly \$400 million smaller, in part because it contains far less funding for improvements to ports of entry in California and Arizona than the version House Democrats introduced last week.

The House bill included \$275.9 million for the second and final phase of improvements to the Calexico West Land Port of Entry in California, about 30 miles west of the Arizona border. The Senate draft includes \$91 million to partially fund the second phase of the Calexico project. The House bill also includes \$248.3 million for improvements to the San Luis Land Port of Entry near San Luis, Ariz. The Senate bill contains no funding for that project.

The Senate draft also contains a number of policy extensions for programs with lapsed authorities. It would extend Violence Against Women Act programs through Sept. 30, for instance, while Temporary Assistance for Needy Families would be renewed through June 30, among other provisions.

First Try for Senate

The spending package will be the first appropriations measure brought to the Senate floor since the partial government shutdown began about a month ago.

The House has, so far, voted on seven different spending bills that would have reopened part or all of the nine Cabinet departments and various agencies shuttered because of the ongoing stalemate over border wall funding.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., opted not to vote on any of those proposals — repeatedly saying he would only hold a floor vote on a spending package that could pass the House, the Senate and receive Trump's signature. McConnell also said numerous times that a final spending deal would have to be worked out among Trump, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y.

But McConnell changed course late last week after concluding that Pelosi was unwilling to negotiate on Trump's top priority, the border wall, according to a source familiar with his thinking. He then worked with White House officials, including Vice President Mike Pence and senior adviser Jared Kushner, to hatch the revamped legislative strategy Trump outlined over the weekend.

"I commend the President for his leadership in proposing this bold solution to reopen the government, secure the border, and take bipartisan steps toward addressing current immigration issues," McConnell said in a statement on Saturday, shortly after Trump announced his proposal.

Senate sets up Thursday test votes on ending shutdown, but no deal in sight (Roll Call)

[Roll Call](#) [1/22/2019 4:14 PM, Niels Lesniewski, 90K]

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer have announced an agreement for a pair of test votes Thursday afternoon on government funding legislation.

But it may not get lawmakers any closer to a deal to re-open the closed portions of the federal government.

Under the deal announced on the Senate floor, the Senate would vote first to limit debate on an amendment to a House-passed spending bill that is the text of an omnibus spending bill for the government departments not already funded, as well as President Donald Trump's immigration policy plan.

After that, the Senate would vote to limit debate on an amendment from Schumer that the New York Democrat said would provide stopgap appropriations through February 8, as well as disaster relief money already passed by the Democratic-led House.

Either of those amendments would need 60 votes to break potential (or likely) filibusters, and after the two leaders made the announcement there was no indication that either would get to that supermajority threshold.

Senate to vote on ending government shutdown, Trump wall impasse (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/22/2019 11:30 AM, Richard Cowan and Jeff Mason]

The U.S. Senate shifted slightly closer on Tuesday to resolving a month-long partial government shutdown, but there was no sign of relief anytime soon for 800,000 federal workers who are furloughed or working without pay.

Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell laid the groundwork for a vote on Thursday on a Democratic proposal to fund the government for three weeks, without attaching the \$5.7 billion in U.S.-Mexico border wall funding demanded by President Donald Trump. The president has opposed similar legislation in the House of Representatives.

McConnell had said previously he would not consider a funding bill that Trump would refuse to sign.

The Senate leader said he would also bring up for a Thursday vote a proposal by Trump to

end the shutdown that includes border wall funding and relief for "Dreamers," people brought illegally to the United States as children. The plan was unlikely to pass in the Senate and had even less chance in the Democratic-led House of Representatives.

Democrats have said they would not trade a temporary restoration of the immigrants' protections from deportation in return for a permanent border wall they view as ineffective. In 2017, Trump moved to end the Dreamers' protections, triggering a court battle.

But the Senate action could set the stage for the type of bipartisan negotiating that will be necessary to end a shutdown that began on Dec. 22. Americans have largely blamed Trump for the shutdown, now the longest in U.S. history.

Affected federal workers are struggling to make ends meet.

A Trump administration official said on Tuesday the president still intended to deliver his State of the Union speech on Jan. 29, even though House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the top U.S. Democrat, had recommended he delay it because of the shutdown.

The request seemed likely to set up another clash between Trump and Pelosi, days after Trump abruptly refused to let her use a U.S. military plane to go on an overseas trip hours before she was to depart.

Aides to Pelosi did not respond to requests for comment on whether Trump's invitation to speak would stand.

Trump may have lost the Dreamer issue as his main negotiating point on Tuesday when the U.S. Supreme Court was silent, at least for now, on considering an administration appeal of lower-court rulings allowing continued temporary protections for the immigrant youths.

Instead, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program established by then-President Barack Obama in 2012 lives on with or without approval by Congress.

As the Senate debates Trump's proposal, House Democrats this week are pushing legislation that would end the partial shutdown of agencies including the departments of Justice, Homeland Security, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor and Interior.

While their legislation would contain new border security money, there would be nothing for a wall, ensuring Trump's opposition.

Once the government reopens, Democrats said, they would negotiate with Trump on further border security ideas.

"We were optimistic that he might ... open up government so we could have this discussion," Pelosi told reporters in comments carried by CNN. "But then we heard what the particulars were in it and it was a non-starter, unfortunately."

Representative Jim Clyburn, the No. 3 House Democrat, welcomed any effort by the Republican-led Senate to debate and vote on legislation to reopen the government.

"This gets us started," Clyburn told MSNBC in an interview.

The shutdown's impact was being felt at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with the FBI Agents Association saying probes of possible financial crimes, drugs and terrorism were being hindered by a lack of funds.

Many federal employees and contractors were turning to unemployment assistance, food banks and other support as the shutdown entered its second month. Others began seeking new jobs.

Senate GOP Releases Proposal to End Shutdown, Build Wall (Free Beacon)

[Free Beacon](#) [1/22/2019 10:10 AM, Charles Fain Lehman, 105K]

Senate Republicans released a version of President Donald Trump's shutdown-ending proposal Monday, which, if passed, would fully fund the government and invest nearly \$6 billion in building a southwestern border wall.

The 1300 page "End the Shutdown and Secure the Border Act" (ESSBA) was introduced by Sen. Richard Shelby (R., Ala.) in his capacity as chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Its contents mirror Trump's proposal to provide temporary amnesty for roughly one million illegally resident people, in exchange for funding for the president's long-desired border wall.

Funding the wall—in one form or another—has been the fundamental source of contention in the nation's ongoing partial government shutdown. Now the longest in U.S. history, the shutdown has shuttered a number of federal agencies, as recalcitrant Democrats have refused to accede to Trump's demand for more border security spending. The proposal embodied in the new bill is Trump's "effort to compromise" with congressional Democrats, according to Vice President Mike Pence.

Prior to the shutdown, House Republicans passed a wall-funding proposal, but Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) concluded it was a no-go given the Senate's 60-vote threshold to end debate. The ESSBA appears intended as an opening volley in Senate negotiations to resolve the issue, as Sen. Shelby called on his Democratic colleagues to either back the bill or come to the table for a different solution.

"The president has proposed a serious compromise to end this shutdown," Shelby said "It would not only fund the government and secure the border, but also provide immigration reforms the Democrats have long supported. For the good of the country, I encourage my Democratic colleagues to either join us in passing this legislation or come to the negotiating table with constructive solutions of their own. Saying no to everything will not move our country forward."

In broad strokes, the bill would grant temporary protection to two populations of illegal immigrants: DREAMers and TPS-recipients. The former group—some 700,000 who arrived to the United States illegally under 18, and who were protected by President Barack Obama's DACA order—saw their protections expire last year. The ESSBA would grant them a three-year leave from deportation, including work permits and Social Security numbers.

Recipients of Temporary Protected Status were granted protection from deportation when it was established that their home countries were too unsafe to return to due to natural

disaster or conflict. Trump ended TPS for a large group of recipients last year; the ESSBA would reinstate it, also for a three-year period.

In exchange for this temporary amnesty, the ESSBA would appropriate \$5.7 billion for the construction of a "physical barrier" along the "highest priority locations" of the Mexican border. It would also provide funding for 750 new border patrol agents and 375 new customs officers, who would work to moderate the flow of drugs across the border. And the ESSBA would fund "custody enhancements, humanitarian needs, and counter-narcotics and counter-weapons technology," as recommended by the Office of Management and Budget.

In addition, the ESSBA would attempt to curb the surge in unaccompanied children arriving from "northern triangle" countries by requiring them to apply for asylum at a processing center in Central America.

"For the new procedure to achieve the desired humanitarian result," Sen. Shelby's release noted, "a further corresponding statutory change would be required to ensure the proper return of those who circumvent the process by coming to the United States without authorization." What this means practically is that children who claim asylum at the border or after entry—a common practice—will be denied and returned to their home country.

This change alone may be enough for Senate Democrats to shoot the whole bill down, notwithstanding leadership's preexisting objections to any border barrier at all. If they do so, Republicans will be back to square one, leaving seven major components of the executive branch unfunded for the foreseeable future.

Still no shutdown deal: House, Senate to vote on dueling border security proposals this week (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/22/2019 9:41 AM, Susan Ferrechio, 629K]

The Republican-run Senate this week will call up President Trump's proposal to end the government funding standoff with a deal trading border wall money for an extension of legal protections for Dreamers.

But Democrats who run the House have already rejected Trump's plan, and will instead take up a series of border security measures and government funding legislation that don't include any money for a border wall.

Congress will take up these dueling approaches while a partial government shutdown, caused by the border wall fight, enters a second month.

House Democrats are expected to introduce their border security measures after they return Tuesday afternoon. They've already scheduled more votes this week on government spending bills that also exclude wall funding.

The Senate, meanwhile, introduced Trump's compromise proposal Monday and plans to vote on it later this week.

The Senate bill, which incorporates the offer Trump made Saturday, would provide funding for the seven lapsed spending bills that fund 25 percent of the federal government, including nine departments and dozens of agencies that have been partially closed since Dec. 22. It

would provide \$5.7 billion for "construction of a physical barrier" along the Southwest border.

To win the backing of Democrats, who mostly oppose wall funding, the measure includes a three-year extension of legal protection for young undocumented immigrants enrolled in the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival program. It also provides a three-year extension for an estimated 325,000 people who have been granted Temporary Protected Status. The United States grants TPS to "nationals of specifically designated countries that face an armed conflict, environmental disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary condition." Most using the program are from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti.

The Senate bill also includes \$12.7 billion in disaster aid that Democrats passed in the House earlier this month.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., called Trump's proposal a "bold solution," that "pairs the border security investment that our nation needs with additional immigration measures that both Democrat and Republican members of Congress believe are necessary."

Neither party's plan has the bipartisan support needed to clear Congress.

The Senate legislation, however, may pick up some Democratic support or become the basis of a deal that can later facilitate a bipartisan compromise.

At least one Democrat, Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., is undecided, and others in the party appear open to future negotiations that might sweeten the deal further for Democrats.

The Senate is all but certain to reject the House measures because they will exclude the wall funding Trump is requiring to approve new spending bills.

Pelosi said she wants money spent not on a wall but on improving security at the ports of entry, through which most illegal drugs are smuggled into the United States.

The Democratic legislation is expected to direct more money to the ports and to add technology and personnel to other parts of the border. But it will not include funding for a wall or barrier Trump is requesting.

"Let's use resources to expand the ports of entry," Pelosi said last week.

Trump tweeted to Democrats Monday to "stop playing games," and approve the Senate proposal.

McConnell sets up votes on Thursday on competing proposals to reopen government (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/22/2019 7:32 PM, Clare Foran, Ted Barrett and Phil Mattingly, 5847K]

The Senate will take two key votes on Thursday on competing proposals aimed at ending the ongoing government shutdown -- one backed by Republicans and the other backed by Democrats and both likely to fail.

One of the votes will be on a proposal backed by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell

to fund President Donald Trump's border wall and reopen shuttered parts of the government. That legislation is in line with an offer the President proposed over the weekend offering temporary protections for some immigrants in exchange for \$5.7 billion for a border wall -- and which Democrats swiftly rejected as they hold firm in insisting that the government should be reopened before lawmakers proceed to a debate on border security.

The other vote will be on House-passed legislation backed by Democrats to reopen the government without providing new funding for the wall.

Both proposals are expected to fail at this point because either would need 60 votes to advance.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer explained in remarks on the Senate floor on Tuesday that lawmakers had reached an agreement to hold the votes.

But despite the announcement, there is still no end in sight to the shutdown stalemate on Capitol Hill as Republicans push for the border funding the President has asked for and Democrats continue to reject that proposal as a non-starter.

In an indication that the House-passed measure will not receive enough bipartisan support to advance, McConnell spokesman Don Stewart told CNN on Tuesday that the Senate majority leader is not supporting the House bill that the Senate will vote on Thursday to reopen the government until early February.

Seven Democrats would have to crossover for the GOP bill to pass -- Republicans hold 53 Senate seats -- and there has been little indication that's possible.

And 13 Republicans would have to crossover for the Democratic bill to pass, which is also unlikely unless Trump were to reverse course and support the bill.

The decision to allow votes on measures that are not certain to receive the bipartisan support needed to pass Congress and be signed into law by the President marks a shift for McConnell.

In late December, McConnell said on the Senate floor that when negotiations over the shutdown "produce a solution that is acceptable to all parties -- which means 60 votes in the Senate, a majority in the House and a presidential signature -- at that point, we will take it up on the Senate floor."

It's a statement, in one form or another, McConnell had made repeatedly on the Senate floor and in weekly news conferences. But the back and forth last week between House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the President, particularly when Pelosi sent a letter to Trump suggesting he move the State of the Union address due to the shutdown, led McConnell to a recognition that Democrats were simply not going to move off their position -- and it was time to get involved, two sources familiar with the decision said.

When Vice President Mike Pence and Jared Kushner, the White House senior adviser and son-in-law to the President, brought up a proposal for wall money in exchange for temporary protections for recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, McConnell pushed to add more provisions that could entice Democrats, from disaster aid to

full year funding measures, one of the sources said. He then sought a public commitment to support the proposal from the President, and once he received it, pledged he would bring the bill to the floor.

Shutdown showdown votes slated for Thursday (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/22/2019 4:23 PM, Stephen Dinan, 527K]

Senate leaders scheduled a showdown on a pair of shutdown votes for Thursday, in what will be the first test of whether President Trump or Democrats have a stronger hand in the negotiations.

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer agreed to the dueling votes, in a deal that passes for progress after more than a month of stalemate.

The last time the Senate took a vote on the shutdown was Dec. 21, just hours before funding ran out.

"For the first time we will get a vote on whether to open up the government without a decision one way or the other on border security," Mr. Schumer said.

The GOP's ante in the showdown will be Mr. Trump's new proposal combining \$5.7 billion in border wall funding with a three-year deportation amnesty for about 1 million migrants here under the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program or a special humanitarian program known as Temporary Protected Status.

Mr. Trump also calls for a new direct path for children in Central America to apply for asylum in the U.S. — but limits their ability to enter the U.S. illegally and then claim asylum.

Those provisions are attached to bills that would reopen all nine shuttered departments with full funding to last through the end of the fiscal year.

The White House has called that a good-faith offer to end the shutdown, make progress on border security and give Democrats long-sought protections for some immigrants living in the U.S. illegally.

But Democrats and immigrant-rights activists complained of a bait-and-switch, saying the legislation Republicans will put on the floor is less generous than what they'd been led to believe would result after Mr. Trump detailed the plans in a speech Saturday.

"Any hope we had that the president was moving quickly towards meaningful compromise disappeared with the harsh terms of this written proposal," said Sen. Richard Durbin, the No. 2 Democrat in the upper chamber.

He and his fellow Senate Democrats are countering with legislation that would reopen the government for a couple of weeks, perhaps giving all sides a chance to negotiate a broader deal.

Meanwhile, House Democrats said they're going another direction, scheduling votes on bills to reopen most of government for the rest of the year — but only giving Homeland Security a short-term boost.

The House plan ignores Mr. Trump's request for border money, does not include protections for Dreamers or TPS recipients, nor does it include the president's proposed adjustments to asylum for Central American children.

It does include additional funding for immigration judges, as does the Senate GOP proposal.

The House plan also includes more than \$500 million for infrastructure at U.S. ports of entry, which Democrats say is key to helping slow the illicit flow of drugs into the country.

"Coupled with investments in technology and personnel, these infrastructure improvements will do far more than a wall to stem the flow of illegal goods, narcotics, and people being smuggled into the country," said Rep. Mike Quigley, Illinois Democrat.

While Democrats have been united in their stance so far, some cracks are beginning to show.

Rep. Collin Peterson, Minnesota Democrat and chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, said he would favor giving President Trump money for a U.S.-Mexico border wall as a way out of the government shutdown if there are "strings" attached to make sure the money is spent properly.

"I'm a committee chairman — so I'm in the room with the other leadership," he said in an interview with KFGO radio posted online Tuesday. "And I told them, you guys are making a mistake. Give Trump the money ... I'd give him the whole thing that he wants and put strings on it so that you make sure that he puts the wall where it needs to be."

At the same time, Senate Democrats are hoping to pick up support of some Republicans eager to see the shutdown end, but who haven't been given a chance to break from their party leadership until this week.

Senate Republicans seek to block Central American minors from claiming U.S. asylum unless they apply at home (Los Angeles Times)

[Los Angeles Times](#) [1/22/2019 2:55 PM, Molly O'Toole, 3575K]

Senate Republicans proposed Tuesday to effectively bar Central American minors from claiming asylum in the United States unless they apply at home, a reversal of U.S. law that Democrats swiftly denounced as unacceptable.

A proposed spending bill introduced by Senate Republicans would amend federal law to bar any Salvadoran, Guatemalan or Honduran younger than 18 from asylum unless they apply first at designated facilities in Central America.

The bill notes that those facilities do not currently exist — and the Homeland Security secretary would have 240 days after the bill's enactment to open them.

The bill also appears to seek to eliminate judicial review of asylum decisions, saying that "no court or immigration judge" could review Homeland Security's determinations of who is granted asylum and who isn't.

Republicans are looking to increase political pressure on Democratic lawmakers following

President Trump's offer Saturday of a supposed compromise to end the month-long partial government shutdown.

Democrats rejected the proposed targeting of Central American children, among others tucked into the massive 1,300-page spending bill that its sponsors said would reopen the government and ensure border security.

"The asylum changes are a poison pill if there ever was one," said Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer, (D-N.Y.). He said Republicans had conducted no negotiations or consultations with Democrats to produce the proposal.

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, (R-Ky.) said the Republican-led Senate would vote on the bill Thursday. If it passes intact, it would go to the Democratic-led House, which is sure to reject the provision.

The Senate will also vote Thursday on a House-passed measure to fund the government through Feb. 8, with no border wall funding that Trump has demanded.

Immigration experts and advocates say the asylum application proposal would face stiff legal challenges.

Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-San Jose), a former immigration attorney, called the bill a "deeply cynical attempt to strip asylees of due process protections and would effectively shut down the asylum process for Central American minors for more than a year, leaving desperate families with no recourse as they continue to face record levels of violence, abuse and even death in their home countries."

Lindsay M. Harris, a law professor and co-director of the Immigration and Human Rights Clinic, said the proposal violates the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which permits any person physically in the U.S. to claim asylum.

While constitutional rights are limited for immigrants, Harris said, the proposal also may violate protections against race, national origin, ethnicity and age-based discrimination.

"This proposal ignores the reality that El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala are unable to protect these children from persecution and will not magically be able to do so because the U.S. decides to reopen an in-country processing system," said Harris. "Children will make the journey north as long as remaining where they are is a threat to their safety."

In his televised address Saturday, Trump touted "critical measures to protect migrant children from exploitation and abuse," highlighting what he described as a new system to allow Central American youth to apply for asylum in their home countries.

He did not mention in his address that they would be required to do so, and would be blocked from claiming asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border.

The proposed bill would limit asylum to Central American minors without criminal records, who have not been deported before and who are deemed not to be a risk to "public safety or national security." They also must have a parent or guardian in the United States who can care for them.

In addition to the so-called Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, processing centers would be located in Nicaragua, Panama, Belize, Costa Rica and Mexico, according to the bill.

The bill would limit asylum to a maximum of 15,000 Central American minors in any fiscal year. The law would remain in effect for at least three years after it's enacted.

As written, the proposal seeks "to establish an asylum processing program" outside the United States that "reduces the incentive for such persons to make the dangerous journey to the United States southern border to request asylum."

The proposal comes as apprehensions of minors entering the country have swelled. In October and November, officials stopped 44% more minors at the border than in the same span a year ago.

In the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, officials apprehended nearly 50,000 unaccompanied minors, with just under 80 % from Central America.

While refugee status is obtained abroad, migrants can only apply for asylum if physically present in or arriving in the United States, even if it's not at an official port of entry, according to federal law.

A federal court in November blocked the Trump administration from trying to ban asylum claims between ports of entry.

The Trump administration ended Obama-era programs that allowed, but did not require, Central American minors and their families to apply for U.S. asylum while at home. Thousands of children were stranded when the programs were terminated.

Requiring the minors to apply for asylum in their home countries or region leaves them trapped by the gang violence and other dangers they are trying to escape, said Lorella Praeli, director of immigration policy at the American Civil Liberties Union.

"You can't condition asylum on people remaining in the place where they are being persecuted," she said.

Republicans load spending bill with hard-line measures targeting asylum (Politico)

[Politico](#) [1/22/2019 7:36 PM, Ted Hesson, 2577K]

A 1,300-page spending bill released by Senate Republicans Monday night contains provisions to restrict asylum and other hard-line immigration changes that make it unlikely to generate bipartisan support.

Democrats already were poised to reject President Donald Trump's proposal to pass his \$5.7 billion funding request for a border wall in exchange for temporary protections for some immigrants brought to the United States as children and others covered by a humanitarian status. But hawkish measures embedded in the Republican spending bill will give Democrats even more reason to spurn the legislation.

"This is a Stephen Miller special," Kerri Talbot, a director with the Washington, D.C.-based

Immigration Hub, told reporters Tuesday. "It's a Trojan horse with many extreme immigration proposals included."

The bill doesn't appear likely to end a partial shutdown of the federal government that stretched into its 32nd day Tuesday.

One policy change in the bill would bar Central American minors from seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border, except under certain circumstances. Instead, children from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala would be required to apply from their home countries or in one of five other countries in the region. Children would need a parent or guardian in the U.S. to qualify for the new pathway.

Moreover, the number of children who could be admitted through the new asylum channel would be limited to 15,000 annually. Under current law, asylum admissions are not capped.

"Any senator who is genuinely concerned about maintaining America's commitment to protecting asylum seekers and refugees cannot support this bill," said Greg Chen, director of government relations for the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

The Obama administration previously offered Central American children the opportunity to apply for asylum from their home countries, but it did not block them from seeking refuge at the border. Trump ended the Obama-era program in 2017.

Furthermore, the Republican spending bill would toughen the overall standard for asylum for children from those countries. The secretary of Homeland Security would need to consider an asylum grant for those minors to be "in the national interest," a hurdle that would be heaped on top of existing requirements.

The legislation also would allow Central American minors who don't qualify for humanitarian relief to be swiftly deported to their home countries pending agreements with those governments.

A pair of senior administration officials who hosted a call for reporters Tuesday evening sought to portray the bill as a starting point for bipartisan congressional negotiations. The officials spoke on background despite a reporter's request to put the discussion on the record.

"Part of what we're looking for is to have a conversation with people on the Hill," said one Trump official. "We have no illusions that we have drafted the world's first perfect piece of legislation."

Early indications showed Democrats wouldn't be receptive to the Republican overture. Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) called it "even worse than advertised" in a press release.

The depth of restrictionist policy changes in the bill drew immediate fire from pro-migrant advocates.

Philip Wolgin, managing director of the immigration program at the liberal Center for American Progress, joined a chorus of advocates who ripped the legislation.

"Hard to see this as anything but bad faith," Wolgin tweeted Monday evening. He added that Senate Republicans could have produced a bill with a narrow immigration trade off — border money in exchange for protections for certain undocumented immigrants. Instead, the legislation contained "pages of new restrictions."

The White House said over the weekend that Trump would support a compromise that would provide three-year provisional protections for immigrants covered by the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. The president moved to phase out the program in September 2017, but federal courts have halted the termination.

Orders from the Supreme Court on Tuesday didn't mention the DACA cases, despite a Justice Department request that they be added to the court's calendar for argument in April.

Over the weekend, the White House also floated protections for certain people covered by "Temporary Protected Status." The humanitarian program offers work permits and deportation relief to roughly 400,000 people, but the Trump administration has sought to largely wind down enrollment.

The administration has moved to end the status for people from six countries covered by TPS. The Republican bill provides temporary protections to TPS recipients from El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti and Nicaragua — who make up the bulk of enrollees — but leaves out Nepal and Sudan.

The legislation also could block undocumented immigrants from obtaining TPS in the future. The measure includes language that would require applicants for the status to be "lawfully present" in the U.S.

The Republican bill significantly ramps up funding for immigration enforcement, according to a summary posted online by the Senate Appropriations Committee — another aspect that could repel Democrats.

The legislation provides money to maintain 52,000 detention beds per day, a 28 percent increase over currently funded levels.

In addition, it would fund 2,000 additional law enforcement personnel for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a 10 percent boost over current staffing levels. The measure would also pay for approximately 750 new Border Patrol agents.

Sanaa Abrar, advocacy director with the immigrant youth-led United We Dream, said the bill uses DACA recipients as a bargaining chip to accomplish Trump's immigration crackdown.

"[The president] is saying that he may temporarily shield some immigrants while he permanently builds the deportation force to go after everyone else," Abrar told reporters Tuesday.

Asylum Limits Added to Bill to End Shutdown Anger Democrats (Bloomberg)

[Bloomberg](#) [1/22/2019 3:20 PM, Sahil Kapur and Laura Litvan, 5702K]

President Donald Trump and Senate Republicans inserted in their plan to end the government shutdown a provision that sets new asylum limits for Central American minors,

making it more difficult to attract enough Democratic votes for the bill to pass.

A Senate bill introduced Monday and modeled on Trump's Saturday proposal for ending the partial shutdown is under attack from immigration activists and Democrats, who say they expect to be able to block it from advancing. In addition to the new asylum limits, the measure also includes an extension of deportation protections for young undocumented "Dreamer" immigrants that Democrats argue cuts out many people who should qualify.

"The president and his team have tried to spin this proposal as a reasonable compromise with concessions to the Democrats," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York said Tuesday. "That defies credulity. Nothing, nothing could be further from the truth."

The 1,301-page legislation includes a provision to ban nationals of El Salvador, Guatemala or Honduras who are under 18 years old from eligibility for asylum unless they submit applications at a processing center in Central America. That means they cannot apply in the U.S. if they flee their home countries due to gang violence, as many have done.

As an olive branch to Democrats, the bill also includes provisional three-year work permits for young undocumented people currently enrolled in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, and those who have Temporary Protected Status. Trump has sought to end those programs.

However, the new legislation would only apply the DACA extension to those young immigrants currently receiving protections, and not those who might be eligible to qualify, as would be allowed under a bipartisan proposal called the Bridge Act. The new legislation would leave out hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children.

Lawmakers are returning to Washington after a holiday weekend that started off with signs of incremental progress on ending the shutdown, but concluded with little accomplished. If the stalemate continues all week, many of the 800,000 federal workers going without pay will miss a second paycheck since funding ran out for about a quarter of the government just before Christmas.

In his remarks Saturday, Trump said his proposal would include "a new system to allow Central American minors to apply for asylum in their home countries," although he didn't mention that they'd no longer be able to apply in the U.S.

"The lack of border control provides a gateway -- and a very wide and open gateway -- for criminals and gang members to enter the United States," Trump said.

Todd Schulte, who leads the pro-immigration group FWD.us, said the legislation allows U.S. authorities to immediately deport children who flee violence in Central American countries and reach the U.S.

Schulte said Trump "misled the public" with his remarks Saturday describing the bill and criticized the "massive restrictions to the asylum system."

The Supreme Court again took no action Monday on Trump's bid to end deportation protections for those in the DACA program, which means it may stay in place at least until

the end of the year.

The administration is challenging lower court rulings that are blocking Trump from rescinding DACA.

The Senate legislation, which Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said will get a vote this week, requires the support of at least seven Democrats to break a filibuster. Schumer indicated it won't come close to that level of support as he and his allies oppose funding for a wall and have insisted that the government be opened before immigration negotiations take place.

One conservative Democrat, Joe Manchin of West Virginia, hasn't had time to review the Senate measure and doesn't have a position yet, according to his office.

McConnell called the White House plan a "bold, comprehensive" offer.

"It's a strong proposal, it's the only one on the table, and later this week we'll vote on it," McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, said Tuesday on the Senate floor.

In the Democratic-led House, the plan also is running into tough resistance. Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a California, Democrat, is calling it a "non-starter."

'Give Trump the money,' Democratic Rep. Collin Peterson says as shutdown drags on (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/22/2019 4:25 PM, Felicia Sonmez, 9763K]

Rep. Collin C. Peterson (D-Minn.) said Tuesday that Congress should agree to President Trump's demand for \$5.7 billion to fund a U.S.-Mexico border wall, in one of the first public statements by a Democrat calling for his party's leaders to throw in the towel as the partial government shutdown drags on.

"Give Trump the money," Peterson said in an interview with Fargo, N.D.-based radio station KFGO. "I'd give him the whole thing . . . and put strings on it so you make sure he puts the wall where it needs to be. Why are we fighting over this? We're going to build that wall anyway, at some time."

Peterson, the chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, has bucked his party in the past. A founding member of the conservative Blue Dog Coalition, he represents a district that Trump won by a 30-point margin in 2016 and has one of the most conservative voting records among House Democrats.

Peterson's remarks come as the partial government shutdown is entering its second month, with few signs of progress toward a deal.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) intends to hold a vote this week on Trump-backed legislation that would reopen the government and meet the president's demand for \$5.7 billion for a border wall.

But House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) has declared such a measure a "non-starter," and Democratic opposition further solidified on Monday after lawmakers and immigration

activists discovered the Senate legislation contains stringent new limits on the U.S. asylum program.

Dem lawmaker calls on Democrats to 'give Trump the money' for border wall (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 4:05 PM, Morgan Gstalter, 3038K]

Rep. Collin Peterson (D-Minn.) called on his Democratic colleagues to give President Trump the funding for his long-desired border wall between the U.S. and Mexico, saying its construction is inevitable.

"Give Trump the money," Peterson told KFGO's "News & Views" on Tuesday. "I'd give him the whole thing ... and put strings on it so you make sure he puts the wall where it needs to be. Why are we fighting over this? We're going to build that wall anyway, at some time."

The 15-term congressman said top Democrats look at him "cross-eyed" when he makes this suggestion.

The funding could come with stipulations requiring some money go toward Border Patrol and improving security measures at ports of entry, Peterson said.

"I don't know if I want to give [Trump] a blank check, but I don't want to preclude him from getting the money either, if he's going to use the money correctly," Peterson told the the outlet.

Peterson said Democratic leadership handing over the requested \$5.7 billion for the wall would end the "unnecessary" partial government shutdown which began on Dec. 22.

He is one of Congress's most conservative Democrats and represents Minnesota's 7th Congressional District, an area Trump won by 30 points during the 2016 presidential election.

The chairman of the House Agriculture Committee said he hasn't been in contact with the Trump White House about shutdown negotiations, adding "I don't now how we get [to a deal]."

The partial government shutdown, currently in its 32nd day, has forced roughly a quarter of the government to shutter. Approximately 800,000 federal employees have been furloughed or are working without pay.

Trump offered a proposal Saturday that would fully reopen the government, provide money for the wall and give a three-year extension of legal protections to immigrants who are Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipients or Temporary Protected Status holders.

Top Democrats, however, dismissed his proposal as a non-starter.

"Democrats were hopeful that the President was finally willing to re-open government and proceed with a much-needed discussion to protect the border. Unfortunately, initial reports make clear that his proposal is a compilation of several previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable and in total, do not represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives," Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said in a statement.

Democrat to Pelosi: 'Get in the Damn Room' with Trump, Negotiate on Border Wall (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/22/2019 3:43 PM, Matthew Boyle, 2015K]

Democrats are livid about House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's continued refusal, on their behalf, to engage in any negotiations with President Donald Trump over his planned wall along the U.S. border with Mexico.

Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D-MI), a freshman from Michigan, is publicly urging Pelosi to drop the games and "get in the damn room" with Trump and negotiate on the wall.

"We all have a fire under us to get something done," Slotkin said, per a local news report. "We're trying to still figure out the dynamic between all of us, and the leadership is still trying to figure out how to manage this very, very energetic and outspoken class."

Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer have flatly refused to negotiate at all over the border wall amid what is now the record longest government shutdown in U.S. history, lasting more than five weeks. About a quarter of the federal government shut down before Christmas over the impasse, when Democrats refused to provide the necessary votes to fund the beginning \$5.7 billion of construction of Trump's wall on the border. The shutdown lasted through the holidays into the new year and new Congress, and as it drags out, Pelosi and Schumer continue to refuse to back down or even talk about the wall.

Trump faced the nation with his first-ever Oval Office address, televised nationally on all the networks, which cut into regular programming to carry it, a couple weeks ago, in which he made the case that the nation faces a crisis on the border. Pelosi and Schumer, in their much-panned response, downplayed the situation and blamed Trump for escalating to this point.

Since then, Pelosi has threatened to cancel President Trump's scheduled State of the Union address before Congress next Tuesday, Jan. 29, even canceling a security walkthrough that the administration is pushing to continue, while the president and his team insist the State of the Union will still be given on Jan. 29. Further complicating matters is the fact that President Trump waited until Pelosi and other top Democrats had boarded a U.S. Air Force bus on Capitol Hill that would take them to a military jet for a government trip to Afghanistan and Europe to assert his authority as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces to cancel their trip, saying Pelosi and Democrats should stay in Washington to end the shutdown instead.

Slotkin is not the only Democrat speaking out, but she is certainly one of the loudest. Per the New York Times, she says she is open to physical barriers along the border:

"As someone who worked on preserving the homeland her entire life, I'm ready to talk about homeland security. I don't think we need a wall from sea to shining sea. But am I willing to talk about more fencing and more drones and technology and radar and border agents? Absolutely."

At a town hall in New York, freshman Democrat Rep. Antonio Delgado (D-NY) pushed for a compromise with Trump.

"There is common ground," Delgado said, according to a local news report. "I don't think

there's much disagreement on the fact that we do have to figure out how to secure our borders. We do have to figure out how to course correct our immigration system, it is flawed, it is broken, we do need to figure out some concrete ways how to solve the problem and do so in a collaborative and cooperative fashion, absolutely."

Rep. Ben McAdams (D-UT) even praised the president for his latest proposal of a temporary extension of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and recipients of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in exchange for the wall—something the president laid out this past Saturday.

The U.S. Senate is expected to take up the president's bill this week, but it remains to be seen if enough Democrats in the Senate will support it to ensure it reaches final passage. The bill needs to garner 60 votes, and there are only 53 Republicans in the majority, so assuming all 53 GOP senators stay on board, it would need at least seven Democrats. If the bill gets through the Senate, its fate is uncertain at best in the House. When President Trump rolled out the idea, Pelosi said it was a "non-starter."

But that's not the only idea circulating. According to Politico, Rep. Elaine Luria (D-VA) is pitching a plan to offer Trump a vote on the wall in February if he reopens the government now. Democrats are livid with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's continued refusal, on their behalf, to engage in any negotiations with President Donald Trump over his planned wall along the U.S. border with Mexico.

Politico's Rachael Bade and Burgess Everett wrote:

"A group of centrist House Democrats, eager to end the shutdown and sick of political posturing, is pressing Speaker Nancy Pelosi to counter President Donald Trump's immigration proposal with her own potential compromise. The group, led by Rep. Elaine Luria of Virginia, is asking the California Democrat to offer Trump a vote on his border wall sometime in February if he signs a bill reopening the federal government, according to a draft copy of the letter obtained by Politico."

Basically, the Luria plan—which Politico writes is being circulated by Democrats who represent red and swing districts—would guarantee House action on the border wall in the form of debates and votes immediately following a reopening of the government. Trump has, as Politico notes, already rejected such an idea when Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) pitched it, but he may be open to it if Democrats are actually on board now.

More importantly, however, this letter and the other comments that keep emerging from a disunited Democrat Party on the border wall demonstrate how much heat Democrats are taking for keeping the shutdown going. Politico's authors write that the letter "illustrates the pressure [these Democrats] are under to end the shutdown."

Border wall immigration deal to end shutdown? It's overdue (San Diego Union Tribune)

[San Diego Union Tribune](#) [1/22/2019 5:20 PM, Staff, 214K]

It may seem impossible, but a compromise can end the U.S. government shutdown, now in a fifth week when nearly 800,000 unpaid federal workers would otherwise be expecting a paycheck. Democrats should start negotiating with President Donald Trump after his weekend proposal to offer more protections for some 700,000 individuals in the Deferred

Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program in exchange for \$5.7 billion in border wall funding. Trump also proposed \$800 million for urgent humanitarian assistance and \$563 million to beef up the immigration court system, including hiring 75 new immigration judges to reduce a backlog of asylum seekers crossing the southern border.

Democratic criticism of Trump's proposal was predictably hasty, if spot-on. Holding federal workers hostage in a policy fight is callous. And protections for DACA "dreamers" must be written into federal law, not set by legally flimsy executive order.

That's a key point. The president's offer of three years of legal protections for the roughly 700,000 individuals in the DACA program doesn't provide anything close to the "certainty to people's lives" that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco, said was essential. It's easy to grasp why President Barack Obama decided to give work permits to these "dreamers" — migrants brought to the United States illegally as children who are leading productive and constructive lives — and allow them to stay in the nation. It's also worth noting that the U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to green-light the Trump administration's 2017's decision to scrap DACA, letting stand lower-court rulings that blocked the decision. Going forward, DACA protections must be law, not revocable regulations.

But Pelosi's categorical rejection of Trump's proposal and her assertion that a border wall is "immoral" are counterproductive. As are Democrats' bizarre claims that walls don't work. There may be better ways to spend federal money on border security, but the 14-mile fence between Tijuana and San Diego that was built in the 1990s drastically reduced the number of illegal border crossings. More recently, construction of a border wall in the Yuma, Arizona, area had the same effect. Walls put up by Israel, Egypt and Spain have also been effective.

Democrats should concede this point even if Trump complicates it. Perhaps because of his rhetoric, American support for a wall has wavered since 2015. But if he allows protections for DACA members to be written into law, then allowing miles of fencing or barriers to be built in areas in Texas and other states that are heavily crossed is reasonable.

This should not be read as countenancing Trump's shutdown strategy or ignoring the stark, ugly nativism of his border "invasion" rhetoric. Instead, it's a call for Congress to do its job and send Trump a bill he'd be foolish to veto, one that ends the shutdown with a compromise or buys time to make an immigration deal. Free the federal workers.

Trump's Compromise Bill: Border Wall Prototypes Banned, Only Bollard Fencing Allowed (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/22/2019 2:44 PM, John Binder, 2015K]

President Trump's compromise legislation to reopen the federal government bans him from building a border wall using elements of prototype walls that he toured last year, only allowing the use of previously-used bollard-style fencing at the United States-Mexico border.

Trump has touted that the End the Shutdown and Secure the Border Act includes a fifth of border wall funding — about \$5.7 billion — to at least continue construction of barriers on the southern border.

Similar to an omnibus spending bill he signed last year, Trump's compromise legislation bans him from building a border wall using elements from prototype walls that were constructed in the San Diego, California, desert and that he toured in 2018.

The wall funding can only be used for "operationally effective designs" that have been used at the southern border in the past "such as currently deployed steel bollard designs," the legislation notes.

This requirement prevents Trump from building barriers that are different from the bollard fences constructed by both Presidents Bush and Obama. Those bollard fences are generally anywhere between 18 to 30 feet high.

Over the past few months, Trump has conceded on the physicality of his proposed border wall, calling the wall "artistically designed steel slats" and a "steel slat barrier." Trump now says he prefers the bollard fencing used by Bush and Obama rather than the prototype walls that featured a mix of materials, including steel and concrete.

The most flexible component of the border infrastructure section of Trump's compromise bill is that it allows the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to determine where best to build the bollard fencing. Previous spending bills have restricted the exact mileage and region where DHS can build new barriers.

The legislation would allow the bollard fencing to be built along more than 200 miles of the 2,000-mile long southern border, DHS officials say.

Hitched to the funding for bollard fences at the border is a plan to give amnesty in the form of three-year work permits to about a million illegal aliens and foreign nationals who would be shielded from deportation.

The Senate bill is expected to be voted on this week.

White House forging ahead with State of the Union planning (Politico)

[Politico](#) [1/22/2019 9:58 PM, Andrew Restuccia and Gabby Orr, 2577K]

Officials intend to move forward until Nancy Pelosi publicly axes the event, a move that they believe would be seen as nakedly political.

The White House is forging ahead with plans to hold President Donald Trump's State of the Union address in the House chamber next Tuesday, according to two administration officials, daring Speaker Nancy Pelosi to nix the event.

Senior White House aides said they put no stock in Pelosi's letter requesting a delay of the annual event because of security concerns related to the government shutdown. They insist the Homeland Security Department and U.S. Secret Service are prepared to secure the address, which traditionally is attended by senior representatives from all three branches of government.

"The security concerns have been addressed," a White House official said. "We're moving forward."

White House officials are aware that Pelosi has the final say over whether the speech will

take place in the House chamber. But they intend to move forward as planned until Pelosi scuttles the event, a move that they believe would be seen as political.

For now, Congress has not approved a joint resolution authorizing an appearance by the president next Tuesday, so there is nothing scheduled for Pelosi to cancel. The resolution would need the support of House Democrats, who have followed taken their lead from Pelosi's lead during the shutdown.

A White House official on Sunday afternoon emailed the office of the House sergeant-at-arms in an attempt to reschedule a walk-through of the event for Monday, a federal holiday during which many congressional staffers were not working.

"Given that we have lost valuable time over the past week my team would like to re-schedule the walkthrough for this Monday, if at all possible," Bobby Peede, the White House's director of presidential advance, said in the email, which was obtained by POLITICO. Peede added that staffers from the Secret Service, Vice President Mike Pence's office, White House military office and others would like to participate in a walk-through.

"We understand that the House Chamber may not be available or be in session and would be happy to meet at any time, day or night," the email continued.

Fox News first reported on the email.

Trump's senior White House aides have advised him to stick to tradition with a formal address from the House chamber, even as some of his closest friends and outside advisers are urging him to "troll" Pelosi with an unconventional location, such as the U.S.-Mexico border or a 2020 battleground state, according to one person involved in the deliberations.

"There's definitely mixed thinking on this, but the general consensus among the people that matter is you need to have it somewhere dignified. It cannot just look like a rally," said a former White House official.

But the White House is already making contingency plans if Pelosi derails the speech, according to another person familiar with the matter. An alternative State of the Union address would likely take place outside Washington, the person said.

An outside Trump adviser said two drafts of the State of the Union address are being written — one to deliver at the Capitol and one to deliver to people other than members of Congress — as Trump and his advisers prepare for either venue.

In addition, White House officials are weighing the possibility of post-State of the Union travel in which the president could amplify his message in the speech, according to another White House official, who added that the plans are in flux. Past presidents have hit the road after their addresses.

Those in favor of an alternative option argue that Trump would benefit more by taking the annual agenda-setting message and delivering it to a hand-picked audience outside of Washington, where protests and boycotts receive outsize attention and pageantry can eclipse substance. They point to the president's decision to schedule a Michigan rally opposite the White House Correspondents' Association dinner in 2017, casting the move as

a remarkable success.

"He can stick to the swamp or he can go to one of the many states witnessing a manufacturing boom to talk about how his agenda is working and what more his administration plans to do," said another Republican close to the White House.

Trump preparing two State of the Union speeches for different audiences: Sources (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/22/2019 12:29 PM, Katherine Faulders, et al., 2413K]

President Donald Trump is preparing for two different State of the Union speeches – one a more traditional address delivered to Congress in the House chamber or some other location in D.C., the other prepared for a political rally at a location outside of Washington, D.C. that has yet to be determined, according to multiple sources familiar with the planning.

Sources told ABC News that the president was previously planning two separate versions of the State of the Union – one version if the government was still shut down and another if the government was open.

However, now the planning has evolved, assuming the government shutdown could drag on past next Tuesday – the expected delivery date of the address. If the president decides to deliver a speech in rally form, it would mark the first rally style event the president has attended since the partial shutdown began.

As part of the ongoing political tit-for-tat between Trump and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., Republicans are encouraging Trump to force Pelosi to officially disinvite him, by suggesting the president announce he still intends to deliver the State of the Union from the House chamber, according to Republican sources involved in the discussions.

A senior administration official confirmed to ABC News that the White House has sent an email to the House Sergeant at Arms requesting a walkthrough of the chamber to prep for the State of the Union address. The White House is still moving forward as planned on the address as they wait to hear whether Pelosi is officially rescinding her invitation.

In a letter to the president last week, Pelosi suggested to Trump that his address, scheduled for Jan. 29, be delayed because of the partial government shutdown. Pelosi proposed the delay out of security concerns, noting that the U.S. Secret Service and the Department of Homeland Security remain unfunded.

Hours after Pelosi's letter became public, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen pushed back in a tweet against the implication that the shutdown has harmed the department's ability to secure the event.

The president tweeted Sunday that "there are so many options" he's considering to give the address.

"Nancy, I am still thinking about the State of the Union speech, there are so many options - including doing it as per your written offer (made during the Shutdown, security is no problem), and my written acceptance. White a contract is a contract, I'll get back to you soon!"

White House deputy press secretary Hogan Gidley said on Fox News Tuesday that the White House had "no announcement at this time" on the president's plans but added that "Nancy Pelosi does not dictate to the president when he will or will not have a conversation with the American people."

While Pelosi's letter to the president left the invitation on the table for him to speak on Jan. 29, she told ABC News last week that her communique underscores her concerns are about security.

"Our letter is clear about what our concerns are. Just read the letter again, okay?" Pelosi, D-Calif., said. "It's about security."

White House planning to proceed with State of the Union, but details up in the air after Pelosi threat (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/22/2019 11:32 AM, Alex Pappas and John Roberts, 9216K]

The White House is still planning to move ahead with next week's scheduled State of the Union address, but the details remain up in the air after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi strongly urged the president to delay the speech or submit it in writing amid the government shutdown fight.

According to multiple sources, it remains unclear whether the address scheduled for Jan. 29 will in fact go forward, or what venue it would be in. The White House is even planning for the possibility of a speech outside of Washington.

"We are still in a holding pattern," one senior source said.

But Fox News has learned that the White House sent a letter to the House Sergeant at Arms asking to schedule a walk-through for next week's planned address. This comes after a previously scheduled walk-through last week was canceled at Pelosi's request.

At the moment, President Trump intends to be at the Capitol next Tuesday to deliver his speech as scheduled, sources said. White House officials told Fox News they essentially are preparing for two tracks for next week's speech. The preferred track is an address, as per custom, at the Capitol. The second track is a backup plan for a speech outside of Washington, D.C.

Ultimately, whether the speech is given on the House floor is up to Pelosi. In an appearance on Fox News on Tuesday, White House Deputy Press Secretary Hogan Gidley suggested the president could move the location of the speech should Pelosi block it in the House.

"There are many ways he can deliver the State of the Union address," Gidley said on "America's Newsroom." "I'm not going to get ahead of anything he would announce."

Gidley accused Pelosi of "trying to play politics with that venue." He also dinged the speaker for suggesting it may be difficult to provide security for the event because of the partial government shutdown.

"If the Secret Service can protect the president of the United States on a trip to Iraq, chances are they can protect the American president in the halls of Congress," Gidley said.

A spokesman for Pelosi did not immediately return a request for comment. Neither did the House Sergeant at Arms office.

On Capitol Hill, there is immense uncertainty about what will happen. The offices of other congressional leaders referred questions about the speech to Pelosi.

"We are standing by to stand by," one senior congressional official told Fox News when asked if the State of the Union speech would still unfold.

For that to happen in the House, both chambers of Congress must approve a resolution to use the House chamber and to have both bodies meet in a Joint Session of Congress. This has not happened yet.

Should the Senate move to host the president instead, a resolution would still be needed.

The White House and Pelosi have time to figure things out. Fox News is told Congress can actually put together the event rather quickly, though they would prefer to have at least 72 hours advance notice.

Last week, Pelosi urged Trump to delay his State of the Union address until the partial government shutdown ends, or submit the address in writing.

"Sadly, given the security concerns and unless the government re-opens this week, I suggest that we work together to determine another suitable date after government has re-opened for this address or for you to consider delivering your State of the Union address in writing to Congress on January 29," Pelosi wrote.

A senior Homeland Security official later told Fox News, however, that they have been preparing for months for the State of the Union event.

"We are ready," the official said. "Despite the fact members of the Secret Service are not being paid, the protective mission has not changed."

The official added: "It is a 'no fail' mission."

On Tuesday, an official confirmed to Fox News that DHS and the Secret Service are continuing their plans for a State of the Union on Jan 29.

After Pelosi called for a delay in the speech, Trump abruptly denied military aircraft to her and other Democrats for a foreign trip just minutes before the congressional delegation was set to depart.

The State of the Union address, historically, has not always been delivered in person. Thomas Jefferson started the practice of submitting the address in writing, and it was not until Woodrow Wilson's administration that the speech was delivered in person again.

Pelosi's letter to the White House comes as the shutdown, the longest in history, has left more than 800,000 federal employees and contractors without pay. Some employees are deemed essential to government functions and are required to work without pay. Others have been furloughed, and also do not receive paychecks.

The government first ran out of funding on Dec. 22, as the president requested \$5.7 billion in funding for border security and construction of a border wall or physical barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border, citing an "invasion" and a "humanitarian crisis."

Pelosi, and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., have vowed to block any spending proposal that includes funding for a wall.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Despite Rescinded Invitation, Trump Moves Toward State Of Union Address At Capitol (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/22/2019 1:19 PM, Saagar Enjeti, 867K]

The White House sought to schedule a walk-through for its advance staff at the U.S. Capitol building Monday, which indicates President Donald Trump intends to deliver his State of the Union address despite being un-invited by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi last week.

The schedule request from the White House is the latest in a larger saga over a partial government shutdown lasting more than a month as a result of funding disagreements between Democrats and Republicans for a wall along the U.S. southern border.

Trump is demanding\$ 5.7 billion in funding with Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer saying they will give no more than \$1.6 billion.

Pelosi wrote Trump last week notifying him that she was un-inviting him from delivering a State of the Union address to Congress on Jan 29, claiming that security readiness was affected because protection personnel were not receiving their paychecks.

Pelosi, however, was rebuked by Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, who said that the department was fully prepared to provide security if necessary.

Trump responded to Pelosi days later saying that the State of the Union address would be delivered in some form, and they would let her know eventually what he decided. The administration's request of a walk through indicates they still believe that a State of the Union address before the full Congress is still on the table.

Shutdown Could Cost the U.S. More than Trump's Border Wall (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [1/21/2019 9:43 AM, Alexa Lardieri, 2894K]

The record-long government shutdown, now entering day 32, may cost the government more than the \$5.7 billion President Donald Trump is demanding for a border wall.

In an analysis earlier this month, Beth Ann Bovino, the chief U.S. economist for S&P Global, estimated that every week of the shutdown could shave off \$1.2 billion from the country's gross domestic product. Now in its fifth week, the shutdown could potentially cost America \$6 billion.

The shutdown began Dec. 22 when Democrats and Republicans couldn't come to an agreement on a budget that included \$5.7 billion for a U.S.-Mexico border wall. More than

800,000 federal employees have been furloughed or are working without pay.

"The longer this shutdown drags on, the more collateral damage the economy will suffer," Bovino wrote.

And the longest government shutdown in the country's history doesn't appear to have an end in sight. Over the weekend, Democrats rejected the president's offer of wall funding in exchange for protection for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipients and individuals with Temporary Protected Status.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a statement on Saturday that the president's offer is "unacceptable" and does "not represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives."

President Trump spins asylum restrictions as humanitarian relief (Washington Post)
[Washington Post](#) [1/23/2019 3:00 AM, Salvador Rizzo, 9763K]

"Our plan includes critical measures to protect migrant children from exploitation and abuse. This includes a new system to allow Central American minors to apply for asylum in their home countries, and reform to promote family reunification for unaccompanied children, thousands of whom wind up on our border doorstep."

— President Trump, in remarks at the White House, Jan. 19, 2019

"We have asked Congress to close border security loopholes so that illegal immigrant children can be safely and humanely returned back home."

— Trump, in an Oval Office address on immigration, Jan. 8, 2019

"We want to save lives. We want children to be safe. The children are being decimated. And I'm not talking about necessarily children in our country. I'm talking about wonderful children that are coming up from other places, whether it's Honduras or Guatemala, or El Salvador or Mexico, or other places. And we have to take care of those children also. We can't let them die on the way up."

— Trump, in a Rose Garden news conference, Jan. 4, 2019

President Trump says he's concerned for Central American children making a potentially hazardous trek to the United States. But his noble sentiments and honeyed words are at odds with the tough-love solution he's proposing.

The journey from Central America to the U.S.-Mexico border comes with risks. The White House notes that "nearly one-third of women are sexually assaulted." This statistic comes from Doctors Without Borders, which interviewed 56 women for a report in 2017 and found that 31.4 percent were "sexually abused" on the journey; 10.7 percent were raped.

The same report says: "The violence experienced by the population of the NTCA [Northern Triangle of Central America] is not unlike that of individuals living through war. Citizens are murdered with impunity, kidnappings and extortion are daily occurrences. Non-state actors perpetuate insecurity and forcibly recruit individuals into their ranks, and use sexual violence as a tool of intimidation and control. This generalized and pervasive threat of

violence contributes to an increasingly dire reality for the citizens of these countries."

Many Central American children and families are fleeing to the United States because of safety concerns and high poverty. The journey is risky, but for many of them, so is the prospect of staying home. Trump's proposal would require these children to stay home and grant asylum to 15,000 minors at most from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras per year.

There's a disconnect between Trump's concern for child safety and what his proposal would mean for children. So, we're going to outline six big changes his bill would make to the asylum system for Central American minors.

The Facts

Trump's plan to reopen the government comes with a sweeping rewrite of U.S. humanitarian laws. One of the biggest changes would reduce opportunities for Central American minors to obtain asylum. That could violate international law on protections for refugees, according to experts and pro-immigration groups.

Applying from home

Under current law, immigrants who fear persecution may apply for asylum in the United States, regardless of how they entered the country. Trump's proposal — the "Central American Minors Protection Act of 2019" — would bar asylum claims by minors from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras who show up at the border.

These minors would have to apply for asylum while remaining in their home countries or another country. The total number of asylum grants for Guatemalan, Honduran and Salvadoran minors would be capped at 15,000 per year.

"This is a major change to asylum law that will block tens of thousands of children who are now showing up at our borders from ever getting protection," said Greg Chen, director of government relations for the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

There's no breakdown of how many Central American minors obtain asylum each year under current law, but it's well known that tens of thousands such children are showing up at the border seeking entry. Nearly 58,600 unaccompanied children, and thousands more who came with family members, were encountered at the southern border in fiscal 2018, according to Customs and Border Protection data.

Immigration judges granted asylum to 20,524 individuals (both children and adults) from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras in fiscal 2018. That total doesn't include unaccompanied children who obtained asylum through a separate process run by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

What would happen to Central American minors who showed up at the border anyway and requested asylum?

The United Nations Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees says governments should not return refugees to the places where they face threats. "The principle of nonrefoulement is so fundamental that no reservations or derogations may be

made to it," the UN agreement says. "It provides that no one shall expel or return ('refouler') a refugee against his or her will, in any manner whatsoever, to a territory where he or she fears threats to life or freedom."

The U.N. protocol on refugees also says governments should not discriminate based on "country of origin," but Trump wants carve-outs in the asylum laws for El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

It's possible that the Trump administration would grant a lesser form of asylum known as "withholding of removal" to Central American minors at the border. But that's not in the text of the legislation, so it's an open question for now, said Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, a policy analyst at the American Immigration Council. Reichlin-Melnick said Trump's proposal would invite legal challenges.

The Trump administration has said the U.N. refugee protocol is "not directly enforceable in U.S. law." But it has noted that the U.S. government avoided refoulement issues in the past by using "withholding of removal," according to a rule proposal submitted in November.

"These treaties are not directly enforceable in U.S. law, but some of the obligations they contain have been implemented through domestic implementing legislation," the rule proposal says. "For example, the United States has implemented the non-refoulement provisions of these treaties — i.e., provisions prohibiting the return of an individual to a country where he or she would face persecution or torture — through the withholding of removal provisions."

Representatives for the Senate sponsor of the legislation, Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), referred questions to the Trump administration. The White House did not respond to our questions.

Having a process to request asylum from outside the United States is not a new idea. What makes Trump's proposal unique is that he would do this while simultaneously barring asylum claims from Central American children who present themselves in the United States. (According to the Daily Beast, Central American minors at the border would still be able to seek Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, but that system is already backlogged and requires children to "prove in family court that they were abandoned or abused by a parent.")

Qualified parent or guardian

Under another change Trump wants, minors from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras seeking asylum would need to have "a qualified parent or guardian in the United States capable of taking custody and care of the minor upon arrival."

That provision could bar many asylum claims. The bill does not define what it means to be a "qualified" parent or guardian. For context, border officials encountered 58,600 unaccompanied minors in fiscal 2018, most of them from Central America. In addition, thousands more Central American minors at the border were traveling with parents or legal guardians. There's no breakdown, but the total for all children and adults encountered as family units was 161,113 in fiscal 2018.

'National interest'

The Trump bill says the secretary of Homeland Security may approve asylum applications for minors from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras "consistent with the national interest." The term "national interest" is not defined in the bill and, as we've noted, neither the Senate sponsor nor the White House answered our questions.

Fee

Reichlin-Melnick said that under current law, Central American minors do not pay a fee to apply for asylum. "Asylum applications and refugee applications do not cost money because people fleeing persecution often don't flee with assets," he said.

Trump's bill would impose a fee to cover "the cost of processing the application" and also an "amount necessary to deter frivolous applications." It's unclear what this fee would total; the bill leaves those particulars to the secretary of Homeland Security.

Judicial review

Trump's proposal would restrict opportunities for Central American minors to challenge the administration's asylum decisions in court. The legislation says "no court or immigration judge shall have jurisdiction to review a determination of the Secretary of Homeland Security" on whether to grant asylum to minors from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Under current law, asylum decisions by executive branch officials can be appealed to the U.S. judicial branch up to the Supreme Court.

Trafficking protection

The Trump proposal would relax a key provision in the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA), a law that gives safe harbor to victims of human trafficking.

As a provision of the TVPRA, unaccompanied children from non-contiguous countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras remain in the United States while their cases are evaluated. Trump's proposal would change that, allowing U.S. officials to return children from those three countries promptly unless an "immigration officer determines that it is more probable than not that the unaccompanied alien child will be trafficked on return to his or her country" or determines that the child could qualify for asylum.

The Bottom Line

Those worried for the safety of Central American children should keep in mind that many of them are in danger whether they journey to the United States or remain in Central America.

Trump says the humane solution is: Stay home, wait your turn. That turn might never come under the bill he's proposing, since it's loaded with new obstacles. What the bill does is put the problem at someone else's door, using safety concerns as a fig leaf.

Here's How The White House Is Trying To Stop Future Caravans (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/22/2019 10:03 AM, Saagar Enjeti, 867K]

President Donald Trump's latest effort to break a stalemate over border wall funding and end a partial government shutdown includes provisions that would seek to stop the formation of Central American migrant caravans.

Trump is currently engaged in a high-stakes fight with Democratic lawmakers over funding for a proposed wall along the U.S. southern border. The two sides remain largely where they were when the shutdown began shortly before Christmas with Democrats saying they will provide only \$1.6 billion in border wall funding and President Donald Trump demanding \$5.7 billion.

The president sought to break the 32-day logjam and stave off another missed paycheck for federal workers Saturday by offering Democrats the chance to extend the DACA program for an additional three years and the temporary protected status program. In exchange, the White House maintains its ask for \$5.7 billion in funding, an increase in humanitarian aid and changes to the U.S. asylum law.

The latter provisions have not received center stage coverage but would seek to strike at the heart of the current migrant crisis at the U.S. southern border. Two administration sources close to the process described a dual phenomenon putting extreme stress on U.S. resources: the arrival of unaccompanied children seeking asylum, and the arrival of family units.

Both cases require the U.S. either to take custody and care of children while their asylum claims are adjudicated, or, in the case of family units, release them after a short period due to loopholes in U.S. law. The Trump administration sees these current policies as an effective open border policy with word trickling back to Central America that it is possible to come to the U.S. as long as one is claiming asylum and brings their children.

The Department of Homeland Security detained a record number of family units at the border in December and points to the formation of a new caravan of would-be migrants gathering in Honduras.

New language included in legislation the administration is putting before the U.S. Senate this week will instead require Central American migrant children to apply for asylum in their home countries. The provision would instead allow these children to remain in their home countries while their cases are being adjudicated, removing the strain on U.S. authorities by not allowing them to claim asylum at the southern border.

A senior administration official pointed to a provision of the legislation that would allow for the removal and deportation of individuals from Central American migrants in a timely manner. The provision would end catch-and-release policy and would work to discourage would-be migrants from making the dangerous trek to the U.S. over nearly 1,000 miles of desert.

Vice President Mike Pence told reporters Saturday that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell gave the administration assurances that the legislation would be put forth on the Senate floor this week. Pence noted that the compromise legislation is a "good faith" effort to try to end the partial government shutdown.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer have already come out against the legislation, however, with Pelosi saying the Democratic House will instead advance legislation that reopens the government and gives no concessions to the White House.

Senate Dems introduces bill to keep DACA info private (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 4:27 PM, Rafael Bernal, 3038K]

Senate Democrats introduced a bill Tuesday to ensure information given to the government by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) beneficiaries isn't used for immigration enforcement.

New Mexico Sen. Martin Heinrich (D) led the bill, dubbed the Dreamer Confidentiality act.

"Nearly a million Dreamers across the country have come out of the shadows because of the promise that DACA represented, including more than 7,000 from New Mexico," said Heinrich in a statement.

"These are some of our brightest students and veterans who came forward based on the promise that our government would not deport them and provided personal information about themselves and their families," he added.

Under DACA, undocumented immigrants who arrived in the country as minors are allowed to work and live in the United States without fear of deportation.

To apply to DACA, potential beneficiaries must provide the government with up-to-date personal information, pass a background check, and pay a fee.

The DACA application itself is an admission that the beneficiary is in the country illegally, and doubts have been raised since the program's inception as to whether the data collected by the government can be used against applicants.

"Dreamers across the country continue to face a harsh uncertainty about their future and are worried that the information they shared will be used against them. To do this would be an extraordinary and unprecedented breach of trust by our government," said Heinrich.

Heinrich's bill would ban the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which oversees DACA, from passing the information collected to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP) -- both agencies reside under DHS -- the Department of Justice, or any other law enforcement agency.

The bill includes exceptions to the ban in case of fraudulent claims, individual national security issues, or the investigation of non-immigration related felonies.

Along with Heinrich, Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Tom Udall (D-N.M.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Tom Carper (D-Del.), Kamala Harris (D-Calif.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.), Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Cory Booker (D-N.J.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Jack Reed (D-R.I.), Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), and Edward Markey (D-Mass.) signed on to the bill.

Small but powerful amendment could lessen immigration detention (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 7:30 AM, Christina Fialho, 3038K]

The United States imprisons more immigrants than any other country, but we don't have to. Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a federal budget amendment introduced by Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.) and drafted with the support of Freedom for

Immigrants to curtail the growth of U.S. immigration detention.

This amendment is the first step toward abolishing the immigration detention system, which is responsible for separating hundreds of thousands of families each year.

The amendment specifically prohibits the U.S. Coast Guard from transferring funds to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for the purpose of building or expanding immigration detention facilities. This is critical because the Trump administration has diverted over \$200 million from other agencies, including \$29 million from the Coast Guard, for the purpose of detaining and deporting immigrants and their children.

Without congressional approval, the Trump administration transferred nearly \$10 million last year meant for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ICE. This administration also has diverted tax dollars needed for cancer research and HIV/AIDS prevention toward locking up children in cages.

These federal dollars could have been used to alleviate suffering. Instead, our tax money has been used to aggravate human suffering. For the asylum-seeker who is locked up, immigration detention means the complete deprivation of liberty and often, hope, and it means being subjected to countless forms of abuse. As a society, the diversion of these funds means our resources are not being invested in ways that serve our communities or respect human dignity.

This small, four-lined amendment to the fiscal year 2019 disaster relief supplemental appropriations bill signals a change in the political tide, though.

Since the early 1980s, Congress has passed increasingly aggressive policies under both Democratic and Republican leadership, resulting in a system that now imprisons 48,000 immigrants, asylum seekers and victims of human trafficking every day. In 1981, the Reagan administration opened the first modern immigration detention facility, the Fort Allen Detention Center on a former U.S. Navy Base in Puerto Rico, to detain Haitians.

In 1996, the Clinton administration passed two laws that greatly expanded immigration detention. President George W. Bush launched Operation Streamline, authorizing the mass criminal prosecution of immigrants at the border, which the Trump administration used to separate families this past summer. President Obama was responsible for the detention of about 350,000 to 400,000 people each year.

But there is a glimmer of hope, even in these times of round-the-clock upheaval.

The House voted in favor of ending this race to the bottom. For the first time in 30 years, our federal legislators have taken a step to stop immigration detention expansion.

And they are not alone.

California has taken decisive action. California's Dignity Not Detention Act, which took effect in January 2018, and an amendment to California's budget bill, AB 103, prevents California municipalities from entering into new, or modifying existing, contracts with ICE for immigration detention facilities, thereby halting the growth of immigrant prisons and jails in the state.

More action is needed. Congress must pass the Detention Oversight Not Expansion (DONE) Act, which would stop the expansion of immigration detention entirely and require ICE to develop a plan for decreasing the number of people in immigration detention by 50 percent. It also would implement community-based alternatives to detention, which have been proven to be far less expensive than imprisonment.

It is time for the United States to stop fueling the incarceration industry and move toward a more humane response to migration.

Families keep trying to cross border, wall or no wall (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/23/2019 5:16 AM, Nomaan Merchant, 9763K]

Maria Orbelina Cortez says she fled El Salvador for the U.S. after her husband attacked her and knocked a pan of scalding oil onto her youngest son's head.

After quietly planning for months, she took the 3-year-old boy and his two brothers and headed north without telling her husband. As she spoke in the yard of a Catholic Charities shelter in South Texas, the boy played nearby. He had a hairless scar on top of his head in the shape of a jagged, capital "T."

"I will always feel culpable," said Orbelina, 30. "Always."

President Donald Trump's push for a \$5.7 billion wall — a demand that triggered the longest government shutdown in history — is unlikely on its own to stop families with stories like Orbelina's, who are crossing the U.S.-Mexico border by the thousands each month.

The Trump administration wants to use that money to construct more than 200 miles (320 kilometers) of border wall. Most of those miles would likely go in South Texas, where more people cross illegally than anywhere else.

Congress has already funded 33 miles (53 kilometers) of new barrier construction here. But much of that new barrier will be built north of the Rio Grande, which carves a natural boundary between the U.S. and Mexico. That means migrants will still be able to reach American soil in front of the newly constructed barrier and request asylum.

The latest proposal Trump and Senate Republicans made to fund the wall includes provisions that could possibly be far more consequential than the wall, by making the already difficult task of winning asylum even harder.

Their bill would require all asylum claims to be in "the national interest" to be granted and allow more claims to be judged as frivolous. It would also require all Central American children arriving on their own to seek asylum in their countries of origin, not in the United States.

Trump did not describe those provisions in his speech Saturday announcing the proposal. But Greg Chen, director of government relations at the American Immigration Lawyers Association, said they amounted to "a historic change" and criticized the bill. Top Democrats have already said they won't support it.

Sister Norma Pimentel, executive director of Catholic Charities in the Rio Grande Valley,

said the families at the organization's shelter sometimes resort to crossing the Rio Grande illegally out of desperation after being stopped at bridges.

"It is important that we secure our borders, that we keep our country safe from criminals," Pimentel said. She added that Trump "needs to meet the families that are not criminals. He needs to meet the children and the great number of families that are here asking for protection."

Deysi Yanira Centeno reached the border a month after fleeing El Salvador, where gangs threatened her 15-year-old daughter.

Centeno said a human smuggler told her crossing the Rio Grande would be easier than trying to enter the U.S. through a bridge, where customs agents often tell asylum seekers they have no room to process them. So she paid \$20 each for herself, her teenage daughter, and two children ages 11 and 7, to board a raft. She described how scared she was as it slowly moved across the river.

"In that moment you think about life and death," she said. "You think, 'Maybe it would have been better for me not to leave my country.'"

Others refuse to cross the river illegally, insisting they will only seek asylum at an official border crossing. Many of the border crossings in South Texas and elsewhere on the border turn away asylum seekers or accept very few daily, leading families to camp out at the bridges or wait in shelters in Mexico.

Esperanza Vargas, who fled Nicaragua with her 18-year-old son, waited for weeks next to the Mexican side of the bridge connecting Matamoros, Mexico, and Brownsville, Texas. Vargas and her son feared that they would be targeted in the government's ongoing conflict with paramilitary groups.

"You can't say we're a danger for the U.S. if we're here," Vargas said. "If we're here, it's because we want to do things the right way."

Trump administration officials argue many asylum seekers are making illegitimate claims to enter the U.S. for years while their cases are processed. Immigration courts last year denied asylum in about 65 percent of cases.

The administration has long fought to limit asylum protections. A federal judge in December struck down a policy change restricting asylum for victims of domestic violence. The Department of Homeland Security has also announced a plan to make all asylum seekers at the border wait in Mexico.

Most of the people who arrived at the border had taken several weeks to get there. Some admitted they hired smugglers to get them through Mexico. Others said they took buses on their own.

But the women waiting at Catholic Charities all said they had no choice.

Sitting in the yard of the shelter, wearing an ankle monitor, Orbelina said her husband would often attack her after coming home from a night of drinking. Sometimes he would hit their

children too, she said.

She says she reported him to police in their town of Sonsonate, west of the capital of San Salvador. But her husband told police she had attacked him, and he wasn't arrested, she said.

It took six months to plan her escape, saving money and relying on her parents in California, who sent money as she moved through Mexico. She said she entered the U.S. through an official border crossing at Progreso, Texas.

She plans to join her parents and file for a divorce and a protection order.

"My hope is to work and to see my children grow up," Orbelina said. "I see them happy, but I know that at times they suffer."

HHS secretary declines request to testify on border family separations, panel says (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/23/2019 12:05 AM, Kate Sullivan and Lauren Fox, CNN, 5847K]

The House Energy and Commerce Committee says Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar has declined a request to appear before the committee to discuss family separations at the US southern border.

Chairman Frank Pallone, a New Jersey Democrat, personally requested that Azar testify before the committee, but the secretary's office declined the request on Tuesday, according to the committee spokesman.

"One way or another," Azar will have to testify before the Energy and Commerce Committee, Pallone said in a statement. He called Azar's denial of the request to testify "unacceptable" and said it is "outrageous" that Azar has yet to appear before Congress for a hearing on the controversial policy.

Between April 19 and May 31 last year more than 2,600 children were separated from their parents at the southern border, after the Trump administration ordered federal prosecutors to pursue criminal charges against all migrants who crossed the border unlawfully. The controversial policy was ultimately reversed in June with an executive order.

A new inspector general report released on Thursday found that "thousands" more children had been separated than previously reported by the government.

The new report "raises new questions of whether this Administration was engaging in such tactics earlier than it reported," according to Pallone's statement.

Azar's office did not dispute that he had declined the invitation to testify. His office contended in a statement to CNN that the secretary and Pallone have "spoken directly." According to the statement, Azar "understands and appreciates the important role of congressional oversight and is committed to providing necessary information and expertise."

The statement says Health and Human Services staff have "communicated in good faith" with the congressional staff "to provide the department's most knowledgeable subject

matter experts to the subcommittee."

"HHS has also facilitated numerous briefings with congressional staff to provide updates" on the Unaccompanied Alien Children program and the work of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, "including a weekly call with the Hill -- and has coordinated over 100 visits for members of Congress and more than 50 members of the media to ORR-funded facilities," according to the statement by Azar's office.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations sent a letter on Friday to Azar requesting that he turn over documents related to the administration's "zero-tolerance" immigration policy.

The letter came less than a day after Sen. Jeff Merkley, an Oregon Democrat, released a 2017 draft memo that details plans to separate families months before the "zero-tolerance" policy was announced by the administration.

Leaked Family Separation Memo May Bolster Detained Children's Case (Bloomberg)
[Bloomberg](#) [1/22/2019 1:56 PM, Andrew M. Harris, 5702K]

Lawyers suing to speed reunification of detained migrant children with relatives have moved to bolster their case with a 2017 draft memorandum purporting to show the government separated the families to deter illegal border crossings.

The memo, entitled "Policy Options to Respond to Border Surge of Illegal Immigration," recommends targeting parents because that would be reported by the media and "would have substantial deterrent effect."

The document -- leaked last week to U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley, a Democrat from Oregon -- also advocates putting parents in detention while keeping children in federal custody. Merkley has called on the FBI to investigate whether Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen lied in December when she told a House committee there was no such policy.

The legal maneuvering comes in a suit filed in Alexandria, Virginia, federal court last year on behalf of children detained in that state. A revised complaint lodged with the court on Friday aims to allow them to represent 10,000 such children nationwide. They're also demanding new procedures for reuniting family members. A hearing was scheduled before U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema for Feb. 15 to consider the lawyers' bid.

Groups sue on behalf of more than 10,000 detained undocumented children (CNN)
[CNN](#) [1/22/2019 7:45 PM, Priscilla Alvarez, CNN, 5847K]

The Southern Poverty Law Center has joined a class action lawsuit against the government on behalf of more than 10,000 undocumented children held in detention centers across the country.

The lawsuit, filed by the SPLC, Legal Aid Justice Center and Washington, DC-based Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox PLLC, seeks that detained children who have a sponsor in the US be released from detention and that the system is overhauled.

At issue is the sharing of a sponsor's information with Immigration and Customs

Enforcement and a leaked government memo that revealed the motivation of policies, like "zero tolerance" and information sharing, was to deter migrants.

"The memo did play an important role in having us understand the motivation of the administration," said Mary Bauer, deputy legal director at the SPLC in a call with reporters on Tuesday. "It seemed to us apparent that the policies were designed for the purpose of harming families and those concerns were confirmed."

In the same call, Kayla Vazquez, a detained child's sponsor who's listed in the complaint, described the challenges she and her family have faced in trying to retrieve her husband's cousin, a 17-year-old boy from Honduras who was apprehended at the US-Mexico border last summer.

"I'm sick of it, it's frustrating," Vazquez said. "His mother reaches out to me asking what's going on and when her son is going to be with us. ... This minor is turning 18 in May and we're scared they're waiting for him to turn 18 and be deported or go to jail or something like that." Once a child turns 18, they're released from custody and can be turned over to ICE.

A lawsuit addressing children in government custody was originally filed last August by the Legal Aid Justice Center. That lawsuit, however, only covered detained children in Virginia.

The announcement comes on the heels of a Health and Human Services inspector general report that found "thousands" more children had been separated than previously reported and a leaked internal memo that revealed how the administration intended to deter migrants from approaching the border through policies like family separation.

The complaint was filed Friday in the Eastern District of Virginia. A hearing is scheduled for February 15.

Southern Poverty Law Center sues Trump over detained immigrant children (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/22/2019 1:05 PM, Anna Giaritelli, 629K]

The Southern Poverty Law Center on Monday filed a class-action lawsuit against the the Trump administration on behalf of more than 10,000 migrant children who have been detained for crossing the border.

The lawsuit argued that the children's due process rights as asylum seekers were violated and called for their immediate release.

"If the President is really interested in taking on a crisis in regard to the immigration situation — this is one he has the power to solve, since his Administration created it," said Mary Bauer, deputy legal director for the center's Immigrant Justice Project. "We have over 10,000 children in custody right now because this administration is using them as bait. This deplorable, deliberate policy means that these children are languishing in detention for months at a time."

The Center originally filed the legal action last year in federal court in Alexandria, Va., on behalf of children who were being held in that state. The new lawsuit covers thousands more that are being held in 100 federal detention centers.

Now, the group says, the number of children being held has reached a "crisis level."

Last April, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services agreed that HHS's Office of Refugee Resettlement would share information with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement about adults who agreed to sponsor a child in federal custody.

The lawsuit charged the administration did this in order to scare families in Central America from migrating to the U.S. because they risked having their child taken away and then having the adult who picked him or her up from HHS be taken into custody by ICE and possibly deported.

"A memo drafted in late 2017 and obtained January 17, 2019 reveals the Administration intended the very result this policy has caused: the prolonged detention of children," the group said in the release.

"Children belong in homes with families, not warehoused in government detention centers," Simon Sandoval-Moshenberg, legal director of the Immigrant Advocacy Program and the Legal Aid Justice Center, said in a statement. "But the government is still using sponsors' information for ICE immigration arrests. They're still targeting the sponsors themselves, and as a result over 10,000 immigrant children are still stuck in detention for longer than ever before."

Other groups that are part of the suit include the Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc. and the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project.

State Dept. forced to cancel border security conference amid shutdown (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 6:22 PM, Emily Birnbaum, 3038K]

The State Department has been forced to cancel an international conference about border security amid the partial government shutdown, The Hill has confirmed.

A State Department spokesperson told The Hill that the 16th annual International Export Control and Border Security Conference set to take place in Scotland next month has been canceled due to "very limited funding available during the lapse in appropriations."

The spokesperson noted that the event typically brings together more than 250 "export control and border security practitioners" from 85 countries.

"In light of the very limited funding available during the lapse in appropriations, the Department will exercise judicious use of limited, remaining resources," the State Department spokesperson said. "Travel, hiring, contracting, public affairs, and other activities will continue to operate in a constrained manner."

Kathryn Insley, director of the State Department's Office of Export Control Cooperation, announced the conference's cancellation in a letter first reported by CNN on Tuesday.

Insley wrote to dozens of U.S. embassies and missions worldwide saying that officials are "working to identify alternative dates" and would be in contact when operational again.

Insley's letter was signed Jan. 16, according to CNN. She asked U.S. missions and

embassies to alert "the appropriate host government officials who have been nominated to attend the Conference."

The current partial government shutdown, which has now reached its 32nd day, is affecting an estimated 800,000 federal workers who are either furloughed or working without pay.

The shutdown largely stems from a fight over border security, as President Trump demands more than \$5 billion in border wall funding while Democrats have refused to give that amount.

Immigration is top issue facing country: poll (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 5:35 PM, Max Greenwood, 3038K]

A plurality of U.S. voters point to immigration as the most important issue facing the country, according to a Harvard CAPS/Harris poll released exclusively to The Hill on Tuesday.

Thirty-eight percent of respondents said that they see immigration as their top issue – more than the 36 percent who said health care is the most important matter in the country.

The findings come as a deadlock between President Trump and congressional Democrats over funding for a border wall drags a partial government shutdown into its fifth week.

The findings also suggest that the topic of immigration could play an outsized role in the 2020 election cycle, when Trump will seek a second term in the White House.

"Immigration is surging as the top issue in the country, displacing healthcare," said Mark Penn, the co-director of the Harvard CAPS/Harris poll.

In the 2018 midterm elections, Democrats took over the House with campaign messages largely built on protecting former President Barack Obama's signature Affordable Care Act (ACA) and expanding access to health care.

Penn said that the rising prominence of immigration as a political issue, however, appeared to be "more of a win for the Trump forces," given the president's intense focus on illegal immigration and claims that a crisis is unfolding on the southern border.

That claim is at the center of Trump's demand for \$5.7 billion in funding for his border wall. Democratic lawmakers have rejected that request, leading to the budget standoff.

Trump unveiled a proposal over the weekend that would extend temporary legal protections for immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children – known as "Dreamers" – in exchange for the border wall funding.

Democrats have panned that proposal as a nonstarter, accusing Trump of seeking to use protections for Dreamers as leverage for his wall after he rescinded those protections in 2017.

Most U.S. voters – 55 percent – oppose the idea of building a wall along the southern border, according to the Harvard CAPS/Harris poll, while 45 percent back the proposal.

But Americans are near-evenly split on whether the U.S. should erect a "security barrier"

along the border. Forty-nine percent support such a proposal, while 51 percent opposes it.

Despite that split, an overwhelming majority of respondents said that border security on the U.S. boundary with Mexico is an issue, the poll found.

Nearly half – 49 percent – said that they see border security as a "serious problem," while another 36 percent said it was a "minor problem." Only 16 percent said it is "not even a small priority."

The Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll online survey of 1,540 registered voters was conducted from Jan. 15-16.

The Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll is a collaboration of the Center for American Political Studies at Harvard University and The Harris Poll. The Hill will be working with Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll throughout 2019.

Full poll results will be posted online later this week. The Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll survey is an online sample drawn from the Harris Panel and weighted to reflect known demographics. As a representative online sample, it does not report a probability confidence interval.

**[TX] Texas has a big problem with asylum seekers, and a wall won't fix it
(Washington Examiner)**

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/22/2019 3:46 PM, Eddie Scarry, 629K]

This is the thing about the pieces of wall barrier already built here along the Mexican border: By the time anyone coming up from Mexico makes it to the wall, they've already been walking in America for several minutes. Or if they get lost in the dark of night, maybe even several hours.

If they claim asylum, there's a good chance they'll get to stay and another good chance they'll skip their court hearing, disappearing into the country for good.

More wall can't stop this. Border agents know it and, even more pressing, everyone south of the border knows it, too.

The wall that's in Texas now does not separate the U.S. from Mexico. It separates the U.S. from more of the U.S., an uninhabited vast space of brush, trees, and wildlife sanctuaries, until you get to the Rio Grande, which is split down the middle longways as our actual border.

An endless flood of people, mostly from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, aren't floating the short distance across the river and hitting a wall. They're landing in South Texas where they walk up a short distance and tell a border agent they want asylum. If they don't find an agent for a while, maybe they'll approach one of the wall barriers and get stuck. But even then, when they're finally apprehended, one easy word is all they have to say to automatically secure legal protection: asylum.

John Morris, the border patrol's division chief of law enforcement for the Rio Grande Valley sector, the most illegally crossed sector in the U.S., told me that social media has rapidly pushed word out to everyone below the border on how to exploit our system.

"What might used to take weeks and months and years for messages to filter back out to these countries — 'Oh, here, if you come and you say this, they have to let you go,'" he said. "And it's instantaneous and it reaches millions of people."

This isn't how the system was intended to work. And it can be fixed, but not with a wall, which would be literally in the middle of a river if it were built on the border.

"Now that the credible fear or asylum claim has kind of gotten out, right, it's been exposed as a loophole to the system," Morris said. Asylum and refugee claims "were designed for people fleeing true genocide, if you will. So, you can talk about things in Africa or Asian or communist countries, what have you. It wasn't designed just to let somebody come in the country just because you may not be rich, or have a lot of money, or you come from a less developed country, that kind of thing."

During my visit to the border, I saw the pieces of wall, which agents say is an enormous deterrent to illegals, and they want any gaps in it filled with more wall. But after leaving the barrier, we drove a short ways down a road toward the river and saw a family of eight, all Guatemalans, simply waiting on the side of the trail for an agent to come so they could claim asylum.

The law right now says people with a legitimate claim for asylum must be "unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."

In 2016, the most recent year with data published by the Department of Homeland Security, 20,455 individuals who claimed asylum were permitted to stay in the U.S. Yet tens of thousands more illegal immigrants claiming asylum between 2012 and 2016 did not show up for their court hearings.

PolitiFact in 2018 estimated that in the 2012 to 2016 period, 30 to 40 percent of asylum seekers were turned loose into the U.S. and vanished among the rest of us without appearing for court.

Data provided to me Tuesday by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services said that in 2018, nearly 70 percent of asylum claims were made by people from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, tracking with what the border agents in Texas said. That's out of nearly 100,000 people claiming asylum total, according to USCIS.

And here's something to help you sleep well tonight: Though just 10 percent of asylum seekers from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador (countries ravaged by gang violence and poverty) were granted legal protection to remain in the country as a refugee, 90 percent of those who pass an initial first interview with authorities were simply released in the country after they promised to appear in court.

So 70,000 people from Central America applied for asylum last year with the risk that as many as 30,000 people could realistically be expected not to show up for their hearing.

This problem, as border agents repeatedly told me, is not new. It didn't start when President

Trump entered office.

Before the national media turned immigration into an issue about race, the New York Times reported in 2014 on the catastrophic border conditions brought on by the overwhelming number of asylum claims in Texas.

"The agents were clearly visible on that recent afternoon, but the migrants were undeterred. Mainly women and children, 45 in all, they crossed the narrow river on the smugglers' rafts, scrambled up the bluff and turned themselves in, signaling a growing challenge for the immigration authorities," a report in the Times said. It quoted Chris Cabrera, a border agent, who said, "Word has gotten out that we're giving people permission and walking them out the door. So they're coming across in droves."

More wall is necessary, as any border agent will tell you. But in Texas, where most border crossings are taking place, it's going to take something way bigger to fix the immigration problem.

[VI] He's accused of killing two fellow officers. His trial can't begin until the shutdown ends. (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/22/2019 3:36 PM, Deanna Paul, 9763K]

The bodies of police officers Lesha Lammy and Kai Javois were discovered on a remote beach in Hams Bluff, on the western end of St. Croix, in August 2016. One had been shot four times, the other three. Both were doused in a gasoline-like fluid, and several pieces of clothing were set aflame.

The investigation led to the arrest of a U.S. Virgin Islands officer, Francis Williams, who was charged with 11 counts, including first-degree murder, assault, stalking and kidnapping.

The trial was scheduled to begin two and a half years later, on Jan. 10. Then the U.S. federal government shut down.

As with most nonmilitary federal agencies, the appropriations act that funded the Justice Department expired, triggering the partial government shutdown Dec. 22. More than 800,000 government workers either have been furloughed or are working without pay.

The lapse in federal government funding affected the Department of Homeland Security and the Justice Department, which includes the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Justice Department employees involved in criminal investigations and prosecution are among those working without a paycheck.

Days before the Jan. 10 trial date, assistant attorneys general from the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Justice filed a motion with the local St. Croix court. "Due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the People's control," they requested a fourth continuance in the Williams murder trial.

"Virtually all of the forensic evidence in this case was processed by scientists and agents attached to the FBI, ATF and the Department of Homeland Security," prosecutors said in court filings.

The U.S. Virgin Islands, a small federal territory, does not have its own forensic

laboratories. It routinely relies on the stateside jurisdiction of the federal government, outsourcing a lot of work and requiring agency employees to testify at trial.

In Williams's case, crime scene investigators took scrapings and samples from the beach and from Williams's clothing, car and other belongings. FBI explosives expert David McCollam assessed the burned clothing that was recovered from the victims, and FBI DNA expert Tiffany Smith handled the DNA analysis, testing the evidence to determine whether there was a conclusive match or transfer of hair, fiber or bodily fluids.

Neither expert is funded by the government during the impasse or approved for travel until the shutdown ends.

Law enforcement also collected spent shell casings from the crime scene, and ATF firearms expert Meredith Acosta tested them against Williams's Glock 22 service weapon.

On Jan. 3, Acosta told prosecutors that "her position at 'ATF is not funded' during the shutdown and travel is 'frozen.' As a result of the current government shutdown, Ms. Acosta is not able to travel to the Territory to provide testimony until the government shutdown is resolved," court documents say.

The prosecutors' motion also said Acosta told them she suffered from medical complications, preventing her from traveling for an additional month.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security computer forensics agent Christopher Landi downloaded data from Williams's cellphone. He was scheduled to travel to the island for his testimony, but he informed prosecutors via email that he no longer had approval because of the shutdown, according to court documents.

The assistant attorneys general and defense attorney Gordon Rhea called Williams's prosecution "a circumstantial case."

More than 50 witnesses are expected to testify, but not one observed the murder. Also, according to Rhea, Williams's DNA was not a positive match. Prosecutors would not independently confirm details of an open case.

Rhea explained the prosecutors' theory as twofold: They allege Williams had a motive because one of the victims was his ex-girlfriend and a shell casing at the scene matched his revolver.

"The feds say the shell casing came from [Williams's] gun, we say there were faults with the testing methodology," Rhea said, adding that the ballistics testing is the sole issue in the case.

The partial government shutdown, now in its second month, shows no signs of ending. Harold W.L. Willocks, administrative judge of the Superior Court of the U.S. Virgin Islands, granted the order. He reset the trial for May 13, concluding that justice demanded the adjournment.

Williams, initially held in jail for six months, is on house arrest.

"He was on the police force for at least a decade. Now he can't work, can't leave his house. He's dependent on his family to take care of him and has no income for two and a half years," Rhea said. "It's pretty tough."

[Mexico] No sign of slowdown as Mexico processes migrants headed toward U.S. (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/22/2019 7:44 AM, Staff, 2890K]

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[Mexico] Mexico screening for criminals in latest migrant caravan; Salvadoran gang member wanted in murder is nabbed (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/22/2019 5:15 PM, Frank Miles and Griff Jenkins, 9216K]

Mexican officials say they're actively screening for criminals and gang members in the latest migrant caravan to head north toward America — and apprehended an 18th Street gang member from El Salvador in Tapachula, who was traveling with the caravan.

The gang member was identified as Amílcar Orlando "N," and was caught by the Chiapas prosecutor's office with the aid of El Salvador's government, officials confirmed to Fox News. Tapachula is a city in the far southwest of the state of Chiapas in Mexico near the Guatemalan border.

He is wanted on charges of aggravated murder, kidnapping, extortion, gang membership and drug possession. He tried to sneak in as a migrant along with the caravan, is being deported.

The two main street gangs of El Salvador, 18th Street and MS-13, are estimated to number around 70,000, and actively try to recruit new members.

The gangs trace their origins to street life in cities such as Los Angeles, where many Salvadorans sought refuge during their country's 1980-92 civil war.

Salvadorans arrested for crimes in the U.S. were deported, bringing gang activity with them.

Some crime experts said today's gangs have ties to international drug trafficking networks. President Trump frequently seizes on MS-13 as a reason to tighten immigration controls.

The migratory trail north from Mexico and the violent Northern Triangle region of Central America are perilous. Criminal gangs control much of the route and prey upon migrants, who are often stigmatized and face discrimination as they travel as much as 3,000 miles.

Many deportees to Central America are people who fled gang threats in the first place, and are sometimes hunted down and murdered once back home.

Shelters have expanded the services they offer to include medical, legal and psychological aid. Workers also have had to learn how to attend to migrants victimized by gangs — robbery, kidnapping, extortion, sexual assault, murder or disappearance.

According to Mexican officials, approximately 6,600 migrants associated with the recent caravans have registered for temporary asylum and work visas.

Of these, approximately 1,400 were minors.

But as of Monday, only 80 applications had been granted status — mostly due in part to the five-day waiting period, which began for most at the end of last week.

It's unclear what these migrants do once they are free to travel and work in Mexico — if they join with existing caravans intent on entering the U.S.

[Mexico] Is Tijuana prepared for the next caravan? (San Diego Union Tribune)

[San Diego Union Tribune](#) [1/22/2019 8:00 AM, Wendy Fry, 214K]

With a new caravan on the way, Tijuana government officials have not given much thought to avoiding the chaos that arrived in November with 6,000 Central American migrants.

"Well, let's hope they don't come here," said Leonardo Neri, a federal volunteer and the coordinator for a temporary migrant shelter on the eastern outskirts of Tijuana.

Neri said operations at El Barretal are winding down as most of the remaining migrants have found work and alternate living arrangements in Tijuana. He said no plans have been made about whether it will be reopened or used as a shelter when or if the next caravan arrives.

At other shelters across Tijuana, resources remain strained, volunteers are weary and conditions are crowded. Beleaguered aid workers are barely able to look up from one dire situation to the next. Meanwhile, remnants of a current caravan from Honduras crossed into Chiapas as recently as Saturday.

Tijuana Mayor Juan Manuel Gastélum issued a statement this week refusing to apologize for the initial shelter conditions when migrants arrived in November, saying his primary obligation is to the residents and City of Tijuana.

Tijuana city officials insist the caravan was a federal responsibility from the start.

"The previous caravan arrived in the city at a unique time when we were in a period of transition in our federal government. That will not be the case with this next caravan," said Cesar Palencia, the city's Director of Migrant Assistance.

It took the last caravan three weeks to get to Mexico City, but from there they began arriving in Tijuana seemingly overnight by bus. Tijuana city officials scrambled to set up an emergency shelter in an open-air sports arena that quickly became overcrowded and then flooded.

"We warned from the beginning that we did not have the resources to deal with this amount of people," said Palencia. "But, still we gave them shelter and food and provided medicine from the very beginning of their arrival in Tijuana."

When Mexico's new president Andrés Manuel López Obrador was sworn into office, the federal government took over operations, and conditions and resources improved at a new, bigger shelter across town.

Palencia said if the federal government is not able to keep the caravan in Chiapas with work, as promised, it will be their responsibility to once again make decisions about how to coordinate resources and safeguard the migrants.

"I believe the position of the government of Tijuana is that the obligation for the large caravan has to be with the federal government because we do not have the resources and we do not have the personnel to adequately provide for everyone," said Palencia.

Food nearly ran out during a two-day stretch near the end of November and some children reported not getting to eat for days.

Nonprofit leaders credit Tijuana city officials with communicating how dire the situation was at Benito Juárez, the first city-run shelter.

"At least, we did not see them sugar-coating the conditions on the news," said Leti Guzman, who was among a coalition of non-profit volunteers and the Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos who publicly asked the mayor to apologize.

"No, I'm not going to apologize," Gastélum responded, according to El Sol de Tijuana. "Better, I'd say that the federal government, the Latin American governments and all those people who are against the people of Tijuana, apologize to us."

Guzman said the response was expected. She said she did not anticipate operations will run more smoothly with the next caravan and was bracing for the possibility they may be worse with resources already strained and volunteers weary.

"Tijuana is doing bad itself with the cartels and the politics of Tijuana and we see a lot of opposition from the residents. It's really hard in this scenario. I think it's hard to address this in a way that satisfies all sides," she said.

Migrants faced violence with Tijuana residents first throwing rocks at them while they slept in the downtown city shelter and then canisters of tear gas when they later moved to the federally run shelter outside of town. Two young Honduran teenagers were brutally killed.

To their credit, leaders said Mexico's National Employment Service did well matching local companies in Tijuana with Central American migrants looking for work. They helped 2,900 migrants process their applications for humanitarian visas and operated a six-day a week federal job fair to help many find employment in Tijuana.

[Mexico] 'It's Not a Wall,' but Steel Slats and Barbed Wire Roil a Border Town (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/23/2019 6:00 AM, Jose A. Del Real, 20737K]

The barbed wire overhead evokes danger and violence, but Maritza Hurtado cannot take it seriously. When the sharp coils were placed on top of the old border fence several months ago, running right along the main boulevard, she chocked it up to political propaganda from a White House that does not understand life along the Southwest frontier.

"This is not a war zone," Ms. Hurtado said from her tax and immigration consulting office in downtown Calexico, from which she can peer into Mexico. "I've had a business here for 30 years and we've never needed the barbed wire. Why now? To me, it feels as if I'm

enclosed."

For nearly a year, President Trump has pointed with pride to a renovation project replacing two miles of border fencing in Calexico. He hailed it as "the start of our Southern Border WALL!" — to the great consternation of many of the town's residents, who are wary of becoming the public face of a hard-line immigration policy that most here do not agree with. The attention the president's tweet brought was surreal, in part because the construction replaced an unsightly stretch of steel fencing that was already there.

Nationally, partisans and journalists began to debate whether the 30-foot-tall steel slats that make up the replacement barrier should be called a "wall" like the one Mr. Trump promised during his campaign. Others said it was just a "fence," a distinction that has taken on great importance in Washington.

Lost amid the battle over credit and semantics was how Calexico residents themselves felt about becoming characters in Trump-era political theater. For many, a sense of apprehension turned to anger when the military installed barbed wire on top of older border fencing, which runs through downtown.

"This community is basically being used for political purposes," said Ms. Hurtado, who served as the town's mayor until December. "And it's happening throughout these border cities that are just like ours." She tried to remain diplomatic when television news crews asked her for comment about the barrier last spring, she said, to "avoid making more drama for this community that has nothing to do with the national problem."

But she said she felt incredulous over the administration's insistence that the replacement fence is part of the wall: "Before we started this project here to do the replacement, Border Patrol came to visit us about three times to ask us to please participate in avoiding the drama. They came to say, three times, 'You guys, just so you know, we're starting this project, and it's not the wall,'" recounted Ms. Hurtado, a Democrat who did not vote for the president. "And then here comes Trump and says, 'It's the wall!'"

The town has received a steady dose of attention from Trump administration officials since last spring. Vice President Mike Pence visited the barrier in April and said the administration was "committed to seeing the construction of a border wall." In October, the Homeland Security secretary, Kirstjen Nielsen, visited to unveil a plaque crediting the president with the barrier.

This month, the president tweeted again: "The Fake News Media keeps saying we haven't built any NEW WALL," he wrote, apparently in reference to the barrier in Calexico. "Below is a section just completed on the Border. Anti-climbing feature included. Very high, strong and beautiful! Also, many miles already renovated and in service!"

Amid a continuing national debate about the border, which has resulted in the longest government shutdown in history, many in this town of 40,000 have struggled to reconcile ominous warnings they see projected from the White House about life on the border with their own experiences living in the quiet agricultural community 120 miles east of San Diego.

Calexico has long celebrated its interdependent relationship with Mexicali, its sister city

directly across the line; the two cities' downtowns are bisected by pillars where the border lies. Shoppers from urban Mexicali, which has a population of about 1 million, are vital to Calexico's small-town economy and cross to shop at large outlet stores on the American side. Americans head to the Mexican side on weekends for cheap health care, entertainment and concerts.

"We're right up against each other. Each city depends on the other," said Hildy Carrillo, the executive director of the Calexico Chamber of Commerce, who like Ms. Hurtado did not vote for Mr. Trump. "The families are on both sides of the border. The businesses are on both sides of the border. And the education, the entertainment and the culture are on both sides of the border. Punto."

Rather than a border wall, residents here express enthusiasm for modernizing the Calexico West Port of Entry, which they hope will expedite traffic and allow for a fluid flow of business between the two sides. The number of legal northbound crossers each day, leading to hourslong lines, is astounding: about 20,000 pedestrians and up to 20,000 vehicles, according to the General Services Administration.

Ground was broken in 2015 on the first stage of the renovation, a \$121.9 million project completed in September 2018. Town officials are hopeful the second phase will be funded by Congress.

"We have been waiting for that funding, for years, for our port of entry," Ms. Hurtado said. "That's been our struggle. We don't need a wall. We've been struggling to get the money for the door." The president's previous threats to shut down the border had also concerned her. "We're depressed and you're going to kill us if you shut things down. It's like, help us by knowing us, you know?"

After Mr. Trump's tweet about the "Border WALL!" Ms. Hurtado had T-shirts made and distributed. They read, "It's Not A Wall."

The high volume of legal traffic does not mean that illegal border crossings do not happen here. The risk those migrants pose, however, and the characterization of the numbers who jump the fence is enormously overstated, Ms. Carrillo said.

The real danger, many here said, lies in drug trafficking conducted through sophisticated tunnel systems built by cartels.

During a drive through downtown Calexico, Victor Carrillo — Ms. Carrillo's cousin and a former City Council member, mayor and county supervisor — pointed to a house where federal authorities found an expansive underground tunnel in 2016 that ran from the United States to Mexico. As he drove, Mr. Carrillo and a friend pointed to other areas where tunnels were found, where sink holes formed because of attempted burrowing and where the authorities suspect there could be new tunnels.

"They're everywhere. Every new apartment complex you see go up, you figure" there might be a tunnel there, Mr. Carrillo said.

A wall, he pointed out, does not even begin to address that problem.

The politics of the Imperial Valley are generally not with the president. The county gave Hillary Clinton 68 percent of the vote in 2016 compared with 27 percent for Mr. Trump. The 51st Congressional District, which runs along the southern border from the Arizona border to San Diego, supported the incumbent Democrat, Representative Juan Vargas, with 71 percent of the vote versus 29 percent for his Republican challenger. Eighty-four percent of Imperial County residents are Latino, according to 2018 data by the United States Census Bureau.

That is not to say that there are not people here and in the broader Imperial Valley, which is a large agricultural region, who support the president's policies. But in Calexico, it seems, few like to speak about it publicly. And even some of those who lean conservative have reservations about the president's talk on immigration.

John Renison, 70, an Army veteran and longtime Calexico resident who is a former City Council member and county supervisor, began his political career here in the 1990s as a Republican but is reluctant to identify with either party today. But he said the barbed wire running through Calexico is a distasteful statement, as is, he said, the president's general rhetoric about immigration.

"We do not have a crisis on the border. We are not in fear of being invaded like he said," Mr. Renison said. "What's really laughable is you think you're going to stop illegal immigration by constructing walls and fences."

[Mexico] Mexico sets record with more than 33,000 homicides in 2018 (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/22/2019 8:07 AM, Christina Maxouris and Natalie Gallón, 5847K]

Mexico recorded more than 33,000 homicides in 2018, the highest number since the country began keeping records.

There were 33,341 homicides in 2018, according to a report released by Mexico's Secretariat of Security and Citizen Protection. That compares with 28,866 homicides in 2017 -- an increase of more than 15%.

The number of femicides -- the killing of females because of their gender -- also climbed, reaching 861 in 2018, compared with 759 in 2017.

Many of the homicides are linked to drug cartel violence. The Mexican government has been fighting a war with drug traffickers since 2006. At the same time, drug cartels have fought each other for control of territory.

In 2017, Mexican authorities uncovered a mass grave with more than 250 skulls, most likely the victims of drugs cartels over the years.

Targeted journalists

Last year also proved a deadly one for reporters in Mexico, with nine journalists killed in 2018. One has already been killed in 2019.

Rafael Murua Manríquez's body was found in Baja California Sur, a statement from the state attorney general said. He was reported missing Saturday, said Jan-Albert Hootsen, the representative for Mexico on the nonprofit Committee to Protect Journalists.

The attorney general's statement said Murua's body was found with "various perforations on the thorax." An investigation is underway.

In November Murua said in a blog post that he had received threats after publishing his reports.

"Working journalism in Santa Rosalína has brought me so much satisfaction, including a professional title, but it also brought several death threats, attempts to censor in the most dictatorial style," he wrote in the blog.

[Central America] The art of killing a deal, or the Central American Minors Protection Act of 2019 (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/22/2019 4:56 PM, Erin Dunne, 629K]

On Saturday, President Trump pitched what he called a compromise on border security. On Monday night, Senate Republicans released the proposal, a total of 1,301 pages, laying out what the government funding and wall deal rolled into one actually entailed. Buried in the package is a proposal called, innocuously enough, the Central American Minors Protection Act of 2019 that will likely kill any chance of passage.

The bill starts with the premise that it would be better if young asylum seekers could apply for protection in their own countries rather than making the dangerous trek across Latin America to reach the U.S. border. On its face, that sounds like a reasonable idea. In practice, the proposed system is unworkable and accomplishes exactly the opposite of what its name suggests.

The proposal would establish what it calls Designated Application Processing Centers in eight countries:

"ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 240 days after the date of the enactment of the Central American Minors Protection Act of 2019, the Secretary of State shall establish Designated Application Processing Centers, with the consent of the country in which such centers will be located, if necessary."

In theory, that's a great idea that would help asylum seekers. But the law would also make this the only option to apply for asylum.

In fact, any minor who shows up at the border would be sent back to his home country, without regard for fear, persecution, or other asylum considerations. Since that provision would go into effect immediately, children sent back to their home countries would have to then wait for the Designated Application Processing Centers to open before having a chance to make their case.

Provided that the centers open on time and are staffed and functioning, minor asylum-seekers would have to make their claims based on modified criteria that include considerations that "such a grant is consistent with the national interest" — a difficult claim to prove. This amounts to granting blanket discretion to the Department of Homeland Security.

And yes, that would deter people from making the long trek, which is the whole idea. But it

also means that a minor facing some kind of real risk in his home country would be unable to flee without also losing the possibility of claiming asylum in the U.S. In many cases, this would defeat the purpose of seeking asylum.

A larger problem is that the proposal sets a cap of 15,000 accepted applicants and just 50,000 applications overall in any given year from minors in the countries in question. But more than 50,000 unaccompanied minors were apprehended last year, many of whom claimed asylum. Given ongoing violence in countries like Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, the numbers of children seeking to leave their home countries is unlikely to drop, meaning this proposal would simply turn many potential applicants away each year without even looking at the merits of their claim.

Not only is the new proposal a humanitarian concern, but it is also contrary to international treaties. Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads: "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution." That idea is currently enshrined in both the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, both of which the United States is party to.

Those agreements mandate that signatory countries adhere to certain conditions. For example the agreement reads, "subject to specific exceptions, refugees should not be penalized for their illegal entry or stay. This recognizes that the seeking of asylum can require refugees to breach immigration rules."

Those treaties, which provide protections and rights for refugees and those seeking asylum, are implemented in current U.S. law:

"Any alien who is physically present in the United States or who arrives in the United States (whether or not at a designated port of arrival and including an alien who is brought to the United States after having been interdicted in international or United States waters), irrespective of such alien's status, may apply for asylum in accordance with this section or, where applicable, section 1225(b) of this title."

The Central American Minors Protection Act of 2019 tries to undo protections offered by current law in adherence to these agreements. In fact, it seems to directly contradict the protections for asylum-seekers that the U.S. has agreed to uphold paving the way for a likely successful court challenge.

Further, if we attempt to foreclose legal avenues to claim asylum for people who have made the trip across the desert, we will only encourage people to elude the border guards instead of turning themselves in, as they tend to do now.

If the Trump administration were truly serious about simply discouraging young people for making the dangerous trip to the U.S., they wouldn't have canceled an existing in-country refugee processing program for minors from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Instead, that program was canceled, with the last applications accepted in November 2017.

In short, by adding the Central American Minors Protection Act of 2019 to the bill, Republicans are poisoning the possibility of a good-faith compromise on immigration.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

MS-13 member who helped law enforcement as informant is deported: report (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 9:45 AM, Justin Wise, 3038K]

An El Salvador native who helped law enforcement as an informant inside the MS-13 gang has reportedly been deported from the United States.

ProPublica reported that the man, a 19-year-old it identifies as Henry, was deported this month despite warnings that MS-13 gang members would potentially try to kill him.

Immigration judge Thomas Mulligan wrote in his decision that he was "very sympathetic" to Henry's situation and that he found his testimony "truthful," according to a copy obtained by ProPublica.

But Mulligan ruled that he was required to deport Henry under U.S. and international law, citing his admission that he had participated in two gang-affiliated murders when he was 12 years old.

"[Henry] had a very difficult childhood and was roped into a gang life from a very young age," Mulligan wrote in a decision from November. He said the court "does not have the discretionary authority to take such humanitarian factors into its consideration."

Mulligan also could have ruled in favor of the 19-year-old staying in the United States if he determined there was a likelihood he'd be tortured upon his return to El Salvador. But Mulligan determined those chances were less than 50 percent because of efforts taken by El Salvador's government. Henry had asked to be allowed to stay in the United States under the 1987 United Nations Convention against Torture.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) portrayed Henry as a danger to his community because of his participation in gang killings, according to ProPublica. They also argued that he was only pretending to cooperate with law enforcement.

Mulligan, ProPublica wrote, found these arguments unconvincing but nonetheless determined he did not have the legal discretion to not deport Henry.

ProPublica had previously reported that Henry was forced to join the MS-13 gang twice — in El Salvador and in Long Island, N.Y. — and that he participated in multiple murders.

It said Henry had vowed to break with the gang when he arrived in Long Island at 15, but was roped in after MS-13 members reminded him that membership in the gang was for life.

He had tried to escape, and later became an informant in law enforcement's efforts to arrest certain MS-13 members.

But the news outlet said that a FBI gang task force handler in Long Island broke a promise to assist him. It added that police turned over his immigration file to ICE.

ICE later detained Henry, identifying him as an informant and placing him in jail.

ProPublica noted that Henry's family encouraged Henry to appeal the ruling. But Henry, who was growing fearful that his life was at risk at a New Jersey detention center, elected not to pursue that route and was deported on Jan. 10.

His attorney, Bryan Johnson, told ProPublica that he arranged a team to get Henry on a flight to Europe as soon as he arrived at an airport in El Salvador. He is now seeking asylum in a European city.

[AZ] Phoenix man gets 14-year prison term for child exploitation (Washington Times)
[Washington Times](#) [1/23/2019 12:59 AM, Associated Press, 527K]

Arizona prosecutors say a Phoenix man has been sentenced to 14 years in prison for sexual exploitation of a minor.

The Arizona Attorney General's Office says 53-year-old Peter Joseph Caddeo also was sentenced to lifetime probation and will be required to register as a sex offender.

Prosecutors say Caddeo identified in 2016 when he was using internet chat groups to acquire child pornography.

Homeland Security investigations located Caddeo in Phoenix and served a search warrant at his residence.

They reported identifying digital devices that belonged to Caddeo and contained hundreds of images and videos of child pornography.

Investigators learned from Caddeo that he would obtain child porn by trading images on internet chat groups or he would pay money to gain access to download the sexually exploitative material.

[NV] Arrest of Immigrant in String of Nevada Killings Draws Trump's Attention (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/23/2019 4:59 AM, Matt Stevens, et al., 20737K]

On the night of Jan. 10, someone walked into a home tucked near the forests that blanket Nevada's northwest border and fatally shot 56-year-old Connie Koontz, the authorities said. Three days later, again under the cover of darkness, someone walked into another Douglas County home about a mile up the road and shot and killed Sophia Renken, 74.

Then, three days after that, Washoe County sheriff's deputies searched a home about 40 miles farther north on La Guardia Lane. There, they found 81-year-old Gerald David and his wife, Sharon David, 80, both with gunshot wounds; they, too, were dead.

For nine days, law enforcement officials from across the region banded together to both reassure and ready residents who had been shaken by what prosecutors would call "brutal murders." Lock your doors and windows, the authorities said; turn on outdoor lights; keep your cellphones handy.

By Sunday — the 10th day of regionwide panic — they were able to deliver some calming news: A suspect was in custody; they believed the man, who they have varyingly identified

as Wilbur or Wilber Martinez-Guzman, was responsible for all four homicides.

Mr. Martinez-Guzman, who is either 19 or 20 years old, had been arrested at a home on Saturday afternoon on felony burglary and immigration charges, Sheriff Ken Furlong of Carson City said, though prosecutors added that they intended to charge him with the murders. Law enforcement officials did not discuss the motive in the killings.

Immigration officials, Sheriff Furlong said, had notified law enforcement that Mr. Martinez-Guzman had been in the Carson City area for about a year, but "was likely in the United States illegally and was detainable." Jail records show that he is under a hold from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which Sheriff Furlong said prevented him from being released on bail. The agency did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

"Four people in Nevada viciously robbed and killed by an illegal immigrant who should not have been in our Country," President Trump said in a tweet on Monday. "We need a powerful Wall!"

The disclosure that Mr. Martinez-Guzman may be in the United States illegally has thrust the case into a set of high-profile murders that President Trump has leveraged to bolster his arguments about immigration and the need for a wall along the country's southwest border. The dispute over funding for such a wall remains at the center of a government shutdown.

The president has previously called attention to the murder of Mollie Tibbetts, a 20-year-old college student, who the police have said was killed by an undocumented immigrant from Mexico. (Her father has called on people to not exploit her death to promote a political agenda.) Mr. Trump also said it was "time to get tough on Border Security" after the authorities arrested a man in California in December who they said fatally shot a police officer and had entered the United States illegally.

In the meantime, friends and family of the four Nevada victims — some of whom flanked the police at the Sunday news conference — were left to grieve.

Eddie England, 70, who met Ms. Renken through the Carson Valley chapter of the Antique Automobile Club of America, said in an interview on Tuesday that four lives could have been saved if Mr. Martinez-Guzman had been expelled from the country.

He described Ms. Renken as an independent and tough woman who drove a 1930s Ford Model A. Still, she moved to Gardnerville in Douglas County a few years ago to be closer to people — a situation she felt would be safer, Mr. England said.

"And this," he said, "is what happened to her."

"It's hard to take."

Alan Squailia, a friend of Mr. David, described Gerald and his wife as "salt-of-the-earth people," who were active community servants and animal lovers.

"If you needed a friend, and needed someone to help you, it was this couple," Mr. Squailia, 75, said.

Looking at a photograph of Mr. Martinez-Guzman, Mr. Squallia said he could imagine that Mr. David would have invited the young man into his home if he had been looking for help.

"The whole city of Reno is devastated over this," he said. "We still can't wrap our minds around it."

[NV] Migrant Illegally in U.S. Suspected in Four Nevada Murders (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/22/2019 9:50 AM, Bob Price, 2015K]

A migrant who is in the U.S. illegally is expected to be charged in connection with four murders carried out in northern Nevada. Law enforcement officials reported the homicides occurred in Douglas County and South Reno earlier this month.

Police arrested 19-year-old Wilbur Ernesti Martinez-Guzman on Saturday afternoon in Carson City, Nevada, on charges relating to burglary, possession of stolen property, and immigration violations, the Reno Gazette-Journal reported. Officials said they expect to file murder charges soon.

Martinez-Guzman is suspected in killing Connie Koontz, 56, and Sophia Renken, 74, who were found dead in their homes on January 10 and 13. The two homes are located in Douglas County, about a mile apart, the local newspaper reported. On January 16, Jerry David, 81, and his wife Sherri, 80, were found dead in their South Reno homes.

Washoe County Sheriff's Office spokesman Bob Harmon told Breitbart News that there are similarities in all four homicides they believe link Martinez-Guzman to the murders. Those include the age of the victims, removal of items from the homes, and the fact that a firearm was used in all for killings. He said other clues linking the four murders are expected to be found as the investigation unfolds.

Harmon said the illegal immigrant has no other known criminal history. He said Martinez-Guzman is cooperating with the investigation.

During a press conference over the weekend, Washoe County Sheriff Darin Balaam said, "We felt it was important for the public to know that we are confident we have the person responsible for the La Guardia Lane homicides as well as the homicides in Douglas County."

Harmon told Breitbart News they are confident that Martinez-Guzman is the only person involved in the case but cautioned that the investigation is still in the early stages.

Immigration officials told Carson City Sheriff Kenny Furlong that the illegal immigrant had been in the local area for about a year, the Gazette-Journal reported. The migrant's nationality has not yet been reported.

Martinez-Guzman is being held on charges related to burglary, possession of stolen property, and obtaining money on false pretenses, KOLO ABC8 reported. He is also being held on an immigration detainer.

The suspect continues to be held in the Carson City County jail.

Citizenship and Immigration Services

Supreme Court Doesn't Act on Trump's Appeal in 'Dreamers' Case (New York Times) [New York Times](#) [1/22/2019 11:00 AM, Adam Liptak, 20737K]

The Supreme Court took no action on Tuesday on the Trump administration's plans to shut down a program that shields some 700,000 young undocumented immigrants from deportation.

The court's inaction almost certainly means it will not hear the administration's challenge in its current term, which ends in June. The justices' next private conference to consider petitions seeking review is scheduled for Feb. 15.

Even were they to agree to hear the case then, it would not be argued until after the next term starts in October under the court's usual procedures. A decision would probably not arrive until well into 2020.

The move left the program in place and denied negotiating leverage to President Trump, who has said he wanted to use a Supreme Court victory in the case in negotiations with Democrats over immigration issues.

Mr. Trump tried to end the program in 2017, calling it an unconstitutional use of executive power by his predecessor and reviving the threat of deportation for immigrants who had been brought to the United States illegally as young children.

But federal judges have ordered the administration to maintain major pieces of the program, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, while legal challenges move forward.

In November, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in San Francisco, ruled against the administration. It acknowledged that presidents have broad powers to alter the policies of earlier administrations but said that the legal rationale offered by the Trump administration did not withstand scrutiny. The court also questioned "the cruelty and wastefulness of deporting productive young people to countries with which they have no ties."

Mr. Trump has criticized that ruling and has said he would be vindicated in the Supreme Court. He also predicted that a Supreme Court victory in the case, *United States Department of Homeland Security v. Regents of the University of California*, No. 18-587, would strengthen his hand in negotiations with Democratic lawmakers over immigration issues.

"I think it's going to be overturned in the United States Supreme Court, and I think it's going to be overwhelmingly overturned," Mr. Trump said at a cabinet meeting this month, adding, "So if we win that case — and I say this for all to hear — we'll be easily able to make a deal on DACA and the wall as a combination."

Mr. Trump has taken inconsistent positions on the program. Even as he tried to end it, he called upon Congress to give legal status and an eventual path to citizenship to the young immigrants, who are sometimes called "Dreamers." More recently, he offered to extend the program in exchange for concessions on a border wall.

The administration has argued that the program, instituted by the Obama administration, was an unconstitutional exercise of executive authority, relying on a ruling from the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, in New Orleans, concerning a related program. The Supreme Court deadlocked, 4 to 4, in an appeal of that ruling.

But the Ninth Circuit said the two programs differed in important ways, undermining the administration's legal analysis. The appeals court affirmed a nationwide injunction ordering the administration to retain major elements of the program while the case moved forward. Such nationwide injunctions, which have been used by courts to block executive actions in both the Obama and the Trump administrations, have been the subject of much commentary and criticism.

Also on Tuesday, the administration told the court that it would ask it to hear an appeal of a trial judge's ruling barring the addition of a question on citizenship to the next census. The administration's filing said it would ask the justices to bypass the appeals court and put the case on a very fast track, culminating in arguments in April or May.

That was necessary, the solicitor general, Noel J. Francisco, wrote, because "the government must finalize the census questionnaire by the end of June 2019 to enable it to be printed on time."

"It is exceedingly unlikely that there is sufficient time for review in both the court of appeals and in this court by that deadline," Mr. Francisco wrote.

DACA program that protects young undocumented immigrants not likely to get Supreme Court review this term (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/22/2019 10:38 AM, Robert Barnes, 9763K]

The Supreme Court is not likely to review during its current term the program that shields young undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children, leaving in place the Obama-era initiative that the Trump administration has tried to end.

The justices on Tuesday took no action on the administration's request that it review the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which has protected nearly 700,000 people brought to this country as children, commonly known as "dreamers."

If the court sticks to its normal procedures, that would mean that even if it accepts the case as a later date, it would not be argued until the new term starting in October, with a decision likely in 2020.

DACA has emerged as an issue in the negotiations over ending the partial government shutdown, with President Trump offering extended but still temporary protection for those in the program in exchange for billions of dollars to build a border wall. Democrats have rejected the offer as "hostage-taking."

Trump has previously said he wanted the Supreme Court to take the case and find he had the authority to end the program.

A string of lower courts has said that Trump's abrupt decision to terminate the Obama-era program was based on faulty legal reasoning and that the administration has failed to

provide a solid rationale for ending it.

The Trump administration moved to scuttle the program in 2017 after Texas and other states threatened to sue to force its end. Then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions advised the Department of Homeland Security that the program was probably unlawful and that it could not be defended.

But courts have rejected that theory and kept the program in place, requiring that those already enrolled be allowed to renew their participation. California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, who is among those fighting the administration's decision to end the program, said more than 276,000 two-year renewals have been approved in the past year.

Those approved to be in the program are allowed work permits and protected from deportation, as long as they abide by its regulations and do not violate laws.

The judges who have stopped the termination of the program have said the administration could remedy the legal impasse by providing a detailed reasoning of why the program should end. Instead, it has continued to combat the orders in court.

The fight over the young people protected by the program — the average age of those in the program is around 24 — has been a fierce battle between Trump and Democrats, who largely defend the initiative program.

Trump at times has said he would like to find a way to protect those in the program, but attempts to work out a political compromise over DACA have foundered amid the larger partisan debate over immigration and border security.

Solicitor General Noel J. Francisco, representing the administration at the Supreme Court, said in a brief that the cases "concern the Executive Branch's authority to revoke a discretionary policy of non-enforcement that is sanctioning an ongoing violation of federal immigration law by nearly 700,000 aliens."

While the Supreme Court has never considered the legality of DACA, it did hear a challenge to an Obama program to extend deportation protection to undocumented parents of those who are either American citizens or lawful permanent residents. Operating with only eight justices because of the death of Justice Antonin Scalia, the court split 4 to 4 — thus leaving in place a lower court decision that stopped the program.

Francisco said DACA is "materially indistinguishable" from that program and that courts would likely find it illegal.

But so far, federal courts in California, New York and the District of Columbia have said that reasoning is wrong. (A judge in Texas said the program was illegal, but did not rule it should cease.) The judges who have ruled against the Department of Homeland Security's justification for ending DACA say it must be based on more than just a belief about its legal underpinnings.

A panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit last month ruled against the administration.

"To be clear: we do not hold that DACA could not be rescinded as an exercise of Executive Branch discretion," Judge Kim McLane Wardlaw said in the opinion. "We hold only that here, where the Executive did not make a discretionary choice to end DACA — but rather acted based on an erroneous view of what the law required — the rescission was arbitrary and capricious under settled law."

The judges, all nominated by Democratic presidents, flatly rejected the administration's position that courts lacked the power to review the executive branch's immigration actions.

"The government may not simultaneously both assert that its actions are legally compelled, based on its interpretation of the law, and avoid review of that assertion by the judicial branch, whose 'province and duty' it is 'to say what the law is,'" Wardlaw said, borrowing the language of the landmark *Marbury v. Madison* decision.

The regents of the University of California, one of the parties challenging the administration, told the Supreme Court there was no hurry to take the case because each DACA recipient had been vetted by the federal government.

The university leadership quoted a tweet from Trump to argue that not even this administration was advocating immediate deportation of those in the program.

"Does anybody really want to throw out good, educated and accomplished young people who have jobs, some serving in the military? Really!" the president tweeted in September.

Supreme Court leaves in place rulings that temporarily protect 'Dreamers' (Los Angeles Times)

[Los Angeles Times](#) [1/22/2019 8:00 AM, David G. Savage, 3575K]

The Supreme Court took no action Tuesday in a case about whether President Trump properly ended an Obama-era program that offered special protections for more than 700,000 immigrants brought to this country illegally as children.

The court's apparent refusal to intervene this term leaves in place lower court rulings that temporarily prevent Trump from ending the program that helps so-called Dreamers.

It may also complicate ongoing talks to end the government shutdown because it reduces the leverage of President Trump, who over the weekend offered to extend temporary protections for Dreamers in return for taxpayer money for a border wall with Mexico. Democrats were already rejecting that deal, and the court's decision to leave in place protections for Dreamers will only bolster that position.

Since 2012, these young people have been shielded from deportation and permitted to work based on a temporary policy adopted by President Obama. The policy was known as DACA, for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

Upon taking office, Trump said that he would not "really want to throw out good, educated and accomplished young people who have jobs, some serving in the military." But then he terminated the program last year and attempted unsuccessfully to leverage Dreamers' plight to win concessions from Democrats for new restrictions on legal immigration.

Trump and his lawyers insist he has the legal authority to repeal Obama's DACA policy, and

no judge can stand in the way.

However, several lawsuits were filed in California, including by state Atty. Gen. Xavier Becerra and the University of California, and a federal judge in San Francisco issued a nationwide order putting the Trump administration's repeal plan on hold.

In November, the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the nationwide injunction. The judges, in a 3-0 ruling, noted one oddity of the dispute. It was agreed that the new administration could change a regulatory policy so long as it offered a good reason for doing so. But former Trump Atty. Gen. Jeff Sessions insisted Obama's order was unconstitutional, and the judges said he was wrong about that. They said Obama had the legal authority to suspend deportation for law-abiding immigrants who had done nothing wrong.

Three years ago, the Supreme Court was evenly divided on a second and larger Obama order that would have shielded about 4 million parents who were in the country illegally but had children who were permitted to be in the United States. Until Sessions became attorney general, however, no one had challenged the earlier DACA policy as unconstitutional.

In defense of Trump, Solicitor Gen. Noel Francisco has argued that judges in California are wrongly interfering with the president's authority to establish immigration policy. He spent much of last year trying to get the dispute before the high court. Two weeks ago, in the aftermath of the 9th Circuit's decision, he urged the court to throw out the judges' orders that "command the government to preserve a policy that affirmatively sanctions the ongoing violation of federal law by 700,000 aliens who have no lawful immigration status and no right to the policy's continuation."

Supreme Court appears to rebuff Trump's push for quick DACA hearing (Politico)

[Politico](#) [1/22/2019 12:48 PM, Josh Gerstein, 2577K]

The federal program granting quasi-legal status and work permits to so-called Dreamers is likely to remain in effect through most of this year, after the Supreme Court appeared to rebuff President Donald Trump's bid for quick action to resolve lawsuits over his attempt to wind down the program.

Trump, who repealed the Obama-era program last year, has said he wanted the high court to take up the case and rule that he had the authority to do away with it. The program has become an issue in the ongoing government shutdown, with Trump on Saturday offering protection from deportation for three years to approximately 700,000 people brought to the country illegally as children.

Justice Department lawyers had asked the justices to accept several cases over the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program and add them to the court's calendar for argument in April, meaning a ruling could be issued by June. However, orders from the high court Tuesday morning made no mention of the DACA disputes.

Typically, cases accepted by the court after mid-January are not argued until the fall, although the justices can accelerate cases if they wish.

Trump has indicated that he was expecting a ruling from the Supreme Court on the issue soon.

While Trump initially said he wanted the Supreme Court to resolve the issue before making any sort of deal on it with Democrats, Vice President Mike Pence told reporters on Saturday that Trump had a change of heart after hearing from rank-and-file Democrats that protecting DACA recipients was a matter of utmost importance to them.

"The president indicated earlier this year that he wanted to deal with the Dreamers, that he wanted to solve the problem," Pence said. The president has been "listening to leaders and rank and file of both political parties."

Lower court judges found that the Trump administration's attempt to end the program was likely unlawful. They ordered that the program remain in place.

Trump has claimed that those court decisions led Democrats to lose interest in making a deal with him to pass legislation to provide more robust legal status to DACA recipients.

Supreme Court takes no action on DACA (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 10:55 AM, Lydia Wheeler, 3038K]

The Supreme Court on Tuesday took no action on whether it will hear disputes over the Trump administration's decision to wind down the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

No action from the court may mean protections for some 700,000 young people brought to the country illegally as children may remain in place for several more months. Many viewed this as the last opportunity for the court to review the case this term given the court's already full calendar. The justices typically don't agree to hear cases over the summer.

Sam Erman, an associate professor at Southern Cal Gould School of Law, said the longer the justices leave an issue hanging out there, the more likely they are to want to wait until the next term to weigh in. And he said there are good reasons to want to wait on DACA.

"If DACA is the subject of political negotiations, it might go away if there's a deal," he said. "That would allow them to avoid settling the separation of powers issue. The court has a strong preference for the branches working it out."

President Trump over the weekend tried to use DACA as a bargaining chip in negotiations to end the partial government shutdown now in its 32nd day.

On Saturday, the president offered a three-year extension for the program in exchange for \$5.7 billion to construct a wall along the southern border, but Democrats have refused the deal.

Multiple district courts found the administration's 2017 decision to wind down the program to be either unlawful or likely unlawful and ordered for it be maintained.

Solicitor General Noel Francisco has asked the Supreme Court to make the final decision on whether the rescission is lawful or not.

Francisco's request, however, was unusual because it asked the justices to take up the issue before the regional appeals courts have weighed in.

He said the lower court decisions were wrong to force the administration to retain a discretionary nonenforcement policy that the Department of Homeland Security and the attorney general concluded was unlawful.

He also argued that the very existence of this litigation and resulting uncertainty would continue to impede efforts to enact legislation addressing the legitimate policy concerns underlying the DACA policy.

The University of California and the states of California, Maine, Maryland and Minnesota were among some of the entities who brought lawsuits challenging the administration's decision to end DACA.

The justices, however, could still decide to hear the case and add a special sitting for arguments.

"They are supreme," Erman said. "They can always grab things if they want to."

For now though, advocates say these undocumented immigrant youth, known as dreamers, can breathe a sigh of relief.

Sanaa Abrar, advocacy director of United We Dream, said in mid-February, the court could announce whether they will take up the case in their next session this fall.

In the meantime, she asked Trump to reopen the government and for Congress to pass permanent protections for immigrants without giving more money to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection.

"DACA's protections have provided hundreds of thousands of immigrant youth with peace of mind and safety as well as work and educational opportunities. Shamefully, Trump has done everything he can to rip that apart and is playing a cruel game with the lives of immigrant youth.

Supreme Court's inaction leaves DACA program for young migrants intact for now (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/22/2019 5:05 PM, Richard Wolf, 6053K]

The fate of the Dreamers – more than 700,000 undocumented immigrants who arrived in the United States as children – appears safe this year due to the Supreme Court's inaction.

The justices Tuesday did not agree to give the Trump administration one last chance to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA, which protects those immigrants from deportation and grants them work permits.

President Donald Trump's effort has been on hold for a year following a federal district judge's nationwide injunction. In November, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit upheld that ruling, chastising the administration for targeting "blameless and economically productive young people with clean criminal records."

The Justice Department had asked the Supreme Court to intervene even before the most recent ruling. But with its inaction, the court likely let slip any chance the case can be heard during the current term, which ends in June. That pushes oral argument to October at the

earliest and a decision into 2020, if the court agrees to hear the case at all.

Sanaa Abrar of United We Dream, an immigrant-led youth network, said the court's continued inaction on DACA should enable those seeking renewals of their status to apply. The group is raising funds to help low-income DACA recipients pay the \$495 fee.

The high court in 2016 blocked a broader initiative by President Barack Obama aimed at protecting millions of undocumented parents. Last year, it upheld Trump's ban against travelers from seven countries, including five with Muslim majorities.

Solicitor General Noel Francisco had warned in his request that "absent this court's intervention, the government will be required to maintain the (DACA) policy nationwide for years after (the Department of Homeland Security) and the attorney general determined that it should end."

A coalition of states and immigrant rights groups had urged the justices to deny the administration's request and let lower court rulings stand.

The nationwide injunction "preserves the status quo for a carefully defined group of young people who were brought to this country as children, are law-abiding and productive residents, and in many cases know no other home," California argued in court papers.

Trump originally proposed ending the program in 2017 but gave Congress six months to work out a compromise solution. That led to intense negotiations and a brief government shutdown but did not produce a law to help the Dreamers. On Saturday, Trump again suggested that the Dreamers' fate could be linked to his own dream: a concrete wall or steel barrier along parts of the southern border.

If the Supreme Court ultimately rules in Trump's favor, it might not lead to immediate deportations but would improve his bargaining position with congressional Democrats.

"A decision concerning DHS's authority to rescind DACA would say nothing about Congress's unquestioned power to alter the immigration status of DACA recipients," the Justice Department has said.

Americans Support More High-Skilled Immigrants (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [1/22/2019 10:39 AM, Sintia Radu, 2894K]

Anxiety over immigration has been stirring politics across the West for years, from the 2016 Brexit vote results in the United Kingdom, to increasing hard-line policies across Europe to the government impasse in the United States over President Donald Trump's demands for a border wall. Now a new survey suggests strong public support to welcome more immigrants – as long as they are college-educated workers.

According to findings published on Tuesday by the Pew Research Center, a bipartisan think tank in Washington D.C., about 8 in 10 American adults want more high-skilled people to immigrate to the U.S. The same or greater level of public support for highly skilled immigrants exists in Sweden, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and Australia, the report shows.

More than 50 percent of respondents in France, Spain, the Netherlands and Greece also

said they encourage more high-skilled immigration, according to the Pew study.

In Israel only 42 percent said they want more college educated immigrants. Last came Italy, where only 35 percent of those surveyed said they encourage more high-skilled immigration.

"Across the 12 countries, younger adults, more highly educated adults and adults with higher incomes tend to be more supportive of encouraging highly skilled people to immigrate to their countries," according to the authors of the Pew report.

Canada and Australia were the only countries surveyed where highly educated immigrants make up the majority of the foreign-born. More than 60 percent of immigrants in Australia and Canada have college degrees, the report shows. In contrast, only around 40 percent of immigrants are considered highly skilled in the United Kingdom, Israel and Sweden.

"In the U.S., just over a third (36 percent) of immigrants ages 25 and older are college educated, ahead of Spain, Netherlands, France, Germany, Greece and Italy among the 12 countries, but behind the UK, Israel and Sweden," the authors of the report add.

Yet the U.S. reported the highest number of highly skilled immigrants, with 14.7 million foreign-born workers age 25 or older having a post-secondary diploma or degree in 2015. Between 2004 and 2016, there were about 1.5 million foreign students who graduated from U.S. universities and received temporary authorization to work in the country. Same amount of workers were also initially approved for a type H-1B work visa sponsored by U.S. companies.

In the U.S., Trump made immigration the focus of his 2016 presidential campaign, as he pointed to immigrants entering the country from the Mexico border. The number of immigrants living illegally in the U.S. has dropped to its lowest level in more than a decade, Pew announced last November.

Europe has struggled in recent years with large numbers of refugees and immigrants, most whom are fleeing war in their home countries. The reaction across the continent has been a growing sense that refugees and immigrants pose a burden. General elections in Sweden last year, for example, showed unprecedented support for a far-right movement with neo-Nazi roots.

Customs and Border Protection

Border patrol official says 'holistic' approach is needed to curb flow of drugs at the border (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 9:44 AM, Julia Manchester, 3038K]

Border patrol agents are taking a "holistic" approach when it comes to combatting the flow of drugs across the southern U.S. border, San Diego border patrol official Rodney Scott said in an interview that aired Tuesday on "Rising."

"We're layering technology and officers on that threat on a daily basis where, every time technology improves, we're putting that at that port of entry," Scott, chief border patrol agent with the San Diego sector, told Hill.TV's Buck Sexton last week.

"We're making positive improvements in border security to address the hard [narcotics], the fentanyl, the opioid threat, but it's a holistic border. You can't just do one piece without the other," he continued.

Scott told Sexton that drug smugglers have employed new methods to get the substances across the border.

"Smugglers will use any mechanism they possibly can. They'll use the route of least resistance, and it's a business, so they want to minimize their overhead," Scott said.

"What's going on today is the cartels are having to spend a lot of money and a lot of effort to build these deep concealed hidden compartments in vehicles," he continued. "Those loads aren't thousands of pounds loads anymore. They're...usually 20, 30, 40 pounds loads at a time."

Scott's comments come amid a weeks-long partial government shutdown that began amid a standoff over funding for President Trump's proposed U.S.–Mexico border wall.

Trump has demanded \$5.7 billion to construct his long-promised border wall, but Democrats have said they will not budge on his funding request, offering more for border security instead.

Trump claims a wall would curb the flow of illegal drugs across the border and reduce crime. Democrats, meanwhile, argue that a 2,000-mile-long barrier would be an ineffective solution for the length of the U.S.–Mexico border.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Official says there needs to be balance of infrastructure and manpower at border (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 11:26 AM, Julia Manchester, 3038K]

San Diego border official Rodney Scott emphasized the need to balance manpower and infrastructure at the U.S. southern border in an interview that aired Tuesday on "Rising."

"This area is much more manpower intensive. That's a reoccurring cost, every year for as long as I need to hire that agent," Scott, chief U.S. Border Patrol agent for the sector, told Hill.TV's Buck Sexton last week.

"Infrastructure is a one-time cost. We need both, but we try to do that balance effectively," he continued.

"I've determined that extending that double fencing out beyond where you were yesterday where the end of that fence is, is a pretty good priority for us because I'm not able to control this area now with just the manpower and technology," he said.

The government shutdown, which began over an impasse on President Trump's proposed border wall, is in its fifth week.

Trump has requested \$5.7 billion to build his long-promised border wall, but Democrats

have said they will not budge on his funding request, offering more for border security instead.

The president argues that a wall would reduce crime and decrease the flow of illegal drugs across the border. Democrats, meanwhile, argue that a 2,000-mile-long barrier would be an ineffective solution for the length of the U.S.–Mexico border.

Odds of corrupted border agents grow as shutdown continues (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 11:30 AM, Ryan Consaul, 3038K]

The longest government shutdown in modern U.S. history turns 1 month old on Tuesday. The financial stress faced by federal workers who have already missed their first paycheck has been well-documented. But the threat to homeland security has not.

U.S. adversaries could exploit the shutdown by trying to corrupt border agents and airport screeners who are doing their jobs but not getting paid. Transnational criminal organizations and drug cartels have tried to bribe officers before.

The Project on Government Oversight reported last April that at least 13 employees have been arrested on corruption-related charges since January 2017. In November 2017, a border patrol agent was arrested for bribery and drug related charges.

The previous November, a supervisory border patrol agent was arrested for making false statements related to narcotics trafficking and bribery and eventually received a two-year prison sentence.

An infinitesimal number of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officers have ever even been accused of corruption, but even a small increase could compromise U.S. homeland security.

Unlike airport screeners, who are more likely to live near metropolitan areas and possibly have more employment opportunities, border agents stationed in remote areas along the nation's southwest border may have few alternatives to offset the financial burden caused by the government shutdown.

In 2012, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that 144 U.S. Customs and Border Protection employees were arrested or indicted for corruption-related activities from fiscal years 2005 through 2012. These activities included alien harboring, fraud, allowing drug smuggling and selling immigration documents.

Concern about corruption in the ranks of Customs and Border Protection personnel led Congress to pass the Anti-Border Corruption Act of 2010. The legislation required polygraph testing of applicants as part of a background investigation before they could become Customs and Border Protection officers and Border Patrol agents.

It also required the agency to deal with its extensive backlog of security reinvestigations. As of spring 2010, the agency had a backlog of 10,000 reinvestigations because relevant personnel were supposed to undergo a security background check every five years.

However, this rigorous process became viewed as burdensome and, in 2017, the House passed legislation that would expedite hiring by allowing some Customs and Border

Protection applicants to skip the polygraph test.

James Tomsheck, the former assistant commissioner for the Customs and Border Protection Office of Internal Affairs, said the legislation "would exacerbate corruption and abusive misconduct" and "threaten our national security."

Last year, the GAO also found deficiencies in the DHS' monitoring of employee misconduct and made 18 recommendations for Customs and Border Protection, TSA and Immigration and Customs Enforcement to improve their processes for monitoring and investigating employee misconduct.

Additionally, those responsible for safeguarding against corruption, including the DHS Office of Inspector General, are operating with significantly reduced staffs. The majority of employees at the inspector general's office are under furlough.

Without these watchdogs ferreting out fraud, waste and abuse, the department is ever more exposed to potential malfeasance. The latest semiannual report by the inspector general's office to Congress includes examples of two recent investigations of corruption as of September 2018.

One investigation was of a Border Patrol agent who worked with drug traffickers to smuggle marijuana across the Mexican border into the United States. The agent pleaded guilty to conspiracy to import marijuana and was sentenced to 20 months imprisonment and three years of supervised release.

The other investigation centered on a TSA employee who was observed meeting with a known narcotics/money courier in uniform at an airport and was later found with a bag containing \$130,000. The TSA employee pleaded guilty and was sentenced to a year of house arrest followed by 48 months of probation.

These examples are, of course, the rarest of exceptions. Nevertheless, the financial pressures caused by the shutdown provide U.S. adversaries with an opening to possibly exploit.

Former DHS Inspector General John Roth said earlier this month that "it's ironic that you're increasing the risk of corruption at the same time as you're attempting to fortify the border."

As negotiations continue to stall, the Trump administration and Congress should consider taking steps to guard against this vulnerability.

The Department of Homeland Security could remind frontline staff of the consequences for egregious misconduct and inform personnel about how to report misconduct as well as employee assistance programs available in this difficult time. Securing the nation's border is a critical issue that has routinely garnered bipartisan support.

Every day that the government shutdown drags on prolongs the financial hardship for those on the frontlines protecting our homeland and gives cartels and transnational criminal organizations an opening to try to corrupt the DHS ranks.

Former Border Patrol Chief Under Obama Supports Trump's Border Wall (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/22/2019 10:25 PM, Mike Brest, 867K]

Mark Morgan, the Border Patrol Chief under former President Barack Obama, ardently supports President Donald Trump's desire to build a wall along the southern border.

"Everywhere where a wall was built — in conjunction with a multi-layer approach of infrastructure, technology, and personnel — it works," he said. "Illegal immigration where the wall was has been reduced 90 percent."

Morgan pointed to those stats to explain why he believes that Democrats, like Speaker Pelosi, who call the wall "immoral" are wrong.

He later added that he believes morale throughout border patrol employees is higher under the current administration because "there is an administration that understands the importance of what they're doing, understands what needs to be done."

[AZ] Four Women Convicted for Setting Migrant Water Stations in U.S. Wildlife Refuge (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/22/2019 1:11 PM, Bob Price, 2015K]

A federal court in Arizona convicted four women after they left containers of water in the desert for migrants who illegally entered the U.S. from Mexico. The volunteers for a non-profit group illegally entered the Cabeza Prieta refuge and left water jugs to help migrants make their trek across the desert.

Prosecutors told the judge the women violated federal law by entering the 860,000-acre refuge while carrying out their mission to leave water for the migrants. The women were convicted in a three-day bench trial for entering Cabeza Prieta without a permit and could face up to 60 days in federal prison, the Washington Post reported.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Bernardo Velasco told the women that their actions violated "the national decision to maintain the Refuge in its pristine nature." The judge went on to say the women committed the crimes under a false belief they would avoid prosecution. He said they believed they would simply be banned from the park or fined. Now they face jail time.

The women are members of a non-profit organization, No More Deaths, whose mission is to bring faith-based groups together to stop the deaths of migrants in the desert.

"This verdict challenges not only No More Deaths volunteers but people of conscience throughout the country," No More Deaths volunteer Catherine Gaffney said. "If giving water to someone dying of thirst is illegal, what humanity is left in the law of this country?"

Five additional volunteers face trial in February and March.

Prosecutors told the judge that the women should have been aware that leaving the plastic jugs in the refuge would be a punishable crime. They said the women admitted to willingly violating the law, according to a report by the Arizona Republic. Prosecutors argued that the emergency beacons operated by Border Patrol agents are more effective because they result in "actual rescues."

Nearly 400 migrants lost their lives during illegal border crossings or in their attempts to march through hazardous regions like the Arizona desert, Breitbart News reported. Due to the partial government shutdown, final numbers for the year are not readily available. More than 100 of these deaths occurred in the Arizona desert.

Human Borders, another non-profit group, compiled data on the number of deaths in Arizona between October 1999 and April 2018. The group reported 3,244 during that period.

Transportation Security Administration

Government Shutdown Forces Airports to Rely on Backup Security Screeners (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/23/2019 12:43 AM, Patrick McGeehan, 20737K]

The government shutdown continues to put extraordinary pressure on the nation's air-travel system, with as many as one of every 10 transportation security officers failing to show up for work and reserve workers having to be flown in to bolster depleted ranks at some airports.

The rate of unscheduled absences of airport screening agents dropped to 7.5 percent on Monday, down from 10 percent the day before, the Transportation Security Administration said. But the agency still had to deploy some backup officers to big airports, including Newark Liberty International in New Jersey, a spokesman for the agency said on Tuesday.

The agency's force of more than 50,000 officers learned on Tuesday that they, like the rest of the 800,000 federal workers who have not been paid during the monthlong shutdown, would miss another paycheck this week. The agency said that many of the absentees had cited financial troubles as their reason for not coming to work, a signal that the call-out rate is likely to continue rising until the shutdown ends. The absentee rate for Tuesday will be available on Wednesday.

Transportation experts and elected officials have begun asking how much longer the air-travel system can continue running safely.

"Every day that goes by puts us a day or an hour closer to a potential bad thing happening," said John S. Pistole, a former administrator of the T.S.A. "When do we hit a tipping point where there is not only a concern for the efficiency of the air-traffic system, but it becomes a safety issue?"

The entire system is operating under unusual pressures: Workers are being ordered to report for duty with no idea when they will be paid for their labor. Airlines are losing more than \$100 million a month in revenue with the grounding of federal workers. Travelers are wondering how long it will take to get through airports and whether it is still safe to fly.

On the front line stand the security screeners, who make less than \$40,000 a year and have not been paid in more than three weeks. A rising number of them have stopped showing up for work because of financial troubles, the security administration said.

In their absence, some airports have had to close checkpoints, as Baltimore-Washington

International did over the weekend. At others, like Newark Liberty International and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International, the T.S.A. has had to deploy additional screeners to cope with especially long lines at checkpoints.

On Sunday, the rate of unscheduled absences for security screeners nationwide jumped to 10 percent, more than triple what it had been a year ago, the T.S.A. said.

Mr. Pistole, who oversaw the T.S.A.'s force of more than 50,000 screening agents under President Barack Obama, said a situation that calls for the emergency transfer of screeners between airports is "not sustainable."

He said he had passed through six airports in the last two weeks and found the officers to be in fairly good spirits. But, he said, "They're frustrated, obviously." He said he worried that working under the stress of not being able to pay bills or feed their families could result in a dangerous lapse.

"There are a number of issues that are coming to a tipping point and hopefully that tipping point isn't something where a potential terrorist sees this as a chance to exploit what is perceived as a vulnerability," said Mr. Pistole, who is now the president of Anderson University in Indiana.

Mr. Pistole was leading the agency during a partial shutdown of the government that lasted 16 days in 2013, he said. He recalled arriving at the agency's headquarters in Virginia, near the Pentagon, and finding out that he was one of just five employees, out of about 3,000 who worked there, who were considered essential.

Representative Gregory Meeks, a Democrat from New York City, said he was starting to have similar concerns about the shutdown after hearing from security officers at Kennedy International Airport on Saturday about "the pressure that it's starting to put on the folks at the airport."

Mr. Meeks said some workers told him they were having trouble buying enough fuel to drive back and forth to Kennedy. He said he doubted that they could continue to show up much longer without getting paid.

"They may have enough to get by possibly two months, but after that it's going to get substantially worse," said Mr. Meeks, who flies regularly between Kennedy and Washington.

In the meantime, he said, "You've got to consider the safety of the air-travel system in its entirety." Referring to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates Kennedy as well as Newark Liberty and La Guardia airports, Mr. Meeks said, "I think the Port Authority is nervous."

Port Authority officials have been offering breaks to the federal workers on AirTrain fares and parking at the airports, an executive of the authority said. They also have offered to have airport staffers pitch in on some T.S.A. duties, such as line management and distributing the bins that travelers use during the screening process, he said.

Port Authority officials declined to speak publicly about the situation, but they said that there

had been no consistent backlog at checkpoints at any of the three big airports the agency operates.

"Things are going pretty well given the circumstances," said Thomas Carter, the federal security director at Newark Liberty. Staff morale, he said, was "very stable" and the airport has not had to close any of its seven checkpoints during the shutdown.

TSA shortages continue to climb (Politico)

[Politico](#) [1/22/2019 10:00 AM, Sam Mintz, 2577K]

— Day 32 of the shutdown. The number of TSA agents calling out from work hit a new high over the long weekend, and shutdown effects continue to hit the aviation industry, among others.

— Lawmakers are set to consider a new proposal from President Trump to reopen shuttered government agencies, which briefly looked like it might be forward progress before Democrats came out against it.

— The White House might be looking to renew a push for an infrastructure package, according to a Reuters report. That could be welcome news for congressional leaders who are hoping to make infrastructure a priority, but the few details coming out of an initial meeting are not exactly promising for cooperation.

NEW HIGH OR NEW LOW? The number of unscheduled TSA screener absences tripled over the weekend, soaring to 10 percent Sunday compared to 3.1 percent on the same day last year. That's the highest call-out rate TSA has reported since the shutdown began. Baltimore-Washington International Airport closed one checkpoint Saturday because of the excessive call-outs, and a terminal at Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport remained shuttered more than a week after it was first closed due to short-staffing.

Outlook bleak: TSA spokesman Michael Bilello said more screeners were calling out "predominantly for financial reasons" and that the spike seemed to be concentrated at several large hub airports, including JFK, LaGuardia, Miami International, Chicago O'Hare and Newark Liberty International. The agency has fully deployed its team of back-up screeners help and is seeking more to fill in, "but TSA's capability is still limited and will ultimately lead to increased lane closures in order to maintain security effectiveness," he said.

In the air: Stephanie Beasley, Brianna Gurciullo and your host had a story over the weekend on the many ways that the shutdown is continuing to squeeze air travel. Canceled training classes, unbought luggage scanners and delays in plane deliveries are adding to the burdens as thousands of security screeners and air traffic controllers work without pay.

STILL STALLED: A new immigration deal offered by President Trump was quickly turned down by Democrats as Congress and the White House keep looking for ways to end the shutdown. The Senate is set to vote on the deal, which includes temporary protection for some undocumented immigrants in exchange for border wall funding. As POLITICO's Caitlin Oprysko writes, "Democrats continued to reject some of the deal's key provisions, making it unclear what the next step will be." Their position remains that Trump should reopen the government, and then they'll debate border security. In short: the deadlock continues.

TSA calls for backup help at airports facing callouts during shutdown: CNN (The Hill)
[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 7:08 PM, Michael Burke, 3038K]

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) on Tuesday asked its workforce for backup help at airports experiencing low staffing because of the government shutdown, according to CNN.

An executive with TSA sent an email to TSA officials in more than 10 states and from more than 100 airports asking workers to move from their usual airports to other airports with staffing issues, according to CNN.

According to the email, a similar request for backup was made last week and resulted in 160 officers volunteering to switch airports, CNN reported.

TSA also noted in the email that it has already dispatched all of the members of its national deployment team, a group of TSA officers that can be sent to airports across the U.S. to combat staffing shortages. That group has been used to shore up TSA staffing at airports in Atlanta, Chicago and New York City, CNN reported.

TSA did not immediately return a request for comment from The Hill.

TSA's latest call for backup help comes after the agency said in a statement Monday that unscheduled absences among workers rose to 10 percent on Sunday.

"Many employees are reporting that they are not able to report to work due to financial limitations," TSA said in the statement.

Another 7.5 percent of TSA workers called out on Monday, according to CNN.

TSA is currently not funded because of the partial government shutdown, which has been in effect since Dec. 22. The agency's workers are still required to work, but they are not getting paid.

The shutdown was sparked because of President Trump's demand for funding for a wall along the southern border — funding the Democrats have refused to approve.

The Senate plans to vote Thursday on two proposals to reopen the government.

Email: TSA makes plea for backup as shutdown drags on (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/23/2019 12:06 AM, Rene Marsh, CNN, 5847K]

The Transportation Security Administration is making a plea for 250 people to bolster its workforce of backup officers, the latest sign the agency is straining under the pressure of the shutdown, according to an internal email sent Monday morning from a TSA executive and obtained exclusively by CNN.

The email, sent to TSA officials in more than 10 states with more than 100 airports, asks for employees to move from their home airports to those airports struggling with low staffing, an indication the agency is bracing for even more callouts.

The email is the latest example of increasing anxiety within TSA about the rising number of callouts as employees prepare to miss a second paycheck this week. Ten percent of TSA's

workforce had unexcused absences on Sunday, the agency said.

This is the second such request for more backup screeners to help fill staffing gaps, according to the email and a TSA official familiar with its contents.

All members of the agency's National Deployment team, a rapid response team comprising of TSA officers can be sent to airports across the country to help fill the staffing gaps, have already been dispatched, according to the email. The team has been used to patch up gaps at airports in Atlanta, New York, Chicago and elsewhere as the partial government shutdown extends into its fifth week.

The Atlanta airport, already the world's busiest, is preparing for an influx of travelers in just under two weeks when the city hosts the Super Bowl.

The deployment team fluctuates in size based on the conditions and needs, said TSA spokesman Jim Gregory.

"We are working every day to ensure our checkpoints are fully covered nationwide and always are welcoming new volunteers," Gregory said, noting the employees would not be paid until the end of the shutdown. "Our workforce is incredibly mission-focused, and we have had hundreds answer the call."

The volunteers would presumably come from airports that haven't faced strain from callouts in order to help airports that have.

A similar request made last week netted the agency at least 160 volunteers, the email said.

In another sign of how badly volunteers are needed, the email reminds TSA officials the agency would pick up the cost of their hotel and travel. According to the email, officers will use their government-issued credit cards for meals and incidentals, but those credit card payments would not have to be made until the government reopens.

Gregory said the agency is working to reduce the need to close security checkpoints and lanes but acknowledges more could close as the government shutdown continues.

"In coordination with the airlines and airport authorities, our federal security directors will implement contingency plans as necessary, which could mean lane closures. We have seen very few lane closures across the nation so far," he said.

The number of TSA officers calling out from work has grown in recent days.

After callouts hit 10% on Sunday nationwide, according to TSA, 7.5% of employees called out Monday, compared to 3.3% on the same Monday a year ago.

"Many employees are reporting that they are not able to report to work due to financial limitations," TSA said in a statement.

In early January, CNN first reported that hundreds of TSA officers had called out from work, raising concerns among union officials and screeners that the security of air travel would be negatively impacted.

One regional TSA manager told screeners at Palm Springs International Airport, a small airport in California, that excessive absences have "adversely impacted security operations" at the airport, and warned of "disciplinary action" for employees who miss work.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

TSA calls for airport backup as more staff stay away from work during shutdown (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/22/2019 7:42 PM, Katelyn Carelle, 629K]

A Transportation Security Administration official sent an internal email Monday morning pleading for 250 employees to support airports struggling from staff shortages during the shutdown.

The email was sent to more than 100 airports in 10 states, according to CNN, and requests that employees move from their home airports to other struggling airports in a sign of higher unscheduled callouts amid the government shutdown.

TSA has been experiencing unusually high numbers of unscheduled employee callouts since the partial federal government shutdown began Dec. 22 and the essential employees work without pay.

On Sunday, 10 percent of TSA screeners called out of work, more than triple the percentage that called out on the same day last year.

The staff shortage has caused some security checkpoints to close down at airports across the country. TSA says, however, that the shortages have not yet had a huge effect on wait time, which averaged less than 30 minutes on Sunday.

"Many employees are reporting that they are not able to report to work due to financial limitations," TSA said in its statement Monday, and some shared their first \$0 pay stubs on social media.

TSA employees, and hundreds of thousands of other federal workers, have gone without pay over the last month after a spending bill was not passed in December.

Nearly 8% of TSA workers calling in sick during federal shutdown (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/22/2019 4:37 AM, UPI, 2015K]

The number of Transportation Security Administration workers calling in sick amid the federal shutdown has reached nearly 8 percent, the agency said Tuesday.

The TSA, which provides the first line of security at U.S. airports, saw only 3.1 percent in unscheduled absences at the same time last year. The updated figure means one in almost eight TSA workers are not reporting for work.

"In coordination with airport and airlines partners, TSA continues to carry out its mission by optimizing resources, managing consolidation efforts, and ensuring screening lanes are properly staffed," the TSA said in an update Tuesday, adding that security wait times at more than 90 percent of U.S. airports is less than the normal 30 minutes.

"Airports may exercise contingency plans due to call-outs and traveler volume in order to maintain effective security standards."

TSA statistics showed wait times at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport topped the average, at 41 minutes. Some of the largest airports are seeing times under the average — like Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport (29 minutes), Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (29 minutes) and San Francisco International Airport (27 minutes).

TSA workers are among the 800,000 affected by the partial federal government shutdown, which is now in its unprecedented fifth week. About 50,000 security employees have been ordered to work temporarily without pay.

While President Donald Trump and congressional Democrats traded proposals over the weekend, neither appeared to push the other side any closer to an agreement to end the stalemate.

Trump continues to demand \$5.7 billion be part of any spending measure, for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border — something that Democratic leadership has dismissed as a non-starter in negotiations.

In the meantime, federal workers have taken to selling personal items on social media, taking out personal loans and organizing food banks to survive while the shutdown continues.

Why TSA and FAA workers can't just go on strike to end the shutdown (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/22/2019 5:33 PM, Soo Youn, 2413K] Video: [HERE](#)

All over Twitter and Facebook, citizen commentators are offering a solution to end the partial U.S. government shutdown: airport workers should just go on strike.

"How many hours after all the TSA workers went on strike would the government be re-opened?" tweeted consultant David Rothkopf, a sentiment echoed throughout the Twittersphere, calling on Transportation Security Administration workers and air traffic controllers to not show up for work.

"The employees of the TSA can do even more. I propose a MASS sickout in Atlanta, the Monday after the Super Bowl. I'm not saying to disrupt the game...but make it impossible for those people to go back home. MAKE Congress and the President pay attention," radio host Joe Madison tweeted.

But striking is illegal for federal workers.

"Federal employees are governed chiefly by the Federal Service Labor Management Relations Act of 1978. That statute prohibits strikes by federal workers," University of Michigan law professor Kate Andrias told ABC News in an email.

Moreover, the act bars workers from getting a future federal government job "if he or she 'participates in a strike, or asserts the right to strike against the Government of the United States,'" Andrias added, quoting the act.

For many air traffic controllers, whose ranks are already at 30-year lows, the last strike has been seared into their memories. In 1981, nearly 13,000 controllers walked out after contract talks between their union, The Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO), and the Federal Aviation Administration broke down. Then-President Ronald Reagan fired 11,000 controllers within days and the union was decertified.

Reagan also instituted a lifetime ban for working for the FAA for the striking controllers. While then-President Bill Clinton issued an executive order to modify the ban, "it's a short shelf-life profession," Georgetown University history professor Joseph A. McCartin told ABC News.

There's also a mandatory retirement age of 56.

"That's more than 13 years," McCartin, who wrote a book about the PATCO strike, explained. "Many were not interested in coming back."

Were they to strike today, federal workers could face prosecution and even jail time.

"While the clear majority of states make public-sector strikes illegal, the statute covering most federal employees has some of the toughest penalties for illegal strikes. Specifically, the statute covering most federal workers makes striking a crime, which is unusual," Joseph E. Slater, a law professor at the University of Toledo and an expert in public sector labor law, told ABC News in an email.

"The typical penalties are (i) you can be fired and (ii) you and your union can be fined. But in addition to that, you can be jailed for striking against the federal government. And indeed, a number of the PATCO strikers were back in the early 1980s," Slater explained.

The suggestion of a strike, or another way to walk off the job, is something Nick Daniels, president of the National Air Traffic Controller's Association (NATCO) Fort Worth Center's chapter hears a lot. But as a union leader, he's well aware of the penalties.

"You know, missing pay is difficult enough, and to lose liberty would definitely be a thing that none of us would want to do," Daniels told ABC News.

Plus, there's the fact that air traffic controllers take their jobs very seriously.

"They are the guardians of the sky who have to be 100 percent right 100 percent of the time. And they take great pride in that weight that they carry on their shoulders for that job," Daniels said.

In addition, Daniels said, "they do not want the American public to pay for this government shut down. They don't want them to pay for it just like we don't want to have to pay for this argument that's going on in the political side. All that would be is us passing off that same type of feeling of being mistreated or being upset to someone else who doesn't deserve it."

Despite not being able to strike, the strain of overtime and financial stress has had an effect. The controllers union did confirm at least two of their members had resigned over the shutdown.

"Failure to provide wages for work performed ... United States Government instability causing undue stress to me and my family and the ability to maintain two households," an unidentified air traffic controller wrote on his SF-50, a federal form detailing personnel changes that ABC News obtained a copy of.

A controller trainee in Wisconsin delivered a hand-written resignation on letter on Jan. 18 that was also obtained by ABC News.

"To whom it may concern, I am an Air Traffic Control Specialist in training at Madison ATCT. Due to financial hardship as a result of the government shutdown, I am forced to resign from my position and seek employment elsewhere. I hope for my coworkers and friends that this shutdown ends, as I worry that I may not be the last developmental forces to resign from an already under-staffed facility," the trainee wrote.

Training has been halted during the shutdown.

Meanwhile, TSA workers have been calling in sick to work at a rate double of that a year ago. On Monday, 7.5 percent of the TSA workforce called out, compared to 3.3 percent on the same day last year.

The TSA acknowledged the strain in a statement: "Many employees are reporting that they are not able to report to work due to financial limitations."

[CT] TSA Employees Turn To Food Bank For Support As Federal Shutdown Persists (New England Public Radio)

[New England Public Radio](#) [1/22/2019 6:42 AM, Ryan Lindsay, 4K]

As the month-marker of the partial government shutdown approaches, Transportation Security Administration employees at Bradley International Airport are turning to food donations to keep meals on their table.

Lunch time feels different for TSA officers at Connecticut's largest airport, especially after missing their first paycheck. Instead of sitting down to eat, they headed to an employee parking lot to fill bags with food donated by Foodshare, a regional food bank.

Steve Gilbert is a father of five who's worked for TSA for more than 15 years.

"When you're trying to feed your family, pride kind of takes a backseat," said Gilbert. "They have some chicken, they have a veggie platter, they have some squash, some onions, a couple of soup bowl things from Panera, so I took it all. A couple of meals over the next few days -- that's going to be huge."

Gilbert drives from Westfield, Massachusetts five days a week to Windsor Locks for his nine-hour, early morning shift that begins at 2:30 a.m.

"It's all we can think about," Gilbert said. "We're coming to work, you have no pay, you're trying to pay [for] gas, you're going around to creditors."

His wife's income is taking care of their mortgage, insurance, and electric bills. Gilbert says his family has enough savings to last through early February but after that, they'll have to "live very frugal lives and muddle through." Some of his co-workers are single parents and

others are parents who are both employed by TSA.

Cherie Trice, Foodshare's director of giving, stood outside in below-freezing temperatures stacking fruits, vegetables, juice, and other food items on tables set up near the parking lot's sidewalk throughout the afternoon. TSA employees lined up before the food distribution started at noon.

"There was already a fair amount of people waiting for us who've told us how grateful they are to us for doing what we're doing," Trice said, "and I've tried to share that we are so grateful to them for keeping us safe and our families safe at the airport and in the skies."

A van shuttled TSA officers back and forth to pick up food and to bring pre-packed bags to their co-workers who couldn't stop by the pop-up. There are more than 300 officers employed at Bradley International and Tweed New Haven airports.

Foodshare president Jason Jakubowski worked with the state's TSA union to organize the event.

"People are food insecure for a short period of time, some for longer periods of time," Jakubowski said. "But when they are, our job is to be out there in the community helping them."

The food bank provides Hartford and Tolland counties food and other related resources for those in need. The organization plans to create "after-hours" food pantries for TSA and other federal employees as the shutdown continues.

[Editorial note: consult audio at source link]

[NJ] Newark Airport Resumes Normal Operations After Drone Sightings Temporarily Halt Traffic (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/22/2019 9:30 PM, Staff, 20737K]

Reports of drone sightings in northern New Jersey temporarily halted arrivals at Newark Liberty International Airport on Tuesday, but normal operations had since been resumed, officials said.

A spokesman from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) earlier said flights into Newark - the 11th busiest U.S. airport - were briefly suspended after two drones were seen flying at 3,500 feet over nearby Teterboro Airport, a small regional airport about 17 miles away that mostly handles corporate jets and private planes.

The federal agency said information about the drone sightings was turned over to law enforcement.

The FAA's Air Traffic Control System Command Center briefly issued a ground stop at Newark citing "drone activity," according to a document posted on its website.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates both the Newark and Teterboro airports, later said on Twitter that normal operations had resumed and that it was coordinating with the FAA and law enforcement authorities as they investigate the incident.

United Airlines, the largest carrier at Newark, said it was aware of the reports of drone activity and was working with the airport and the FAA. It said the impact on its operations had been minimal.

The issue of drones impacting commercial air traffic has taken on new urgency after reports of drone sightings in the United Kingdom impacted air travel.

Earlier this month, flights from London's Heathrow airport were halted for about an hour after a drone was sighted near Europe's busiest air hub.

Gatwick Airport, London's second busiest airport, was severely disrupted in December when drones were sighted on three consecutive days, resulting in about 1,000 flights being canceled or diverted and affecting 140,000 passengers.

Both airports responded to the Gatwick incident by ordering military-grade anti-drone technology.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Transportation Department proposed rules that would allow drones to operate over populated areas and end a requirement for special permits for night use, long-awaited actions that are expected to help speed commercial use.

The Trump administration noted there are nearly 1.3 million registered drones in the United States and more than 116,000 registered drone operators. But officials say there are hundreds of thousands of additional drones that are not registered.

The U.S. Congress last year gave the Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security new powers to disable or destroy threatening drones after officials raised concerns about the use of drones as potential weapons.

In September 2017, a small civilian drone struck a U.S. Army UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter near Staten Island, New York. The helicopter landed safely but there was some damage.

[NJ] Drone sighting sparks delays at New Jersey's Newark Liberty International Airport (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/22/2019 11:48 PM, Cydney Henderson, 6053K]

Operations at New Jersey's Newark Liberty International Airport are back to normal after a reported drone sighting delayed arriving flights.

The Federal Aviation Administration told USA TODAY Tuesday evening that they received two reports around 5 p.m. from incoming flights of a drone "about 3500 feet above Teterboro, New Jersey," which is a little more than 15 miles north of the airport.

"At that point, flights arriving into Newark were held for a short duration," an FAA spokesperson said in a statement. "With no further drone sightings, arrivals resumed."

The airport's official Twitter page informed travelers of the delay, adding they are "coordinating with the FAA & fully supporting all federal law enforcement authorities as they investigate this incident." Newark reported a delay averaging 55 minutes for arrivals.

U.S. law requires anyone flying a drone within five miles of an airport to contact its control tower for clearance. Amateur drone flights are restricted to an altitude of 400 feet and cannot be flown in controlled airspace without a permit.

Tuesday's drone sighting is the latest to cause a disruption at an airport. In December, London's Gatwick international airport was shut down for several days during Christmas travel due to drone sightings.

[MN] Most TSA workers at MSP showing for work, even without pay (Minnesota Public Radio)

[Minnesota Public Radio](#) [1/22/2019 8:27 PM, Martin Moylan and Tom Crann, 15K]

The Transportation Security Administration's federal security director in Minnesota said more than 90 percent of the agency's local employees are still showing up for work, even though they're not getting paid.

Cliff Van Leuven said that the workers' perseverance is helping keep wait times for airport security screening in check. Over the past weekend, wait times topped 40 minutes during peak passenger rushes but averaged about 15 minutes overall.

Van Leuven said the agency is trying to cut employees some slack to deal with family and financial issues.

"When they're calling in to say, 'I have to take care of meeting with my landlord, my financial institution,' we're doing everything we can to grant that time off, being respectful of the fact that we know they'll be in the next day to do the work," he said.

In a memo to local employees, the TSA said it is facing a critical staffing challenge at main security checkpoints. The agency is closing some secondary checkpoints and assigning managers, back-office staff and other employees to watch exits and otherwise assist security screeners.

Van Leuven said travelers, businesses and other organizations have been trying help out local TSA screeners working without pay.

"The Metropolitan Airports Commission, the airport staff, the airlines, the concessionaires here and the traveling public had been so supportive in feeding our staff, in dropping off gift cards in small denominations, just to try to help them make ends meet and to show their appreciation," he said.

Van Leuven said federal ethics guidelines limit the value and type of gifts that employees can accept. For instance, he said gift cards worth \$20 or less are acceptable but cash donations are not permitted.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

2017, 2018 were costliest ever years for natural disasters (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/22/2019 4:55 PM, Staff, 2890K]

Taken together, 2017 and 2018 were the costliest years for weather-related disasters on record, with total losses of \$653 billion, according to a new analysis

This year's devastating hurricanes in the U.S. -- Florence, which hit the Carolinas in September and Michael, which roared through the Florida Panhandle the following month -- cost \$15 billion and \$17 billion, respectively, professional services firm Aon said in a report that evaluates the impact of natural disasters. But they were dwarfed by 2017's Hurricane Harvey, which flooded Houston and resulted in losses of \$125 billion.

Hurricanes were only part of the natural disaster landscape described by Aon. In the past year alone there were typhoons in Japan and East Asia, flooding in Japan and China and drought in Central Europe. All told, the company tallied 394 significant natural catastrophes in 2018, costing a total of \$225 billion.

Fourth-warmest year since 1880

The two-year whammy indicates that worse might come as the world's climate continues to change, with Aon meteorologist Steve Bowen noting that "catastrophe risks continue to evolve."

Among the causes raising those risks: shifts in population to vulnerable locations such as low-lying shorelines, as well as a changing -- and warming -- climate that is "contributing to more volatile weather patterns," Aon said.

Dating back to 1880, 2018 was the fourth-warmest year on record, according to the report.

Bowen might also have been referring to California, where drought, heat, high winds and untamed brush caused the state's "deadliest and most destructive fire on record," according to Aon. The Camp Fire destroyed nearly 19,000 homes and other structures in Paradise, California, killing 88 people and resulting in \$15 billion in losses. That and other California conflagrations charred 1.8 million acres in the state, a record.

There was some good news in Aon's report. While 10,000 people died in natural disasters around the world in 2018, that loss of life ranked well below the average. "2018 ranks among the lowest disaster-related fatality totals since 1950," the company concluded.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[PR] Study: Puerto Rico received slower, less 'generous' disaster aid than Texas, Florida (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 5:26 PM, Chris Mills Rodrigo, 3038K]

Puerto Rico received slower and less "generous" federal assistance after Hurricane María than Texas and Florida did after hurricanes Harvey and Irma, according to a study published Tuesday.

The researchers from the University of Michigan and the University of Utah analyzed federal spending and resource allocation estimates as well as direct and indirect storm-mortality counts to compare the responses to the three devastating 2017 hurricanes based on severity.

"Our results show that the federal response was faster and more generous across measures of money and staffing to Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in Texas and Florida,

compared with Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico," they wrote in the report.

"This result would be unsurprising if Hurricane Maria was less damaging than Irma and Harvey. However, Hurricanes Harvey and Irma made landfall as category four hurricanes, and Maria hit Puerto Rico as a 'high-end' category 4, or just below the threshold of a category 5 hurricane."

"Thus, assuming that disaster responses should be commensurate to the degree of storm severity and need of the population, the federal response is questionable and the degree of variation between the disaster responses is problematic," they wrote.

The researchers explained that the response to María was hamstrung by federal staffing deficiencies and lack of resources.

In September 2017, shortly after Maria slammed the island, President Trump said that the response was hampered because of the distance between Puerto Rico and the mainland U.S. as well as the ocean.

"This is an island, surrounded by water. Big water. Ocean water," the president said.

The report's authors specifically refuted this argument, saying that "geographic limitations" do not fully explain the "magnitude of this variation" in the different responses to the hurricanes.

"Federal staffing rates in Puerto Rico reached comparable levels in three times the amount of time as Texas and 30 times the amount of time for Irma," the researchers wrote. "The magnitude of this variation seems difficult to explain by geography, particularly in the context of an ongoing disaster."

The island originally reported a death toll of 64 from María but increased it to 2,975 after a government-commissioned study by George Washington University in Aug. 2018.

FEMA responded to an inquiry about the study with an email saying it isn't responding to media questions due to the partial government shutdown.

In a statement to CBS News, Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló's office used the study to further criticize the federal government's response to María.

"The study released today is further evidence that the federal government dragged its feet during the biggest disaster in our recorded history, which took the lives of almost 3,000 citizens," said Carlos Mercader, executive director of the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration, which represents the island's government in the U.S.

"We can only hope that the mounting evidence serves to improve the federal government's response during the next natural disaster," he added.

Coast Guard

'Unacceptable': Coast Guard's top officer criticizes lack of payment in government shutdown (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/22/2019 8:56 PM, Dan Lamothe, 9763K]

The Coast Guard's top admiral said Tuesday that members of the armed forces should not be expected to shoulder the burden of the partial government shutdown, citing the "anxiety and stress" it is causing military families as their pay is withheld.

Adm. Karl Schultz, the Coast Guard commandant, said that he is heartened by the outpouring of support Coast Guard personnel have received across the country but expects more.

"Ultimately, I find it unacceptable that Coast Guard men and women have to rely on food pantries and donations to get through day-to-day life as service members," he said, speaking on a video posted to his Twitter account.

The comments marked the admiral's most forceful remarks about the shutdown since it began 32 days ago amid a dispute over President Trump's demands for funding for a southern border wall. While the majority of the U.S. military is part of the Defense Department and has funding, the Department of Homeland Security and its agencies, including the Coast Guard, are affected by the shutdown.

About 41,000 active-duty service members and 2,100 civilians who are considered "essential personnel" are working without a paycheck under the promise they will get back pay when the shutdown is resolved, said Lt. Cmdr. Scott McBride, a service spokesman. That situation grew more urgent Jan. 15, when service members missed a paycheck. An additional 6,000 civilians working for the service are furloughed.

Overall, about 800,000 federal workers are not receiving paychecks amid the shutdown, with nearly half furloughed.

Schultz, appearing alongside the service's top enlisted man, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Jason M. Vanderhaden, noted that civilian employees will miss another paycheck on Friday and called it a "sobering" situation.

Senior Coast Guard officials and the American public, he said, "stand in awe" of the affected service members' "continued dedication to duty and resilience" and that of their families.

The admiral, in keeping with the military's tradition of not commenting directly on politics, did not blame anyone specific for the shutdown. He and Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen are making their case for the service on Capitol Hill, Schultz said.

The Coast Guard has continued to carry out operations across the globe during the shutdown.

On Sunday, the Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf departed from Alameda, Calif., with about 170 people aboard for a deployment to the Pacific that will last up to six months. The Defense

Department will reimburse the service for the deployment, but Coast Guard personnel still will not be paid until the shutdown is resolved.

"The crew, like all other [Coast Guard] members, are affected by the lapse of appropriations, and are not being paid," said Lt. Cmdr. Steve Brickey, a service spokesman. "It is always difficult to deploy for months and leave behind family and loved ones. That stress is of course magnified when you add on the uncertainty of the shutdown."

Coast Guard chief: 'Unacceptable' that service members must rely on food pantries, donations amid shutdown (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 10:08 PM, Michael Burke, 3038K]

The commandant of the US Coast Guard on Tuesday called it "unacceptable" that members of the military branch have had to turn to food pantries and donations during the ongoing government shutdown.

Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz said in a video message posted to Twitter members of the Coast Guard "should not be expected to shoulder" the burden of the shutdown, which has resulted in members missing paychecks.

Schultz also said he is "heartened" by an "outpouring of support from local communities across the nation."

"But ultimately, I find it unacceptable that Coast Guard men and women have to rely on food pantries and donations to get through day-to-day life as service members," he added.

Last week, service members in the Coast Guard did not receive their regular paycheck because of the partial shutdown, which has been ongoing since Dec. 22.

The shutdown was sparked because of President Trump's demand that Congress approve funding for a wall along the southern border, something Democrats have vowed not to support.

The Senate plans to vote Thursday on two proposals to reopen the government, including one that includes funding for the wall.

Coast Guard head: Service members relying on food pantries 'unacceptable' (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/23/2019 12:24 AM, Kate Sullivan, CNN, 5847K] Video: [HERE](#)

The commandant of the US Coast Guard said Tuesday that it is "unacceptable" that Coast Guard members have to rely on food pantries and donations during the partial government shutdown.

"We're five plus weeks into the anxiety and stress of this government lapse and your non-pay," Commandant Adm. Karl L. Schultz said in a video tweeted out as a message to service members. "You as members of the armed forces should not be expected to shoulder this burden."

Schultz said he and the Coast Guard leadership team "stand in awe of your continued dedication to duty and resilience and that of your families." He said he was also "heartened" by the "outpouring of support from local communities across the nation."

"But ultimately, I find it unacceptable that Coast Guard men and women have to rely on food pantries and donations to get through day-to-day life as service members," Schultz said.

"This week we'll hit another sobering milestone, and that's potential nonpayment to our civilians on Friday," Schultz said. The Coast Guard has a civilian workforce of 8,000, according to the commandant, who work alongside uniformed members.

On January 15, thousands of active-duty Coast Guard service members did not receive their paychecks -- the first time in history that US service members were not paid during a lapse in government funding, according to Schultz.

In the video, Schultz said he and Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen will "continue to seek solutions." He said he and Master Chief Jason M. Vanderhaden, who also appears in the video, will continue "to take to Capitol Hill the message, the critical importance, of putting paychecks into men and women's hands that serve in the world's best Coast Guard."

Vanderhaden thanked service members and said in the video, "This will end. We will get through this."

"Continue to stand tall," Schultz said. "Your dedication, resilience, to this adversity defines the absolute best of our nation."

[NC] Woman medevaced from cruise ship off North Carolina coast (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/22/2019 6:26 AM, Staff, 337K]

The U.S. Coast Guard has medevaced a woman from a cruise ship off the coast of North Carolina.

News outlets cite a Coast Guard release that says Carnival Pride crewmembers notified watchstanders on Monday that a 40-year-old woman had abdominal pains. A helicopter crew from Air Station Elizabeth City was launched to hoist the woman from the ship, which was approximately 50 miles (80 kilometers) southeast of Cape Hatteras.

Accompanied by her spouse and a nurse, she was taken to a hospital in Morehead City.

Further details about the woman's condition were not available. The release commended the ship's crew for acting swiftly.

[FL] Coast Guard: Migrant smuggling vessel stopped off Florida (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/22/2019 12:06 PM, Associated Press, 337K]

The U.S. Coast Guard says its crews intercepted a boat in the Atlantic Ocean with six people trying to enter Florida illegally by sea.

The 20-foot (6-meter) boat was stopped Saturday afternoon about 30 miles (45 kilometers) east of Sunny Isles Beach. In a statement Tuesday, the Coast Guard said two Jamaican

men, a Dominican man and a Bahamian man were aboard the vessel, along with two U.S. citizens.

The statement says one migrant had previous drug convictions, and another had previous convictions for drug trafficking, kidnapping and aggravated assault.

The commander of the Coast Guard's Miami-based 7th district said maritime border security remained a priority amid the partial government shutdown.

Rear Adm. Peter Brown said he was "humbled and inspired" by his crews' service "during this time of personal financial uncertainty."

[FL] 2 men, dog rescued from overturned boat in Gulf off Florida (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/22/2019 8:37 AM, Associated Press, 337K]

The U.S. Coast Guard came to the aid of two men and a dog whose boat flipped over in the Gulf of Mexico off Florida's Big Bend.

In a statement Tuesday, the Coast Guard said a helicopter crew hoisted the men and the dog to safety about 5 miles south of Rock Island.

The statement said the men and dog were found wearing life jackets and clinging to the hull of the overturned vessel. They showed mild, hypothermia-like symptoms and were met at Tallahassee International Airport by emergency responders.

CISA/Cybersecurity

DHS issues emergency order to civilian agencies to squelch cyber-hijacking campaign that private analysts say could be linked to Iran (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/22/2019 11:12 PM, Ellen Nakashima, 9763K]

The Department of Homeland Security on Tuesday issued an emergency directive to all non-national-security agencies requiring them to take steps to protect their networks against a cyber-hijacking campaign that private-sector researchers suggest may be linked to Iran.

According to a directive issued by Christopher Krebs, head of the DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, attackers have affected "multiple executive branch" agencies by redirecting and intercepting Web and mail traffic.

No intelligence, Defense Department or classified networks were affected, U.S. officials said.

However, according to one U.S. official, only one civilian agency so far has been verified to have had its email traffic redirected. But it is not clear how much traffic was affected and how many other agencies have also seen their data hijacked.

"There is still a whole lot of data that needs to be crunched to determine impact," said one senior official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the matter's sensitivity.

"The issue is that this is potentially bad," the official said.

DHS is one of a number of agencies affected by the partial government shutdown. Though key operational cybersecurity personnel are on the job, most support staff have been furloughed, making administrative tasks more difficult to manage, officials said.

The hijacking campaign targets a basic but little-known part of the Internet known as the "Domain Name System" (DNS), which translates Web or domain names into IP addresses. To execute it, the attacker covertly changes a destination IP address so that log-in data entered by a user passes through a server controlled by the hacker before being forwarded to the legitimate destination.

Krebs ordered agencies to take several steps within the next 10 days, including auditing their DNS records to see whether they resolve to the intended location or IP address and strengthening password security for all users who are able to make changes to DNS records.

"Overall, this [DNS hijacking] cannot be allowed to continue," the official said.

The campaign was first spotted last fall by private-sector firms such as Cisco and FireEye, which detected malicious DNS activity in the Middle East.

Cisco's Talos Intelligence Group saw a campaign targeting Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates affecting government websites and a private Lebanese airline company. FireEye's Mandiant intelligence team identified a wave of DNS hijacking targeting dozens of domains belonging to government, telecommunications and Internet infrastructure entities across the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and North America.

"While we do not currently link this activity to any tracked group, initial research suggests the actor or actors responsible have a nexus to Iran," FireEye said in a blog post this month.

The attackers have targeted ministries of foreign affairs, energy ministries, and police and military organizations in the Middle East, the firm said.

The firm has tracked related episodes of DNS hijacking dating to January 2017 in the Middle East.

The campaign's goal appears to be traditional espionage — to siphon potentially all the emails or user traffic and credentials of a targeted agency, said Ben Read, a FireEye senior manager. If Iran is behind the campaign, he said, it "would want to know what the foreign ministries in the gulf are deciding."

The campaign is notable for its breadth, he said.

"I don't think we've seen such an operation at this scale," he said. "We found at least 50 different organizations affected across at least 12 countries — and that's just what we've found so far."

It's also notable because it seizes information when it is transiting outside a user's network, he said. "No anti-virus is going to flag on this. Your firewalls aren't going to block this," he said.

FireEye documented efforts by operators using Iranian IP addresses to operate machines used to intercept, record and forward network traffic. These IP addresses were previously linked to an intrusion attributed to hackers working on behalf of the Iranian government, the firm said.

In December, the firm detected activity in the United States targeting telecom companies that operate the Internet backbone.

DHS reports cyberattack on government websites (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/22/2019 11:50 PM, Katelyn Caralle, 629K]

The Department of Homeland Security warned of a recent cyberattack directed at the agency in an "emergency directive" issued Tuesday.

"[A]ttackers have redirected and intercepted web and mail traffic, and could do so for other networked services," according to the directive.

The attack is believed to be out of Iran, according to ZDNet.

The emergency directive requires all employees to take multiple login precautions, including changing passwords and implementing multifactor authentication, and all agency-related domains will be audited.

The attacker tampered with the domain name system and was able to redirect site traffic. The hijacker, however, was also able to obtain encryption certificates for organizations' domain names, which allows any redirected traffic to be decrypted, revealing any data the user submitted.

The DHS directive will stay in effect for an unspecified time, according to the statement.

In the meantime, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency will continue to track the series of incidents and will regularly provide technical assistance.

The new cybersecurity agency, as part of the Department of Homeland Security, is affected by the ongoing partial government shutdown that has left some 800,000 federal employees either furloughed or working without a paycheck.

Unintended consequence: Federal cybersecurity workforce a potential casualty of the shutdown (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 11:00 AM, Frank J. Cilluffo and Sharon L. Cardash, 3038K]

The partial shutdown of the US government may well end up damaging cybersecurity but perhaps not in the way most commonly thought.

The most common and understandable concern is that the country's current ability to respond to an emergency in the cyber domain is hampered. This line of thinking rests on the belief that the United States is not operating at full strength and, therefore, its present capacity to cope with an urgency is diminished. Admittedly, the challenge with multiple players down is not to be underestimated: It is far from ideal to take and defend the field with an incomplete roster. Moreover, bad actors may be plotting how to seize advantage

during this self-inflicted window of vulnerability.

Frankly, it is hard enough to ensure cybersecurity on a good day, when all hands are on deck. Having said that, there is some cause for confidence, despite prevailing circumstances. For example, from the standpoint of the Department of Homeland Security, over 80 percent of its flagship component responsible for cyber incidents — namely, the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center, known as NCCIC — remains staffed. This should stand us in reasonably good (if imperfect) stead, should a crisis arise. For instance, US authorities engaged fully during the spate of DNS (domain name system) hijackings reported recently.

While that which is urgent may displace all else, by virtue of immediacy, it is critical to keep in mind the longer-term aspects of the shutdown: The tasks and consequences which are also truly important, but which are going undone or unaddressed. One such example would be vulnerability assessments, whose completion is suffering. Yet, leaving blind spots unidentified — and therefore unchecked — is obviously a suboptimal condition, which could have serious ramifications for our national security. By no means is this the only worry.

A relatively overlooked but deeply concerning knock-on effect of the shutdown, particularly as it wears on and multiple "paychecks" show a zero balance, is the potential thinning of the federal cybersecurity workforce.

Recruiting and retaining the best and brightest in government service in the area of cybersecurity has long been difficult. Openings even for critical positions requiring key skills have gone unfilled in the public sector, and generated substantial and ongoing concern about how best to grow the workforce in this area quickly and well, so as to meet the needs of government — and industry — and thereby serve the ends of both national and economic security. The gap between supply and demand is striking: 320,000 U.S. cyber jobs are open (as underscored recently by former cybersecurity advisor to the President, Rob Joyce, now senior cybersecurity advisor to the director of the National Security Agency). The companion figure worldwide is projected to reach 1 million by 2020.

A substantial conundrum (but certainly not the only one) for government is that the public sector is not in a position to offer salaries that are commensurate with those in the private sector. The good news is that this is not the only motivating factor at play. To the contrary, the opportunity to contribute to the mission has profound appeal to prospective public servants and incumbents. Indeed, the mission has always been the strongest "selling" point for government, and has long drawn extraordinary talent into the ranks of public service. The ability to contribute to the national interest — to serve one's country and people, and to make a real difference and impact — is not to be underestimated and, some would say, unparalleled.

However, those who have adopted this mindset are now faced with the reality that the custodians of the mission are placing it in question and jeopardy. With their animating factor held in check by others, and with no immediate end to the situation in sight, some of the very professionals that we should be valuing most are instead being given the opposite signal. Against this background, and caught in the bind of having (and wanting) to provide for themselves and their families in a stable way, some of the most highly skilled federal workers are now being given pause for thought. They are questioning the very thing that drew them into public service in the first place, and asking whether they may as well migrate

into private industry with all that it has to offer in the way of tangible and concrete benefits.

The country can ill-afford this situation, especially at a time when adversary nation-states are ramping up their investments in science and technology, with an eye toward gaining strategic advantage and shifting the balance of global power. While the United States continues to possess an extraordinary capacity to innovate and a deep reservoir of talent in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math)-related disciplines, we also stand apart when it comes to government shutdowns. Neither our friends and allies nor our foes find themselves where we do now.

Protecting the sanctity of the mission is tantamount to protecting and serving the national interest — which is the essence of governance and the most sacred and fundamental responsibility of the federal government. Put another way, retention of the cybersecurity workforce in the public sector is so much more than an "HR" issue. It is past time to recognize the gravity of that fact and act accordingly.

Did Australia Poke a Hole in Your Phone's Security? (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/22/2019 5:41 PM, Nellie Bowles, 20737K]

A new law in Australia gives law enforcement authorities the power to compel tech-industry giants like Apple to create tools that would circumvent the encryption built into their products.

The law, the Telecommunications and Other Legislation Amendment (Assistance and Access) Act 2018, applies only to tech products used or sold in Australia. But its impact could be global: If Apple were to build a so-called back door for iPhones sold in Australia, the authorities in other countries, including the United States, could force the company to use that same tool to assist their investigations.

The Australian law went into effect last month. It is one of the most assertive efforts by lawmakers to rein in tech companies, which have argued for decades that unbreakable encryption is an imperative part of protecting the private communications of their customers.

In recent years, law enforcement officials have complained that tough encryption has made it impossible for them to gain access to the online discussions of crime suspects, particularly in time-sensitive terror investigations.

The tension between tech and law enforcement came to a head about four years ago when Apple resisted a federal request to help investigators gain access to a locked iPhone that had belonged to a man who took part in a shooting that killed 14 people in San Bernardino, Calif.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation eventually found a way around the iPhone's security without Apple's help. But if Apple had already created a workaround — a back door, in industry terms — to sell phones in Australia, the American authorities could have simply ordered Apple to use the tool.

"This may be an encryption back door for the U.S.," said Sharon Bradford Franklin, director of surveillance and cybersecurity policy for the New America think tank's Open Technology Institute. "A back door to an encryption back door."

The Australian law has limited oversight mechanisms. A notice sent to a company must be "reasonable and proportionate," and the authorities must have a warrant to gain access to a phone or service. But the agency issuing the notice decides what is reasonable.

There is an appeals process if a company is asked to build a new interception capability. A firm can ask an independent assessment panel consisting of a technical expert and a former judicial officer to review the notice.

The law says the Australian authorities cannot ask a company to build universal decryption capabilities or introduce system-wide weaknesses. But security experts and tech companies like Apple said that did not reflect what they would have to do to comply with an order. It is impossible, for example, to create a workaround for one iPhone's encryption without potentially introducing something that could work for all of them, they said.

"All of Australian technology is tarnished by it," said Mike Cannon-Brookes, one of the founders of Atlassian, a business software company that is among Australia's biggest tech companies.

Australia is a member of the so-called Five Eyes intelligence alliance, and it is not the only country in the alliance with a law like this. Britain passed the Investigatory Powers Act in 2016. For British law enforcement to gain access to data, it must first ask a judicial approver.

"We're not the first," said Michelle Price, chief executive of the nonprofit Australian Cyber Security Growth Network. "But Australia's version has gone much further."

Apple officials called the law "dangerously ambiguous" and "alarming."

"Encryption is simply math," Apple wrote in a statement submitted to the Australian Parliament's Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security on Oct. 12. "Any process that weakens the mathematical models that protect user data for anyone will by extension weaken the protections for everyone."

But politicians said the risk of encryption technology's being used by terrorists was too significant. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull of Australia said in July, "The laws of mathematics are very commendable, but the only law that applies in Australia is the law of Australia."

Technology companies in the United States have argued that they cannot be compelled to create tools for breaking the encryption in their products because computer code is a kind of free speech protected under the First Amendment. But building tools to satisfy the Australian authorities would essentially make that argument moot. Countries around the world could demand access to the tool.

Apple is hardly the only tech company that could feel the impact of the Australian law. Anyone with a website is considered a communications provider, subject to the law. Any company that "provides an electronic service that has one or more end-users in Australia" is required to comply.

A long list of companies meets that description, such as smartphone makers and Facebook

and its WhatsApp messaging service.

"Once WhatsApp, for example, builds a system at the behest of the Australians, everyone gets to use it," said Nate Cardozo, the senior information security counsel on the Electronic Frontier Foundation's legal team, who has studied the new law.

The law allows government agencies like the Australian Secret Intelligence Service or the Australian Federal Police to compel tech companies to install software on a user's device to get around encryption. It can also compel the company not to alert the user.

"So if WhatsApp gets one of these notices and does not comply, they're subject to asset seizure and even hypothetically having executives hauled into jail for contempt if they refuse to do so," Mr. Cardozo said.

There is confusion about other secrecy requirements of the law. For example, would it require employees who received requests to keep them secret from their employers? The Australian Department of Home Affairs, which coordinates strategy and leadership of the country's national security policy, says it would not. But security experts at the Electronic Frontier Foundation and at companies like the password manager 1Password say it is actually unclear.

Australia does not have a strong tech industry, but it is growing, with investors and start-ups and a few established companies. And in the tightknit tech community that does exist, the new law has been a gut punch.

"We never thought it would pass," said Alan Jones, chief executive of M8 Ventures, a tech investment firm in Sydney. "We all just figured that Australia's political leaders would consider the expert advice that told them this was nuts."

Sarah Moran, the chief executive of Girl Geek Academy, which teaches young women to code, said she had planned to begin tech start-ups in Australia until the law passed.

"I was looking to found two tech companies, but why would you build tech here now?" she asked. "I don't think the government understands how drastically it impacts not just the tech that's built here but also the enthusiasm and entrepreneurial investment that Australians will be willing to make."

Ms. Moran, who is based in Melbourne, said she was questioning even the program she currently runs. "Why would I tell young girls to go build tech here if there's not going to be any tech industry?" she asked.

Casey Ellis, 37, was raised in Sydney but lives in San Francisco, where he runs a cybersecurity firm called Bugcrowd. He has already heard about companies that have become wary of hiring Australian firms, he said.

"People are factoring it in as a risk when you're looking at hiring an Australian now," Mr. Ellis said. "It's causing a chilling effect around Australian companies."

Terrorism Investigations

[NY] 4 Arrested, 23 Guns Seized in Plot Against Muslim Enclave in Upstate N.Y. (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/23/2019 12:29 AM, Michael Gold, 20737K]

A seemingly offhand remark in a high school lunchroom set off an investigation that uncovered an arsenal of weapons and a plot to attack a Muslim enclave in upstate New York, law enforcement officials said.

The comment was made by a 16-year-old student at Greece Odyssey Academy in Greece, N.Y.

On Friday, he showed classmates a photo of someone and said that person looked like a potential school shooter, authorities said.

The statement alarmed fellow students, who reported it to school officials. The local police became involved and started interviewing people at the school to determine whether there was a potential threat.

The threat, it turned out, came from the 16-year-old whose comments had triggered the investigation, authorities said on Tuesday. He and three young adults stockpiled 23 firearms and three homemade bombs as part of a plan to target the secluded Muslim enclave of Islamberg, a rural settlement about 150 miles northwest of New York City, authorities said.

The men, Vincent Vetromile, 19, Brian Colaneri, 20, and Andrew Crysel, 18, all from suburban Rochester, were arrested and charged with criminal possession of a weapon and conspiracy, according to court documents. They were expected to appear in court on Wednesday.

A fourth person was arrested and charged with the same offenses as an adolescent offender, Greece's police chief, Patrick Phelan, said at a news conference on Tuesday. His name was not revealed because of his age.

No federal terrorism charges have been filed. But Monroe County's district attorney, Sandra Doorley, said Tuesday that the U.S. attorney's office is involved in the investigation and that federal charges were possible.

It was unclear how all four of those charged were linked or how they initially connected, though at least three of the four were boy scouts, Mr. Phelan said. Two of them, Mr. Vetromile and Mr. Crysel, were eagle scouts.

Mr. Phelan said that the four suspects had been planning their attack for about a month. They communicated on Discord, a group chat app created for video gamers that later became popular among far-right activists.

Officials only discovered the planned attack through their investigation at the school, Mr. Phelan said.

Had students not come forward with their concerns, "people would have died," he said.

As part of the investigation, the police recovered 23 legally owned shotguns and rifles from multiple locations, Mr. Phelan said.

Law enforcement officials also found three improvised explosive devices, homemade bombs that appeared to be filled with black powder and nails, Mr. Phelan said. It was unclear whether they were capable of being detonated, he said, but they were sent to an F.B.I. laboratory in Quantico, Va., for further examination.

Court documents described the devices as a large cylinder, a medium-sized cylinder and a Mason jar, all wrapped in duct tape.

Mr. Phelan said that officials were not yet sure why the four suspects had chosen to target Islamberg, which is more than three hours from Greece by car. But he said that officials were continuing to examine the men's electronic devices to determine a motive.

Islamberg, a rural hamlet in Delaware County, covers at least 60 acres of rolling tree-covered hills, lakes and fields. Reaching it requires driving along country roads that wind through thick woods.

The community was settled in the 1980s by followers of a Pakistani cleric, Mubarik Ali Shah Gilani. The initial settlers were predominantly African-American Muslims who left New York City looking for a better place to practice their religion and raise their children. It serves as the headquarters for an organization called Muslims of America, which operates similar communities throughout the United States, according to a 2017 Associated Press story.

Over the past several years, Islamberg has been attacked by anti-Muslim groups and some right-wing conspiracy theorists, who have said that the town is actually a terrorist training camp despite its peaceful history.

For the past three years, a group called "Bikers United Against Jihad" has organized a motorcycle protest against the community — though the bikers have been outnumbered by counterprotesters.

Islamberg has also previously faced threats of violence. In 2015, a man from Tennessee, Robert Daggart, was arrested and charged with plotting an attack on the community. Prosecutors said that he planned to recruit a militia to shoot Islamberg residents and blow up the mosque there. He was convicted and sentenced to nearly 20 years in prison in 2017.

Muslims of America did not respond to requests for comment.

[NY] Planned Attack On Muslim Community In Upstate New York Disrupted, Police Say (Kansas Public Radio)

[Kansas Public Radio](#) [1/22/2019 8:20 PM, Brian Mann, NPR, 2K]

Police in upstate New York have arrested three men and a 16-year-old boy on weapons and conspiracy charges. They allegedly plotted a bomb attack against an Islamic community. At a press conference Tuesday, police chief Patrick Phelan from Greece, N.Y., a suburb outside Rochester, said the suspects assembled an arsenal including more than 20 firearms and three improvised explosive devices.

"There was a plan to attack this community with weapons," Phelan said. "If they had carried out this plot and there's every indication is that they were going to, people would have died. I don't know how many and who, but people would have died."

Phelan declined to talk about the motive for the attack, citing the ongoing investigation.

Islamberg lies in a rural area a three-hour drive from Rochester. It was settled by Muslim families in the 1980s and about 200 people live there. Local authorities and neighbors say the community is peaceful, a long-established part of the region's culture.

In recent years Islamberg has become the target of suspicion and conspiracy theories among right-wing groups and conservative media, including the Alex Jones program Infowars. One broadcast on Fox News suggested that people in the Islamic "compound" were "stockpiling guns" in response to the election of President Trump.

In 2017 a Tennessee man was sent to federal prison for nearly 20 years after plotting to burn down Islamberg's mosque and school. At the time, then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions described the plot as an attack on religious freedom. "People of all faiths have the fundamental right to worship freely, and this administration will not tolerate attempts to violate that right," Sessions said.

State police and the FBI have regularly debunked claims that Islamberg poses a danger to the wider community. Still, anti-Muslim activists regularly hold protests nearby. Lisa Joseph, a conservative activist from Syracuse joined a rally in 2017 and told NPR that she would "not tolerate ISIS training camps, militant-style training camps, radicalized training camps" in upstate New York.

Authorities say this latest alleged plot against Islamberg involved young men. The oldest was 20 and two of the suspects are still in high school. It was uncovered after the 16-year-old who's been arrested talked to friends in the lunchroom at his school. Police chief Patrick Phelan says another high school student then raised the alarm.

"The kid who initially said something to an adult saved people's lives," Phelan told reporters at the Tuesday press conference. "We tell kids this all the time, we say if you see something say something, you gotta report anything suspicious. The lesson is that it works and as a result nobody's dead."

A spokesman for the Islamberg community says they'll hold a press conference on Wednesday. The FBI, New York state police and other agencies say they're still investigating, including a review of the suspects' phones and computers. More arrests are possible.

[NY] 4 arrested in plot to attack Muslim community in New York (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/22/2019 6:39 PM, Jeff Pegues, 2890K]

Police in New York Tuesday announced the arrest of four suspects in an alleged terror plot. They described the plan to attack a group of Muslims in central New York state as serious and real.

Brian Colaneri, 20; Vincent Vetromile, 19; Andrew Crysel, 18; and a 16-year-old suspect whose name is being withheld, were arrested Friday in the town Greece.

"If they had carried out this plot, which every indication is that they were going to, people would've died," said Chief Patrick Phelan.

Investigators said the suspects, who knew each other from the Boy Scouts, were targeting Islamberg, a rural community that's home to several hundred Muslims and the headquarters for The Muslims of America organization.

According to court papers, the suspects had built three improvised explosive devices "in the shape of a mason jar wrapped in duct tape." Investigators said they had access to 23 rifles and shotguns.

"We found firearms in almost every location that we searched and once again the bombs were all in one location. That was the home of the 16-year-old," Phelan said.

The bombs are being sent to FBI labs in Quantico, Virginia, for analysis where investigators will try to determine if the devices were viable.

Islamberg was the target of another planned attack in 2015 when Robert Doggart, a former congressional candidate from Tennessee, was arrested. He was eventually sentenced to 20 years in prison for plotting to burn down a mosque, a school and a cafeteria in the community.

In this case, the tip that led to the arrests came from a local school. Investigators have not ruled out the possibility that there could be more arrests and that the suspects could face federal charges.

Police said the 16-year-old suspect was showing suspicious pictures on his phone and another student passed along the information. Police began the investigation, and quickly made the arrests.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[NY] Four Charged in Plot to Attack Muslim Community (US News & World Report)
[US News & World Report](#) [1/22/2019 6:05 PM, Claire Hansen, 2894K]

Three men and a 16-year-old were arrested by police for plotting to attack a small Muslim community.

Three men and a high school student were charged with plotting to bomb an upstate New York Muslim community, authorities said Tuesday.

The four people, who are residents of the Rochester area, are accused of plotting to attack a rural Muslim community known as Islamberg, according to news reports. It's not known when the attack was going to take place.

Brian Colaneria, 20; Andrew Crysel, 18; and Vincent Vetromile, 19, were charged with weapons possession and conspiracy, according to the Associated Press. A 16-year-old high school student was charged as a juvenile.

At the time of their arrests this weekend, the men had access to more than 20 rifles and

shotguns and three homemade explosives, Greece, New York, Police Chief Patrick Phelan said at a press conference.

The investigation was sparked by a comment the 16-year-old made during school lunch, Phelan said. After interviewing the student and others, law enforcement eventually discovered the plot.

Police searched five locations and seized 23 weapons, as well as electronic devices such as phones and computers. Some of the weapons were legally owned by relatives of the suspects, according to the AP. Three improvised explosive devices wrapped in duct tape were found at the juvenile suspect's house.

Islamberg is a community operated by The Muslims of America, an indigenous American Muslim organization based in the U.S., according to the AP. Police and analysts have dismissed claims that the small community is linked to terrorism. In 2017, a Tennessee man was convicted of planning to burn down the community's mosque.

[MI] Three arrested at US airport, charged with supporting IS (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/22/2019 10:37 AM, Staff, 2015K]

Three American citizens of Kenyan descent have been charged with conspiring to support the Islamic State group after an arrest at a Michigan airport foiled their alleged plot, authorities announced Tuesday.

The three men, all in their 20s and related to each other, allegedly recorded videos pledging their allegiance to IS and discussed a potential car attack in the United States if one of them was unable to travel overseas to fight for the terror group.

FBI agents employed undercover agents to communicate with the suspects and multiple search warrants of their social media accounts to monitor the suspects' communications between each other, according to an affidavit filed in federal court.

The three were arrested Monday at Gerald Ford Airport in the city of Grand Rapids as Muse Abdikadir Muse, 23, also known as Muse Muse, was going through the TSA security screening process.

Authorities said he had checked in for a trip that would eventually take him to Mogadishu, Somalia, with the goal of joining IS.

In an online exchange with an undercover FBI agent, Muse allegedly said he wanted to join IS in Somalia and "fight in the front lines," according to the affidavit.

Police also arrested at the airport terminal the men said to be Muse's co-conspirators: his brother Mohamud Abdikadir Muse, 20, and another relative, Mohamed Salat Haji, 26.

The two are alleged to have purchased the airline ticket and driven Muse to the airport.

All three men, who are naturalized US citizens from Kenya, were charged with conspiring to provide material support or resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization.

Law enforcement became interested in the elder Muse starting in April 2016, when he allegedly publicly posted pro-IS messages on his Facebook account, the affidavit said.

[MI] Three Arrested In Michigan For Allegedly Planning To Join ISIS, Wanted To 'Kill Non-Believers' (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/22/2019 6:05 PM, Hanna Bogorowski, 867K]

The Department of Justice announced Tuesday it arrested three Michigan residents for allegedly conspiring to provide material support to the Islamic State (ISIS).

Agents of the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force arrested Muse Abdikadir Muse, Mohamud Abdikadir Muse and Mohamed Salat Haji on Monday without incident, the DOJ said in a statement.

One of the arrested men had just checked into a flight en route to Mogadishu, Somalia, and he was driven to the Grand Rapids airport by the other two conspirators who allegedly knew the purpose of his travel was to join ISIS.

The complaint affidavit says all three defendants had previously pledged their allegiance to ISIS in videos they recorded of themselves. Two of the men allegedly also discussed at some point their desire "to kill non-believers, and even to potentially use a car for a martyrdom operation to run down non-believers here in the United States if they could not travel overseas to fight for ISIS," the statement reads.

All three of the defendants were born in Kenya, but had U.S. citizenship. Their conspiracy charge is punishable by up to 20 years in federal prison, according to the DOJ.

President Donald Trump's administration has stated several times in recent weeks that the U.S. has defeated ISIS, despite an ISIS-claimed attack in Syria on Wednesday that killed four Americans.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said such as recently as Tuesday.

"It should not go unnoticed that we've also defeated the ISIS caliphate in Syria and Iraq alongside more than six dozen nations in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS," Pompeo said in a speech broadcasted to the World Economic Forum.

Vice President Mike Pence told the Global Chiefs of Mission conference at the Department of State the same day of the Syria bombing that "the caliphate has crumbled and ISIS has been defeated."

National Security News

Shutdown hits national security employees across government (Yahoo News)

[Yahoo News](#) [1/22/2019 3:00 PM, Jenna McLaughlin and Sean D. Naylor]

Days after Christmas and the start of what is now the longest partial government shutdown in U.S. history, Maggie Feldman-Piltch, founder of a growing grassroots community of female national security professionals called #NatSecGirlSquad, reached out to members affected by the furloughs to offer support.

Now, over a month since the shutdown began, Feldman-Piltch has fielded calls from more than 300 federal workers asking for help paying bills and vetting résumés, among other requests, she says. Those reaching out include FBI officials; employees at the departments of State, Justice Department and Homeland Security; temporary workers from various agencies; and other national security officials.

"It's very obvious that it's having a huge impact," said Feldman-Piltch during a phone interview with Yahoo News. "The connective tissue part, the parts established after 9/11 to prevent stovepiping [blockages preventing information-sharing between agencies] ... those are the parts falling first."

Feldman-Piltch, who is working on expanding her networking organization, didn't anticipate fundraising to help federal employees, from the highest ranks to entry-level workers, "but it's what's needed," she said.

Not every agency in the defense and national security arena is directly affected by the shutdown. The Pentagon, as well as much of the intelligence community, including the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and the CIA, are fully funded — as is the Department of Energy.

However, officials serving in intelligence and national security roles in the FBI; the departments of Homeland Security, State and Justice; and other, smaller agencies have large numbers of employees either furloughed or working but not being paid. Some federal contractors are also impacted and may not receive back pay.

We are "working hard to keep troops' spirits up with no paycheck," said one senior national security official, referring to civilian employees. "Recruitment is probably down bigtime."

One of the agencies most heavily affected is the FBI, where large numbers of employees are either furloughed or being required to work without pay. "FBI operations are directed toward national security and violations of federal law and must be able to continue during a lapse in appropriations," said an FBI spokesperson.

Four sources familiar with the matter, two of whom are former FBI employees who have maintained contact with former colleagues, say employees across departments are either looking for other work or have already quit, and the shutdown is the latest in a long stream of events whittling away at the overall morale of the agency. "Morale has been low for some time, unsurprisingly, and the pay is not great," said one former FBI official.

Some of the areas most heavily hit are those working on cybersecurity issues and counterintelligence. The FBI has already lost some of its senior cybersecurity officials in recent months, and now that the shutdown is hitting pay, the bureau is "hemorrhaging" talent, said one former official. "Everyone with anything cyber in their resume is getting out," the second former official said. Given the FBI's major role in monitoring cybercrime and foreign meddling in domestic affairs online, the absence is sorely felt.

FBI officials are generally prohibited from outside work, but employees have started requesting exceptions for part-time work to pay the bills.

The FBI Agents Association, which represents almost 13,000 active FBI employees,

petitioned Congress last week to immediately fund the bureau and its field offices. And on Tuesday, the FBIAA published a report that detailed the impacts of the shutdown on agents and their families. "For us, the fight for funding is not political," said FBIAA President Thomas O'Connor in a statement "It is a matter of completing our mission to protect this country from criminal and national security threats."

The impact across departments has been uneven. According to one State Department official, while 23 percent of overseas employees and 40 percent of domestic employees were furloughed as of last week, the department found funds to cover an additional pay period. Employees were summoned back to work on Sunday, but beyond the current period, paychecks are uncertain.

"The State Department is best positioned to carry out our mission when we have our entire team on the field," the official said in a statement. "The department's management, budget, and legal teams have been working on a way to do just that as the President continues working to secure our southern border and bring reforms that will ensure the safety and security of the American people."

At the Department of Homeland Security, nearly 200,000 employees are working without pay, said one official — though 90 percent of the staff continues to work.

"The dedicated men and women of DHS are fully prepared to protect the homeland and keep Americans safe during this lapse in government funding," said Tyler Houlton, DHS press secretary.

While the Pentagon isn't directly affected by the shutdown, because the military already has its fiscal year 2019 funding, companies that contract with the Defense Department have been. The White House and Congress are "creating a whole heck of a lot of uncertainty for these companies," retired Air Force Col. Wesley Hallman, senior vice president of policy at the National Defense Industrial Association, told Yahoo news.

Some of those companies may choose to leave the public sector altogether if the instability continues, he said. "Even those ones that are primarily in the defense sector, they say, 'This could happen to us too; how do we protect ourselves from this?'"

Additionally, while the intelligence community is already funded and functioning more smoothly than other parts of the government, any team that works with other agencies is at least slowed down. "Totally unimpacted is a stretch," said one former intelligence official.

And the longer the shutdown proceeds, many national security experts point out, the higher the chances are that vulnerable employees with access to classified information could become targets for foreign adversaries looking to recruit.

One Western intelligence official noted that spies are typically developed over longer periods of time, but it's possible the Russians or other adversaries "might take advantage" of employees desperate for money to pay the bills.

"We are always mindful of the counterintelligence and security environment we operate in and the risks to federal employees, data, and facilities from adversaries," said Dean Boyd, spokesperson for the National Counterintelligence and Security Center at the ODNI, in a

statement to Yahoo News. "We continue to support our federal partners in building their counterintelligence capabilities and awareness through insider threat programs, information sharing initiatives, training, and other ongoing efforts."

FBI union warns: Shutdown is delaying criminal, counter-terrorism, child trafficking cases (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/22/2019 1:11 PM, Kelly Cohen, 629K]

A group representing FBI agents says the partial government shutdown has delayed criminal, counterterrorism, and counter-intelligence operations, and it has also intruded on investigations related to child trafficking.

"It is truly sad that we must resort to this because we are being let down by our elected officials," Thomas O'Connor, the president of the FBI Agents Association, told reporters in Washington Tuesday.

O'Connor's group released a report Tuesday that explained some of the hardships that agents are going through because of the shutdown, which is now in its fifth week. It included anonymous quotes from FBI workers who explained the agency's limitations in the face of having 5,000 support personnel furloughed, and the realities of having 13,000 active-duty agents work without a paycheck.

An official from the southeast region of the country said in the report, "On the child exploitation side, as an [undercover employee], I have had to put perps on standby ... this just puts children in jeopardy."

"The shutdown has eliminated any ability to operate," said one agent working in the western region. "It's bad enough to work without pay, but we can only conduct administration functions while doing it. The fear is our enemies know they can run freely."

According to the report, the agent works on both overt and undercover counter-intelligence matters against "a top threat to national security."

"I am already starting to see a negative impact of the shutdown on the pace of our operations and investigations," said an agent in counterterrorism in the central region. "Particularly, the the United States Attorney's Office is unable to issue grand jury subpoenas for financial institutions ... Most of our [counter-terrorism] cases have a strong financial angle and our ability to fully utilize all available investigative tools slows down the pace of the investigation in critical [counterterrorism] matters."

Another agent said that there are no funds for grand jury subpoenas, which means "affected investigations" are put on hold.

Another added that they have not had a Spanish speaker since the shutdown and cannot speak to any of the division's Spanish-speaking informants. The agent has been working on a long-term MS-13 investigation for over three years, which has led to the indictment of 23 members.

The report also said the shutdown could make it harder for FBI agents to renew their security clearances if their missed paychecks cause them to fall behind on their regular monthly payments. It said the shutdown will also make it harder to recruit FBI agents.

On Friday, FBI agents will lose their supplemental health insurance, specifically vision and dental. This happens when the shutdown extends past two pay periods.

As a result, some FBI field offices have opened food banks to help support their workers struggling without pay. Some of those areas include Dallas, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C.

Negotiations between President Trump and congressional leaders have stalled, as leadership cannot agree on legislation that would give the White House what it wants: more than \$5 billion for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Trump often cites the fight against transnational gangs, specifically MS-13, as a reason why the border wall is so important.

CORRECTION: In a previous version of this story, the Washington Examiner erroneously referred to the FBIAA as a union. The FBI Agents Association is not a union. The Washington Examiner regrets the error.

New intelligence strategy warns of threats to Western democracy (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/22/2019 6:59 PM, Shane Harris, 9763K]

The United States will be challenged in coming years by nations that exploit "the weakening of the post-WWII international order and dominance of Western democratic ideals" and "increasingly isolationist tendencies in the West," according to a new intelligence document published Tuesday.

The document, known as the National Intelligence Strategy, cited Russia as seeking to flex its geopolitical muscle in order to challenge the United States "in multiple regions."

Meant to set U.S. spy agencies' priorities for the next four years, the language echoed the intelligence community's unanimous conclusion, released in 2017, that Russia interfered with the 2016 presidential election in order to "undermine the US-led liberal democratic order."

The warning of increased isolationism comes as decades-old alliances among Western nations are strained and waves of nationalism are upsetting long-held assumptions about the stability of democratic governments.

President Trump, who campaigned on a promise to put "America first," has questioned the value of mutual-defense treaties with U.S. allies, chastised European nations for not spending enough on their militaries and spoken warmly of autocrats, in Russia and elsewhere.

The intelligence strategy is not a direct rebuke of the president's policies. But it is the latest expression of intelligence leaders' intention to pivot away from a focus on combating terrorism, which has been their central concern since 2001, toward countries that threaten the United States on a geopolitical scale, chief among them Russia, China, North Korea and Iran.

"The 2019 strategy is more than just an update to previous strategies," Daniel Coats, the director of national intelligence, said in remarks unveiling the document. "In some areas, it offers incremental improvements to things we do today. In other areas, it offers fundamental

changes to how we operate."

The new strategy was notable for emphasizing a kind of return to basics, focusing on rival nations and providing policymakers with information to "detect change and provide critical warning in the future," Coats said.

The strategy also emphasizes responding to new technologies, including anti-satellite weapons that could degrade U.S. military strength in space; cyber threats that are "challenging public confidence in our global institutions, governance, and norms;" and artificial intelligence, automation and high-performance computers that create economic benefits but also could give other countries' militaries and spy services an edge over the U.S.

The document also rued technology's ability to exacerbate inequality. The emergence of nano- and bio-technologies could cure disease and improve quality of life, but their proliferation is "uneven, increasing the potential to drastically widen the divide between so-called 'haves' and 'have-nots.'"

US intelligence warns of 'ever more diverse' threats (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/22/2019 10:37 PM, Susannah George, 9763K]

Russia's efforts to expand its influence and China's modernizing military are among the "ever more diverse" threats facing the U.S., according to a major intelligence report released Tuesday.

The National Intelligence Strategy report, issued every four years, also singles out such potential threats as North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons, the growing cyber capabilities of U.S. adversaries and global political instability.

The report, which sets out the priorities for the various agencies that make up the U.S. intelligence community, notes that the United States "faces an increasingly complex and uncertain world in which threats are becoming ever more diverse and interconnected."

Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats said in a letter accompanying the report that the U.S. agencies must adapt to respond to what he calls a "turbulent and complex" environment.

"We face significant changes in the domestic and global environment," Coats said. "We must be ready to meet the 21st century challenges and to recognize emerging threats and opportunities."

He said the intelligence community must improve cooperation among member agencies and foster more innovation. He also said agencies must do more to increase transparency to raise public trust in their work.

The report does not rank the threats, but the first section is devoted to the threat posed by "traditional adversaries" seeking to take advantage of the weakening of the post-World War II international order and increasingly isolationist tendencies in the West. "Russian efforts to increase its influence and authority are likely to continue and may conflict with U.S. goals and priorities in multiple regions," it says.

Coats also addressed his staff at the strategy's rollout, pledging that the intelligence community would not be dissuaded from "seeking the truth, and when we find the truth, speaking the truth."

Coats said the 17-agency intelligence community plans to operate with greater transparency to earn and uphold the trust of policy makers and the American people.

Senior Intelligence officials at the strategy's unveiling did not address statements from President Donald Trump dismissing intelligence findings. Trump has expressed disregard for key intelligence findings regarding Russian influence in the 2016 election and Saudi Arabia's role in the killing of writer Jamal Khashoggi.

Speaking broadly, one senior director of national intelligence official said the push for greater transparency is part of an effort to restore trust with the American people following Edward Snowden's 2013 leak of classified U.S. material about America's surveillance programs. Senior intelligence officials briefed journalists at the strategy's unveiling on condition they not be cited by name.

The 2019 National Intelligence Strategy report also discusses China's modernization of its military and pursuit of "predominance" in the Pacific region.

The strategy notes that both China and Russia continue to pursue anti-satellite weapons to weaken the U.S. military and security. It also says the threat from hacking is growing as more adversaries acquire the technology to interfere with U.S. computer systems.

US intelligence agencies warn of threats from new and old foes (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1322/2019 1:30 AM, Zachary Cohen and Alex Marquardt, CNN, 5847K]

US intelligence agencies are grappling with the "most complex and diverse threats ever seen" from a host of adversaries, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats said Tuesday while unveiling his office's new National Intelligence Strategy.

Among those named in the strategy were the expected -- Russia, China, North Korea and Iran -- as well as a raft of non-state actors and terrorist threats that "pose challenges within traditional, non-traditional, hybrid, and asymmetric military, economic, and political spheres."

The new strategy, which sets the agenda for the country's 17 intelligence agencies and has been released every four years, also placed on emphasis on the need for the intelligence community to be more transparent and to ensure its voice is heard in the national security conversation.

"One of the things that's awesome about America is that people hate being duped," a senior official in Coats' office told a gathering of journalists after Coats addressed around 180 members of the office's staff.

While many of the stated strategic goals in the 36-page report remains similar to years past, the document released Tuesday outlines how the US intelligence community must address evolving threats "particularly in the realm of space, cyberspace, computing, and other emerging, disruptive technologies."

"We face significant changes in the domestic and global environment; we must be ready to meet 21st century challenges," Coats wrote in a letter that accompanied the document. "To navigate today's turbulent and complex strategic environment, we must do things differently."

Senior officials told reporters that Russia and China are collaborating on artificial intelligence and also highlighted the growing influence of Beijing as it forms strategic partnerships with Latin American and African nations.

The US intelligence community must become more "agile" and use the most "advanced technology" available in order to implement three guiding parts to its mission, according to Coats: Value-based integration, innovation, transparency.

As for the four countries named at the top of the report, the strategy asserts those nations "will continue attempts to gain and assert influence, taking advantage of changing conditions in the international environment --- including the weakening of the post-WWII international order and dominance of Western democratic ideals, increasingly isolationist tendencies in the West, and shifts in the global economy."

That warning comes amid new reports that President Donald Trump raised the idea of withdrawing from North Atlantic Treaty Organization alliance.

Trump has been clear in his criticism of NATO and has knocked allies for failing to pay enough for their defense. Meanwhile, Russia has long attempted to divide the alliance, and a US exit would be seen as a major victory for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The Democratic-controlled House passed 357-22 a bill Tuesday showing strong congressional support for the NATO alliance amid recent reports that Trump raised the idea of withdrawing from NATO several times last year.

The bill states that it's US policy to remain a member of NATO and prohibits funds from being used to withdraw from the alliance.

Last year, the Republican-led Senate approved a motion of support for NATO the same day that Trump arrived in Brussels, Belgium, for a NATO summit. And a bipartisan group of senators introduced a bill that would require Senate approval for the US to withdraw from NATO.

However, asked specifically about whether Trump's comments made it life more difficult for the intelligence community, senior ODNI officials emphasized that their job is not more or less complicated based on who is in the White House and that the strategic environment remains the same regardless of who is President.

New intelligence strategy identifies emerging tech as major threat (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/22/2019 5:05 PM, Morgan Chalfant, 3038K]

Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats on Tuesday released the strategy meant to guide the U.S. intelligence community over the next four years, placing an emphasis on threats posed by new and emerging technologies.

The 2019 National Intelligence Strategy released by the Trump administration sets forth

objectives for the intelligence community in a rapidly changing strategic environment where the United States faces both more traditional threats from nation states and extremist groups as well as burgeoning challenges posed by artificial intelligence, automation and other technologies.

"The strategic environment is changing rapidly and the United States faces an increasingly complex and uncertain world in which threats are becoming ever more diverse and interconnected," the document states.

Tuesday's release represents the fourth iteration of the nation's intelligence strategy. The objectives laid out in it do not differ greatly from those offered in the 2014 strategy document released during the Obama administration; namely, the intelligence community plans to focus on providing intelligence to counter cyber threats, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and the threat from foreign intelligence operations.

Nevertheless, the document places significant emphasis on threats posed by technological advancements.

"Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, automation, and high performance computing are advancing computational capabilities that can be economically beneficial, however these advances also enable new and improved military and intelligence capabilities for our adversaries," the strategy states.

"Advances in nano- and bio-technologies have the potential to cure diseases and modify human performance, but without common ethical standards and shared interests to govern these developments, they have the potential to pose significant threats to U.S. interests and security," it states.

The document also recognizes growing strategic challenges in space and cyberspace, including digital threats that could damage critical infrastructure or impact public safety and economic stability.

"While the [intelligence community] remains focused on confronting a number of conventional challenges to U.S. national security posed by our adversaries, advances in technology are driving evolutionary and revolutionary change across multiple fronts," the strategy says.

"The [intelligence community] will have to become more agile, innovative, and resilient to deal effectively with these threats and the ever more volatile world that shapes them," it says.

Microsoft Seeks to Restrict Abuse of its Facial Recognition AI (Bloomberg)

[Bloomberg](#) [1/22/2019 7:01 PM, Natalia Drozdiak, 5702K]

Microsoft Corp. is planning to implement self-designed ethical principles for its facial recognition technology by the end of March, as it urges governments to push ahead with matching regulation in the field.

The company in December called for new legislation to govern artificial intelligence software for recognizing faces, advocating for human review and oversight of the technology in some critical cases, as a way to mitigate the risks of biased outcomes, intrusions into privacy and

democratic freedoms.

"We do need to lead by example and we're working to do that," Microsoft President and Chief Legal Officer Brad Smith said in an interview, adding that some other companies are also putting similar principles into place.

Smith said the company plans by the end of March to "operationalize" its principles, which involves drafting policies, building governance systems and engineering tools and testing to make sure it's in line with its goals. It also involves setting controls for the company's global sales and consulting teams to prevent selling the technology in cases where it risks being used for an unwanted purpose.

The use of facial recognition software by law enforcement, border security, the military and other government agencies has stirred concerns about the risks of bias and mass surveillance. Research has shown that some of the most popular products make mistakes and perform worse on people with darker skin. Microsoft, Amazon.com Inc. and Alphabet Inc.'s Google have all faced protests from employees and advocacy groups over the idea of selling AI software to government agencies or the police.

"It would certainly restrict certain scenarios or uses," Smith said of the principles, adding that Microsoft wouldn't necessarily reject providing governments with the technology. The company only wants to prevent law enforcement from using the technology for ongoing surveillance of a specific individual without the preferred safeguards, he said.

The company has turned down contracts for that reason, he said. One was a case that Smith said would have amounted to public surveillance in a national capital "in a country where we were not comfortable that human rights would be protected." Another was deployment by a law enforcement agency in the U.S. that "we thought would create an undue risk of discrimination."

Asked whether Microsoft would rule out working with Chinese law enforcement, especially in light of new rules to judge citizens on their social behavior, Smith said "it would definitely raise important questions in China." He said that in any case it appears that Beijing is more interested in procuring facial-recognition technology from local firms instead of American ones.

Despite steaming ahead with the self-imposed rules, the company said industrywide regulation is necessary.

"You never want to create a market that forces companies to choose between being successful and being responsible and unless we have a regulatory floor there is a danger of that happening," Smith said.

[Cuba] GOP lawmakers urge Trump to transfer 'battle-hardened terrorists' to Gitmo (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/22/2019 9:02 PM, Diana Stancy Correll, 629K]

A group of GOP lawmakers wants President Trump to transfer more than 700 "battle-hardened terrorists" detained by the Syrian Democratic Forces to the military detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, a move that comes as the U.S. looks to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria.

In a letter to Trump on Tuesday, Sens. Tom Cotton of Arkansas, Marco Rubio of Florida, John Cornyn and Ted Cruz, both of Texas, urged Trump to move the prisoners to the detention facility in Cuba where they can face justice.

"Given the rapidly shifting dynamics in Syria, it is possible that these terrorists may escape or be released from SDF custody in the coming weeks and months," the lawmakers wrote. "It is imperative that these Islamic State fighters not be released. If given the opportunity, many of them will take up arms against our Syrian and Iraqi partners or attempt to infiltrate the United States and Europe to carry out terror attacks against civilian targets, like they have already done in France and Belgium."

"We urge you to consider transferring the worst of these Islamic State fighters to the detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, where they will face justice," they wrote.

The U.S. hasn't transferred any new detainees to the detention facility — which currently houses 40 detainees — in more than 10 years. Doing so would require the U.S. to prove that the detainee in question is affiliated with a force that the U.S. is in armed conflict with.

Although former President Barack Obama signed an executive order in 2009 to close the facility, Trump signed his own executive order to keep the facility open in 2017.

Both administrations have argued that ISIS is covered by the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Terrorists, which permits the president to use military force against those responsible for the 9/11 attacks.

But experts have noted that such an interpretation of the law has not been challenged in court. As a result, an ISIS prisoner moved to Guantanamo would "likely" file a "habeas petition in federal court to challenge the scope of the government's detention authority," according to Charles Stimson and Hugh Danilack, who co-authored a Heritage Foundation report on the matter.

"If the Trump Administration rushes to bring ISIS fighters to Guantanamo without a stronger legal basis, those detainees might successfully challenge not only their own detention under the AUMF, but also the Trump Administration's entire legal justification for the authority to use all necessary and appropriate force in the fight against ISIS," they wrote in the 2017 report.

Trump claimed last month that ISIS had been destroyed and said the U.S. would begin to pull out the approximately 2,000 U.S. troops from Syria. Since then, several Americans were killed in a suicide bombing in Syria. ISIS claimed responsibility.

In response, Trump ally Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said he was worried Trump's rhetoric about withdrawing troops from Syria had inspired ISIS and he urged Trump "look long and hard at what we're doing in Syria."

[Cuba] Senators Want Captured ISIS Fighters Sent to Guantanamo Bay Prison Camp (Free Beacon)

[Free Beacon](#) [1/22/2019 5:20 PM, Adam Kredo, 105K]

Top GOP senators petition Trump to reopen Gitmo to hundreds of foreign fighters

A leading group of Republican senators is petitioning the Trump administration to reopen the Guantanamo Bay prison camp to hundreds of foreign ISIS fighters captured on the battlefield, according to a copy of a letter sent Tuesday to the White House and obtained by the Washington Free Beacon.

As the Trump administration continues to take the fight to ISIS forces in Syria and elsewhere, Sens. Tom Cotton (R., Ark.), Ted Cruz (R., Texas), Marco Rubio (R., Fla.), and John Cornyn (R., Texas.) are petitioning the administration to use the prison camp established on the U.S. naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, as a holding facility.

The timing of the letter coincides with the 10-year anniversary of the Obama administration's executive order to close Guantanamo Bay. President Donald Trump reversed this order and the prison remained open, but no new prisoners have been transferred to the facilities during his time in office.

With nearly 700 "battle-hardened terrorists in northeast Syria" currently being held by U.S. coalition partners with the Syrian Democratic Forces, the senators fear these captives could escape or be released from custody so they can again take up arms against U.S. forces and allies.

"We urge you to consider transferring the worst of these Islamic State fighters to the detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, where they will face justice," the senators write to President Donald Trump on Tuesday, according to a copy of that letter obtained by the Free Beacon. "Thank you for your continued leadership in our military campaign against the Islamic State and your willingness to consider this matter of national security."

All told, 775 inmates have passed through Gitmo's notorious prison walls, with just 40 detainees still being held at the facility for alleged crimes related to the 9/11 attacks and other terrorist plots. It is unclear if the joint military task force that currently operates the prison located on a sequestered side of the naval base has the capacity to take in and care for a massive influx of new detainees.

"As U.S. and partner forces have waged a campaign against the Islamic State over the past four years, we have captured hundreds of foreign enemy combatants," the senators write. "Our partners, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), are currently detaining over 700 of these battle-hardened terrorists in northeast Syria."

"These detainees," they continue, "include two of the so-called 'Beatles,' expatriated British citizens suspected of joining ISIS and beheading Western hostages. Given the rapidly shifting dynamics in Syria, it is possible that these terrorists may escape or be released from SDF custody in the coming weeks and months."

Gitmo, the senators argue, is the best place to house these high-level detainees who also might have operational intelligence about ISIS and its plans.

"It is imperative that these Islamic State fighters not be released. If given the opportunity, many of them will take up arms against our Syrian and Iraqi partners or attempt to infiltrate the United States and Europe to carry out terror attacks against civilian targets, like they

have already done in France and Belgium," the senators write.

One senior congressional aide familiar with the call said the U.S. withdrawal from Syria could complicate efforts to ensure these militants remain imprisoned. Sending them to Guantanamo could ensure they remain off of the battlefield.

"One of the unfortunate consequences of withdrawing from Syria is the probable return to the battlefield of some seriously bad Islamic State fighters—think terrorists with weapons training and combat experience," said the source, who would only speak on background about the matter. "It would be a terrible and completely avoidable mistake to allow the worst of these assholes to go free to carry out terror attacks in the Middle East, Europe, or the U.S. We have plenty of empty cells at Gitmo, and we might as well fill them up with these terrorists who are too dangerous to set free."

[Iraq] Iraq scientist on death row claims he successfully helped ISIS develop chemical weapons (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/22/2019 10:03 AM, Lukas Mikelionis, 9216K]

An Iraqi scientist says he worked with ISIS, led its successful effort to obtain chemical weapons in 2014 and claims the terror group continues to seek for such weapons.

Suleiman al-Afari, an Iraqi geologist, started working for ISIS after the group seized Mosul in Iraq during the peak of the group's activities in the region and began asking the remaining civil service workers to work for them.

But the man, who worked at Iraq's Ministry of Industry and Minerals, was surprised after Islamic State militants, instead of letting him keep the same job, offered a new role: help the group make chemical weapons, the Washington Post reported.

"They didn't force anyone," Afari said in an interview. "I was afraid that I would lose my job. Government jobs are hard to get, and it was important to hang on to it."

Afari went on to accept the proposed new role and worked for 15 months supervising the project to manufacture chemical weapons for the terror group.

He told the newspaper that he took the position because ISIS then became the government and everyone wanted to work to get paid. "Do I regret it? I don't know if I'd use that word," he said.

The scientist is now facing the death penalty in Iraq as one of the few alive individuals associated with the group's chemical weapons program.

He detailed the terror group's successful effort to manufacture sulfur mustard, a chemical weapon used during the World War I, which was part of a broad attempt to equip the militants with chemical weapons that could be deployed to defend the territory and attack its enemies.

According to the Post, the scientist's description of the plans was confirmed by U.S. and Kurdish officials who worked to destroy the insurgents' weapon plants. U.S. and Iraqi officials also said that weapons created by ISIS were actually used in multiple attacks on soldiers and civilians in Iraq and Syria.

While the chemical weapons program appears to have stalled since 2016 after the U.S. and its allies in the region pushed back against the ever-encroaching jihadists, the threat of such weapons production remains as some of the deadly materials were hidden or even moved outside the country.

The know-how provided by Afari and other scientists also still remains, allowing the surviving ISIS militants to continue the work.

[Afghanistan] Taliban Attacks Afghan Intelligence Amid U.S. Peace Talks (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [1/22/2019 1:38 PM, Paul D. Shinkman, 2894K]

The attack, which killed dozens, came hours before reports of the death of a U.S. service member and casts doubt on the future of peace in Afghanistan.

Taliban fighters killed at least three dozen Afghan security personnel and injured upwards of 58 in an attack on a key intelligence base outside the capital Kabul on Monday, casting further doubt on peace talks taking place this week.

A captured military Humvee filled with explosives struck the Maidan Shahr intelligence training center in the capital of Maidan Wardak province, according to Pajhwok Afghan News. At least two militants then opened fire. Some of the deaths were caused by the building's roof collapsing. A statement from the National Directorate of Security said the attack took place in the early morning hours local time.

The attack occurred hours before Taliban officials were supposed to meet with U.S. diplomats for another round of talks in Qatar.

The BBC reported that a second car bombing attempt was foiled by Afghan security forces. The Taliban claimed credit for the attack.

A spokesman for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan – the Taliban's name for the country – said in a statement Sunday that American delegates had accepted an agenda for continued peace talks in Doha, Qatar, on Monday, including "ending invasion of Afghanistan and preventing Afghanistan from being used against other countries in the future," according to a statement.

The U.S. delegation is led by Zalmay Khalilzad, an Afghan-born U.S. special representative for Afghanistan political reconstruction. He has held several rounds of peace talks with the Taliban in recent months. The discussions center on a timeline for withdrawing foreign troops and the terms of temporary cease-fires.

The U.S. military headquarters overseeing operations in Afghanistan announced Monday that an American service member had died but did not specify the location or cause of the death. The incident – the second U.S. military death in Afghanistan this year – is under investigation.

Presidential Tweets

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet1](#) [1/22/2019 7:32 AM] Nick Sandmann and the students of Covington have become symbols of Fake News and how evil it can be. They have captivated the attention of the world, and I know they will use it for the good - maybe even to bring people together. It started off unpleasant, but can end in a dream!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet2](#) [1/22/2019 7:35 AM] "The Democrats are playing politics with Border Security." @foxandfriends

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet3](#) [1/22/2019 7:48 AM] Without a Wall our Country can never have Border or National Security. With a powerful Wall or Steel Barrier, Crime Rates (and Drugs) will go substantially down all over the U.S. The Dems know this but want to play political games. Must finally be done correctly. No Cave!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet4](#) [1/22/2019 8:15 AM] FBI top lawyer confirms "unusual steps." They relied on the Clinton Campaign's Fake & Unverified "Dossier," which is illegal. "That has corrupted them. That has enabled them to gather evidence by UNCONSTITUTIONAL MEANS, and that's what they did to the President." Judge Napolitano

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet5](#) [1/22/2019 8:25 AM] Marist/NPR/PBS Poll shows President Trump's approval rating among Latinos going to 50%, an increase in one year of 19%. Thank you, working hard!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet6](#) [1/22/2019 9:48 AM] Never seen @senatemajldr and Republicans so united on an issue as they are on the Humanitarian Crisis & Security on our Southern Border. If we create a Wall or Barrier which prevents Criminals and Drugs from flowing into our Country, Crime will go down by record numbers!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet7](#) [1/22/2019 10:00 AM] Last time I went to Davos, the Fake News said I should not go there. This year, because of the Shutdown, I decided not to go, and the Fake News said I should be there. The fact is that the people understand the media better than the media understands them!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet8](#) [1/22/2019 10:01 AM] The United States has a great economic story to tell. Number one in the World, by far!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet9](#) [1/22/2019 10:28 AM] The reason Sarah Sanders does not go to the "podium" much anymore is that the press covers her so rudely & inaccurately, in particular certain members of the press. I told her not to bother, the word gets out anyway! Most will never cover us fairly & hence, the term, Fake News!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet10](#) [1/22/2019 10:53 AM] Former FBI top lawyer James Baker just admitted involvement in FISA Warrant and further admitted there were IRREGULARITIES in the way the Russia probe was handled. They relied heavily on the unverified Trump "Dossier" paid for by the DNC & Clinton Campaign, & funded through a.....big Crooked Hillary law firm, represented by her lawyer Michael Sussmann (do you believe this?) who worked Baker hard & gave him Oppo Research for "a Russia probe." This meeting, now exposed, is the subject of Senate inquiries and much more. An Unconstitutional Hoax. @FoxNews

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet11](#) [1/22/2019 7:19 PM] Congratulations to Mariano Rivera on unanimously being elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame! Not only a great player but a great person. I am thankful for Mariano's support of the Opioid Drug Abuse Commission and @FitnessGov. #EnterSandman #HOF2019

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet12](#) [1/22/2019 9:00 PM] Deroy Murdock, National Review: "We are now exporting oil, which is the first time in my lifetime - we are right now the largest producer of oil and gas. This is not good if you're Vladimir Putin where your chief export is oil. W.H. Agent - Not good for Kremlin." @TuckerCarlson

{End of Report}



DHS MORNING BRIEFING

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U.S. Department of Homeland Security

By TechMIS

www.TechMIS.com

[Mobile User Copy](#)

TO: Homeland Security Secretary & Staff

DATE: Tuesday, January 29, 2019 7:00 AM ET

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Presidential Tweets

Editorial Note: The DHS Daily Briefing is a collection of news articles related to Department's mission. The inclusion of particular stories is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse the political viewpoints or affiliations included in news coverage.

Top News

Government Reopens as Trump Casts Doubt on Prospects for a Border Wall Deal (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/28/2019 4:50 PM, Eileen Sullivan and Alan Blinder, 20737K]

Hundreds of thousands of federal employees returned to work on Monday with a presidential promise of a paycheck "very quickly" but no guarantee that they will be working in three weeks, when a temporary stopgap of funding expires.

President Trump and congressional Democrats arrived at a short-term agreement late on Friday, reopening the government after 35 days and the longest government shutdown in history. Lawmakers have until Feb. 15 to reach a compromise on the Republican request for billions of dollars to be allocated for a border wall — a wall Democrats have refused to fund.

Referring to the odds that a deal could be struck over that time, Mr. Trump told The Wall Street Journal on Sunday, "I personally think it's less than 50-50." Mr. Trump said he would use emergency powers to fund the wall if an agreement could not be reached.

In a stark reminder that federal employees were returning to work with the knowledge that

they might be forced to go without a paycheck once again next month, one federal agency, the Department of Agriculture, updated its employee information website and said, "We will also leave some of the shutdown-related material up for a period time, should you need to refer back to it."

Richard Nagle, a lawyer with the Environmental Protection Agency in Chicago, said returning to work after a mandatory furlough required some digging out.

"It's triage," he said, eyeing his email inbox. "I'm going to go through the ones that are screaming for attention. I haven't been on voice mail yet, but I'm sure that's capped out at 32 messages."

In the first hour of his day, one question seemed to be echoing through the halls: What did you do?

Colleagues were sharing stories of how they passed the time while they were furloughed. Pretty much everyone confessed to sleeping a little later than usual. Basements were cleaned out, digital photos were organized, hardwood floors were scrubbed until they were gleaming.

Some employees took road trips, visiting extended family in Michigan or driving down to Memphis, eight hours away. Anything to stave off the boredom and anxiety of being home, unpaid, during a Chicago winter.

As employees streamed into the office, managers stood in the lobby, handing out informational papers on things to know: how to apply for back pay, what to do if you forgot your passwords. Some supervisors brought in sweet treats. There were nudges about projects that had been put on hold — and, in some cases, forgotten — and hurried meetings to figure out what could be accomplished before the next potential shutdown.

At a Federal Emergency Management Agency office in Fort Worth, some employees felt like they were racing against the clock.

"They're trying to get as much work as they can get done before flood season, tornado season and hurricane season," said Steve Reaves, a safety officer for FEMA who also leads the union for FEMA employees. "With us, it's do as much we can before they try to do this again."

Senior officials on Monday both welcomed their workforces and tried to reassure them about the weeks to come.

"I encourage you all to take time to talk to each other about the past few weeks and be transparent with your supervisors about any hardships," Brock Long, the FEMA administrator, wrote in an email on Monday morning. "I also want to be clear that there is no higher priority than to guarantee, for those who missed paychecks, that you get paid as quickly as possible."

But Mr. Long acknowledged that reopening the government was not as simple as turning a light-switch.

"While there is important work to be done, I want to make sure that you are set up for success before jumping into your normal assignments," he wrote. "Please allow time for updates and reboots to computers, addressing expired passwords, syncing mobile devices, managing benefits and organizing your work space. Supervisors have been provided checklists that should be helpful. Again, please also take the time to listen and support each other."

Ryan Baugh, a Department of Homeland Security statistician and a steward for the American Federation of Government Employees, said the possibility that there could be another shutdown had a damaging effect, raising questions about what could realistically be scheduled — meetings, trainings, projects — given the uncertainty.

"We'll work hard for three weeks, and then we'll see what happens," he said. "You could still use the word 'hostage.' We're still the bargaining chip here."

The morning commute on Monday in the Washington area was once again bustling after an eerily quiet month of little road traffic during peak travel hours and open seats on trains and buses.

At a Metro station near the Environmental Protection Agency's headquarters in Washington, a small group of environmental activists with the nonprofit group Mom's Clean Air Force welcomed E.P.A. employees back to work with cinnamon rolls.

"Welcome back! Cinnamon roll?" Elizabeth Brandt, a field organizer for the group, chirped as employees rode up the Metro escalator. Ms. Brandt, holding her daughters, Valencia, 5, and Natalia, 3, said that having grown up next to a toxic cleanup site in Tacoma, Wash., it was important to her to make sure the agency's workers knew their work was valued.

"I don't often get a chance to thank people who do that work the way I thank our pediatrician and the people who give my kids shots," she said.

E.P.A. employees for their part said they were relieved to be back to work yet anxious that the reprieve from the partial government shutdown could be short-lived.

"Most of us cannot afford to be without pay for a month," said Denise Walker, an agency lawyer. "It's very stressful for people."

The National Park Service reopened on Sunday, but prospective visitors were encouraged to check with individual parks to make sure they were indeed receiving visitors. Smithsonian museums and the National Zoo were set to reopen on Tuesday.

Federal workers who had turned to food banks to feed their families continued to struggle to make ends meet as they returned to work on Monday. Some federal employees have been working without pay for weeks. And many federal contractors are not expected to be paid at all for the days the government was closed.

Jamie Rodny, an investigator at the Housing and Urban Development office in Los Angeles, said she was both excited to return to work and scared she would be facing the same situation in three weeks. She was told she would not see a paycheck on Monday, and said her branch chief told her that he had heard they might get paid on Thursday.

Ms. Rodny, who works for the Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity division, which oversees the enforcement of federal housing laws, said she arrived at her office to find frantic emails and voice mail messages from people whose cases she was forced to drop when the government closed. Now, as she returns these messages, she expects to hear that some of those complainants were evicted over the past 35 days or are facing debts because of the forced lull in their cases.

"Where do I start," she asked.

Ms. Rodny spoke at the Women's March in Washington earlier this month, after she was approached by her labor union, the National Federation of Federal Employees, about the financial and emotional pain of workers affected by the shutdown. Her family lives paycheck to paycheck, she said, and during the break in pay, they used their credit cards for as many purchases as possible, which resulted in her credit score dropping. She said they were able to make their payment because of donations they received through a GoFundMe campaign. She recently started an activist group called "Stop Government Shutdowns Forever."

The president promised the 800,000 employees who had been furloughed or forced to work that they would be paid "very quickly or as soon as possible," without providing a specific date. The White House Office of Management and Budget directed agencies to prioritize pay and benefits after reopening.

Some federal agencies worked through the weekend in an effort to get paychecks to their workers as soon as possible. The Department of Agriculture instructed its employees to file their time sheets by noon on Monday and pledged to resume direct deposits into bank accounts by Thursday. On Sunday, the commissioner of the Customs and Border Protection agency, Kevin K. McAleenan, addressed employees on Twitter to say that the agency had already approved a majority of the timecards and pledged to work to make sure everyone is paid soon.

Aware of the looming Feb. 15 deadline, some lawmakers are trying to pass a law that would outlaw future government shutdowns.

"Shutting down the government should be as off limits in budget negotiations as chemical warfare is in real warfare," Senator Lamar Alexander, Republican of Tennessee, said on Friday.

Dealmakers Dominate Panel Tasked to Reach Border Security Agreement (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/28/2019 7:11 PM, Sheryl Gay Stolberg, 20737K]

The fate of President Trump's \$5.7 billion demand for a border wall is now in the hands of a 17-member bipartisan panel that includes some of the most senior members of Congress and, perhaps more tellingly, lacks the most vocal immigration hard-liners on Capitol Hill.

Under the agreement Mr. Trump reached last week with congressional Democrats, a committee of Republican and Democratic lawmakers from both chambers — known as a conference committee — has until Feb. 15 to come up with a border security package.

During the 35-day shutdown, many Americans accused Mr. Trump and Congress of acting

like toddlers, with Mr. Trump insisting that he had to have the wall, and Democratic leaders insisting that they would not give him a penny for it.

Now, a group less dominated by ideology will be in charge.

One conference committee member, Senator Jon Tester, Democrat of Montana, departed from Democratic orthodoxy on Monday when he told reporters that he would be in favor of including some money for a wall in the border security package. Late last year, Mr. Tester and other Democrats on the Appropriations Committee voted for a spending bill that included \$1.6 billion for 65 miles of fencing along the border.

"What I hope can happen is we end up with a set of broad-based measures to secure the border, including manpower, wall, technology," Mr. Tester said. Noting that physical barriers already exist along roughly 600 miles of the border, he added, "I think to take that off the table entirely — this is my opinion, O.K.? — would be not the best direction to go."

The conference panel's members, appointed by House and Senate leaders, are drawn exclusively from the appropriations committees in each chamber, which have a long history of working in a bipartisan way. (Senator John McCain was fond of saying, "There are Republicans, there are Democrats, and then there are appropriators.") The first meeting will be Wednesday afternoon.

With nine Democrats and eight Republicans, the panel traverses the philosophical spectrum: Representative Barbara Lee, Democrat of California, is an ardent liberal critic of Mr. Trump's immigration policies, as is Senator Richard J. Durbin, Democrat of Illinois.

Representative Tom Graves, Republican of Georgia, has co-sponsored legislation to provide \$23.4 billion in wall construction money, while Representative Steven M. Palazzo, Republican of Mississippi, has backed a bill that would allow Americans to purchase bonds to help finance a wall. But neither is closely identified with that cause.

And the panel includes members of both parties, beyond Mr. Tester, who have been calling for compromise.

"This is much more than just a wall," another Republican member, Representative Chuck Fleischmann of Tennessee, told Fox Business Network last week, in urging an end to the shutdown. "We've got to look at border security where there are areas where a wall won't work; we've got to secure it that way. But yes, I think we can sit down and come up with something. The American people want a reasonable compromise that will work for all."

Mr. Durbin helped write the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (Dream) Act in 2001, which would offer a path to citizenship for young immigrants who were brought illegally to the country as children. Members of both parties have suggested some version of the Dream Act could be exchanged for some wall funding.

Conference committees, once an elemental part of Congress, occur when the House and Senate have to reconcile two bills. But in the recent past, much of the reconciliation has been done by leadership. Genuine conference committees have become so rare that many lawmakers have never been on one that worked as intended.

The border security panel conference includes several Democrats from border states, including Ms. Lee; Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard of California; Representative Henry Cuellar of Texas; and Representative Pete Aguilar of California.

It will be led by the top Democrat and Republican appropriators in both chambers: Representatives Nita M. Lowey, Democrat of New York, and Kay Granger, Republican of Texas; and Senators Richard C. Shelby, Republican of Alabama, and Patrick J. Leahy, Democrat of Vermont.

Together, they have more than 100 years of legislative experience — Mr. Leahy alone has been in the Senate for 43 years — and are senior enough to remember the days of real conference committees, when lawmakers worked across party lines to hash out deals.

"In my judgment, the next three weeks will be one of the most important work periods in recent history — in my job here," said Ms. Lowey, who was elected to the House in 1988 and is the first woman to lead its Appropriations Committee. She will be the chairwoman of the conference panel; Mr. Shelby will be its vice chairman.

"I've been an appropriator for a long time," she added. "I'm always willing to work across the aisle and find compromise."

What that compromise might look like — and whether it will satisfy Mr. Trump — is unclear.

At least one Trump ally on Capitol Hill — Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican of South Carolina — is suggesting that Mr. Trump go ahead and declare a national emergency to build the wall, without congressional support.

The Republicans on the panel are Representatives Granger, Fleischmann, Graves and Palazzo; Senators Shelby, John Hoeven of North Dakota, Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia and Roy Blunt of Missouri.

The Democrats are Representatives Lowey, Roybal-Allard, Lee, Cuellar, Aguilar and David Price of North Carolina; Senators Durbin, Leahy and Tester. At Wednesday's meeting, each member will be able to give an opening statement.

"We've got to come together; the question is, 'Will we?'" said Mr. Shelby. Asked if he was optimistic, he said, "Optimistic? I'm cautious, guarded, anxious."

Lawmakers tasked with reaching border deal to meet Wednesday (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/28/2019 2:08 PM, Jordain Carney, 3038K]

A bipartisan, bicameral committee tasked with hashing out an agreement on Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding will meet for the first time this week.

Lawmakers will meet at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, according to a notice from the House Appropriations Committee.

It will mark the first time the panel has met since Congress passed a three-week bill to reopen the government and kicked the fight over funding for the U.S.-Mexico border wall to the conference committee. The continuing resolution (CR) passed by Congress would fund

approximately a quarter of the government through Feb. 15, setting up another deadline to avoid a second partial government shutdown.

The 17-member panel is facing an uphill battle to break the months-long stalemate between President Trump, who wants \$5.7 billion for a wall, and congressional Democrats.

Democrats had previously offered money for fencing, but will be under pressure to take a hard line after the president agreed to reopen the government with no border wall funding.

Trump, meanwhile, has floated declaring a national emergency to construct the wall if lawmakers can't get a deal.

Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) said Monday that there were already behind-the-scenes talks happening "quite actively" about how to get to a deal and predicted that a final agreement would include money for "physical barriers."

"I think it's important that we have that. The size of it is probably where the biggest bickering would be, but I think there's enough Democrats that support this," Capito, a member of the conference committee, told WV MetroNews. "I don't think this is going to be easy, but I don't think it's impossible."

The Senate Appropriations Committee cleared a bill last year that would provide \$1.6 billion for the border, including approximately 65 miles of pedestrian fencing. Capito added on Monday that the Senate bill should be a starting point for the conference committee.

"My bill that was passed in June is a good starting-off point. It has a lot of really good, bipartisan, already agreed-to items," she said.

The Senate also voted down two proposals last week, including a measure backed by Trump that would have traded \$5.7 billion for the border wall in exchange for letting Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipients and some temporary protected status holders apply for a three-year extension of protected status.

These members of Congress are seeking a deal on border security and Trump's wall (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/28/2019 10:05 PM, Phil Mattingly, 5847K]

Following President Donald Trump's announcement Friday to reopen the government came the news that efforts to reach a legislative solution to funding border security, immigration issues and Trump's campaign promise of a wall would go to a special committee of senators and representatives to try and hash out a deal.

This bipartisan conference committee has until February 15 to find such a proposal that could clear both chambers of Congress and get Trump's signature. Shortly after each chamber passed the bill to re-open the government, the Senate and House also named which lawmakers would negotiate on behalf of the Republicans and the Democrats.

As the fight largely surrounds funding for Trump's campaign promise of a border wall, the negotiators for both House and Senate come from the Appropriations committees, the panels in each chamber that determine how the federal government spends money.

While it appears obvious on its face that the members of the conference committee would all come from an appropriations panel -- the measure the group will be negotiating, or attempting to conference, is a product of those two committees -- it also creates an interesting dynamic on an issue that for years has flummoxed, vexed and outright defeated every legislative effort to find a compromise: immigration.

Appropriators are, by nature, deal makers and rarely come from the hardline elements of either side of the party. The Senate Appropriations Committee actually came to a bipartisan agreement on a Homeland Security bill last year -- one that included \$1.6 billion in border security that included funds for fencing and barrier repairs.

Does that make a final deal more likely? Not necessarily, aides in both parties say. They are all skeptical that given the red lines for both sides, particularly on the issue of the border wall, a final agreement is a long way off. Plus, the party leaders in both chambers will ultimately have a say over the final deal, and even Trump, in an interview with the Wall Street Journal Sunday, put the odds of success for the conference committee at "less than 50-50." Still, the group marks the best chance for any kind of border security agreement in the near term.

This conference committee will meet for the first time Wednesday. See below for the 17 lawmakers who are now on the front line of Congress' latest attempts to find a broader deal.

Homeland Security Funding Negotiators

Senate:

Four Republicans:

Sen. Richard Shelby of Alabama, the Senate Appropriations chairman

Sen. Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, the chairwoman of the Senate Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee

Sen. John Hoeven of North Dakota, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee

Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee

Three Democrats:

Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont, the top Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee
Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois, who is the second ranking Democrat in the chamber and a member of the Appropriations Committee

Sen. Jon Tester of Montana, the top Democrat on the Senate Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee

House:

Six Democrats:

Rep. Nita Lowey of New York, chairwoman of the House Appropriations Committee

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard of California, chairwoman of the House Appropriations Homeland Security Subcommittee

Rep. David Price of North Carolina, a member of the House Appropriations Homeland Security Subcommittee

Rep. Barbara Lee of California, Appropriations Committee member

Rep. Henry Cuellar of Texas, Appropriations Committee member

Rep. Pete Aguilar of California, Appropriations Committee member

Four Republicans:

Rep. Kay Granger of Texas, the top Republican on the House Appropriations Committee

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann of Tennessee, the top Republican on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

Rep. Tom Graves of Georgia, Appropriations Committee member

Rep. Steven Palazzo of Mississippi, Appropriations Committee member

Lawmakers skeptical that a broad immigration deal can be reached (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/29/2019 2:42 AM, Lauren Fox, Ted Barrett and Manu Raju, 5847K]

Democrats and Republicans on Capitol Hill enter the next chapter in the fight over President Donald Trump's border wall skeptical that a broad immigration deal can be reached and with a mission: Keep negotiations narrow and avoid another shutdown.

"I am not ruling anything out at this point. It's just an effort to pass a (Department of Homeland Security) appropriations bill and put an end to recurring presidential threats of a shutdown," said Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois, the second-ranking Democrat in the chamber. "I go into this to solve the problem as best I can, but I don't go in with any high expectations when it comes to the immigration side. ... I don't go in with any high hopes that will be successful on immigration issues and I am not walking in there with an immigration agenda."

After the longest government shutdown in history, lawmakers returned Monday to Washington sober to the realities that the next three weeks will entail grueling negotiations between two sides that have spent the last month engaged in raw, partisan posturing. If an immigration deal has eluded Congress for decades, members are keen to the fact that the environment over the next three weeks isn't likely to produce one.

"That would be really challenging," Sen. John Thune of Texas, the second-ranking Republican in the chamber, told reporters Monday night. "I think this is going to be all about the number. But who knows? That would be great. The President put some stuff in play. If the Democrats are willing to make a broader deal, I don't think we know the answer to that yet."

The contours of the spending negotiations are still taking shape. The conference committee -- made up of Republican and Democratic lawmakers from both the House and Senate -- will begin meeting Wednesday afternoon.

"My focus is on the appropriation aspect," said Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, a Republican from West Virginia who's serving on the conference committee. "Whether we go bigger remains to be seen."

Asked if negotiators should try to tackle a broader immigration overhaul, Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine said that should depend on whether it brings them votes for a final deal.

"In my view, it depends on how you get the votes," she said. "I very much want the (recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program) given a path to citizenship. I don't think that's going to happen."

Each party has long established its immigration battle lines. For Republicans, the President's border wall will be the prize even as rank-and-file Republicans acknowledge that the showdown may come down to a game of semantics. On Monday, many Republicans referred to the wall as a "barrier," a nod to a détente over the war of words that has transpired over the President's signature campaign promise. On Friday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi wouldn't definitively rule out a barrier at the Southern border.

Democrats, meanwhile, still argue they too support border security, just more in the form of technology and at ports of entry than in the form of a wall. Many Republicans, meanwhile, have long agreed there should be some protection for individuals with DACA status even as the extent of those protections is a source of division within the party.

As part of his negotiation during the shutdown, the President proposed \$5.7 billion for his border wall in exchange for three years of protections for DACA recipients and another three years for immigrants who had Temporary Protected Status. Democrats rejected the offer, arguing they wanted a more permanent solution.

But even keeping a negotiation about border money and DACA recipients has proved too difficult in the past. The White House rejected a bipartisan proposal last year that included \$25 billion for the wall over a decade in exchange for a path to citizenship for DACA recipients and significant changes to the country's legal immigration system.

"I think what the President proposed on TPS and DACA are a good starting point. That's not a comprehensive immigration bill, but they are significant changes, and I think that is possible, so I'm very interested in helping the President getting money for barriers as part of a broader border security package," said Republican Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio. "I think the way that happens is to focus on the two areas: DACA and TPS. If you go beyond that in a short period of time, I think it is difficult to see a solution."

Trump has remained somewhat skeptical that Congress can come to an agreement he would support. He told the Wall Street Journal on Sunday that he thought the chances of a new deal being reached in the next three weeks were "less than 50-50."

Sen. Lindsey Graham, a Republican from South Carolina, told reporters that he talked Monday to Trump and he thought "the President's in the mode of doing a deal."

"We'll just see if we can get reasonable people to agree," Graham said.

But winning over Democrats for significant funding for the border wall will be a tall task.

Rep. Henry Cuellar, a Democrat who is on the conference committee, said Democrats are going to go in with a "united front." Asked if Democrats would agree to any money for the wall, he said, "I will be with the group together -- whatever the consensus of the group, I will be with."

"We do have a consensus with the wall -- I think we are all against the wall."

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Lawmakers meet Wednesday to start working on border security deal (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/28/2019 1:59 PM, Susan Ferrechio, 629K]

A bipartisan group of House and Senate negotiators will meet Wednesday to begin hammering out a deal on border security ahead of a Feb. 15 deadline.

The group of 17 lawmakers are tasked with coming up with a House-Senate agreement on Homeland Security spending for fiscal 2019.

The conference committee was created as part of a deal to re-open the government after a 35 day partial shutdown that resulted from a partisan fight over border wall funding. President Trump has pushed the committee to accept some new spending on a border wall, but it's not clear they'll be able to reach any agreement.

Democrats oppose money for a border wall and Republicans will try to win some funding to appease President Trump, who has threatened to withhold his signature on spending legislation when the current authorization expires on Feb. 15.

Senate negotiators include Richard Shelby, R-Ala., and Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., the top two lawmakers on the Senate Appropriations Committee. The House side is being led by the leaders of the House Appropriations Committee, Reps. Nita Lowey, D-N.Y., and Kay Granger, R-Texas.

Podcast: The Clock Starts As Negotiators Try To Avoid Another Shutdown (NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/28/2019 6:55 AM, Staff, 4491K] Audio: [HERE](#)

Congress and the White House have three weeks to come to an agreement about border security - or else the government could shut down again. Federal workers are bracing themselves for another furlough, even as they return to work today. And the prosecution rests its case in the trial of Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman.

Why Democrats are unlikely to budge on next round of border security negotiations (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/28/2019 1:40 PM, Chad Pergram, 9216K]

Does anyone really think we won't be back here in three weeks, trying to avert another crisis and fund the government?

"If the Democrats come in offering \$0 for the wall at the beginning and \$0 for the wall at the end, that's not a negotiation," said one Republican.

Well, you all know that's not true. After all, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said long ago she'd offer "\$1" for the wall.

So....

But why does the Trump administration and GOP advocates on Capitol Hill think congressional Democrats will budge?

If the president agreed to re-open the government after achieving nothing and Republicans started taking the blame, why does the president think the matrix changes in mid-February? Democrats gave nothing. They have very little to lose in the next round.

"I can't imagine that (President Trump) is in any stronger position than he was now that he's had to move off his position," Rep. Francis Rooney, R-Fla., recently said on Fox News.

The key to the three-week window is a conference committee, a blend of bipartisan House and Senate negotiators, charged with forging a border security agreement before Feb. 15. Otherwise, we might be right back where we were.

Pelosi lifted an exchange of DACA for a wall off the table. What really could Democrats trade? Comprehensive immigration reform? There's almost no way lawmakers could settle something of that magnitude in less than three weeks. Plus, the scope of the conference committee is narrow in terms of both substance and time. The administration likes the confined turning radius. But it really doesn't give the sides much to negotiate. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., told Fox News on Friday that Democrats want to complete a DACA fix and approve comprehensive immigration reform. But Hoyer noted the conference committee doesn't have to untangle those issues. The Maryland Democrat said Congress can address them later.

There's a reason the government shut down in the fall of 1995 during an epic standoff between President Bill Clinton and House Speaker Newt Gingrich re-opened later, and then shut down again. The sides thought they were on a track to resolve their issues. But they weren't.

That said, there is opportunity here. A crisis like the one over the government shutdown could spur policymakers to action. Big crises often prompt landmark agreements. Such was the case with the mid-'90s deadlock between Clinton and Gingrich. The shutdowns sparked a major deal on federal spending and prompted welfare reform. The 2011 quandary over the debt ceiling resulted in \$1.1 trillion in discretionary spending cuts via sequestration. History shows an agreement is feasible.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., long doubted there would be a shutdown the first time. We'll see how confident McConnell is now.

"There is no education in the second kick of a mule," McConnell is fond of saying.

Optimists on the Republican side are betting on a couple of factors.

It's likely Congress and the White House will reschedule State of the Union for February 5. After the president punted last week, Rep. Dan Kildee, D-Mich., observed Trump's allocution at the White House.

"I have seen people go to the Rose Garden after a hard-won fight," said Kildee. "I have never seen the president go to the Rose Garden and take a defeat lap."

Republicans know the president needs a big platform. A bully pulpit with which to sell his border wall pitch. A rescheduled State of the Union is the perfect forum for that, combined with the splendor and pomp of the House chamber. With the government re-opened, Trump gets to make his appeal from the dais of the House. Right in front of Pelosi, no less. This is the State of the Union grandeur the president truly wants. Not some Make America Great Again rally with supporters stuffed into a second-rate ECHL hockey arena.

The administration and many Republicans think there are fissures in the Democratic ranks when it comes to border security or a wall. Consider the fact that Democrats now control the House because they won seats with moderate to conservative Democrats in battleground districts. Championing a wall is good politics for these members.

"(Democrats) had come to us and said 'Look, we agree with you. You're winning the battle on the importance of a barrier on the southern border. But we simply cannot work with you while the government is (closed),' White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney said on Fox News Sunday. "I think the president saw a chance here to try and take the Democrats at their word."

A vote for border security and even the four-lettered word could be smart politically for moderate Democrats. That's why the administration thinks they can attract Democrats. But that theory runs afoul of one factor: Nancy Pelosi.

The government shutdown and stare down with Trump only emboldened Democrats. It solidified the standing of Pelosi among Democrats who were skeptical of her. The freshman House Democratic class is full of disruptors and upstarts, ready to crash the system. Rather than turning their attention on Pelosi and other "institutional problems," the newcomers directed their ire on the president. The shutdown helped Pelosi keep Democrats together and channel energies against Trump.

This phenomenon isn't that new. Congressional Republicans won the House in 2010. Once in control, the GOP found it was a lot easier to oppose things like President Obama and Obamacare than be for something – say a bill to actually repeal and replace Obamacare.

This is why the conference committee might not get anywhere. Opposing the president is easy for Democrats. Solving the problem is more nuanced.

Something has to give somewhere. Otherwise, we're stuck in the same feedback loop for the next three weeks.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Democrats counter Trump: How about a 'pedestrian fence'? (Washington Examiner)
[Washington Examiner](#) [1/29/2019 12:00 AM, Susan Ferrechio, 629K]

Democrats who oppose President Trump's border wall say they might be able to agree to spend \$1.6 billion on new fencing along a pedestrian walkway in the Rio Grande Valley.

"I'd be willing to listen and see what those senators have to say," said Rep. Henry Cuellar, D-Texas, about the idea of the fence. He is one of nine Democrats appointed to a committee tasked with coming up with a border security deal by Feb. 15.

Cuellar added, "I've been very clear that I don't like the wall."

Trump wants a wall, but there may be a legislative vehicle in Congress for a compromise that involves a fence.

The Senate Appropriations Committee last summer passed a Homeland Security funding bill that included \$1.6 billion for 65 miles of pedestrian fencing in the Rio Grande Valley. It falls far short of the \$5.7 billion Trump is seeking and would not allow construction of the steel-slat barrier he has recently touted as the best approach to stopping illegal immigration in targeted areas.

But the fencing would represent construction of a new barrier along the border, and it already won the backing of 10 Appropriations Committee Democrats in the Senate once before.

Among them was Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., who is one of the negotiators and who still supports the money for the fencing. "Whether that's where we end up at I have no idea," Tester told the Washington Examiner.

Democrats on the 17-member panel said they do not outright reject the idea of new fencing, as long as it doesn't constitute a concrete border wall and does not carry the \$5.7 billion price tag Trump has demanded, which they say is far too much money.

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, D-Calif., who chairs the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, told the Washington Examiner Monday she won't endorse the wall Trump envisioned but she isn't ruling out the Senate proposal.

"We've all voted for some kind of fencing or barrier in the past," Roybal-Allard said. "I don't think that's really the question. It's more the whole issue of does he still want that concrete wall he keeps talking about?"

The Homeland Security bill is linked to six other measures that together fund nine departments and dozens of agencies, so finding an accord by the deadline is critical. The group is desperate to find a compromise that can pass both chambers in order to avoid a threat of a second partial government shutdown after a 35-day closure just ended.

Trump has warned he is willing to veto the measure if it doesn't include border wall funding and is so far sticking to the \$5.7 billion demand. Some lawmakers say he'll ultimately need

to try to circumvent Congress by declaring a national emergency and allocating the level of funding he seeks.

The House and Senate negotiators will hold their first meeting Wednesday.

Rep. Shelley Moore Capito, R- W.Va., who chairs the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, said the Senate bipartisan agreement on the fence could lead to a wider deal.

"I certainly think, for the base bill, it's a good place to start," Capito told the Washington Examiner. "The figure there, in my view, it's a good starting point, because it's already been agreed upon by a lot of bipartisan lawmakers."

But Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby, R-Ala., who is among the negotiators, said the \$1.6 billion in fencing hasn't won everyone over.

"I thought it was a good place to start," Shelby said. "Some of the Democrats thought it was too much later on, and the president didn't think it was enough."

Dem Sen. Hassan Supports Funding for Border Security and 'Strategic Fencing' (Free Beacon)

[Free Beacon](#) [1/28/2019 11:44 AM, Cameron Cawthorne, 105K] Video: [HERE](#)

Sen. Maggie Hassan (D., N.H.) on Monday said she supports border security and would be willing to support funding for "strategic fencing" and whatever border patrol agents believe is necessary to protect the U.S.-Mexico border.

Hassan appeared on CNN's "Newsroom" Monday morning to wade into the ongoing debate about immigration and border security. Anchor Poppy Harlow mentioned how Hassan said back in December that she supported "strategically-placed fencing and other kinds of barriers in certain parts of our border" and then asked her whether she would support a deal that included funding for a border barrier.

"Last Thursday we had a bipartisan discussion on the Senate floor about the importance of ending the shutdown, which, there was bipartisan agreement, was needless and harmful to the American people and our economy, and that we all pledged to work in good faith to find common ground on border security," Hassan said. "That's what I'm committed to doing, and I think that really starts with making sure we're listening to the experts on the front lines on this and that may include strategic fencing in certain places."

Harlow noted this position differed from several of her Democratic colleagues and then asked Hassan how much funding she would be considering to support. Hassan dodged this question and started talking about the importance of Democrats and Republican listening to the Border Patrol agents on the front line.

"I was down on the border last May and what the CBP told me was they needed more agents, we need more immigration judges, we need better technology, especially at our ports of entry and in some places we need to improve fencing, repair fencing or perhaps put in some new fencing," Hassan said.

"What we need to be doing is focus on what the experts are telling us they need, and I think

that there is a lot of common ground around that, and I'll continue to push people to look for common ground and come to compromise because that's what we're supposed to do" Hassan concluded.

President Donald Trump announced Friday the end of the partial government shutdown, which came about because he and Democrats reached an impasse over funding for a wall along the southern border. Trump said they would negotiate a deal with the government fully functional again.

Hassan joins a list of Democratic lawmakers who have begun to crack on their opposition to the wall. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D., Calif.) and other Democrats have voiced their opposition to any funding for a wall with Pelosi going as far as calling a border wall "immoral." However, several Democrats have acknowledged that barriers or fencing could be effective, according to the Washington Free Beacon.

"Some fencing has uses. Some barriers are useful," Sen. Jeff Merkley (D., Ore.) said.

"If we have a partial wall, if we have fencing, if we have technology used to keep our border safe, all of that is fine," Rep. Cheri Bustos (D., Ill.) said.

"There are areas along the border where there are currently fences that are put up or barriers that are put up that need to be enhanced," Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D., N.Y.) said.

"Certainly you need barriers and we support barriers," Sen. Ben Cardin (D., Md.) said.

"Certain physical barriers can make sense along the border, and a lot of places you already have that," Rep. John Sarbanes (D., Md.) said.

"I think there are parts of the border that would benefit from repairing fencing and other barricades that already exist there," Rep. Katherine Clark (D., Mass.) said.

Trump Downplays Chance of Amnesty-for-Wall Deal (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/28/2019 1:50 AM, Neil Munro, 2015K]

President Donald Trump used an interview with the Wall Street Journal to downplay expectations that the 17-member bipartisan panel on border security will propose an amnesty-for-wall deal.

The newspaper asked Trump on Sunday if the panel might propose an amnesty for DACA migrants. He responded:

"I doubt it," he said, when asked if he would agree to citizenship for a group of immigrants illegally brought to the U.S. as children, known as Dreamers, in exchange for border-wall funding.

"That's a separate subject to be taken up at a separate time," said Mr. Trump, a Republican. Earlier this month, the president offered three years of temporary protections for Dreamers as part of a broader proposal, but Democrats said they wanted more permanent protections, including a path to citizenship, for those immigrants.

The group of 17 House and Senate legislators has a less than a half chance of coming up

with a deal, said Trump. "I personally think it's less than 50-50, but you have a lot of very good people on that board," he said.

Trump also kept up his demand for \$5.7 billion in wall funding, saying, "As long as it can stop criminals, gangs, human trafficking and drugs, I'm open to anything. But the only thing that will work is a very strong form of physical barrier."

Trump also told the Wall Street Journal that he can use emergency powers to build the wall.

The Senate and House panel is expected to draft a compromise policy by February 15, but many Democrats are now arguing that any border wall is "racist" because it would largely curb migration by Latino migrants.

But business groups are pushing White House aides hard to strike a deal that would help stop rising wages by importing more foreign workers, such as university trained visa workers. Wages rose by 3.2 percent in 2018, diverting corporate revenues from profits into wages.

Rising wages threaten to cap investors' stock-market growth, but they also give Trump a political edge by boosting voters before his 2020 re-election. For example, ABC7 in Chicago reported that Walmart is dramatically raising wages for truck drivers:

Walmart is looking to hire more truck drivers this year, and it's paying nearly \$90,000 a year.

The pay increase comes as the company faces an industry-wide shortage of drivers.

Last year, Walmart hired 1,400 truckers. This year, they plan to hire even more.

Disabled Americans are also gaining fast because employers are being forced to hire people they would prefer not to hire in Trump's "Hire American" economy, according to a Wall Street Journal article.

Since Inauguration Day, when Trump promised his "Hire American" economic policy, 370,000 unemployed disabled people have left welfare and gotten jobs, the paper said:

"This is really quite a dramatic turnaround," said Nicole Maestas, an economist at Harvard Medical School who studies the disability system. "Employment among people with disabilities had been declining for a really long time—now it's not. And it's not transitory. It's been increasing for a few years."

The Journal interviewed a person with autism who can now afford his own home:

Nathan Mort has often struggled to find and hold a job. A conservation group once declined his attempt to volunteer. The 37-year-old West Michigan native, who has a high-functioning form of autism, ended up living with his parents and dependent on government payments.

His fortunes turned several years ago when a local food distributor, Gordon Food Service, found itself short of entry-level workers and developed an internship program for

adults with disabilities. Mr. Mort was hired from the program permanently to track warranty claims for the company's trucks and other equipment. That allowed him to stop collecting federal disability benefits and move into his own home.

Amid the good news for employees, there is little incentive for politicians to seal a deal that would anger slices of the electorate before 2020. The risk is high, partly because Americans have contradictory preferences. Voters want to welcome new arrivals, but they more strongly oppose companies' use of immigration to cut wages and sideline Americans.

The 2013 "Gang of Eight" amnesty, for example, was widely praised by the establishment and the D.C. media. But it proved disastrous for two of its leading participants: It wrecked GOP Sen. Marco Rubio's presidential prospects, and it cost Sen. Chuck Schumer nine Democratic seats and the Senate majority after November 2014.

The huge and complex bill also upended the D.C. establishment by supercharging the outsider campaign of Donald Trump, a New York real estate developer.

GOP senator says Trump wants a 'simple' border wall deal (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/28/2019 4:37 PM, Seung Min Kim, 9763K]

President Trump signaled to a GOP senator over the weekend that he is searching for a "simple" border wall deal in advance of the new funding deadline next month — casting more doubt on the prospects of a broader immigration deal before portions of the government shut down again.

Sen. David Perdue (R-Ga.), who lunched privately with the president Sunday at the White House, also indicated that Trump is prepared to act on his own should a new committee on Capitol Hill struggle to come up with an agreement on the wall that satisfies him. Trump is mulling the prospect of issuing a national emergency declaration to start wall construction without congressional approval — a move that will almost certainly face an immediate challenge in the courts.

"He wants as simple of a solution as we can get," Perdue said in an interview Monday. While the president would like a more sweeping immigration package at some point, Perdue said Trump acknowledges "that's just not realistic in three weeks."

Perdue added that while Trump is "hopeful" that a new bipartisan committee of 17 lawmakers can strike a deal on modest border security, "at the end of the day, if in three weeks [there is no resolution], this president's ready to move."

Calling Trump "resolute," Perdue said the new committee "should face the reality that if they don't get something done, something else will have to be done."

"I will say that he's upbeat, he's dedicated to this, and he has not changed his tenor in this thing," Perdue said. "He's committed. It's an instinctive thing with him."

Trump on Friday ended the longest government shutdown in history prompted by a confrontation over his demand for border wall money, although the government agencies hampered by the shutdown — including the departments of Homeland Security, Justice, Treasury and Commerce — won only a short-term funding reprieve.

Now, a committee of 17 lawmakers — primarily deal-minded and pragmatic members with experience in congressional appropriations — is tasked with coming up with a border wall deal. Their first public meeting will be held Wednesday.

"The president doesn't want to go through another shutdown. That's not the goal," White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said Monday. "The goal is border security and protecting the American people. Ideally, Democrats would take these next three weeks to negotiate in good faith."

The Sunday lunch with Perdue was not listed on Trump's daily public schedule. The senator said the president had a "full day" of meetings — although no other weekend meetings were made public.

The Georgia Republican, one of Trump's closest allies on Capitol Hill, was also at Camp David over the weekend with other GOP senators and acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, according to people familiar with the gathering.

The Camp David confab was largely social, although some border security discussions were expected to occur. Trump phoned into the meeting at one point, telling the Senate Republicans that he wished he could've attended the gathering and that Camp David is a special place, according to one of the people familiar with the meeting.

In turn, the GOP senators thanked Trump for his comments earlier that afternoon in the Rose Garden and his decision to sign a short-term spending bill that keeps the federal government fully open through Feb. 15. The GOP senators who were at Camp David in addition to Perdue included Joni Ernst (Iowa), James Lankford (Okla.), Rob Portman (Ohio), Kevin Cramer (N.D.) and Shelley Moore Capito (W.Va.).

A small handful of Democrats were invited, but declined, according to the people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe a private gathering.

Trump Skeptical of Congressional Deal on Border Security (Wall Street Journal)

[Wall Street Journal](#) [1/28/2019 2:09 PM, Peter Nicholas] Audio: [HERE](#)

In an exclusive interview with The Wall Street Journal's Peter Nicholas, President Trump expressed doubts that he'll accept a Congressional deal on border security, as lawmakers work to figure out a long-term solution.

President Trump doubts border security negotiations will succeed (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/28/2019 3:34 PM, Meridith McGraw, 2413K]

With less than three weeks for the White House and Congress to negotiate a compromise on border security funding, at the moment, President Donald Trump has said he has little confidence the job will get done in time.

The president gave the bipartisan group of lawmakers a "less than 50-50" chance of crafting a deal in an interview on Sunday with the Wall Street Journal, setting up what could be another government shutdown. If no deal is reached, the president has threatened another shutdown or to use executive powers to declare a national emergency — a move that some Republicans have warned could set up a bad precedent.

The White House was quick to try to paint the president's unexpected capitulation on Friday as a victory. It came after the president presented a week before what he described as a "compromise" that would fund the border wall and provide temporary protections for "Dreamers" -- undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children -- and those with temporary protected status, including victims of natural disasters. But Democrats wouldn't agree to the president's proposal.

Now, the president has ruled out striking a broader immigration deal that might include a path to citizenship for Dreamers in exchange for border-wall funding or settle for anything less than the \$5.7 billion he originally requested.

Talks among Republicans began after the president signed a bill to reopen the government on Friday night following the longest government shutdown in American history. On Friday night, Senate Republicans -- including Sens. Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, Kevin Cramer of North Dakota, James Lankford of Oklahoma, Joni Ernst of Iowa, Portman of Ohio, and David Perdue of Georgia -- met for a private meeting with acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney to begin hashing out a game plan for negotiations. Trump called into the meeting, according to a GOP aide.

Despite the president's comments to the Wall Street Journal on Sunday, the White House said the president wasn't pouring cold water on the negotiations by already dangling national emergency.

"I think that he is seeing the negotiations for what it is, this is an opportunity for Congress to act. It's an opportunity for Congress to speak with the experts -- the president has listened to these experts in the Border Patrol community to figure out what are the resources we need to secure the border," Mercedes Schlapp, White House Director of Strategic Communications, said Monday.

Trump ally and confidante Sen. Lindsey Graham, a South Carolina Republican, has publicly urged the president to declare a national emergency if appropriations negotiations fail.

"If White House and Congress fail to reach a deal then President Trump must act through emergency powers to build wall/barrier," Graham tweeted. "Presidents Bush, Obama, and Trump have all sent troops to help secure the border in the past.

What's the difference between troops securing the border and troops constructing barriers to secure the border?" Graham asked. Still, he said he is "hopeful" Congress and the president reach an agreement.

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., called the idea of declaring a national emergency a "terrible" idea on NBC's "Meet the Press" Sunday citing potential legal issues and the precedent that it sets.

"It doesn't mean that I don't want border security. I do. I just think that's the wrong way to achieve it," Rubio said.

Trump Skeptical on Border Deal: Report (US News & World Report)
[US News & World Report](#) [1/28/2019 9:34 AM, Megan Trimble, 2894K]

The president is threatening another shutdown as the next round of government funding talks begins.

President Donald Trump doesn't think Congress will reach a deal that he could accept to open the government long-term, telling The Wall Street Journal that another shutdown is "certainly an option."

Thousands of furloughed federal workers were set to return to work on Monday after Trump agreed to end the 35-day partial government shutdown for three weeks while congressional negotiators debate border security and funding for the president's promised border wall. But the odds a bipartisan committee reaches that deal, the president mused, aren't high.

"I personally think it's less than 50-50, but you have a lot of very good people on that board," Trump told the Journal in an interview Sunday.

The temporary spending bill signed by Trump on Friday sent some 800,000 government workers who were furloughed or working without pay back to work, providing temporary relief for some individuals and families who said they were already living paycheck to paycheck. The agreement, though, only funds shuttered agencies until Feb. 15.

Trump said he doubted if he would accept less than his requested \$5.7 billion in funding for the wall in the next round of negotiations, telling the Journal: "I have to do it right." The president also told the paper he was skeptical about any agreement that would trade wall money for a broader immigration policy change.

Asked if he would agree to citizenship for immigrants who were illegally brought into the U.S. as children, Trump again said: "I doubt it."

The president pledged in the interview to build a barrier at the border despite whether lawmakers could reach a deal and said he'd use his executive powers to declare a national emergency if needed, according to the Journal. Trump has threatened to declare the border a "national emergency" and use federal funds to build a wall without congressional approval. That decision would likely lead to lengthy legal challenges.

On Sunday, Trump doubled down on his demand for a wall, tweeting: "BUILD A WALL & CRIME WILL FALL!"

Trump's Wall Can Stop Human Trafficking At The US-Mexico Border (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/28/2019 12:00 PM, Cynthia Dunbar, 867K]

After more than one month of another needless Schumer-Pelosi government shutdown, President Trump continues to stand strong in defense of the most vulnerable among us, while Democrats turn a blind eye to a serious crisis: human trafficking across our southern border.

According to the State Department, up to 17,500 — even up to 19,000 — foreign nationals are trafficked into the United States every year. Most of those, an estimated 70 percent, are trafficked from Mexico, and half of those are minors forced into prostitution.

Sex trafficking is one of the top revenue sources for organized crime groups, which exploit our porous borders to inflict lasting damage on countless human lives and harm our

communities.

Far too many women and children will continue to suffer if we do not strengthen our borders and enforce the rule of law. Far too many lives will be ruined by policies that enable illegal immigration and transnational crime to continue.

That is why President Trump has made human trafficking a focus of his administration — and he has already made significant progress in addressing it. In 2017, the president signed an executive order to empower law enforcement and provide the resources necessary to dismantle transnational criminal organizations involved in trafficking.

Last April, he signed into law legislation to curb online sex trafficking. Early this year, he signed the Frederick Douglass Act into law, authorizing \$430 million to combat human trafficking.

The president's bold leadership has yielded results: over the first 18 months of his presidency, there was a 743-percent increase in the arrest of traffickers over the first two years of the Obama administration.

Construction of a southern border wall will remain a key part of these efforts to stop traffickers and save women and children.

As the president said in his proclamation, "I have made it a top priority to fully secure our Nation's Southwest border, including through the continued construction of a physical wall, so that we can stop human trafficking and stem the flow of deadly drugs and criminals into our country."

Today, President Trump announced he has reached a deal to end the government shutdown and fund our agencies for the next three weeks. He called on members of Congress to come together during that time and negotiate a lasting agreement that funds our government and secures the border.

This is the latest of many negotiation offers the president has made to congressional Democrats. Last weekend he offered a compromise solution, which would put \$5.7 billion toward a border barrier in exchange for provisional status to current DACA recipients. President Trump's proposal would be a historic step forward to solving the humanitarian crisis at our border.

But Democrats continue to stand in the way. They pronounce every White House proposal dead on arrival. They point fingers, leave town, and ignore every call to come to the table. They refuse to support legislation that would provide the funding necessary to build a wall, and in doing so they refuse to curb the illegal immigration that damages the lives of vulnerable women and children.

Over the next three weeks, Democrats must finally join this administration in finding a compassionate solution: stand with vulnerable women and children, keep our communities safe, and secure our border.

Democrats throw spotlight on Trump's troop deployment to U.S.-Mexico border (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/29/2019 12:37 AM, Phil Stewart and Idrees Ali]

As the Pentagon weighs new troop deployments to the U.S.-Mexico border, Democrats in Congress are poised to usher in unprecedented scrutiny of a politically charged mission championed by Republican President Donald Trump.

Democratic Representative Adam Smith, the new chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, will hold a hearing on Tuesday with Pentagon officials he hopes will shed light on the costs, scope and goals of a deployment that critics have derided as a political stunt.

U.S. officials told Reuters the border deployment, which has fluctuated in size over the past three months, could grow again by as many as 2,000 or more troops.

Smith is skeptical about sending U.S. troops to deal with a crisis he believes would be better handled by judges. He told Reuters his committee may consider future funding restrictions for such missions.

"It's undeniable that we have a significant increase in asylum seekers," Smith said.

"But that's not so much a job for the military as it is: we need more judges. We need to process them (the asylum seekers) more quickly," he said.

Smith will receive testimony on Tuesday morning from John Rood, under secretary of defense for policy, and Vice Admiral Michael Gilday, the director of operations at the Joint Staff.

It is the first oversight hearing by the committee since Democrats took over the majority of the House of Representatives this month, a sign of the issue's importance.

The Pentagon first approved the high-profile deployment of active duty U.S. troops to the Mexico border in October, ahead of U.S. midterm congressional elections. It was embraced by Trump's supporters, including Republicans in Congress.

However, critics assailed the deployment as a political stunt to drive Republican voters to the polls and scoffed at Trump's comparisons of caravans of Central American migrants, including women and children, to an "invasion."

There are now about 2,350 active duty U.S. troops involved in the U.S. border mission. Although the figure is down from a peak of about 5,900 in November, it has expanded in scope from basic missions such as stringing concertina wire.

The Pentagon confirmed earlier in January that U.S. forces had provided medical support to 80 migrants.

A new request by the Department of Homeland Security for additional U.S. military support approved by the Pentagon earlier this month could require a fresh increase in troops, officials said. Smith said he had not been briefed by the Pentagon yet on potential new troop deployments.

He said public scrutiny was one of the best tools available to his committee to influence Trump's decisions, given that the Senate is still controlled by Republicans and that Trump

won't want to sign legislation unfavorable to his agenda.

"What we can do is try to shine a light on it, to make the case that this is a bad idea, drum up public pressure so the president will stop doing these things," Smith said.

For example, Smith said he wants to know what Pentagon funds might be used if Trump makes good on his threat to declare a national emergency in order to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

He suggested his committee would also consider ways to introduce restrictions in next year's budget legislation.

"That will be one of the chief things that my committee tries to do, is to put into the NDAA (National Defense Authorization Act) strict restrictions on how money can be used," Smith said.

House panel to probe Trump's troop deployment to border (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/28/2019 11:25 AM, Lauren Meier, 527K]

The House Armed Services Committee plans to "shine a light" on President Trump's decision to send U.S. troops to the Mexican border in their first hearing in the new Congress this week.

Committee Chairman Adam Smith, Washington state Democrat, told NPR Monday morning that the committee is seeking "an explanation of the policy ... and make it clear there's no legitimate purpose" of increasing military presence at the U.S. border with Mexico. Thousands of troops were deployed to the region to assist Border Patrol officials in combating illegal immigration.

Mr. Smith said it was "absolutely" a political move by the administration, coming shortly before last year's midterm elections, arguing that the troops were sent despite a long-term decline in illegal immigration levels.

"Border security has gotten a ton better in the last 14 years, in part because we made a lot of policy decisions to do it," Mr. Smith said. "But the president is manufacturing a crisis to pander to his base. ... He made [the promise to build a wall] because it played well to his crowd. Something that plays well to the crowd doesn't translate into policy."

The committee on Tuesday is expected to hear from Undersecretary of Defense for Policy John Rood, and Vice Admiral Michael Gilday.

Trump to Deliver State of the Union Next Week (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/28/2019 9:55 PM, Sheryl Gay Stolberg, 20737K]

President Trump will deliver his State of the Union address to Congress on Feb. 5, 10 days before the deadline for lawmakers in the House and the Senate to reach an agreement on a border security package to avert another government shutdown.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi sent an invitation to the president on Monday afternoon, after the two spoke for about 12 minutes by telephone in a conversation that she initiated, an aide said. Mr. Trump later replied, agreeing to the date.

"We have a great story to tell and yet, great goals to achieve!" he wrote.

The invitation capped weeks of back-and-forth between the speaker and the president over when, and whether, he could deliver the speech in the House chamber.

On Jan. 23, in the middle of the 35-day government shutdown, Ms. Pelosi told the president she wanted to postpone the address, initially scheduled for Tuesday, until after the government reopened, and even went as far as to suggest that he deliver the speech in writing.

Mr. Trump retaliated by grounding the military plane that was supposed to take Ms. Pelosi and other lawmakers on a fact-finding trip to Afghanistan. Then, when Mr. Trump pressed ahead last week, insisting he wanted to give the speech on Tuesday, Ms. Pelosi disinvited him.

"When I wrote to you on January 23rd, I stated that we should work together to find a mutually agreeable date when government has reopened to schedule this year's State of the Union address," Ms. Pelosi wrote Monday in the letter. "In our conversation today, we agreed on February 5th."

As part of their deal to end the shutdown, Mr. Trump and congressional Democrats agreed that a conference committee of House and Senate appropriators would have until Feb. 15 to come up with a border security package. If they fail to reach an agreement, or come up with a plan that is not to Mr. Trump's liking, the president has threatened to either shut down the government again or invoke emergency powers to circumvent Congress in obtaining money for a wall along the southwestern border.

By hosting Mr. Trump before Feb. 15, Ms. Pelosi is effectively agreeing to give him a nationally televised platform in the middle of those negotiations. The invitation could be interpreted as an olive branch from the speaker to the president, who has little experience in dealing with an adversary as powerful as Ms. Pelosi and has at times seemed flummoxed by her.

Pelosi invites Trump for State of the Union on Feb. 5 (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/28/2019 5:47 PM, Juliegrace Brufke, 3038K]

Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) in a letter Monday said President Trump could give his annual State of the Union address in the House chamber on Feb. 5, shortly after lawmakers and the White House reached an agreement to end the partial government shutdown.

"When I wrote to you on January 23rd, I stated that we should work together to find a mutually agreeable date when government has reopened to schedule this year's State of the Union address," Pelosi wrote in the letter.

"Therefore, I invite you to deliver your State of the Union address before a Joint Session of Congress on February 5, 2019 in the House Chamber."

Trump formally accepted the invitation later in the day.

"It is my great honor to accept," he wrote in his response. "We have a great story to tell and yet, great goals to achieve!"

The California Democrat previously retracted Trump's invitation to come to the Capitol Tuesday, arguing the speech should not be held until after the end of the partial government shutdown.

Trump, who rejected the notion security at the Capitol would be problematic, in turn barred her from using military aircraft for an official visit to Afghanistan, escalating tensions between the two parties during a stalemate over border wall funding.

Trump agreed to sign a three-week stopgap measure to reopen the government that didn't include funds for his border wall, ending a weeks-long impasse and providing a win for Democratic negotiators.

The president previously vowed not to support any spending legislation that didn't provide funding for the wall. Democrats asserted they would not negotiate on border security until the shutdown came to an end.

The continuing resolution provides House and Senate conferees time to hash out a border security proposal. Trump has warned if they fail to put forward a plan that provides funding for the wall the government could close again in three weeks or he could declare a state of emergency to circumvent Congress.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders during a briefing on Monday weighed in on Pelosi's decision to retract Trump's invitation, shortly before news broke that the State of the Union was back on.

"I certainly don't think she acted in good faith on the front end considering she cited security concerns that didn't exist, but we're certainly hopeful that moving forward in the future she will," Sanders said. "The president, as he always does, looks forward to addressing the American people and we'll do that as soon as that's invitation is received."

Immigration Courts Face More Than 80,000 Canceled Hearings in Federal Shutdown (Bloomberg BNA)

[Bloomberg BNA](#) [1/29/2019 12:00 AM, Staff, 59K]

The longest running government shutdown in history has brought increased attention to our nation's immigration court system and the impact of the shutdown on the ever increasing backlog, currently at 800,000 cases and growing daily during the shutdown.

Most people are unaware of the primary factor underlying our current morass-that the immigration court is located within the Department of Justice, headed by the U.S. Attorney General, the nation's chief federal prosecutor.

Thus, the immigration court system fails to meet the most fundamental concept of our American judicial principles-that courts must be independent and neutral, free from interference and influence of the prosecutor or any party before it.

The federal courts in the judicial branch have not had to shut their doors because they are independent of the executive branch and largely have their own funding source.

With the nation's renewed interest in everything immigration, there has been uniform dismay at the unacceptable case backlogs and the recognition of a crucial need for more funding for the court.

Funding increases alone will not solve the persistent problems of backlogs, as the dysfunction of the court stems from its structural defect of placement within the DOJ. The immigration court has consistently been hampered in achieving its mission due to the DOJ's use of the court as a law enforcement tool.

Ignoring the immigration judge's role as neutral adjudicators has led to larger backlogs, while compromising the court's integrity and reputation.

One example is the incessant docket shuffling in furtherance of the latest law enforcement priorities.

The Obama administration had the "Surge" dockets, which placed the newest cases of "Adults with children" or "Unaccompanied children" immigrants at the top of the court's docket, essentially line-cutting.

Thousands of pending cases were delayed to accommodate new arrivals solely to serve political optics, in the hope that this tactic would discourage illegal entrants.

The Trump administration has continued and amplified these prosecutorial priorities through its declaration that everything is a priority, but some priorities are more priority than others, such as the temporary transfer of more than 100 judges to "Border courts" as a show of force or rebranding the previous administration's "Adults with children" dockets as the new "Family unit" docket but with completion deadlines.

These actions usurp the role of judges who are the experts at case management and adjudication and cast doubt on the neutrality of the rulings made.

Compounding this problem is the administration's unprecedented decision to subject immigration judges to numerical completion quotas and deadlines as a precondition to keeping their jobs, something you may do to a prosecutor but not a judge.

This action prompted an outcry from legal scholars and bar associations across the nation.

Now judges have to spend precious time keeping track of their rulings and daily activities to protect their jobs, instead of focusing their time and attention on the cases before them.

Although in the last two years we have seen the largest growth in the immigration court, our backlog of cases has continued to grow from more than 600,000 to more than 800,000 cases.

Just when we thought things could not worsen, the shutdown happened.

The disruption caused by the shutdown is staggering.

To date, more than 80,000 hearings have been canceled, and by the end of January, the number will rise at a rate of more than 20,000 a week.

No one is getting paid, regardless of whether they are deemed essential and working or are furloughed and prohibited from working as one cannot "Volunteer" for government work.

More than three-quarters of our judges have been shut out of their courts.

Only the cases of those individuals who are held in immigration detention are proceeding as previously scheduled.

Those cases are less than 10 percent of the total 810,000 pending case backlog.

The judges who handle our "Non-detained" dockets routinely carry anywhere from 2,500 to 5,000 or more cases on their calendars, which translates to being in court every day, morning and afternoon, with schedules that are booked two, three, or more years in advance.

Contrary to what some may imagine, once the shutdown is over, the pending backlog of 800,000 cases will not just get shifted in unison to a later date to accommodate the missed hearings.

It is a logistical impossibility to reschedule 800,000 cases.

Instead, the cases that were postponed will likely be placed at the back of the line, resulting in delays of two, three, or more years before the individual's day in court.

The potential lengthy delays caused by the shutdown can be devastating for the parties before the court.

Individuals with strong asylum claims can see their claims seriously compromised as memories fade and witnesses become unavailable.

Others may see the entire basis for their claim disappear when their qualifying relatives, such as U.S. citizen children, age out to become adults or parents and spouses pass away.

The only true winners of the shutdown are individuals who have weak immigration claims and would welcome the opportunity for additional time in the U.S., a cruel irony.

The only lasting and just solution to both the backlog and the integrity of our court system is to remove the court from the DOJ and make it an independent court.

Ashley Tabaddor speaks in her capacity as the president of the National Association of Immigration Judges.

She is also a sitting Immigration Judge in Los Angeles and an adjunct professor at UCLA School of Law.

'Catch-Up for Years' as Backlogged Immigration Courts Open (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [1/28/2019 5:56 PM, Deepti Hajela and Olga R. Rodriguez, AP, 2894K]

The nation's immigration courts were severely backlogged even before the government shutdown. Now it could take years just to deal with the delays caused by the five-week impasse, attorneys say.

With the shutdown finally over, the courts reopened Monday morning to immigrants seeking asylum or otherwise trying to stave off deportation, and hearings were held for the first time since late December. Court clerks scrambled to deal with boxes and boxes of legal filings that arrived after the doors opened.

Over 86,000 immigration court hearings were canceled during the standoff, the biggest number in California, followed by Texas and New York, according to an estimate from the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University. It estimates the courts have more than 800,000 pending cases overall.

The shutdown over President Donald Trump's demand for funding for a border wall to keep out migrants has only added to the delays in the system, where cases can already take years to be resolved, said Jennifer Williams, deputy attorney in charge of the immigration law unit at Legal Aid in New York City.

"They're going to be playing catch-up for years," she said.

The shutdown did not affect hearings for immigrants being held in immigration detention. It also had no bearing on applications for green cards and U.S. citizenship, which are handled by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and are funded by filing fees.

The cancellations were bad news for the many asylum applicants who have been waiting years to win approval so that they can bring loved ones to this country. It could be years before they are given new court dates, immigration attorneys said.

But for those with weak asylum cases, the canceled hearings could be a good thing, enabling them to keep on living in the U.S. and fend off deportation for now.

A spokeswoman for the Executive Office for Immigration Review, the part of the Justice Department that oversees the immigration courts, could not immediately say how many hearings were delayed or when they would be rescheduled.

Judge Ashley Tabaddor, president of the National Association of Immigration Judges, said: "What is clear is that the cases that were set for trial during shutdown will likely ultimately end up at the end of the line when a new date is picked."

Getting back to work didn't come without problems in courts around the country.

In San Antonio, a long-scheduled asylum hearing for a teenager from El Salvador was canceled because no Spanish-language interpreter was available, said Guillermo Hernandez, the teen's attorney. The hearing was rescheduled for late April.

"It's a little bit frustrating because we're trying to bring these cases to a resolution and move forward, and now we have to fight another day," Hernandez said.

At an immigration court in San Francisco, attorneys and paralegals carrying large bags,

small suitcases or boxes stacked on a dolly waited in line to file documents that in some cases had piled up during the shutdown.

Attorney Sara Izadpanah said six of her clients missed court hearings because of the shutdown and she missed several deadlines to file court documents.

"What happened is pretty serious for a lot of our clients because it could be two or three years before they can get a new court hearing, and by then immigrations law could change," Izadphana said.

Judge Ila C. Deiss walked into the San Francisco courtroom, where about 15 people waited, and announced that there was no Spanish interpreter present but that a bilingual clerk would be able to help if needed.

One of the cases on the docket was that of a Nepalese woman seeking asylum. The judge set the woman's final hearing for July 2.

The woman's attorney, Gopal Shah, said they had to scramble to be in court Monday.

"We were not sure a hearing was going to happen today, but we showed up anyway," Shah said. "She was lucky her case was heard and a court hearing was set for July because judges already have full calendars."

Immigrants impacted by government shutdown could wait until 2023 for court (Houston Chronicle)

[Houston Chronicle](#) [1/28/2019 1:00 PM, Lomi Kriel, 199K]

One man has been waiting two years to seek asylum for his wife and children facing danger back home. A Pakistani woman has been trying for a decade to become a U.S. citizen and was expecting a final ruling from a judge in Houston after Christmas.

Instead knowledge of her fate was set back — again.

"She kept crying to me, 'When is it going to be over?'" said her attorney, Gordon Quan. "They have a burden on their back and their futures are unsettled."

The nation's already backlogged immigration courts lurched back to life Monday following a record government shutdown in the name of border security. But the impact on the courts—an often publicly forgotten arm of immigration enforcement—will likely be felt for years.

With a record 827,000 pending cases, including more than 51,000 in Houston, the 35-day long shutdown pushed an already overburdened system closer to the precipice. More than 80,000 hearings were canceled, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, a research center at Syracuse University.

Texas had the third-most postponed hearings in the country after California and New York. Across the nation Monday, judges rescheduled some cases to 2023 even as government attorneys arrived to work with no prepared files, causing further delays.

Immigrants who should have been quickly deported were granted an unwarranted reprieve, while those with credible asylum claims or other legitimate reasons to remain now must wait

even longer.

"The administration's shutdown of the government could not have come at a worse time," said Elizabeth Mendoza, a Houston immigration attorney. "The courts are understaffed, dealing with a massive docket and almost weekly policy changes, and the shutdown has made things even worse."

The Executive Office for Immigration Review, an arm of the Department of Justice overseeing immigration courts, has been understaffed for years, with about 350 judges across the nation struggling to tackle an ever-worsening caseload. An average immigration judge could oversee more than 2,000 cases.

Under President Donald Trump's administration, the agency also made it more difficult to qualify for asylum and other forms of immigration relief. It has imposed controversial quotas mandating judges close about 700 cases a year to receive a "satisfactory" rating.

"We are looking to management to see what is going to happen to these quotas given the 35 day-delay," said Amiena Khan, vice president of the National Association of Immigration Judges and a judge in New York.

She said the union was also seeking guidance about whether cases missed during the shutdown should be pushed to the end of the line, meaning those immigrants could be set back years.

"We have a long way to go and a lot of work to do to catch up," Khan said.

Some courts in Indiana, Michigan, Georgia and Colorado remained closed this week because of bad weather. In others, including in San Antonio, interpreters had not been arranged.

In Houston's downtown immigration court, immigrants waited hours only to be told to return months or even years from now. Judge Clarease Rankin Yates presided calmly over the chaos.

"I came in yesterday to prepare these files but we're going to have to continue these cases," she said. "The government doesn't have any files. We just got back after three weeks of furlough."

Rickey Watson, a Houston immigration attorney, said he called the court early Monday, but a recorded message wrongly said it was still closed. So Watson told his client, a 17-year-old girl from El Salvador, to go to school and said her father could go to work.

The government attorney suggested the girl should receive a deportation order for having missed the proceeding, but the judge agreed to postpone her hearing until July.

"It's a double-edged sword," said Baldo Garza, another immigration attorney. "On one hand, there are delays if your cases have merit but if not, it helps stretch things out."

He said court staff must dig through boxes of required documents attorneys mailed in during the furlough. Until they caught up, he was bringing copies of paperwork he had already

submitted.

A sense of confusion prevailed.

Garza was waiting for one client who realized that day he had a court hearing, although the attorney hadn't received such a notification. Another client who crossed illegally into the United States in 2013 and was seeking asylum had his hearing reset to 2023.

"Everybody has been calling, 'What are we doing, what's going on?'" Garza said. "Whatever backlog there already was is just now going to be that much bigger."

Attorney Ruby Powers said about five of her clients had their cases canceled during the shutdown. She was concerned about the trickle-down effect.

"It's extremely ironic and counterintuitive by the administration," she said. "Deportations are being delayed because of this, but also many people's lives are on hold."

She said she is most worried about the man seeking asylum for his imperiled family abroad.

"His case is dependent on the approval to bring his wife and child to the United States," she said. "They're in a precarious balance waiting for the results and they're in potential danger."

Powers had filed to fast-forward his hearing to later this year, though now she doubted that would materialize.

"There's going to be a lot of shuffling around," she said. "We're thinking we're going to have to help manage his expectations."

Noel Suniga, an attorney with the firm Gonzalez Olivieri, said the worst was knowing a government shutdown could happen again soon. Trump has threatened a second if he doesn't receive funding for a border fence by Feb. 15.

"It's kind of groundhogs popping their heads out of the sand and maybe we'll be back down there again," Suniga said.

Immigrants affected by government shutdown could wait years for new day in court (San Diego Union Tribune)

[San Diego Union Tribune](#) [1/28/2019 9:50 PM, Andrea Castillo, 214K]

Alfredo and Claudia Valdez were an hour and a half into their drive from Bakersfield to a Los Angeles federal courtroom, brimming with expectation that a judge there would finally declare them legal United States residents.

It was early January, nearly two weeks into the partial federal shutdown. Alfredo's brother had flown in from Denver and his parents had driven from Palmdale for the occasion. A friend, a coworker and a former manager had taken the day off work to speak as witnesses on his and Claudia's behalf.

The couple was aware of the shutdown, but because they live so far away, they couldn't risk the court reopening and missing their morning hearing. After a phone call to his lawyer

confirmed that the court was still shuttered, a dejected Alfredo turned the car around.

Last Friday, President Trump agreed to temporarily reopen the government, including immigration courts, for three weeks while lawmakers continue negotiations on funding for border security. The agreement affords a temporary truce in a partisan fight that has paralyzed Washington.

But for people such as the Valdez family caught up in a serpentine court system already overwhelmed with backlogged cases, the shutdown derailed a lengthy process that could take weeks or months to get back on track.

"Me and my wife, we were trying to get past this nightmare of waiting," he said.

The shutdown has not only resulted in thousands of cancelled court hearings but also generated chaos for everyone involved in the immigration system.

Most judges have been furloughed and those who remain are working without pay. Lawyers have cancelled flights for out-of-town hearings and, absent direction from the Justice Department, continue to meet filing deadlines imposed by courts that aren't open to accept them. Dozens of immigrants have shown up at courthouses every day, some unaware of the shutdown, many simply to prove that they didn't intentionally skip their hearing.

With more than 76,000 pending cases as of November, Los Angeles already had the nation's second-largest immigration court backlog, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University. Across the country, more than 800,000 cases were pending, a figure that has swollen from a low of less than 125,000 in 1999.

Every week of the shutdown added 20,000 cancellations to the backlog. By Jan. 11, more than 9,000 court cases were canceled in California alone.

Meanwhile, about 300 of the nation's nearly 400 immigration judges have been furloughed, said Ashley Tabaddor, president of the National Assn. of Immigration Judges.

Immigration court schedules are split between hearings for detained and released immigrants. Tabaddor said hearings for detained immigrants, which make up less than 10% of the entire docket, have continued during the shutdown and are being overseen by judges who aren't getting paid.

Morale among judges was already at historic lows before the shutdown, said Tabaddor, who is based in Los Angeles. In October, the Justice Department implemented a quota system tied to performance evaluations under which immigration judges are expected to complete 700 cases a year to receive a "satisfactory" rating. She said the DOJ hasn't provided any guidance about whether those quotas will be waived once the government fully reopens.

"Each day, it becomes exponentially more difficult to get back up to speed in a short timeframe," she said. "What I understand right now is there are piles and piles of filings that are just sitting there. The first thing we're going to have to do is dig ourselves out from under the mountain of paperwork."

Spokespeople at the Executive Office for Immigration Review, which oversees immigration courts, didn't return phone calls or emails. A voicemail message on the office's general communications line states that the line will be unstaffed "for an indefinite period."

Lawyers also have been frozen by the shutdown. Sabrina Damast, an L.A.-based immigration lawyer, said she has continued sending case documents to the court and to lawyers for the Department of Homeland Security even though she assumes the paperwork isn't being reviewed. She worries that some of those documents will get lost in the shuffle.

Damast had been checking on the status of the shutdown every morning so that she could tell her clients whether or not to show up to court. Many had already requested the time off work and made childcare and transportation arrangements.

"The irony is, for all of Donald Trump's enforcement, those people who are criminals or repeat violators or the 'bad guys' — they're getting just as many delays as everybody else," she said.

One recent morning, around two dozen people stood outside the downtown L.A. immigration court. Inside, security guards informed them that the court was closed. Many took photos of a notice taped near the elevators stating that cases would "be reset for a later date after funding resumes."

Ashley Ramirez was supposed to have a court hearing that day for her asylum petition. The 29-year-old said she fled Guatemala after enduring physical and sexual abuse by her boyfriend. She and her 9-year-old daughter turned themselves in to Border Patrol agents last March after illegally crossing the Rio Grande in Texas. She was released from detention two weeks later and came to Santa Ana to live with her godmother.

Ramirez is enrolled in the Intensive Supervision Appearance Program, an alternative to detention that requires her to check in with an officer every other week. She knew the court was closed, but the day before her hearing, an ISAP officer told her she had to take a photo of the closure notice and present it during a check-in the same day.

So after snapping a photo with her cell phone, Ramirez went six blocks east to the ISAP office. After sitting for 45 minutes in the crowded waiting room, an officer called her name. When she showed him the photo, she said he told her that they just wanted to be sure she'd do what they asked.

She's not sure whether her asylum case will play out favorably. The shutdown bought her more time before a final decision. Even so, she wasn't happy to miss the court date — she'd planned to ask for a work permit.

For many others, the shutdown is a burden. Judith Seeds Miller, a lawyer in Bakersfield, described the case of an agriculture worker who has been in the U.S. since 1995. The 37-year-old man landed in deportation proceedings three years ago. He has a lengthy but nonviolent rap sheet — 11 arrests including three DUIs, several instances of driving without a license and one instance of driving with a suspended license.

The man applied for cancellation of removal, a humanitarian benefit that would grant him permanent residency but requires Seeds Miller to prove that his deportation would cause

one of his U.S.-citizen family members extreme hardship. She said the man's 18-year-old son, whom he cares for, has chronic depression and an anxiety disorder, as well as an intellectual disability.

Only 4,000 such visas are available every year and Seeds Miller said the wait time is a couple years. But they are in a race against time: The man's son will no longer be considered a "qualifying" family member once he turns 21.

Seeds Miller was ready for their trial Friday. She had a UCLA psychology professor lined up to testify as an expert witness and had spent hours prepping the family for questioning.

"Everybody was all dressed up, nowhere to go," she said. Her client can't spare another couple years waiting for a new trial. If it's not rescheduled for soon, she said, "It would mean he was out of luck. It's a really big loss."

Others saw the shutdown as a gift. Oscar Gomez, 34, has been in deportation proceedings since 2010, when Oregon police detained him for driving without a license and turned him over to immigration authorities. The government had suspended its effort to deport him until last year, when he was convicted of a misdemeanor related to domestic violence.

The Moreno Valley construction worker said he's now applying for asylum.

"This is like winning time," he said. "We'll see what happens in the future."

Tabaddor, of the National Assn. of Immigration Judges, said it's likely that most immigrants whose trials were canceled will have to go to the back of the line — a potential delay of two to four years.

She acknowledged the harm that could result from people with time-sensitive cases missing their long-anticipated hearings.

"Those who have the best cases and were ready to go forward are going to suffer," she said. "Memories fade, witnesses disappear, children age out, parents die of old age."

Back in Bakersfield, Alfredo Valdez, a 40-year-old Mexico native, had been anticipating his day in court for almost 25 years. His father, a naturalized citizen, first petitioned for him in 1994, a few years after he was brought into the country illegally. But yearly limits on the number of green cards available to Mexican citizens and their spouses who are being sponsored by a U.S.-citizen parent have led to a more than 20-year wait.

Claudia, 39, is also from Mexico and entered the U.S. in 1998 with a visa. She and Alfredo got married in 2005.

A paperwork error by a previous lawyer landed Alfredo in deportation proceedings. His current lawyer has helped him apply for a work permit and bide his time until a residency visa becomes available.

Alfredo and Claudia pay more than \$1,300 collectively each year to renew their work permits. He works as an electrician apprentice and in construction, and she does shipping and packing for a food warehouse. They have two sons, 13 and 18.

The shutdown means it could be a couple more years before they get their green cards.

"It's kind of depressing," Alfredo said. "That's not what we expected."

Closed cafeterias, missed emails: Government dusts off after shutdown (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/28/2019 6:22 PM, Eli Watkins, 5847K]

Thousands of federal workers came back to their posts on Monday, returning to a deluge of missed emails and a month of work to catch up on after the end of the longest government shutdown on record.

From President Donald Trump's decision on Friday to end the shutdown on through Monday, federal agencies issued statements to let workers know how the reopening would go, how they could get their accounts to work again -- and how they would get paid.

Food and Drug Administration commissioner Scott Gottlieb posted a thread on Twitter for FDA workers having technology issues, appearing to brace for employee badges not working.

A US Forest Service regional office echoed other offices across government in its welcome back message that it knew it would take "a little time and patience to regain computer access and begin project work."

While some facilities needed time to reopen, some department heads and managers tried to welcome workers back into normalcy as the morning kicked off.

A sign warned people headed for the Justice Department's cafeteria Monday morning that "the recent situation" meant it would take time to get the cafeteria fully back in operation.

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson addressed HUD workers on Monday, according to his spokesman Raffi Williams, and thanked them for "patience and perseverance."

"Today, as you dust off your desks, get your PIV, pins and passwords working, please take time to commiserate and check on your colleagues," Carson's remarks read. "And gather your thoughts on what your priorities should be."

Emily Lewis, who works at NASA's Shared Services Center in Mississippi, told CNN on Monday afternoon that workers had been "anxious to get back," but that management held a breakfast with employees and lessened worry around getting back to work. Lewis stressed a degree of support within the entity as well.

"It's not like a bunch of people took a vacation willingly at one time," she said. "We all know the situation we are collectively in."

Lewis added that with uncertainty around funding being extended past three weeks, just as they had to start work back up, they had to keep in mind the possibility they could have to shut back down.

"It's almost like stepping on ice, not (knowing) how long it will hold," Lewis said.

Glenn Fitzpatrick, a federal contractor at the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, told CNN that he and other contractors worked remotely on Monday once their stop work order was over and they could access federal systems again.

"It's just been slammed all day," he said.

Fitzpatrick said he did not have issues getting back into their systems, but noted the particular pressure the shutdown placed on contractors, who were not guaranteed full back pay.

WMATA, the public transit authority in Washington, welcomed back federal workers, whose resuming schedule on Monday was expected to ensure trains were full again after a few weeks of roomier Metro cars.

A preliminary estimate from WMATA during the shutdown said the Washington area subway system had a 16% drop in ridership while agencies were closed compared to average levels prior to the shutdown.

Other agencies, like US Customs and Border Protection, had mostly stayed working through the shutdown, with employees unpaid and some growing anxious about when their next paycheck would come.

US Customs and Border Protection commissioner Kevin McAleenan issued a statement to the CBP workforce saying his team had worked to process time cards and that they were "working aggressively to make sure you are paid as soon as possible."

Department of Homeland Security spokesman Tyler Houlton said in a statement Friday that "nearly 90%" of DHS employees had worked without pay through the shutdown and anticipated employees would "be receiving paychecks soon."

According to the American Immigration Lawyers Association, immigration courts were expecting confusion on Monday. The group said it was told by the Executive Office for Immigration Review on Friday that "there will likely be some confusion and disorganization at first, so we are asking all parties to be patient as we restart operations."

And other departments and advocates hailed the reopening for workers who were returning to work after the long shutdown, thanking them and the community.

[NV] Salvadoran could face death penalty in 4 killings in Nevada (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/28/2019 9:01 PM, Scott Sonner and Ken Ritter, 1773K]

A 19-year-old Salvadoran man suspected of being in the country illegally was charged Monday with killing four people in Nevada, including a couple who employed him as a landscaper, authorities said.

Wilber Ernesto Martinez-Guzman told investigators he used a .22-caliber revolver stolen from the property of 81-year-old Gerald David and 80-year-old Sharon David less than two weeks before he killed them on Jan. 16.

"The lady was coming out. I got scared and shot at her," Martinez-Guzman is quoted telling a Washoe County detective in an affidavit filed in Reno on Monday. It alleged that he broke into outbuildings on the sprawling David property on Jan. 3 and Jan. 4 and made off with a cache of rifles and the handgun.

Martinez-Guzman had worked for a landscaping company at the Davids' property for four months, ending last July. It was not immediately clear if the job linked him to two women he is accused of killing in nearby Gardnerville.

The affidavit was used to obtain an arrest warrant for Martinez-Guzman, who was arrested Jan. 19 in Carson City and is jailed there on charges that he possessed weapons and other items stolen from the Davids and sold jewelry belonging to Gerald David and another victim.

Martinez-Guzman also admitted killing Gerald David, and the affidavit alleges that his DNA was found on the .22-caliber gun also used to kill Connie Koontz and Sophia Renken in their homes. Koontz was found dead Jan. 10. Renken's body was found Jan. 13.

The Davids were prominent Reno Rodeo Association members, and Martinez-Guzman is accused of possessing several Western-style belt buckles stolen from their home.

Douglas County District Attorney Mark Jackson told reporters Monday that investigators in Douglas and Washoe counties had "a high level of confidence" that Martinez-Guzman acted alone in the killings.

Washoe County prosecutor Chris Hicks said it could be 30 days before prosecutors decide whether to pursue the death penalty against him.

Hicks said Martinez-Guzman's immigration status had nothing to do with the criminal charges, which also included five burglary counts.

President Trump tweeted a week ago that the four killings in Nevada showed the need for his proposed U.S.-Mexico border wall, which was at the center of the federal government shutdown.

Martinez-Guzman is being held in the Carson City jail on \$500,000 bail. His newly appointed public defense attorney, Karin Kreizenbeck, has declined comment.

Furlong said earlier that Martinez-Guzman's only known contact with authorities was a speeding ticket last February.

[CA] 7 people indicted for attempting to help illegal immigrant California cop killer flee to Mexico, officials say (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/28/2019 2:27 PM, Travis Fedschun, 9216K]

Seven friends and relatives of an illegal immigrant accused of killing a California police officer the day after Christmas were indicted on federal charges for allegedly helping the man attempt to flee to Mexico, federal officials said Friday.

The group is accused of helping Gustavo Perez Arriaga, 33, after he allegedly shot and killed Newman Police Officer Ronil Singh during a traffic stop.

"When individuals act to thwart law enforcement's efforts, they undermine the safety of those officers and the public as a whole," U.S. Attorney McGregor Scott in a statement. "Today's indictment is a significant step toward holding accountable those who chose to harbor and conceal the man accused of killing a police officer in Newman — Corporal Ronil Singh."

Those indicted include: Erik Razo Quiroz, 29, of Merced; Adrian Virgen-Mendoza, 25, of Fairfield; Conrado Virgen Mendoza, 34, of Chowchilla; Erasmo Villegas-Suarez, 36, of Buttonwillow; Ana Leydi Cervantes-Sanchez, 31, of Newman; Bernabe Madrigal-Castaneda, 59, of Lamont; and Maria Luisa Moreno, 57, of Lamont.

All seven were charged with conspiring to hide Perez Arriaga, and smuggle him back to Mexico, according to the Fresno Bee. Members of the group allegedly gave Perez Arriaga clothes, money and a new phone and hid his pickup truck, among other efforts.

Razo Quiroz was also charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm and being an alien in possession of a firearm, court documents said.

The seven also face state charges for helping Perez Arriaga try to flee to avoid prosecution and lying to investigators.

Perez Arriaga shot Singh after the officer stopped his vehicle to check if he was driving drunk, according to prosecutors. He had two previous drunken driving arrests, authorities said.

The sheriff leading the investigation has blamed California's sanctuary law for preventing local authorities from reporting Arriaga to U.S. immigration officials for the two previous arrests. If he had been deported, the sheriff said, Singh would still be alive.

"We can't ignore the fact that this could have been preventable," Stanislaus County Sheriff Adam Christianson said in December, asking why the state was "providing sanctuary for criminals (and) gang members. It's a conversation we need to have."

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[Mexico] Mexico stands with migrants. The new U.S. asylum policy must respect their rights. (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/28/2019 2:52 PM, Roberto Velasco Alvarez, 9763K]

Mexico is adopting a new migratory framework in line with the solidarity that has always characterized our foreign policy. This new framework relies on a comprehensive vision to understand migration and all its repercussions from their root causes. We believe trying to halt the flow of migrants without addressing the factors that force people to flee their countries is insufficient.

As President Andrés Manuel López Obrador stated in a letter to President Trump, a plan to boost development in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras that creates employment and, as a consequence, lowers crime rates, represents a better and more effective alternative than merely focusing in stemming the outflow of immigrants.

The ongoing initiative between Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico is designed

to raise investment, enhance governance, reduce violence and foster economic growth. Our governments must properly implement several complex policies to meet this ambitious set of goals. The technical expertise and financial support of the United States represent a significant advantage toward the success of those policies, and should be commended.

Our administration's new migratory plan is a far-reaching shift from that of our predecessors. Mexico is the first country to adjust its migratory policy as recommended by the new United Nations Global Compact for Migration. In accordance with this international agreement adopted by more than 160 countries, Mexico's position will no longer be one of migration deterrence and blockage. Mexico's National Migration Institute has provided visiting registrations for humanitarian reasons to migrants that otherwise would have entered the country irregularly. In light of our regional responsibilities and commitment to human rights, migrants will be able to work and, as a consequence, will benefit from access to health care, education and other social programs.

But our new migratory blueprint is at odds in some respects with the announcement by U.S. authorities that some migrants looking for asylum who entered through our shared border could be returned to Mexico to wait for their proceedings.

In accordance to our new migratory policy, one that puts human rights at its core, Mexico will temporarily welcome some migrants seeking asylum in the United States. But in the interest of protecting vulnerable migrants, unaccompanied children and those in poor health conditions will not be accepted into our territory from the United States. With this, Mexico reaffirms its adherence to the paramount principle of non-refoulement. As stated by international law, no government should return an asylum seeker to territories where his or her life would be threatened on account of race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group. Therefore, Mexico expects that asylum seekers with a credible fear of such threats will not be sent to our country.

The operational complexity of receiving asylum seekers from the United States opens the door to new potential drawbacks. Mexico will keep raising these concerns to the United States, to adequately manage the situation while guaranteeing the orderly functioning of our border. There are several technical-level questions — the specific ports of entry where this measure would apply, the timeline of the process, among others — that our two governments need to address to guarantee an adequate implementation of this unilateral policy.

In the future, Mexico will continue investing in development policies to reduce violence and poverty in our country and Central America, so that migration will no longer be a necessity but an option. In this regard, the potential cooperation with the European Union, Canada and Japan to bolster our Comprehensive Development Plan is a sign of our willingness to expand alliances for development on a global scale.

Mexico will continue to emphasize the protection of human rights in our new migratory policy. Our new comprehensive stance entails not only the defense of rights but the expansion of opportunity. That is the road Mexico will follow in the years to come.

[Mexico] Mexico won't accept minors awaiting US asylum claims (Washington Post)
[Washington Post](#) [1/28/2019 11:32 PM, 9763K]

The head of Mexico's immigration agency said Monday that his country won't accept migrants younger than 18 while they await the resolution of their U.S. asylum claims

National Immigration Institute Commissioner Tonatiuh Guillen also said Mexico won't extend the policy beyond a single border crossing, the El Chaparral crossing in Tijuana.

Mexican officials had previously said the United States expressed interest in extending the "remain in Mexico" policy to other border crossings. But Guillen said Mexico will accept only asylum seekers aged 18 to 60 at El Chaparral.

Mexico will accept migrants only from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, and will give them four-month visas.

Guillen said that since Dec. 1, Mexico has given 3,983 transit visas to Central Americans, most of whom hope to reach the United States. Mexico will also extend other work-visa programs to apply to more Mexican states and more Central American countries.

The "remain in Mexico" program had been set to start last week with about 20 migrants returning to Tijuana.

U.S. authorities plan to bus asylum seekers back and forth to the border for court hearings in downtown San Diego, including an initial appearance within 45 days.

The U.S. has witnessed a surge in asylum claims, especially from Central American families. Due largely to a court-imposed 20-day limit on detaining children, families are typically released with a notice to appear in immigration court. With a backlog of more than 800,000 cases, it can take years to settle cases.

The new U.S. policy purportedly aims to reduce incentives for migrants to make asylum claims, on the belief they will be released and allowed to spend years in the United States even if their claims are eventually rejected.

Migrant activists fear the program will make it harder for asylum seekers to successfully argue their cases.

[Mexico] US immigration authorities detail so-called return-to-Mexico guidance for migrants (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/28/2019 9:55 PM, Geneva Sands and Priscilla Alvarez, 5847K]

The Trump administration officially laid out its new policy to force migrants seeking asylum in the United States to remain Mexico to await their immigration court proceedings -- a significant change in US asylum policy.

The memorandum, which was issued by US Citizenship and Immigration Services, would require some asylum seekers, many of whom are from Central America, to stay in Mexico, instead of the US, until their immigration court hearings. A massive immigration court backlog has resulted in cases being scheduled years out; it's not clear whether these cases will be on a similar timeline or expedited.

The policy is expected to be challenged in court by immigration-rights advocates.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly criticized the nation's immigration system, particularly the practice of releasing immigrants into the US until their immigration court hearings. According to Justice Department data, the majority of immigrants do attend their immigration court proceedings. Still, an influx of immigrants at the US-Mexico border with the arrival of caravans appears to have flamed the President's concerns.

Customs and Border Protection is instructed to refer migrants who claim they'll be persecuted or tortured in Mexico to US Citizenship and Immigration Services for further interviews; asylum officers are then expected to conduct follow-up interviews in person, via video teleconference or by telephone. If migrants don't meet the threshold, they'll be expected to stay in Mexico until their immigration court proceedings.

The memo indicates that the policy will be implemented soon. A Department of Homeland Security official told CNN that returns of asylum seekers were expected to begin taking place on Friday, but they never materialized.

Sources told CNN last week that the policy would begin to be implemented at the legal border crossing with Tijuana.

It's still unclear when or if the policy will be rolled out across the southern border or only at certain points of entry. As a result, the number of people who would be affected by its implementation remains unknown.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen issued policy guidance on implementation of the program on Friday, which prompted the US Citizenship and Immigration Services field guidance issued Monday.

"We have implemented an unprecedented action that will address the ongoing humanitarian and security crisis at our Southern border," said Nielsen in a statement on Thursday. "The Migrant Protection Protocols represent a methodical commonsense approach to exercising our statutory authority to require certain individuals to await their court proceedings in Mexico."

Citizenship and Immigration Services is one of a few US agencies that will be involved in sending migrants back to Mexico. Customs and Border Protection is expected to handle the initial processing, while Immigration and Customs Enforcement will manage transportation to and from the border and court appearances, according to an administration source.

Additionally, DHS is working with the Department of Justice's Executive Office for Immigration Review to "streamline the process and conclude removal proceedings as expeditiously as possible," said a fact sheet released by DHS last week.

The uncertainty over when immigration court proceedings will be scheduled and how they'll be handled is raising concerns among immigration lawyers.

"It'd be incredibly difficult to prepare an asylum case when your client is in another country. These are very much due process concerns we're tracking and monitoring," said Laura Lynch, senior policy counsel at the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

"We're still, unfortunately, in the information gathering stage. There's a lot of anxiety among immigration attorneys about access to counsel concerns."

[Mexico] When it comes to border security, Democrats can learn from Mexico (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/28/2019 6:00 PM, Madison Gesiotto, 3038K]

The Mexican government is doing more to combat illegal immigration into the United States than the entire Democratic Party put together. While the Democrats continue to pretend the crisis on our southern border is imaginary, Mexico is heavily investing in border security in anticipation of yet another massive caravan of migrants heading for the United States.

Hundreds of Honduran migrants began their journey in hopes of seeking asylum at our southern border, a goal that proved elusive to the previous caravan. Instead of dismissing the new caravan as a "manufactured crisis"• as the Democrats did after President Trump made his appeal for border security from the Oval Office, Mexican authorities sprang into action, announcing a list of strengthened requirements to address the problem.

According to the latest reports, the Mexican government is reinforcing all the entry points along its own southern border with additional immigration enforcement agents, and is stepping up surveillance of known illegal crossing points. It also plans to enforce strict immigration protocols, such as requiring the migrants to undergo biometric scans and acquire immigration documents before they can enter the country.

Significantly, migrants who plan to traverse Mexico on their way to the United States will be required to provide an American visa, which will assist federal authorities. Most importantly, the Mexican government will deny passage and deport anyone who fails to comply with these strict conditions. While the decision to reinforce its own border clearly involves internal security concerns, Mexico has also been conscious of how its own policies impact the illegal immigration crisis in the United States.

In an effort to support our American enforcement efforts, the Mexican government took pivotal steps to stop the previous caravan, offering migrants access to various social programs and benefits if they chose to live and work in Mexico rather than continue on to the United States. Mexico even gave migrants an opportunity to apply for temporary work permits and obtain health benefits if they remained in its southern states.

"This plan is only for those who comply with Mexican laws, and it is a first step towards a permanent solution for those who are granted refugee status in Mexico," former President Peña Nieto warned at the time. By discouraging the caravan from traveling to the United States, Mexico demonstrated its willingness to assist federal authorities and establish a working partnership with President Trump despite past disagreements.

Sadly, the same cannot be said about the Democrats, who continue to do everything in their power to obstruct the White House agenda and still refuse to allocate adequate funds for a border wall to help end our illegal immigration crisis. As a consequence of this diehard partisanship, we just experienced the longest government shutdown in our history, during which many Democrats refused to even meet with President Trump.

Despite the efforts President Trump has made to compromise with the Democrats, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer refuse to hold

productive negotiations, arguing instead that there is no illegal immigration crisis to begin with. But to their dismay, Democrats are breaking ranks to come to the table on border security. Will enough lawmakers compromise to solve this issue and get the job done?

When it comes to border security, Mexico is putting the Democrats to shame with tough immigration policies that will do more to protect our southern border than anything the Democrats have ever been willing to support since President Trump was elected. If the Democrats took our security as seriously as Mexico has, there would be no such crisis at all.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

[NH] Immigrant held for more than 7 months released (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/28/2019 6:56 AM, Staff, 337K]

An Indonesian immigrant held for more than seven months by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in New Hampshire has been released.

Etty Tham, of Portsmouth, was detained last spring at an immigration checkpoint on Interstate 93 near Lincoln. She had been held at the Strafford County House of Corrections since June.

Tham entered the U.S. in 2000 or 2001 and overstayed a tourist visa. A petition for asylum was denied.

She told Foster's Daily Democrat on Friday when she was released, "I'm very happy. I'm going to see my family. I miss my family."

Tham has two grown daughters and has two grandchildren. Earlier this month, she lawsuit in U.S. District Court, asking for a review of the "legality and reasonableness" of her federal custody and "civil, non-criminal detention."

[TN] Illegal Alien Granted \$3.5K Bond After Allegedly Killing Pierce Corcoran (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/28/2019 5:50 PM, John Binder, 2015K]

The illegal alien accused of killing 22-year-old Pierce Corcoran in Knoxville, Tennessee, has been granted a \$3,500 bond that could allow him to be released from prison while he awaits trial.

As Breitbart News reported, Pierce Corcoran — an aspiring personal trainer — was killed in a head-on car crash allegedly caused by 44-year-old illegal alien Francisco Eduardo Franco-Cambrany days before New Year's Eve.

The illegal alien, police said, was driving without a license and without proper registration for his vehicle. He has been charged with negligent homicide and driving without a license.

Now, Franco-Cambrany could be able to leave prison while he awaits trial for Corcoran's death as General Sessions Court Judge Patricia Long granted a \$3,500 bond, noting that agents with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency could take the illegal alien into custody should he be released. Long has required the illegal alien to wear an

ankle monitor if he is released on bond.

Franco-Cambrany's bond had initially been instated at \$3,500 but was revoked when prosecutors urged that the illegal alien needed to stay in custody. Long said she had to reinstate the bond under Tennessee state law.

Knox County Public Defender Mark Stephens, representing the illegal alien, asked Long to throw out the negligent homicide case, a request the judge refused.

In a recent interview with Breitbart News, Corcoran's family said they are continuing to mourn the loss of Pierce.

"It's still new and we are still dealing with the reality every day that, that there's not going to be another family picture with him in it, another vacation with him there, another holiday, another birthday, so for us, it's the worst time we've ever had to face," Wendy Corcoran, Pierce's mother, told Breitbart News.

Family members of Pierce have created a Facebook and Twitter account in his memory, both titled: "Justice for Pierce Corcoran."

[IL] Man who stored grenade launcher, submachine gun, other weapons in Elgin gets 7-year prison term (Chicago Tribune)

[Chicago Tribune](#) [1/28/2019 11:20 PM, Staff, 1740K]

An Addison man who stashed an arsenal of weapons and ammunition in an Elgin storage locker, including a grenade launcher and a submachine gun, has been sentenced to seven years in prison.

Juan A. Mexicano, 33, was arrested in August 2016 after Elgin police, with assistance from Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Homeland Security Investigations, used a search warrant to enter a storage unit Mexicano had rented in the 600 block of Big Timber Road.

Police recovered 31 weapons, all of which belonged to Mexicano, according to a news release from the Kane County State's Attorney's Office.

Among them were five fully automatic long guns, including a Colt AR15, a Schmeisser rifle and a Thompson submachine gun, as well as a grenade launcher, two live grenades and thousands of rounds of live ammunition.

In August, Mexicano pleaded guilty to seven counts of class 2 felony unlawful use of a weapon and two counts of class 3 felony unlawful use of a weapon, the release said.

The sentence handed down Friday by Kane County Associate Judge Kathryn Karayannis was the maximum Mexicano could have received under state law. It will be served in conjunction with a sentence he received in California for cocaine distribution conspiracy, the release said.

"Mr. Mexicano is a gun and drug dealer whose capture and prosecution is the result of cooperation across multiple state and federal agencies and the Elgin Police Department," State's Attorney Joe McMahon said in the release.

"Removing these fully automatic weapons, dozens of other firearms, explosive devices and thousands of rounds of ammunition is a small but important victory against those who engage in violent crime and participate in the deadly and illegal drug trafficking trade."

In addition to ICE and Homeland Security, Elgin police conducted the investigation with the Department of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives, the Kane County Sheriff's Office and the Chicago Police Department.

They received assistance from the Will County and DuPage County sheriff's offices and the New Lenox, Addison, Olympia Fields and Hoffman Estates police departments.

James Gibbons, special agent in charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Chicago, lauded the cooperative work done by the police agencies.

"This joint investigation demonstrates that law enforcement can combat emerging and existing transnational criminal organizations by employing the full range of federal, state and local law enforcement authorities and resources in the fight to identify, investigate, disrupt and dismantle these organizations at every level of operation," Gibbons said in the release.

[AZ] Phoenix man gets 20-year prison term for sexual exploitation (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/29/2019 12:15 AM, Staff, 337K]

Authorities say a Phoenix man has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for sexual exploitation of a minor.

The Arizona Attorney General's Office says 45-year-old Michael Mattox also was sentenced to two consecutive terms of lifetime probation and will be required to register as a sex offender.

State prosecutors say Mattox posted images to an internet message board in October 2017 and posted messages that referenced that he had child pornography to trade.

Homeland Security Investigations obtained a search warrant for Mattox's home in April 2018.

They reported finding digital devices that had images and video of child pornography that were downloaded from the internet and images of child porn that were created by Mattox.

Investigators say Mattox had been downloading child pornography for years.

Citizenship and Immigration Services

What it's like to be naturalized in Trump's Oval Office (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/28/2019 6:00 AM, Matthew Hemsley, 9763K]

When my family and I arrived in America in 2006, we weren't planning to stay.

I thought I was taking a working sabbatical - a break from my job as a video producer and our family's life in London.

Twelve years later, on Jan. 19, I had one of the most surreal moments of my life: I was naturalized as a U.S. citizen in the Oval Office by President Trump.

We arrived on a working visa, so that I could help a friend establish a church in Charlotte.

Some 12 years on, we were living and working in the Washington area and had our green cards.

By now, my three daughters had grown up in the United States.

I wanted to secure my wife and my children's futures here, and to have a voice in civic life by gaining the right to vote - perhaps because of the changing political climate.

As an immigrant, it often feels as though you should shut up and say nothing.

I'm male and white, and because I'm British, people tend to class my IQ several points higher than it actually is.

I have experienced some degree of the sense of dislocation all immigrants experience.

Like many, I have struggled with the increasingly negative rhetoric about immigrants, both globally and in the United States - not least from the president himself.

The immigration process can be expensive - with lawyers, our green cards originally cost about \$10,000, and application for citizenship cost approximately \$750 per adult and \$1,200 for each of my children.

With no guarantee that policy wouldn't suddenly change, I decided we needed to get going last summer, no matter the cost.

To my surprise, I was called in for an interview within six.

The interview itself, on Jan. 10, was straightforward.

I passed a relatively simple civics exam and answered some questions to ascertain that I'd been truthful on my application and that I didn't intend any harm to the United States.

Then the immigration officer asked: "You don't happen to be free this Saturday, do you?" He said there was going to be a small swearing-in.

The officer disappeared from the room, and after some mysterious consultation, came back and said: "You're in. You'll be contacted soon."

As far as I knew, this was typical for a naturalization ceremony.

First, the ceremony was postponed to the following Saturday to accommodate an unspecified dignitary.

Then I was told I could take only two people with me to the event, and they would need to

provide personal details for background checks.

I had to sign a news release, because there might be media present.

I thought, "Well, that's interesting - maybe the mayor is coming, or who knows, even a senator!" But by Thursday, we still had no details about exactly when or where the ceremony would take place.

Then Friday morning came, and with it an email telling me to expect a call from the deputy White House press secretary.

That's when I told my wife, "I think the dignitary is President Trump." Stunned, she blurted, "I haven't got anything to wear!".

We immediately sensed how great a privilege we were being offered.

Was this going to be some kind of setup? Were we being used as political pawns? We've lived here long enough, in this most political of cities, to know nothing is straightforward.

Seeing the names of other participants copied on the emails reassured us somewhat - they clearly came from all sorts of ethnic backgrounds.

President Barack Obama had spoken at a naturalization ceremony at the National Archives during his administration - maybe this was just something that presidents did, like pardoning turkeys at Thanksgiving.

In the end, honestly, our curiosity to go to the White House and meet the president may have been greater than anything else.

Saturday finally came, and we arrived at the White House.

The White House staff members were incredibly warm and gracious in welcoming my family.

The atmosphere reminded us of a wedding - with everyone genuinely excited for us, and for the ceremony that was about to start.

We were escorted through security to the Roosevelt Room, where we filled out the last of the required citizenship forms.

Then we were taken to the Oval Office - which is much smaller than you'd think - for a brief rehearsal, and returned to the Roosevelt Room again to wait.

It was awkward at first, with five families in the room who didn't know one another, and it took us a while to introduce ourselves.

Vice President Pence came in to shake hands with everyone and wait with us, telling us about his grandfather, an Irish immigrant.

Kirstjen Nielsen popped in to ask whether anyone needed anything - as if anyone was going

to ask the secretary of homeland security to get us a coffee! Then, unannounced, there was Trump, standing in the doorway of the Roosevelt Room.

"I'm not supposed to be in here," he joked.

It is shocking to come face to face with the person of the president of the United States.

To do so as an immigrant, given the circumstances, is, well - complex.

The reality of coming face to face with the president as another human being transcends your preconceptions.

He was careful to introduce himself to everyone, making good eye contact, putting people at ease quickly.

We were all led into the Oval Office, where our families sat in a semicircle as the media were let in.

Trump made a formal entry into the room, and Nielsen led us through the Oath of Allegiance.

The president made a short speech, reading from notes, and shared short biographies for each of the candidates.

It was odd hearing the words I had quickly, unthinkingly, jotted down and emailed to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, at their request, now in the president's mouth.

The president of the United States walked around to each of the five candidates, shook all of our hands and stood behind us as everyone recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

When the ceremony was over, and the press and cameras had left, Trump came back into the Oval Office to make sure each family took individual photographs with him, standing behind the Resolute desk, gifted in the 19th century by Queen Victoria.

Of course, I was aware it was all good public relations - a bit of political theater, carefully staged at an extraordinary moment in the nation's life.

Minutes later, he would deliver a speech about ending the longest government shutdown in U.S. history, over a border wall intended to keep people out.

After we got home, we scrolled back through the photos on our phones to confirm that this had all really happened.

In the days since the most extraordinary afternoon of my family's life, we have watched carefully the reaction of our friends and neighbors as we tell them the story.

What I often want to say to them is that, however you choose to interpret the event, don't refuse to believe it was a truly American moment.

If, as a polarized nation, we cannot find things to celebrate together, allowing those we

disagree with to celebrate alongside us, transcending - even briefly - our divisions and personal feelings, then what hope is there to build dialogue to transform our troubled time?

Fast-Track Processing Back on for H-1Bs Submitted in Lottery (Bloomberg BNA)

[Bloomberg BNA](#) [1/28/2019 12:00 AM, Laura D. Francis, 59K]

Fast-track processing for H-1B skilled guestworker visas is back on for those visa petitions that were part of last year's lottery.

The option for "premium processing" allows employers to pay an extra fee to have their visa petitions decided within 15 calendar days. But premium processing hasn't been available for close to a year, and workers who were slated to start Oct. 1 already are months behind schedule.

The fast-track option still isn't available for all H-1B visa petitions, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services said Jan. 25. It will be expanded "as workloads permit," the agency said.

The announcement is a "helpful sign that further processing improvements are on their way," William Stock of Klasko Immigration Law Partners in Philadelphia told Bloomberg Law Jan. 28. It will allow for some of the "most critical" delayed cases to be decided quickly, he said.

But while there are still a number of outstanding H-1B petitions, Stock said the "vast majority" of those he filed on behalf of employers last April have already been decided.

"It's notable" that the USCIS has restored premium processing "after they have finished most of the workload," said Stock, a past president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

When the continued suspension of premium processing was announced in August, the USCIS had anticipated that it would be back online by Feb. 19, 2019. The original suspension, announced in March 2018, only was supposed to last until September of that year.

The suspension was done to clear backlogs and prioritize H-1B cases that were time-sensitive, the agency said.

"Over the past few years, USCIS has experienced an increased volume of petitions and a significant surge in premium processing requests," an agency spokesman said in a Jan. 28 email to Bloomberg Law. Extending the suspension of premium processing "enabled USCIS to continue to effectively adjudicate H-1B petitions, particularly long-pending extension of stay petitions, and reduce overall H-1B processing times," he said.

Exclusive—Outsourced U.S. Workers Feel Trump White House 'Pushed Aside' Concerns (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/28/2019 9:55 PM, John Binder, 2015K]

After President Trump sent a tweet endorsing the outsourcing of American jobs to foreign workers, Protect U.S. Workers attorney and Trump rallier Sara Blackwell said she cried.

"We endorsed him, he said exactly the opposite of what that tweet says," Blackwell exclusively told Breitbart News. "So that was so utterly disappointing, it made me cry."

The tweet took outsourced American workers who put their faith in Trump's economic nationalist agenda off guard. They have yet to see major wins from the administration on the issue, but remained hopeful that the president was on their side of the issue, not on the side of tech plutocrats like Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg and outsourcing billionaires such as IBM's Ginni Rometty.

Just months before, Trump's United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) agency described a plan to reduce the outsourcing of American jobs to foreign workers through the H-1B visa program.

Every year, more than 100,000 foreign workers are brought to the U.S. on the H-1B visa and allowed to stay for up to six years. There are about 650,000 H-1B visa foreign workers in the U.S. at any given moment. Americans are often laid off in the process and forced to train their foreign replacements, as highlighted by Breitbart News. More than 85,000 Americans a year potentially lose their jobs to foreign labor through the H-1B visa program.

Trump's tweet, though, reversed his "Buy American, Hire American" anti-outsourcing stance, instead endorsing a "pathway to citizenship" for H-1B foreign workers and writing that he wants to "encourage" foreign workers to come to the U.S. to take American jobs.

While American worker advocates have blasted the tweet, they acknowledge it is somewhat of an inevitable outcome from an administration that they say has shunned its populist-nationalist supporters.

"We've been silenced a lot since President Trump has actually taken over the White House," Blackwell contends.

When it has come to staffing, a few allies of Trump's immigration and economic nationalist agenda have told Breitbart News that they have attempted to get jobs in the administration but ultimately failed.

Expert John Miano, who has written extensively on the abuses of the H-1B visa program at the expense of American workers, called Trump's pro-outsourcing tweet "incoherent" and said, "all the folks that got him elected" have been "pushed aside."

Jay Palmer — a visa fraud expert and whistleblower against Indian outsourcing firm Infosys — questioned whether senior Trump adviser Stephen Miller was supportive of the pro-outsourcing plan outlined by the president in the tweet.

"If [Miller] is [supportive of this plan] it is disturbing after all the time and information I have provided to educate him over the years," Palmer told Breitbart News.

Miller, nonetheless, remains one of only two champions that the outsourced American workers see in the Trump administration.

In 2017, Blackwell attended a meeting at the White House on the very issue of the H-1B visa and its negative impact on U.S. workers. She was invited by Miller. Howard University

Professor Ron Hira, a longtime critic of foreign guest worker visas, was in attendance as well.

Fast forward to today: Blackwell and her army of laid off and outsourced American workers say they have no contact with Miller.

It's a position that outsourced U.S. workers are accustomed to: Voiceless, alone, and left with threats from multinational corporations not to speak out, keeping them isolated.

"Stephen Miller is still in the White House, but other than that, he doesn't communicate with me or any of the people that I've been working with," Blackwell said.

"Stephen Miller is kind of like the hope that we're all holding onto but he's unavailable," Blackwell continued. "I have no idea if he's still pushing this issue or not. I have no idea."

USCIS Director Lee Francis Cissna is the only Trump administration official that has remained in touch with the whistleblowers, the U.S. workers, and the advocates against outsourcing through visas, they assert.

The problem the U.S. worker advocates run into with their strong relationship with Cissna is the restrictions he is bound to by his job title, they tell Breitbart News.

"I have lost all contact with everybody except for the USCIS Director Cissna, but he's only able to enforce the laws as they are written and he's done a fantastic job," Blackwell said.

Cissna has attempted to tighten up the H-1B visa program through regulatory changes. Those reforms have come to a screeching halt, for now, Breitbart News is told.

"[Trump] really did cut off the ties with the people who were on this side," Blackwell said.

The White House did not respond to multiple requests for comment for this story.

Customs and Border Protection

Border Wall Works in Strategic Locations, Former Border Patrol Chief Says (Bloomberg)

[Bloomberg](#) [1/28/2019 8:280 AM, Staff, 5702K] Video: [HERE](#)

Mark Morgan, former U.S. border patrol chief, discusses the political battle over border security. He speaks with Bloomberg's David Westin on "Bloomberg Markets: Balance of Power."

If Trump can't get 'the wall,' give border agents 'more wall' (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/28/2019 12:07 PM, Eddie Scarry, 629K]

Talking about "the wall" is now like banging your head against one. President Trump did a fantastic job selling the idea to the public, but the debate on controlling our jungle-like immigration system has shifted and now he needs to adjust. Otherwise, the border will be no more secure when he leaves the White House than when he arrived.

That means he needs to stop yelling about "the wall," where Democrats are completely

uncompromising and screaming "racism" for entirely political reasons. He needs to start talking about "more wall," which all the border patrol agents I spoke to in Texas (mostly Latinos, by the way) are asking for.

There is no "the wall" that will ever get built — not least because Trump has never explained what it would look like or where it would go. But more importantly, there is already "wall" in place. We just need more of it, and depending on where it goes, it's going to look different.

In the Rio Grande Valley sector at the southern border of Texas, more people are illegally crossing into the U.S. than anywhere else. There are sections of wall there — 25 feet of concrete and steel — that work to slow down or stop aliens, aiding in their apprehension by agents.

When I went there two weeks ago, they said they want more of that wall to fill in gaps where it hasn't been built. They also want more money for cameras and additional agents.

This has nothing to do with Trump. The pieces of wall that are there now were recommended by the border patrol in the 1990s and were built in 2008.

But Trump on Saturday, after caving on the government shutdown, tweeted again about a "a powerful Wall" necessary to keep illegals at bay.

Okay, maybe? But if Democrats are simply going to call that "racist" and never say yes to building it, force them instead to say no to what the border patrol wants.

If they do, then we can once and for all drop the lie that Democrats are "for border security."

Border agents aren't asking for "a powerful Wall." They're asking for more of what they already have, which Democrats said yes to in the past. Some in the conservative media aren't helping by making dumb demands about "the wall," insisting we replicate the barrier Israel has up around Gaza. Yes, Israel has a "wall" there, but guess what: It's 40 miles long on mostly flat desert. You can't build that over the 1,000 miles of canyons, mountains, and forest that make up our border with Mexico.

Trump moved the country in the right direction on immigration. His repeated "We either have a country, or we don't" argument in favor of border control was essential to his victory and should go down as one of the great political lines of all time.

But he dragged his feet on fixing the problem when he had Republicans controlling both houses of Congress. Now he has to deal with Democrats who, if unwilling to build "the wall," should at least be forced on the record to opposing what the Border Patrol wants: "more wall."

Why It's So Hard To Recruit And Retain Border Patrol Agents (NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/28/2019 5:39 PM, Staff, 4491K] Audio: [HERE](#)

NPR's Ari Shapiro talks with Los Angeles Times reporter Molly O'Toole about the staffing challenges Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement are facing.

[TX] Migrant Family Rescued from River in Unsecured Section of Texas Border (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/27/2019 11:59 AM, Bob Price]

Laredo Sector Border Patrol agents rescued a migrant family from the Rio Grande River in an unsecured section of the border with Mexico.

Laredo South Station agents observed a migrant woman and an infant stranded in the middle of the Rio Grande River. The ground-based agents contacted a Laredo Riverine Unit to respond to assist the migrant family who had been abandoned by their cartel-connected human smuggler. The Riverine unit responded to the scene and recovered the two people who were trapped by the icy-cold water, according to Laredo Sector Border Patrol officials.

The agents on the patrol boat transported the migrant family to the U.S. side of the river and turned them over to land-based Border Patrol agents. A Border Patrol emergency medical technician evaluated the woman and her 10-month-old son. Because of their exposure to the cold weather and water, agents transported the family to a hospital for evaluation. Doctors determined they needed no additional treatment.

The woman told Border Patrol agents the smugglers abandoned her and her child in the river and left them overnight before agents discovered their predicament.

"Laredo Sector agents continue securing our border, while also conducting these types of rescue missions when a humanitarian situation arises," Laredo Sector Chief Patrol Agent Felix Chavez said in a written statement. "I thank the agents for their vigilance and rapid response that averted a potential tragedy today, and I cannot stress enough the dangers of crossing the Rio Grande and discourage anyone from doing so."

During the last fiscal year which ended on September 30, 2018, Border Patrol agents rescued more than 4,300 migrants in distress, Breitbart News reported. During that period, agents rescued 4,311 times, a Customs and Border Protection official told reporters during a December press conference. This represents an increase of 26 percent over the previous year.

During the first two months of Fiscal Year 2019, which began on October 1, the number of rescues jumped 74 percent over the same period last year, the official stated.

[TX] Border agents seize bags of guns, ammo left on Texas ranch (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/28/2019 3:55 PM, Anna Giaritelli, 629K]

Two duffel bags filled with 17 long-arm rifles, shotguns, handguns, and ammunition were found on a private Texas ranch and confiscated by border officials.

The weapons were taken from a ranch near the Border Patrol's Carrizo Springs Station in Del Rio, Texas. An unnamed citizen called the agency after seeing a group of suspected illegal immigrants carrying large bags on nearby land Friday. The area is about 25 miles east of the international border.

The agents who responded to the ranch found four handguns and 13 various types of rifles and shotguns wrapped in blankets inside. An unspecified amount of money was also found with the guns and bullets.

It's not clear if the suspected illegal immigrants were moving north or south, though it is standard for narcotics to flow north, while money and guns more often are moved south in return for drugs.

"This seizure is a testament to the vital role that the men and women of the U.S. Border Patrol have in safeguarding our borders and protecting our communities," Del Rio Sector acting Chief Patrol Agent Matthew J. Hudak said in a statement.

The guns were turned over to the Dimmit County Sheriff's Department.

[TX] Group of Border Patrol wives invite House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to visit Texas border town (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/28/2019 10:22 AM, Lucia I. Suarez Sang, 9216K]

A group of women whose husbands patrol America's southern border along the banks of the Rio Grande are inviting House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to come to Texas so she can see first-hand why a barrier between the U.S. and Mexico is desperately needed.

"We would like to show you around! You don't need to bring any security detail. Our husbands/boyfriends/fiances/wives/significant others are actually very good at their jobs, thank goodness!" Jill Demanski wrote in the letter posted on Facebook.

Demanski added: "We'd also appreciate if you'd stop pretending that you care about federal workers. If you did, you would care for their safety, not just their paychecks. We can hold out a while longer if it means our husbands and communities are safer."

Posted on Thursday – a day before President Trump announced a tentative deal to reopen the government at least until mid-February – the letter quickly went viral.

"I felt it's really important to have our leaders come here and see what's happening first. It's important to meet with the people who are here on a daily basis, that are witnessing it – the effects of it, that it has on our country," Demanski said on "Fox & Friends" on Monday. "We want them to come here and make an informed decision and to see what's really going on."

A 17-person bipartisan committee of House and Senate lawmakers is expected to negotiate border spending as part of the legislative process. It's unclear if Democrats will budge in their opposition to funding a border wall, while Trump said Sunday he doubted he could accept any agreement struck by congressional negotiators that gives him less than his requested \$5.7 billion for the construction of a barrier on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Renea Perez, another Border Patrol wife, told "Fox & Friends" that, while the women feel safe in Rio Grande Valley, the men and women who patrol the southern border could still use some help in high-traffic areas.

"[A wall] will allow them to do their job more efficiently and give them more time – if they are by themselves – have another agent meet them. It is definitely needed," Perez said. "We just want them to come down there on the line and actually see where the argument is all about."

She added the partial shutdown was very hard for the families of Border Patrol agents, who

hadn't received a paycheck during the partial shutdown, and, at times, it felt like nobody cared about their community.

"It gets tough. The bills don't stop. We were feeling like we were forgotten," Perez said.

Demaski said if Pelosi sees the letter and agrees to visit, she hopes the California Democrat will do a ride-along with border agents to see the day-to-day experiences of those on the front lines of the border issue.

"Border patrol and our agents and experts here have been asking for [the wall] for years," she said. "Now we have a president who has come here and seen first-hand the need and has had our backs."

[TX] Border Patrol Wife Invites Speaker Pelosi to See Why Walls Are Needed (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/28/2019 12:03 PM, Bob Price, 2015K]

The wife of a Texas-based Border Patrol agent invited Speaker Nancy Pelosi to visit the border to see for herself why walls are needed.

"We would like to show you around! You don't need to bring any security detail. Our husbands/significant others are actually very good at their jobs, thank goodness!" Jill Demanski, the wife of a Texas-based Border Patrol agent wrote in a letter to Speaker Pelosi. She told Fox News she wrote the letter because she felt Pelosi needs to see this area of the border in person in order to make an informed decision about border security funding.

"We would also appreciate if you'd stop pretending that you care about federal workers," she continued. "If you did, you would care for their safety, not just their paychecks. We can hold out a while longer if it means our husbands and communities are safer."

She emphasized that elected representatives should meet with the agents on the ground to get a more accurate understanding of the need for physical barriers and to see the actual work being done by their husbands.

Another Border Patrol wife, Renea Perez, joined Demanski on Fox & Friends Monday morning, saying, "It is definitely needed. We just want them to come down there on the line and actually see where the whole argument is about."

The wives of Border Patrol agents endured weeks of their husbands going to work and putting their lives on the line while they were not being paid during the partial government shutdown that ended late last week. She said she was glad Demanski wrote the letter to Pelosi.

"It was kind of written in a time of high emotion. It's been tough, and at times we have felt like nobody cared about us families, about our agents," she said. "Bills don't stop, so we were feeling like we were forgotten."

Demanski said the border wall is not a Trump issue and that Border Patrol agents have been asking for the barriers along the border for years.

"We finally have a president that has come here and seen firsthand the need for it, and has had our back," she said on Fox & Friends on Monday. "You can support a wall without being a supporter of Trump."

[NM] The Trek Across the Border Veers Into More and More Remote Terrain (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/29/2019 5:45 AM, Simon Romero and Caitlin Dickerson, 20737K]

The Border Patrol's tiny base in the southwest corner of New Mexico is so remote that the wind howls through the surrounding basin where jaguars still stalk their prey.

But that hasn't stopped thousands of Central Americans from journeying in recent weeks to the rural outpost and other isolated points along the Southwest border, launching increasingly desperate bids for asylum in the United States.

In a two-day span in January, 362 migrants surrendered to the Border Patrol in Antelope Wells, overwhelming the small base's capacity to process asylum requests. Last week, a new group of 306 migrants arrived at the same location, including children in need of immediate medical care — a situation officials in New Mexico say is without precedent.

Prompting these trips to ever-more-remote border locations are not only the nearly 700 miles of border wall and fencing built since 2006, but the Trump administration's increasingly rigid immigration policies aimed at deterring the flow of migrant families, mostly from Central America, that have streamed in from Mexico since 2014.

Over the past year, the government has limited the number of asylum seekers who are allowed to present their cases each day at certain ports of entry, stationed agents on bridges to turn asylum seekers away and launched tear gas at migrants attempting to cross the border near San Diego.

The administration went even further last week, announcing that it would start requiring some asylum seekers to wait in Mexico while their applications are processed, which can take years. Officials plan to implement the new policy at the San Ysidro border crossing near San Diego before expanding it to crossings in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.

Taken together, these moves effectively have forced some Central American migrants to wait for months to apply for asylum, sometimes sleeping on the street or in crowded shelters in Mexican border cities.

Frustrated and increasingly desperate, thousands of families have lately been opting to pay smugglers to take them to remote border stations where they can surrender quickly to American officials and hope to be allowed to remain in the United States while their asylum claims are processed.

In December, which saw a record number of families arriving at the border, 27,518 migrants traveling in families were apprehended in areas outside normal border stations. The El Paso sector, which includes the suddenly busy area of rural New Mexico, saw a 1,866 percent increase in family apprehensions during October and November of 2018, compared with the same period a year earlier.

Pushing migrants toward remote desert locations puts them at higher risk of dehydration,

heatstroke or hypothermia. Most are choosing the more dangerous crossing routes because they have been foreclosed from seeking asylum at the more widely traveled border crossings, said Fernando Garcia, director of the Border Network for Human Rights in El Paso. "How else to explain the desperation of thousands of people making it to the middle of nowhere just so they can surrender to Border Patrol?"

Trump administration officials have argued that the new policies are an attempt to discourage migrants from even attempting the dangerous trips through Mexico where they are especially vulnerable to extortion and human trafficking. Officials contend that existing legislation encourages parents to bring children along on the journey.

Katie Waldman, a spokeswoman for the Department of Homeland Security, laid blame on the federal government having to comply with the Flores agreement, a 1997 legal settlement aimed at preventing lengthy detentions of migrant children, and subsequent legislation codifying parts of the settlement into federal law.

"We continue to call on Congress to address this humanitarian and security crisis that entices smugglers to bring families across the border," Ms. Waldman said.

Border Patrol officials have put forward various theories about why crossings at remote locations are climbing that have nothing to do with the administration's policies. Kevin McAleenan, commissioner of Customs and Border Protection, said in a conference call with reporters in December that smugglers could be trying to hold down the transit fees they pay to other criminal organizations with sway in northern Mexico by dropping migrants near remote locations like Antelope Wells.

In an interview in El Paso, Jose Romero, a supervisory agent in the Border Patrol's sector that oversees operations in New Mexico, offered another explanation, claiming that Mexican cannabis smugglers were trying to distract agents in the field by flooding remote stations with asylum seekers.

"Our adversary is no idiot," Mr. Romero said, adding that while agents were arresting 247 migrants in Antelope Wells one January day, traffickers were trying to smuggle hundreds of pounds of marijuana across the border in another location. "Now they know where our weak spots are," he said.

The administration has not been unmindful of the hazards of migrants venturing into little-traveled regions. Partly in an attempt to deter such crossings and what government officials describe as "meritless" asylum claims, the administration tried last year to refuse to accept asylum applications from anyone who had not entered the country at a legal border crossing, but that policy was blocked by the courts. And Antelope Wells, though remote, is a legal border crossing.

Just how dangerous such crossings are became apparent in December, when Jakelin Caal Maquin, a 7-year-old girl from Guatemala, died in United States custody after she and her father crossed the border in a group of 163 migrants that surrendered to agents at Antelope Wells. Only a few weeks later, an 8-year-old boy from Guatemala, Felipe Gómez Alonzo, died after crossing the border about three miles west of the Paso Del Norte port of entry in El Paso.

But the numbers have only continued to grow. Since the start of the 2019 fiscal year, the Border Patrol said, it has found at least 24 groups of 100 or more migrants that had crossed around the Bootheel, the sparsely populated area where New Mexico's border with Mexico dips southward like a cowboy boot's heel.

At the end of a 45-mile road from the decaying hamlet of Hachita that runs through grazing lands dotted with creosote bushes, the Border Patrol has maintained a small presence at Antelope Wells for decades. A sign says the base is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The population of Antelope Wells, once 2, sometimes soars all the way into the high single digits when more than a handful of agents are deployed here for weeklong assignments.

At another remote point to the west in Arizona, the Border Patrol reported that 376 migrants had tunneled through the sandy soil under the border fence near Yuma, earlier this month and then surrendered to agents. The group, which included dozens of children, ranks among the largest groups of families and unaccompanied children ever arrested on the border with Mexico.

Immigration activists say the increase in remote crossings is just the latest development in a decades-long effort to push immigration out of urban areas, tracing back at least to Operation Blockade, a Clinton administration initiative in 1993 to curb unauthorized crossings in the city of El Paso. Border fencing erected in Southern California and Arizona in recent years drove some of the biggest migration flows toward the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, where the river marks the border and many migrants are able to cross with a short boat ride.

Busy border crossings like the one in McAllen, Tex., now have relatively elaborate infrastructure set up to handle newly arrived families seeking asylum. But no such facilities exist in this stretch of rural New Mexico, raising fears that the recent deaths of the two Guatemalan children won't be the last.

The grim cost of United States immigration policies is hardly new. Law enforcement authorities have found the remains of about 8,000 migrants who have died while crossing the border with Mexico since the 1990s. And while undetected illegal border crossings have fallen sharply over the past decade, hundreds of migrants continue to die making the attempt each year.

At least 413 migrants were found dead along the border in 2018, according to a preliminary count by the International Organization for Migration, up from 412 in 2017 and 399 in 2016.

"We're seeing the increase in people crossing out here, and we're afraid," said Amanda Adame, 39, a cattle rancher whose family lives in Hachita, about 45 miles north of Antelope Wells. "We're fearful for the families that are going across and fearful for our own safety."

Still, humanitarian groups say they are waging an uphill battle to save lives along the border. Some cite the conviction in January of four volunteers from the Unitarian Universalist Church in Tucson on charges of abandonment of property after they left caches of food and water in an Arizona wildlife refuge where migrants have died while crossing into the United States.

"Asylum seekers shouldn't have to cross in the middle of the desert," said Justine Orlovsky-

Schnitzler, a member of the advocacy group No More Deaths in Tucson. "This is the newest stage of policies that have been sentencing migrants to death for decades."

[AZ] Hundreds of migrants cross Arizona border after 'several busloads' dropped off in Mexico (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/28/2019 8:12 PM, Geneva Sands, 5847K]

In the early morning hours Thursday, several busloads of migrants were dropped off on Highway 2 in Mexico, just south of the Arizona border.

"They walked about 100 yards, climbed under and over the vehicle barrier that is the only infrastructure in that area and agents were called in to make the arrest," said acting Tucson Border Patrol Chief Jeffrey Self.

In total, 242 people -- mostly families from Guatemala -- were arrested when Border Patrol agents arrived at the scene after the migrants were detected by a mobile surveillance system.

This was one of the largest single groups crossing the Arizona border over the last year, according to Border Patrol, and comes on the heels of other large groups illegally crossing at other parts of the border.

Similar to other groups of families, these migrants willingly surrendered to Border Patrol with no attempts to evade or hide from authorities.

Earlier this month, Border Patrol agents stationed in the Yuma, Arizona, sector took around 375 migrants into custody after they had made it into the United States. Last week, a group of 306 migrants were taken into custody in a remote part of New Mexico near the border.

In Arizona earlier this month, agents encountered a group of 85 Central Americans after they arrived by bus and illegally entered the country in the same general area of Thursday's crossing.

In December, Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan raised concerns that a new trend was emerging of very large groups of migrants arriving at the southern border by bus and unloading in remote areas.

"So far in this fiscal year, and this has been a brand-new phenomenon this fiscal year, we have started to see extremely large groups arrive together several times, usually once or twice a week since about mid-October," said McAleenan in December.

The trend appears to be continuing into the new year.

It was unclear exactly how the migrants on Thursday had made the journey from Guatemala to Arizona.

Of that group, 130 were children and 11 of those children arrived unaccompanied, without legal guardians.

"It's a situation where not only are we overwhelmed with the numbers and the fact that there

are so many children and (families) that are involved in this," said Self, but also "the fact that our system is not set up to handle family units. It's set up to handle adults."

Coast Guard medical staff, including a physician, were flown on a helicopter to the Ajo Border Patrol station to screen every child in the group and more than a dozen adults complaining of medical issues. Two children were sent to the hospital with high fevers and were later re-released to Border Patrol custody.

"They are doing well," said Self.

The agency implemented more in-depth medical checks for children following the deaths of two Guatemalan migrant children after they had entered US custody in December.

The "positive" impact of the Coast Guard medical assistance, which frees agents for other work and prevented overwhelming the local hospitals, can't be "overstated," said Self.

Echoing comments made by other Border Patrol officials, Self pointed out that the Border Patrol facilities had been designed for single men, not children.

"Basically, you just turned an adult short-term detention center into ... basically, a day care center. There's nothing for them to do there. You've got to watch them, you have to separate them from non-family members, you only have so much detention space," he said.

Self told CNN that the increase in large group apprehensions is taking resources away from other border security missions, like narcotics interdiction.

The Arizona region has not seen a notable uptick in narcotics seizures, but the concern is that the large groups distract from agents' ability to prevent smuggling, according to Border Patrol.

"The manpower that is dedicated to having to deal with the children and the families really creates a situation where it makes us vulnerable in other areas of the border because we are having to collapse in on this one incident with additional resources that were out patrolling other parts of the border," which opens up other regions to exploitation, said Self.

Like other regions across the border, Arizona has also seen an increase in illegal crossing by families.

In fiscal year 2019 to date, Tucson Sector, which extends from the New Mexico state line to the Yuma County line, has seen more than a 231% increase in family apprehensions compared with the same period in fiscal year 2018, according to Customs and Border Protection. Border Patrol uses apprehensions as a measure of illegal crossings.

"Our agents, they embrace the humanitarian effort, but it impacts our ability to do border security versus having to do this humanitarian mission. And I would also add that most of our agents aren't trained to do a medical evaluation," said Self.

Although family apprehensions have reached record highs in recent months, overall numbers of illegal crossings are way down compared with highs in the late '90s and early 2000s.

In 2000, there were 616,346 total annual apprehensions in Arizona. That number was down to 52,172 last year.

"The border is stronger than that time frame," said Self, but "still areas of the border are ripe for exploitation."

[AZ] Video shows 3-year-old girl falling from 16-foot border fence in Arizona (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/28/2019 8:28 PM, Rafael Carranza, 6053K] Video: [HERE](#)

A 3-year-old girl traveling with her mother and a large group of asylum-seekers sustained minor injuries after falling 16 feet from the top of the border fence east of the San Luis, Ariz., port of entry.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection on Monday released a video showing the moment the girl falls to the ground as another person, presumably her mother, tried to climb down the bollard-style fence on the U.S. side.

"I don't know if the mother was with the child," said Jose Garibay, Border Patrol's Yuma Sector spokesman. "But in the video you can see that the child actually falls from almost the top of the border wall and lands on the ground and may or may not have tried to be stopped by the individuals who are in the group."

Garibay said he didn't have specific details about the types of injuries the girl sustained. But he added that agents called paramedics to treat the girl's minor injuries. They cleared her on the spot and released her back into agents' custody.

The girl and her mother were traveling in a group of 49 migrants. With the help of two smugglers, they used a ladder to scale the fence just past midnight on Sunday, about three miles east of the San Luis commercial border crossing.

At the end of the clip, the two presumed smugglers are seen running away from the fence with the ladder in their hands.

The area has gained notoriety in recent weeks. The site where this group crossed is very close to two other breaches involving large groups of mostly Guatemalan migrants, including a record-breaking group of 376 who turned themselves in to agents on Jan. 14.

Garibay said Sunday's group was the larger of several other migrant groups that agents encountered in the Yuma border area over the weekend.

According to CBP, agents in Arizona and in south Texas have apprehended and processed 53 groups larger than 100 migrants since October. They've also hospitalized more than 2,200 border crossers since December.

Fence-related injuries, not common in the Yuma area, are on the rise, according to sector officials.

On Dec. 7, a 14-year-old girl was hospitalized in Phoenix with several broken vertebrae

after falling off the fence and landing on her back. A 17-year-old girl also injured her ankle during that same incident.

[OR] Libyan-American comedian says CBP called him 'illegal,' demanded his papers on bus (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/28/2019 9:43 AM, Emily Birnbaum, 3038K]

A Libyan-American comedian over the weekend claimed that Customs and Border Protection (CBP) demanded to see his papers as he rode on a Greyhound Bus, at one point calling him "illegal" although he has been granted asylum in the U.S.

Mohanad Elshieky tweeted he was on a bus to Portland, Ore., when officers boarded the bus and demanded to see his papers. When he originally shared the story on Twitter, he claimed the agents were with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), but later said it had been pointed out to him that they were likely with CBP.

Elshieky tweeted that the border agents "got on my Greyhound bus that was headed from Spokane to Portland. They walked around before they asked me and few others to step outside and took my documents and interrogated me for around 20 mins then claimed my papers were fake and that I'm 'illegal'."

"I explained to them that I was granted asylum here in the United States, and that the work permit they currently hold and the license are impossible to get unless your presence here is legal," Elshieky said in a follow-up tweet. "They told me that I was lying and these could pretty much be falsified."

Elshieky claimed the CBP agent claimed there were "no records" of his asylum status and demanded to see his asylum approval.

"Why would I carry that where I have my IDs?" Elshieky wrote.

"I kept it together and told them that what they are doing now is illegal and that they must hand me my documents back or I will have to call my lawyer and take legal action," he tweeted. "Another ICE agent then started yelling at me to take my hands out of my pockets and I did which is stupid because it was snowing and they were wearing gloves and my hands were freezing cold."

He wrote the agents ultimately gave him back his documents, warning him, "Next time, have your papers on you."

"To be honest, I have never felt as terrible as I did today. I have never imagined that I would have to go through this," he tweeted.

The tweet thread quickly went viral, accruing tens of thousands of likes and retweets throughout the day.

Elshieky fired off another tweet with a photo of the agents he alleges made the demands as they got back into their vehicle.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) retweeted his thread, writing, "One of these days, I hope people realize that the idea that ICE should be scrapped isn't so crazy after all," a

reference to the left-wing campaign to "abolish ICE."

"ICE jails children in for-profit detention centers funded by private equity grps," Ocasio-Cortez wrote. "Kids are dying w/ 0 accountability. If that's not totally broken, I don't know what is."

CBP did not immediately respond to The Hill's request for comment.

Greyhound in a statement to Sky News noted that it is legal for border agents to board buses.

"We understand our customers' concerns about US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) conducting warrantless, but still legal, searches on our buses," Greyhound said, according to the outlet. "CBP officers do not ask permission to board our buses. We do not want to put our drivers' safety or the safety of our passengers at risk by attempting to stop a federal agent from conducting checks."

[OR] Portland comedian questioned by Border Patrol agents in Spokane (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/28/2019 1:38 PM, Staff, 337K]

A comedian from Portland, Oregon, isn't laughing after his encounter with Border Patrol agents in Spokane, Washington.

Mohanad Elshieky was ordered by Border Patrol agents to get off the Greyhound bus as he was preparing to travel back to Portland after a performance Saturday in Pullman.

The Spokesman-Review reported that Elshieky tweeted that he was interrogated for 20 minutes by agents who contended his papers were fake and that he was in the country illegally.

A U.S. Customs and Border Patrol spokesman said Elshieky stated he was from Libya and presented the agents with an Oregon driver's license and an employment authorization card. The spokesman said that neither is considered a valid document to satisfy a federal law requiring a non-citizen immigrant who is not a minor to carry certain documentation.

Failure to comply is a misdemeanor, punishable by a maximum \$100 fine and maximum 30-day prison sentence.

Elshieky tweeted that he was granted asylum and has lived in the United States for five years.

Eventually, the agents released him and told him to carry proper paperwork.

The Spokane City Council in October voted to restrict such searches, but Mayor David Condon has refused to enforce the law.

[HI] "Rolling the Dice" on Invasive Species During Shutdown (Hawaii Public Radio)

[Hawaii Public Radio](#) [1/28/2019 10:23 PM, Ryan Finnerty, 6K]

The effort to control non-native species in Hawaii was dealt a significant setback by the 35-day partial shutdown of the federal government. Inspectors at ports of entry remained on duty, but research and mitigation efforts into previously established invasive species saw major reductions in available resources.

In contrast to more obvious effects of the shutdown, like cancelled flights and a freeze on federal loans, the impact on invasive species mitigation was less apparent. Agriculture inspectors from Customs and Border Protection and the Department of Agriculture were still on duty at air and seaports, although it is unclear if workloads and effectiveness were impacted as they were with TSA agents. State inspectors are responsible for clearing goods coming from the mainland United States and were not affected.

What is clear is that efforts to research and control invasive species already in Hawaii were immediately impacted. Federal agencies like the Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service are the lead authorities on some of Hawaii's most pressing ecological challenges, like Rapid Ohia Death and Rat Lung Worm Disease.

After the shutdown began, non-federal researchers on Hawaii Island scrambled to move experiments out of shuttered labs and salvage previously planned tests involving federal equipment. Much of their research is focused on the fungal disease that has been ravaging the island's native ohia forests.

The efforts of the many state and federal entities are outlined in the state's biosecurity program, rolled out in 2017. The vast majority of spending on that plan is on "post-border" activities; controlling invasive already here. But most experts agree that preventive "pre-border" actions are critical in addressing the problem.

That is especially true in Hawaii, where dozens of cargo ships and airplanes arrive every day. Christy Martin, an invasive species outreach coordinator with the University of Hawaii, described the constant flow of people and goods, combined with the decreased federal response, as a roll of the dice.

"We're not rolling it every day, we're rolling it every two minutes" Martin said. "You just can't count on winning when you play something like that."

[Guatemala] Still no cause of death as boy, 8, who died in border patrol custody laid to rest in Guatemala, relative says (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/28/2019 7:52 PM, Elliott C. McLaughlin and Angela Barajas, 5847K]

Felipe Gomez Alonzo, the 8-year old boy who died in US custody on Christmas Eve, was laid to rest in Yalambojoch, Guatemala, his half-sister said on Monday.

Catarina Gomez described how one of Felipe's friends reacted on Sunday upon seeing the coffin: "He was crying, upset that his friend had died." Felipe's body arrived back in his home country on Saturday, she said.

The family has yet to receive any indication from American authorities as to what led to Felipe's death, she said.

The New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator said Felipe, who died in US Customs and Border Protection custody, had the flu, but no official cause of death has been

released.

"My dad still doesn't feel like himself after my brother's death. (Felipe's mother) cries every day. (He) was her firstborn," Gomez said.

The boy's father, Agustin Gomez Perez, is still in the United States, she said, but she isn't sure where he's living. He must check in regularly with immigration officials, she said.

On December 18, about 3 miles west of the El Paso border crossing, Felipe and his dad were detained for illegal entry. Noticing Felipe was ill on Christmas Eve, a border agent took him to a hospital, where he was diagnosed with a cold and later a fever.

"The child was held for an additional 90 minutes for observation and then released from the hospital midafternoon on December 24 with prescriptions for amoxicillin and Ibuprofen," CBP said in a statement. Amoxicillin is a commonly prescribed antibiotic.

That evening, the boy began vomiting and was taken back to the hospital. He died hours later at Gerald Champion Regional Medical Center in Alamogordo, New Mexico, about 90 miles north of El Paso, the CBP said.

The father was released on his own recognizance, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokeswoman Liz Johnson said. The Guatemalan Consulate in Phoenix said it was assisting with his immigration case.

Gomez has previously said Felipe was healthy when he and his father set out for the United States in the middle of December. The father vowed to send money home to the family in their village in the highlands of western Guatemala, near the Mexico border.

She described Felipe as a playful and respectful boy who liked soccer and eating fish from a lake near the family's thatched-roof home.

Now, the family finds itself worried about the debt the father occurred in migrating to the United States.

"A lot of people leave because of the extreme poverty we live in," Gomez said on Monday.

Felipe was one of two Guatemalan children to die in CBP custody in December. Jakelin Caal Maquin, 7, died in a hospital December 8, two days after she was taken to a border patrol station.

Transportation Security Administration

Shutdown ends after flight delays (Politico)

[Politico](#) [1/28/2019 10:00 AM, Sam Mintz, 2577K]

— The breaking point arrived for air traffic controllers and as predicted, the shutdown came to a close — at least temporarily. Just hours after severe flights delays on the East Coast due to FAA staffing issues, President Donald Trump agreed to a continuing resolution to reopen the government until Feb. 15.

— Lawmakers will have three weeks to settle on funding for the affected agencies, including DOT, with the focal point on DHS and border security, as has been the case for months.

— Agencies now have to dig out from the shutdown, and will have backlogs of work that could take months to resolve. The cascading effects on transportation will continue, and that's not even taking into account that we might have to do this all over again next month.

IT'S OVER, FOR NOW: Trump announced Friday he would sign a short-term funding deal to end the shutdown after an increase in air traffic controllers taking sick leave caused flight delays throughout the East Coast. Many lawmakers and others had predicted that once major airports and airlines started really feeling the impacts of the shutdown, the White House would swiftly find a resolution — and they were right. The magic number, by the way, is six — FAA confirmed Friday evening that six controllers at a center in Northern Virginia that controls large swaths of the East Coast airspace called out.

NOT A STRIKE, BUT... The air traffic controllers union was quick to say Friday that it did not condone or endorse any coordinated work action, which would be illegal. But it's not illegal for FAA workers to take off sick, even during a shutdown. "Union leaders have to walk a fine line because of the restrictive federal labor law, but their rank-and-file members are sometimes able to take matters into their own hands," said Rebecca Kolins Givan, an associate professor at the Rutgers University School of Management and Labor Relations. Employees who call out sick, she said, "are exerting their power as workers even in a challenging labor environment."

RELIEF FOR FEDERAL WORKERS: TSA agents, air traffic controllers and other FAA employees working without pay during the shutdown will get back pay soon for the two checks they missed during the funding lapse, thanks to a bill Trump signed a few weeks ago. "Very quickly or as soon as possible. It will happen very fast," Trump said Friday. According to a tentative plan shared by their union, air traffic controllers can expect the first direct deposits to come in between Wednesday and Friday. The financial issues caused by the shutdown won't immediately disappear, though, especially for those who may have missed bill payments.

LONG-TERM IMPACTS: For agencies, there's a complex process to through in the coming weeks and months. You know how your inbox is always a little daunting after a week of vacation? Try that times a thousand. Certification applications, grant requests, environmental impact reviews and much more will have piled up across DOT and its subagencies, our team reports. TSA will have to replace screeners who resigned during the shutdown, and FAA will have to deal with a shortage of air traffic controllers, which was already notable before training courses were delayed. And transit agencies across the country are bracing for a slow return to normal, after the 90 percent of FTA employees who were furloughed find their way back to the agency.

STABILITY NEEDED: In a statement after the shutdown ended, NATCA warned that it's still keeping a close eye on the next three weeks. "We must not lose focus on the short-term nature of this agreement, and the need to continue to make our voice heard to avoid another shutdown on Feb. 15, 2019," said union president Paul Rinaldi. He also said that "the status quo is broken" and that the national airspace "requires a stable, predictable funding stream," Tanya reports.

[NC] All security checkpoints briefly closed at Charlotte airport (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/28/2019 4:52 AM, Staff, 337K]

All security checkpoints at Charlotte Douglas International Airport were briefly closed early Monday for a security inspection.

The airport announced the closure on Twitter at 6:02 a.m. Around nine minutes later, the airport tweeted that the inspection was complete.

No information was released as to what triggered the security inspection. The airport advised passengers to allocate extra time to get through security screenings, saying the ticketing lobby was congested. Travel officials are also anticipating delays because of weather conditions across the country.

WSOC-TV had a reporter at the scene who filmed massive lines. The Transportation Security Administration didn't return the station's request for comment.

Recent travelers within the U.S. haven't been strangers to long waits as absence rates among TSA workers soared during the partial government shutdown, which ended Friday.

[TX] IAH's Terminal B checkpoint to reopen Wednesday (Houston Chronicle)

[Houston Chronicle](#) [1/28/2019 4:54 PM, Staff, 199K]

The Transportation Security Administration plans to reopen its Terminal B checkpoint, which was closed during the partial government shutdown, early Wednesday, the Houston Airport System says. The ticketing counter in Terminal B will also reopen.

The checkpoint had been closed since Jan. 13 over TSA staffing issues as TSA agents called in sick. TSA workers were among federal employees in the Houston area who had been furloughed or required to work without pay amid the shutdown, the result of President Donald Trump's clash with congressional Democrats over funding a wall on the nation's border with Mexico.

There are an estimated 30,000 federal workers in the Houston area. As of last week, the Texas Workforce Commission had received 6,445 unemployment claims associated with the federal shutdown.

Across the U.S., TSA workers had been calling in sick, causing longer lines and closed checkpoints, including at IAH.

Though flights will continue to operate as normal at Terminal B, passengers will be directed to ticket counters and TSA checkpoints in terminals C and E until Wednesday. Passengers can walk or take the Skyway tram to Terminal B to reach their departing gates.

Starting time Wednesday for the Terminal B checkpoint will be 4:30 a.m.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

[CA] Battered by wildfires and scandals, PG&E files for bankruptcy (Los Angeles Times)

[Los Angeles Times](#) [1/29/2019 3:55 AM, Sammy Roth, 3575K]

California's largest power company filed for bankruptcy protection for the second time in two decades on Tuesday, starting an unpredictable process that could take years to resolve and is likely to result in higher rates for the millions of Californians who buy electricity from Pacific Gas & Electric.

PG&E listed about \$71.4 billion in assets and nearly \$51.7 billion in total debts. The company said it filed requests for authorization to continue paying employee wages and to continue existing customer programs. It also said it intends to pay its suppliers under normal terms for goods and services provided on or after the date of the bankruptcy filing.

"Through this process, we will prioritize what matters most to our customers and the communities we serve — safety and reliability," Interim CEO John R. Simon said in a statement. "We believe that this process will make sure that we have sufficient liquidity to serve our customers and support our operations and obligations."

PG&E Corp. says a Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing, which will allow the company to continue operating while it comes up with a plan to reorganize its debts, is the only way to deal with billions of dollars in potential liabilities from a series of deadly wildfires, many of which were sparked by the company's infrastructure. A bankruptcy filing "is ultimately the only viable option to restore PG&E's financial stability to fund ongoing operations and provide safe service to customers," the company told the Securities and Exchange Commission this month.

PG&E said it also filed a motion seeking court approval to enter into a \$5.5-billion debtor-in-possession agreement with several banks. The company had already lined up the money to fund its operations during what it expects to be a two-year bankruptcy process. The company says electricity and natural gas service will continue uninterrupted for its 16 million customers in Northern and Central California.

Besides that, it's far from clear what will happen next.

Unlike most companies that seek bankruptcy protection, PG&E is a regulated monopoly that provides an essential public service. The California Public Utilities Commission would need to approve any reorganization plan that involves raising electricity rates.

State lawmakers will have no formal role in the process, but some PG&E critics have called for the Legislature and Gov. Gavin Newsom to break up the company into smaller pieces or convert it to a public entity. San Francisco officials have said they will study the possibility of acquiring PG&E's electrical infrastructure in the city.

Some utility experts say a government takeover is unlikely because it could saddle state or local agencies with huge liabilities from future fires without addressing the causes of those fires. Newsom has played his cards close to his vest, saying after PG&E announced its planned Chapter 11 filing that he would work toward a solution "that ensures consumers have access to safe, affordable and reliable service, fire victims are treated fairly, and California can continue to make progress toward our climate goals."

Financial pressure has been mounting on PG&E since October 2017, when a series of wildfires ravaged Northern California, killing 44 people. State investigators determined that

PG&E's equipment sparked or contributed to more than a dozen of those fires, which killed 22 people. The company's crisis only grew with the November 2018 Camp fire, which killed 86 people and destroyed most of the town of Paradise.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection has yet to announce a cause for the Camp fire, but PG&E's infrastructure is suspected. The utility company's stock has lost more than 80% of its value since the 2017 fires broke out, and its credit rating has been downgraded to junk status.

PG&E has blamed its wildfire costs, in part, on climate change, which scientists say is contributing to bigger and hotter fires in California and across the Western United States. The company has also pushed lawmakers to rewrite the state's strict liability laws, which allow utilities to be held liable for wildfires sparked by their infrastructure even if they follow all safety rules and aren't found negligent.

PG&E has estimated its potential wildfire liabilities at \$30 billion or more, although that number includes the Tubbs fire, the biggest and deadliest of the 2017 Northern California blazes. Cal Fire announced last week that the Tubbs fire wasn't caused by PG&E, which by some estimates could cut the company's potential liabilities in half.

Even without Tubbs fire damages on its ledger, PG&E's liabilities could still exceed the company's market value, which was down to about \$6 billion at the end of last week.

"To be clear, we have heard the calls for change and we are determined to take action throughout this process to build the energy system our customers want and deserve," Simon said Tuesday.

Critics say PG&E has exaggerated its financial woes and is filing for bankruptcy as a ploy to extract investor-friendly concessions from the Legislature or regulators. Those critics include ratepayer advocacy groups and lawyers for fire victims, whose clients could see court awards reduced by a bankruptcy judge. They also include BlueMountain Capital Management, a hedge fund that holds more than 11 million shares of PG&E stock that could be wiped out.

BlueMountain urged PG&E's management not to go through with the bankruptcy filing and said last week it would nominate a full slate of new directors to the company's board.

"Instead of rolling up their sleeves and getting to work, current board members are poised to concede defeat and pass the buck to a bankruptcy judge. There is no imminent financial crisis — there is a leadership crisis," BlueMountain said in an open letter to other shareholders, asking them to join the hedge fund in its protests.

In addition to the likelihood of higher electricity rates and lower payouts for wildfire victims, PG&E's bankruptcy could affect California's ability to meet its climate change goals. Those goals depend on a rapid transition from fossil fuels to climate-friendly power sources, and state officials have been counting on PG&E to make massive investments in solar and wind farms and other clean energy technologies.

Even without the fires, PG&E continues to grapple with the fallout from the 2010 explosion of one of its natural gas pipelines, which killed eight people and destroyed 38 homes in San

Bruno. PG&E was fined \$1.6 billion by the Public Utilities Commission and \$3 million by a federal judge. Just last month, the commission accused PG&E of falsifying pipeline safety records for years after the deadly explosion.

The company is still under probation after a criminal conviction stemming from the gas explosion. The federal judge overseeing the probation, William Alsup, said this month that he may order PG&E to inspect its entire electric grid and do extensive tree-trimming before this summer, which PG&E says could cost as much as \$150 billion.

Alsup also suggested he could order PG&E to preemptively shut off electricity in certain areas when strong wind and other weather conditions create a high fire risk. PG&E and the state's other big investor-owned utilities, Southern California Edison and San Diego Gas & Electric, rarely use preemptive power shutoffs as a wildfire prevention strategy, but that could change as climate changes fuel bigger fires.

The last time PG&E filed for bankruptcy, in 2001, fires had nothing to do with it. That bankruptcy was a result of California's infamous energy crisis, in which a failed deregulation plan allowed Enron Corp. and other energy traders to manipulate markets and send prices skyrocketing. PG&E said at the time that it needed relief from \$9 billion in debt that it incurred because it couldn't recover its higher costs from ratepayers.

PG&E emerged from that bankruptcy process with a reorganization plan that saw investors largely made whole. The company was also allowed to boost its regulated profits for years to come. Customers, meanwhile, were saddled with higher rates.

Secret Service

[NM] New Mexico state auditor issues counterfeit money warning (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/29/2019 12:21 AM, Staff, 337K]

The New Mexico state auditor has issued a warning about counterfeit money found in the southern part of the state.

The Artesia Daily Press reports the Office of the State Auditor last week issued a risk advisory alerting the public, business owners, and governmental agencies about counterfeit money in circulation.

Officials say counterfeit money has been spotted in communities in southern New Mexico, particularly Alamogordo.

Authorities say the fake money is printed on low-quality paper and appears to have Chinese lettering.

Alamogordo police say the bills have been presented at various retailers, including dollar stores, nail salons, restaurants, and gas stations.

Coast Guard

[CA] 12 people detained after human smuggling boat lands in Huntington Beach (Los Angeles Times)

[Los Angeles Times](#) [1/28/2019 9:25 PM, Alene Tchekmedyan, 3575K]

Federal authorities detained 10 Chinese nationals who were smuggled into the U.S. on a panga-style boat that landed in the Sunset Beach section of Huntington Beach on Monday afternoon, officials said.

Two Latino men were also detained, though their role in the incident was not immediately clear, Matthew Rice of the Department of Homeland Security told reporters.

It's unclear where the boat traveled from, but it came ashore near Pacific Coast Highway and Anderson Street shortly before 3 p.m. Nine of the Chinese nationals were men and one was a woman. The U.S. Coast Guard determined they were in good health, Rice said.

Seal Beach police helped detain several occupants of the boat, said Sgt. Mike Henderson.

CISA/Cybersecurity

The Cybersecurity 202: The government's cyber workers are back in action. First task: Checking for hacks (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/28/2019 7:30 AM, Joseph Marks, 9763K]

Thousands of federal cyber workers are returning to their posts after more than a month on furlough today. And they have a big to-do list.

The first priority: Looking for evidence of any major hacks that wormed through government defenses the past 35 days while agencies were working with a skeleton crew of security pros.

It will take them days or weeks to pore through security logs to assess how much damage the shutdown did to the security of government computer networks and the sensitive data they hold. The attacks did not abate because the government was closed: One cyber manager who worked without pay during the shutdown described an uptick in attacks on his agency -- including phishing emails containing malware, attempts to reset employee passwords and attempts to trick users into downloading malicious software cloaked as a legitimate update.

Also on the docket: Figuring out how to adjust the multimillion-dollar contracts to upgrade and secure federal IT systems that have spent more than a month on ice.

Perhaps most dishearteningly, cyber and IT leaders across the government will need to figure out the smartest way to prepare for the possibility of another shutdown if Congress and the president can't reach a new funding deal when the current one expires in three weeks. President Trump has said congressional Democrats must give him new money for a U.S.-Mexico border wall or risk another shutdown when the temporary funding expires.

The best hope, former officials told me, is that agencies can learn from the shutdown just

ended to prepare as smartly as possible for the next one — if and when it comes.

"In terms of preparing to shut down again, the agencies should look at any lessons they have learned from having to operate with a skeleton crew and make adjustments based on that very recent experience," Michael Daniel, former White House cybersecurity coordinator who's now president of the Cyber Threat Alliance, told me by email.

Already, the Homeland Security Department's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency is gearing up to take on some big projects post-shutdown. CISA was operating with about half its staff furloughed and the remainder working without pay during the shutdown. But this week, one of its top goals will be implementing an emergency order, issued Jan. 22 during the shutdown, directing agencies to protect their Domain Name System from a cyber hijacking campaign that private-sector researchers have linked to Iran, an agency official told me.

Digital tampering stemming from that vulnerability affected "a number of agencies" during the shutdown, according to a tweet stream from CISA Director Chris Krebs.

Other CISA priorities include cutting paychecks as quickly as possible to employees who have been furloughed or working without pay, relaunching stalled work on election cybersecurity and helping industries combat Chinese hacking, the official told me.

The agency also plans to relaunch efforts focused on supply chain cybersecurity and pipeline security, the official said.

"We are happy to be back at it, and look forward to getting the full force of CISA back up to speed," the official said.

CISA and other agencies must also focus after the shutdown on restoring the morale of highly skilled workers who missed two successive paychecks and may be seriously considering leaving government for the private sector, former officials told me.

Those agencies should also move to restart the hiring process for new cyber pros as quickly as possible, Philip Reitingner, a former top DHS cyber official, told me.

"One piece of advice I'd offer agencies trying to hire cybersecurity talent is to start reaching out to prospective hires on Monday," Reitingner said, "assuring them that they are valued and that the government needs them — please don't be discouraged and decide to work elsewhere."

Intelligence Chiefs Set to Outline Threat of Chinese Cyberspying (New York Times) [New York Times](#) [1/29/2019 6:00 AM, Julian E. Barnes, 20737K]

Threats posed by Chinese cyberespionage — including the role of the telecommunications giant Huawei as it builds networks around the world — are expected to be among the top risks to American security as outlined by United States spy chiefs on Tuesday.

A hearing in front of the Senate Intelligence Committee is expected to touch on recent indictments against Chinese hackers, Beijing's intelligence agents and Huawei.

Cyberattacks and cyberespionage have been the top threats outlined by the American

intelligence chiefs for several years at their annual threat hearings. The growing concerns within the United States government about the actions of Huawei and other Chinese telecommunications companies are likely to sharpen that assessment on Tuesday. The Huawei challenge.

The Justice Department unveiled charges on Monday against Huawei, the Chinese company that is helping build next-generation telecommunications networks, accusing it of violating Iran sanctions and stealing intellectual property. American officials have accused Huawei of being a security threat to the United States and the rest of the West.

Christopher A. Wray, the F.B.I. director, who is set to testify at the hearing, told reporters on Monday that "the immense influence" that the Chinese government has over Huawei was a threat to American security.

"The F.B.I. does not — and will not — tolerate businesses that violate our laws, obstruct our justice and jeopardize our national security," Mr. Wray said. "We will not stand idly by while any entity — be it a foreign power or corporation — seeks to criminally or unfairly undermine our country's place in the world."

Senator Mark Warner, Democrat of Virginia and the vice chairman of the intelligence panel, said on Monday that there was "ample evidence" that no Chinese company was operating independent of the government in Beijing.

"It has been clear for some time that Huawei poses a threat to our national security," said Mr. Warner, who before entering politics helped found a telecom company. "This is also a reminder that we need to take seriously the risks of doing business with companies like Huawei and allowing them access to our markets."

Dan Coats, the director of national intelligence, is expected to discuss both stepped-up Chinese espionage and cyberactivity against the United States and its allies, as well as the advantage Beijing gets by having its national companies take a leading role in telecommunications networks.

The White House has, so far, taken a tough line with China, accusing it of unfair trade practices. Some officials have privately speculated that the administration could soften its line on Huawei as it reaches a trade deal with Beijing.

Chinese and American negotiators are set to talk Wednesday and Thursday in Washington. Steven Mnuchin, the Treasury secretary, said on Monday he expects significant progress but acknowledged there were "complicated issues" around how to enforce any deal. A tough stance on North Korea, the Islamic State and more.

Beyond China, the intelligence officials will most likely carefully navigate the discussion around where the administration has staked out positions that President Trump has publicly contradicted.

The intelligence chiefs are expected to discuss North Korea's nuclear abilities and the threat from the Islamic State. Lawmakers are also expected to press the officials on the political unrest in Venezuela, according to congressional officials.

The hearing will present Mr. Coats and Gina Haspel, the C.I.A. director, with the challenge of candidly presenting their agency's views that are often tougher than positions staked out by Mr. Trump.

Mr. Trump has often found himself at odds with the assessments of his intelligence agencies. They include the effect Russia has had on American elections, North Korea's intentions to denuclearize, the continued threat of the Islamic State and the culpability of the Saudi crown prince in the death of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

Intelligence officials have taken stronger positions than Mr. Trump on some issues, including North Korea's continuing nuclear activity, the strength of the Islamic State and Russia's attempts to influence elections. Speaking 'truth to power.'

April F. Doss, a former associate general counsel at the National Security Agency, said the most recent National Intelligence Strategy made a point of highlighting the responsibility of the intelligence agencies to "speak truth to power" and to deliver intelligence objectively.

"They are going to be very mindful of reassuring the intelligence committee and the public they are committed to carrying out their work in an apolitical, nonpartisan fashion," said Ms. Doss, now a partner at the law firm Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr.

Ms. Haspel has made few public appearances since taking the helm of the C.I.A. last year. In her last public appearance in September, she was skeptical of the steps taken by North Korea to denuclearize. Senators are likely to press her for an updated view on Pyongyang's nuclear program and missile work.

On the C.I.A. assessment of Mr. Khashoggi's death.

Lawmakers might also ask Ms. Haspel to discuss her agency's assessment of the culpability of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia in Mr. Khashoggi's killing.

Mr. Trump has said he will not upset relations with Saudi Arabia because the United States' concerns over Iran and its economic ties with the kingdom are more important than concerns over the killing of Mr. Khashoggi.

Privately, Ms. Haspel has taken a tough line, saying the agency believes Prince Mohammed was responsible, but she is not likely to repeat that assessment publicly, instead deferring questions to a closed session, set to follow the public testimony on Tuesday afternoon.

Pentagon's Cybersecurity Weaknesses (Bloomberg)

[Bloomberg](#) [1/28/2019 12:50 PM, Staff, 5702K] Video: [HERE](#)

Hackers are advancing their skills faster than the U.S. military can keep up, according to the Pentagon's combat testing office.

Potential global cyber attack could cause \$85 billion-\$193 billion worth of damage: report (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/29/2019 2:07 AM, Noor Zainab Hussain and Tanishaa Nadkar]

A co-ordinated global cyber attack, spread through malicious email, could cause economic damages anywhere between \$85 billion and \$193 billion, a hypothetical scenario developed as a stress test for risk management showed.

Insurance claims after such an attack would range from business interruption and cyber extortion to incident response costs, the report jointly produced by insurance market Lloyd's of London and Aon said on Tuesday.

Total claims paid by the insurance sector in this scenario is estimated to be between \$10 billion and \$27 billion, based on policy limits ranging from \$500,000 to \$200 million.

The stark difference between insured and economic loss estimates highlights the extent of underinsurance, in case of such an attack, the stress test showed. An attack could affect several sectors globally, with the largest losses in retail, healthcare, manufacturing and banking fields.

Regional economies that are more service dominated, especially the United States and Europe, would suffer more and are vulnerable to higher direct losses, the report said.

Cyber attacks have been in focus after a virus spread from here Ukraine to wreak havoc around the globe in 2017, crippling thousands of computers, disrupting ports from Mumbai to Los Angeles and even halting production at a chocolate factory in Australia.

Governments are increasingly warning against the risks private businesses face from such attacks, both those carried out by foreign governments and financially motivated criminals.

For example, Britain's National Cyber Security Centre announced on Friday it was investigating a large-scale Domain Name System (DNS) hijacking campaign that hit governments and commercial organizations across the world.

In another recent incident, French engineering consultancy Altran Technologies was the target of a cyber attack that hit its operations in some European countries.

On a larger scale, personal data and documents from hundreds of German politicians and public figures, including Chancellor Angela Merkel, were published online in what appears to be one of Germany's most far-reaching data breaches.

[VT] VTel Case Raises International Cybersecurity Concerns (Vermont Public Radio)

[Vermont Public Radio](#) [1/28/2019 5:05 PM, John Dillon, 15K]

Concerns that Chinese technology may threaten U.S. cybersecurity have surfaced in Vermont.

Vermont Telephone Company, based in Springfield, says it does not want to fully link its network to an out-of-state telecom company because that firm uses equipment made by a leading Chinese manufacturer.

The Trump Administration has targeted the Chinese-owned conglomerate Huawei because of fears its technology could undermine the security of phone and computer networks.

The Vermont dispute surfaced in a hearing Monday at the state Public Utility Commission.

FirstLight, based in Albany, N.Y., wants a full interconnection agreement between its network and one operated by the Vermont Telephone Company, or VTel. The agreements are pretty standard, and would allow customers to keep their phone number if they go to the other company.

But VTel raises an issue that's a top priority in the White House and in capitals around the world - the spread of Chinese-made technology in global telecom infrastructure.

"What we're concerned about here is an unprecedented cybersecurity challenge," said VTel lawyer Anthony Iarrapino. "And I think you see how grave those are based on the precautions of our own government."

Iarrapino argued VTel and its customers are at risk if the network is connected to a company using equipment made by Huawei, a leading manufacturer of routers, switches and other telecom technology. He said VTel could also be hurt financially because the federal government won't do business with companies that use Huawei.

"So this is not really a typical interconnection dispute," he said.

FirstLight did not address national security issues at Monday's hearing at the Public Utility Commission. Company lawyer Gregory Kendall challenged VTel's claims that it uses Huawei equipment.

VTel wants FirstLight to sign an agreement promising it does not use Huawei equipment. FirstLight, which is owned by a French multinational, so far has balked at making that promise.

The Vermont case was continued, and the two sides promised to work on a schedule for more hearings.

National Security News

Government shutdowns create national emergency (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/28/2019 12:37 AM, UPI, 2015K]

Make no mistake. Even though there has been a temporary reopening of government, the partial government shutdown is a national emergency. The emergency is not over funding for a "wall," or a crisis on the southern border. As Texas Republican House member Will Hurd, whose constituency is on the border, pointedly observed, "There is no crisis." He is correct.

Yet there is another, far greater crisis facing the nation. And there may not be a solution after Feb. 15, when the resolution to keep government open expires. This emergency is another shutdown that will stifle the economy; do great harm to government employees who are unpaid; lead to the deaths of Americans dependent on government for money, support and safety; and, worse, jeopardize the nation's overall security — besides making us look foolish.

That the president is seen as "caving" and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi viewed as

"winning" this shutdown is misleading. This crisis is not over and both sides bear responsibility. Whether a compromise can be reached is still uncertain.

In this titanic struggle, new four- and six-letter epithets have joined the incendiary lexicon over stopping illegal immigration. "Wall" is red meat for the president's base and a red flag for Democrats to rally round. "Asylum" is anathema to the base.

President Donald Trump's governing strategy depends on maintaining his base. Hence "w" is repeated loudly and the "a" word not at all. As long as the views of unelected right-wing ideologues such as Rush Limbaugh and Ann Coulter are heeded by the president, and opposed by those who put nation before ideology, the shutdown will persist.

Meanwhile, 800,000 unpaid government workers and perhaps a million other government contractors suffered. Thus far, fortunately, protests have been largely non-violent. However, if a second shutdown occurs, unpaid employees may have no redress except to take stronger action.

In 1995, the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was obliterated by Timothy McVeigh and his deranged view that the only way to change an evil government was to destroy it. The law of statistics suggests that perhaps a handful of this unpaid cohort of nearly 2 million Americans could see violence as the only means of getting people back to work. Whether an act as or more destructive than Oklahoma City could conceivably occur is not the point. The point is that desperation is a powerful motivator.

This analogy is imperfect. The first known female Palestinian suicide bomber was Wafa Idris. She was an attorney from a prominent and successful Palestinian family. However, her husband and much of her family were killed by the Israelis for whatever reason. Idris was desperate. The ultimate step was to don a suicide vest.

That violence did not occur yet is a tribute to these 800,000 whose patience must be exhausted. And it may not if a second shutdown occurs. However, given the history of violence that dates back more than a century to labor unions and strikes and the use of force against both, that legacy cannot be easily forgotten.

Here are three actions Congress can take in separate or a single bill over the next three weeks. First, Congress can authorize pay for all government employees, regardless of whether appropriations laws are enacted. Government may not have any money to operate or to pay utility and other bills. At least people will not suffer financially.

Second, Congress can authorize repaying interest fees for those employees forced to take out loans. While the opportunity for misuse and fraud are real, this is a minimum act of fairness. And one wonders why banks have not made low-interest loans available to qualified government employees.

Third, and most importantly, Congress can declare a national emergency — not over the wall, but because the nation and its citizenry are being put to extreme risk by shutdowns — to assure government remains open. These measures, while temporary, will not repair the political differences between both parties. While it is not certain the president would sign these bills, presumably, each could be passed with a veto-proof majority.

The greatest threat to the nation is not a revanchist Russia or an aggressive China. Nor is it radical and violent Islam or growing autocratic populism in Europe. Yes, the mounting national debt is a Damoclean sword. And Brexit could disrupt the Atlantic alliance.

Still, the greatest danger is failed and failing government. And the past partial shutdown is the most vivid example of this failure.

Congress must move quickly to fix the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/28/2019 1:00 PM, Debra Shushan, 3038K]

In a perversely ironic turn, a law intended to aid American victims of international terrorist attacks will strike a serious blow to counterterrorism cooperation that keeps Israelis (and Americans visiting Israel) safe.

The Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act (ATCA) will take effect on February 1. Unless it is adequately amended or repealed before then, the law will damage Israeli national security and U.S. foreign policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Time is short, and Congress must take action.

ATCA was passed with little fanfare, by unanimous consent in the House and Senate, and apparently absent an understanding of its foreign policy implications. The law's aim is to assist American victims of international terrorism in securing, through U.S. courts, monetary damages from entities alleged to have aided and abetted terrorist attacks.

It was the outcome of lawsuits against the Palestinian Authority and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), like *Waldman v. PLO*, that drove the most consequential provision in ATCA. In *Waldman*, a district court awarded the plaintiff \$655.5 million (triple the damages suffered), only to have a circuit court rule on appeal that the court lacked personal jurisdiction over the PLO. To address this perceived flaw, Section 4 of ATCA stipulates that a defendant consents to personal jurisdiction if it accepts the types of aid the U.S. government has given the PA: most importantly, economic support funds (ESF) and international narcotics control and law enforcement (INCLE) aid.

Recognizing that future acceptance of U.S. assistance could bankrupt the Palestinian Authority through litigation, Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah informed Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that the Palestinian Authority will decline U.S. aid when ATCA takes effect. Comparing the \$665 million judgement in *Waldman* (equivalent to 13 percent of the Palestinian Authority's 2018 budget) to \$60 million in security funding it receives from the U.S., its decision was obviously inevitable.

So, ATCA will not achieve its purpose of enabling terror victims to collect money from the Palestinian Authority or PLO through litigation. Since the Palestinian Authority has foresworn U.S. aid, courts still won't have personal jurisdiction over it.

Meanwhile, ATCA will harm Israeli security, given an end to INCLE funding for the Palestinian Authority and the termination of the U.S. Security Coordinator. Under US supervision since 2005, the Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF) have transformed into a professional and effective entity that works closely with Israel to maintain law and order in Palestinian cities and foil terrorism. Israeli security chiefs are unequivocal about the importance of this security coordination. In remarks to the Israeli cabinet earlier this month, outgoing Israeli army chief of staff Lt. Gen. Gadi Eisenkot urged the government to

strengthen the PASF. Belatedly, the Israeli government has weighed in with the Trump administration, asking for an ATCA fix to preserve security coordination, "a top priority Israeli national security interest."

ATCA will also undermine U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Neither President Trump nor subsequent presidents will be able to use aid as a tool to facilitate future Palestinian-Israeli peace. Meanwhile, as the U.S. Agency for International Development prepares to lay off local staff and abandon nearly completed infrastructure projects in the West Bank, the Palestinian people will suffer. American interests are harmed, too, when worsening Palestinian quality of life fosters extremism and a hardening of attitudes toward the U.S. and Israel.

Compounding its deleterious impact, ATCA may apply to foreign states, impacting allies in the Middle East (think of Egypt and Jordan) and beyond. It could also apply to humanitarian NGOs.

Members of Congress are working with the Trump administration on a fix. A number of options are available. The best choice is revocation of Section 4, which triggered this crisis while failing to help terrorist attack victims. A national security waiver for the President is another possibility. It is suboptimal since President Trump slashed ESF funding to Palestinians before ATCA and appears unlikely to reinstate it, though a future president could. Exempting only INCLE funding is better than nothing, but would transmit the message to Palestinians that the U.S. cares only about Israeli security and not their welfare. (They are complementary; we must care about both.)

If Congress cannot engineer a fix by January 31 — a real danger, even likelihood — Congress must at minimum delay ATCA's implementation. This time bomb is ticking, and if Congress can't defuse ATCA in time, it must at least reset the clock.

US Rep. Stephen Lynch to Head National Security Subcommittee (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [1/27/2019 9:04 PM, Staff, 2894K]

U.S. Rep. Stephen Lynch has been named chairman of the House's National Security Subcommittee.

Lynch said one of his top tasks will be to restart congressional oversight of President Donald Trump's national defense strategy, which he described as "ill-defined and prone to sudden and erratic revision."

The Massachusetts Democrat said he also wants to look into the use of cyberespionage against the U.S. government and private sector and will step up oversight of pipeline safety and security following a number of recent gas explosions across the country.

The committee's oversight efforts include national security, homeland security, foreign operations — including the relationship of the United States with other countries — immigration, defense and veterans.

Lynch said he's traveled to Afghanistan and Iraq as often as any member of Congress.

Pentagon prepares for Space Force rollout (Politico)

[Politico](#) [1/28/2019 10:00 AM, David Brown, 2577K]

— The leadership shakeup at the Pentagon hasn't stalled the planned rollout of the department's proposal for a new Space Force. Morning D has learned that the building formed a new "coordination cell" last week that brings all the players together ahead of the big unveiling.

— Both sides seem optimistic over a possible deal to pull U.S. troops out of Afghanistan in exchange for a commitment by the Taliban to end hostilities and keep other terror groups out.

— The partial government shutdown is over. Now Congress has until Feb. 15 to come up with a new compromise before we get a new shutdown, or President Donald Trump declares a national emergency to free up border wall funding.

SPACE FORCE ROLLOUT: Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan established a group last week to put the final touches on the Pentagon's proposal to establish a Space Force, our colleague Bryan Bender has learned.

The Space Governance Committee, described as a "small coordination cell," will consist of about a dozen key personnel drawn from the department's policy, legislative affairs and public affairs shops, says Lt. Col. Joseph Buccino, Shanahan's chief spokesman.

"We are preparing for the rollout of the proposal, finalizing our messaging, and coordinating actions," Buccino said, explaining that any appearance that the process has slowed in recent weeks is only because "we are transitioning from a series of decisions to the execution phase."

"The leadership shakeup at the Pentagon has had no effect on ongoing planning or the development of the legislative proposal," he added. Shanahan, who as deputy defense secretary was carrying out Trump's order to establish a new military branch, "has maintained oversight of the process."

Marine Corps officer asks Google to resume working with Pentagon (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/28/2019 11:56 AM, Christopher Carbone, 9216K]

A decorated Marine Corps infantry officer is pleading with Google to not turn its back on the Department of Defense months after the tech giant decided to end its involvement in Project Maven, a U.S. military artificial intelligence program.

In an op-ed for Defense News, First Lt. Walker D. Mills writes that he attended a symposium on innovation sponsored by the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory last summer, but was disappointed that a representative from Google did not attend the event, which did feature leaders from Amazon and IBM.

Mills also calls out Google's proposal for a censored Chinese search engine, code-named Dragonfly: "The company that Americans and people all over the world associate with innovation and information technology had spurned the U.S. military, yet continues to work with one of our chief competitors."

Although Google said Project Dragonfly has been "effectively ended," the company is still

being slammed by human rights groups and critics for considering a censored Chinese search engine. Mills wrote that he appreciates the letter Google employees sent to CEO Sundar Pichai demanding an end to Project Maven, but says it's "impossible" for tech companies to stay above the fray in a complicated, interconnected world.

Despite Google's decision to step away from Project Maven, Pichai emphasized at a business conference in November that the Mountain View, Calif. company continues to partner with the Pentagon on a range of projects.

"We partner with the military — and deeply. Today we are bidding for, and we work with the military and the government on many things. We have projects underway, and cybersecurity, transportation security, planning, etc. And we are committed to doing that. We cherish our values. We know we enjoy those values because our military protects us," Pichai said during the conference.

The tech executive, who testified before the U.S. House of Representatives in December, said it's a "bit of a misunderstanding" to say his company does not or will not work with America's military.

"If your mission is truly to "make the world's information universally accessible," then you must support those who protect the free exchange of ideas," Mills wrote in Defense News.

Mills wrote that U.S. service members are "the kids you know from college who wore uniforms to class on Wednesdays because we were there on ROTC scholarship, the Boy Scouts who put the flags in the cemetery in November."

Mills continued: "We, too, want to live in a world where the truth triumphs and the world's information is freely accessible. We just fight for that world in a more literal sense. .. I know we are not a perfect partner, but please work with us. I don't ever want to have to explain to my Marines why our technological edge has eroded. Or that their lives are at greater risk defending our shared values because we have been abandoned by our tech sector."

Regarding Google's decision to step away from Project Maven, Pichai said: "I think as we are developing AI, we want to be thoughtful about how we develop AI. And amongst the AI research community, there are concerns — narrow concerns — around the use of AI and weaponry. And so, we have drawn some lines there."

Last fall, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos said that his company will continue to work with the Pentagon and that the United States would be in "big trouble" if technology companies turn away from the country.

U.S. accuses Huawei of stealing trade secrets, defrauding banks (BNN Bloomberg) [BNN Bloomberg](#) [1/28/2019 3:21 PM, Patricia Hurtado, 158K]

U.S. prosecutors filed criminal charges against Huawei Technologies Co., China's largest technology company, alleging it stole trade secrets from an American rival and committed bank fraud by violating sanctions against doing business with Iran.

Huawei has been the target of a broad U.S. crackdown, including allegations it sold telecommunications equipment that could be used by China's Communist Party for spying. The charges filed Monday also mark an escalation of tensions between the world's two largest economies, which are mired in a trade war that has roiled markets.

In a 13-count indictment in Brooklyn, New York, the government alleged Huawei, two affiliated companies and Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou of bank and wire fraud as well as conspiracy in connection with business in Iran. Charges filed in Washington state accuse the company of stealing trade secrets from T-Mobile USA Inc. and offering bonuses to employees who succeeded in getting technology from rivals.

The cases "expose Huawei's brazen and persistent actions to exploit American companies and financial institutions, and to threaten the free and fair global marketplace," Christopher Wray, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, said at a press conference in Washington announcing the charges.

Huawei didn't respond immediately to requests for comment on the allegations.

Prosecutors said that Huawei concealed its relationship with Skycom Tech Co., a company in Iran, in violation of U.S. laws. Meng "personally made a presentation in August 2013 to an executive of one of Huawei's major banking partners in which she repeatedly lied about the relationship," prosecutors said in a statement announcing the charges. Skycom was also charged.

Meng, 46, the daughter of the company's founder, was arrested Dec. 1 in Canada on allegations that she committed fraud to sidestep sanctions against Iran. Meng's next court date is set for Feb. 6 in Vancouver, where she is out on bail following her detainment on Dec. 1 while in transit at the Vancouver airport. She is fighting extradition to the U.S. to face criminal charges.

Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker said at a news conference Monday that the U.S. intends to file a formal extradition request by tomorrow. Once that occurs, Canada's justice minister has up to 30 days to assess it and issue an "authority to proceed" with hearings. Canada has little leeway to refuse the request, assuming the alleged crimes she committed also violate Canadian law. A hearing could still be months away, and Meng will have several opportunities to appeal. The final decision on extradition is up to Canada's justice minister.

Canadian judges end up approving about 90 per cent of extradition requests because the system makes it nearly impossible to mount a defense, says Gary Botting, a Vancouver-based lawyer who's been involved in hundreds of extradition cases.

In the Brooklyn indictment, the U.S. says Huawei misrepresented its business with Iran to the U.S. government and various financial institutions since 2007. That year, FBI agents interviewed Huawei's founder, identified in the indictment as Individual 1, according to the U.S. During the interview, Individual 1 falsely stated that Huawei didn't conduct any activity in violation of U.S. export laws, and that it didn't deal directly with any Iranian company, the U.S. said. Huawei was founded by Ren Zhengfei.

Charges in the Brooklyn indictment include bank and wire fraud, conspiracy and violations of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. In addition, Huawei and Huawei USA are accused of conspiring to obstruct justice.

Trade Secrets

Prosecutors also alleged that Huawei began a "concerted effort" in 2012 to steal information from a phone-testing robot developed by T-Mobile USA Inc. and even offered bonuses to employees who could get their hands on the technologies of rivals.

In the indictment filed in Seattle, the government alleged Huawei violated confidentiality agreements with T-Mobile in an effort to build their own robot to test phones. A Huawei engineer secretly took photos of T-Mobile's robot, called Tappy, took measurements of parts of the robot and, in one instance, stole a piece of the robot, prosecutors said. Huawei then blamed "rogue actors" within the company when T-Mobile threatened to sue, the U.S. said.

T-Mobile sued Huawei and its U.S.-based unit, Huawei Device USA Inc., in 2014. Three years later, a federal jury in Seattle found Huawei liable for both breach of contract and misappropriation of trade secrets. First Assistant U.S. Attorney Annette Hayes of the Western District of Washington, whose office is handling the trade-secrets case, said Huawei's actions showed a pattern by the company.

'Steal Technology'

"Huawei wanted to build its own robot, and rather than engineer its own device, it decided to steal T-Mobile's technology," Hayes said.

The Chinese company also obstructed justice by preparing a report claiming to be an investigation of rogue employees, even though "Huawei clearly knew that the thefts were part of an organized effort by the company," Hayes said. "During the time period of the alleged crime, Huawei announced a bonus for stealing confidential information from competitors."

It's unclear how Huawei will respond. The company could appear in court and defend itself against the charges, as any criminal defendant might. Or it could challenge the U.S. jurisdiction to bring charges against the Chinese company, though there's no question that prosecutors have authority over domestic units, said Harry Sandick, a former federal prosecutor now with Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP.

Ignoring the case won't be an option, Sandick said, as that could result in a company becoming a "fugitive" entity that's unable to do business in the U.S.

"Usually these are hypothetical questions because the government rarely charges business organizations," Sandick said.

U.S. charges Chinese telecom giant Huawei with fraud, stealing trade secrets (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/29/2019 4:47 AM, Camilo Montoya-Galvez, 2890K]

The Department of Justice (DOJ) unveiled criminal charges on Monday against Huawei Technologies Co. and its chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou, accusing China's largest telecommunications company of stealing trade secrets, committing wire fraud, breaking confidentiality agreements and violating sanctions against Iran.

Two sweeping indictments allege that Huawei, its affiliate in Iran and Meng herself stole

confidential information and obstructed justice as part of an elaborate and "illegal" economic scheme. Prosecutors are seeking Meng's extradition to the U.S. She was arrested in early December by Canadian authorities at the request of the U.S. government.

In response, China said Tuesday the "unreasonable crackdown" on Huawei should be stopped and the extradition request dropped by the U.S., adding that Beijing would "firmly defend" its companies. A foreign ministry statement read on state-run TV didn't say whether Beijing would retaliate for the charges against Huawei.

The U.S. has long suspected that China's government uses Huawei to aid in international espionage and thus poses a national security risk -- allegations which both the Chinese state and the telecom hardware giant have consistently denied.

During a press conference on Monday, Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker said Huawei had made a "concerted effort" to steal information stored on a T-Mobile phone-testing robot called "Tappy." He said the Chinese company instructed its employees to violate non-disclosure and confidentiality agreements with T-Mobile by taking photos of "Tappy." On one occasion, Whitaker added, Huawei representatives stole a piece of "Tappy" so that its engineers in China could attempt to replicate the robot.

The Justice Department accused China's largest smartphone manufacturer of offering its employees bonuses if they stole confidential information. "The charges unsealed today clearly allege that Huawei intentionally conspired to steal the intellectual property of an American company in an attempt to undermine the free and fair global marketplace," FBI Director Christopher Wray told reporters.

The indictments also claim that Huawei set up a shell company called Skycom to do business in Iran, in violation of economic sanctions imposed on Iran by the U.S.

For months, the Trump administration and lawmakers from both parties have denounced the company for its alleged links to China's communist leadership. After the charges were unveiled, Democratic Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia praised the Trump administration for its crackdown against Huawei.

"There is ample evidence to suggest that no major Chinese company is independent of the Chinese government and Communist Party -- and Huawei, which China's government and military tout as a 'national champion,' is no exception. It has been clear for some time that Huawei poses a threat to our national security, and I applaud the Trump Administration for taking steps to finally hold the company accountable," Warner wrote in a statement.

Whitaker and Wray were joined by Department of Homeland (DHS) Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and several U.S. attorneys for the announcement at DOJ headquarters.

The announcement came as U.S. officials were scheduled to meet with representatives of the Chinese government this week to try broker an elusive trade agreement and end the prolonged tariff war between the two economic giants. Apart from the trade dispute, the U.S. and China are also competing for control over 5G infrastructure, which both countries believe is key to their economic and military success.

**The NFL, not the federal government, should pay for Super Bowl security.
(Washington Post)**

[Washington Post](#) [1/28/2019 6:25 AM, Juliette Kayyem, 9763K]

Federal guidelines require federal involvement — with good reason — but why should taxpayers foot the bill?

We just came out of the longest federal government shutdown in U.S. history — during which many federal agents, including, but not limited to, employees of the Secret Service, Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection (CBP), FBI, FEMA and TSA were required to work unpaid. And we're just a few days from the Super Bowl, an event that carries a hefty price tag for law enforcement agencies, including at the federal level.

No expense should be spared to protect the thousands of fans who attend: In the world's greatest superpower, we should be able to carry on with our most cherished single-day sporting event, confident that every precaution has been taken to make it as safe as possible. When my now-hometown New England Patriots square off against my childhood-hometown Los Angeles Rams, I want to be focused on the game, the halftime show, the clever new commercials and the snacks on my coffee table, not worried about game security.

But particularly given where the nation is, budget-wise, it's time that the NFL picked up the tab for Super Bowl security, not American taxpayers.

Major events are potential targets for terrorism, and the federal government, through the Department of Homeland Security, applies the designation National Special Security Event (NSSE) to highest-security-level events such as the State of the Union address and presidential inaugurations. Immediately below that designation are SEAR (Special Events Assessment Rating) level I events, for which this year's Super Bowl qualifies. This designation prompts a significant commitment of federal resources and pre-event coordination and planning, but no additional budget.

Many of the functions federal law enforcement are tasked with during this type of event can be found on a list, on the DHS site, related to the 2016 Super Bowl held in Santa Clara, Calif., including cybersecurity, bombing prevention training, active shooter preparedness and emergency communications. As an example, this year, according to the CBP website, "Between 3 p.m. and midnight on Sunday, February 3," CBP "aircraft will be assisting in the enforcement of an air travel restriction around Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta."

According to an FBI spokesman, USA Today reports, "more than 1,500 public safety personnel" will be involved in security for the upcoming Super Bowl, including an unspecified numbers of federal officials. At the local level, an Atlanta police spokesman told CNN, "every Atlanta police officer will be on duty, working 12-hour shifts from January 26 to February 5."

For last year's Super Bowl, the Minneapolis Star-Tribune reports, \$5 million was set aside by the event's host committee to cover security costs, plus more than \$1 million to reimburse the Minnesota National Guard. The effort, according to the Star-Tribune, was planned to include "hundreds of officers from 60 police departments across the state, 40 federal agencies and related offices, 400 members of the Minnesota National Guard and private contractors."

And the NFL isn't on the hook for these costs.

When a city bids on a Super Bowl, the NFL stipulates that pregame and day-of-game security will be incurred "at no cost to the NFL." For the host city, that might be an acceptable trade-off: Cities solicit funding from big donors or host committees to offset or augment the cost to public entities in exchange for the event's anticipated (or, at least, hoped for) cachet and revenue.

There's no such trade-off for the federal government. Federal resources allocated to support Super Bowl security are, effectively, chalked up to the federal government's ongoing mission to protect the public, which serves the common good and benefits all, which is true in the broadest sense: Millions of Americans will watch and enjoy the game this coming Sunday. But as much of an American institution as it is, it's tough to justify categorizing the Super Bowl, with all its attendant costs, as vital to protecting national interests, which should be the motivation at the core of any federal law enforcement action. And, as with a private entity that has the wherewithal to foot the security bill, the argument for the United States incurring the security costs becomes even less justifiable.

Contrast the allocation of Super Bowl security costs with the Delta Air Lines Foundation's approach to the recent shutdown: Delta contributed to the cost of keeping Atlanta's Martin Luther King Jr. Park open during January's MLK holiday weekend, an act of civic-mindedness that acting interior secretary David L. Bernhardt lauded as an example of "private organizations stepping up to ensure that our visitors from across the nation and around the world are able to have a meaningful experience at national parks."

It makes sense that federal law enforcement, with all its capabilities, has a central role in efforts to make the Super Bowl as safe an experience as possible for fans and its host community. As a responsible corporate citizen, however, the NFL should take a page out of the Delta foundation's playbook and start shouldering more of the security the costs for its own premier event.

[NE] Nebraska base to get new \$1.3b military headquarters (San Francisco Chronicle)
[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/28/2019 5:08 PM, Staff, 1773K]

A new \$1.3 billion military facility that will serve as the U.S.'s military command headquarters during national emergencies will soon open at Offutt Air Force Base near Omaha.

The first of more than 3,500 employees will begin moving into U.S. Strategic Command's new Command and Control Facility in the spring, The Omaha World-Herald reported.

The 916,000-square-foot (85,000-square-meter) facility will replace StratCom's current headquarters in the Gen. Curtis E. LeMay Building, which was constructed in 1957.

"The construction of the (Command and Control Facility) is historic," said Vice Adm. David Kriete, StratCom's deputy commander. "It marks the transition from the old to the new."

The facility is "a national asset" designed to serve as the nation's military command headquarters, even during a national emergency such as a nuclear war, Kriete said.

"We firmly believe a nuclear war should never be fought," Kriete said. "But we want the good guys to know, and the bad guys to know; we're really good at it."

The project is in its second phase, which focuses on installing technology in the facility, Kriete said. The headquarters will have oversight of the nation's space forces, missile defense, electronic warfare and nuclear arsenal.

Work on the project began in October 2012. The project has seen many setbacks, including flooding problems, persistent mold, a fire and a tornado.

"There's been some minor glitches," Kriete said. "Nothing that has substantially set us back."

StratCom plans to move all staff into the new headquarters by the end of the year, he said.

"I'm very optimistic," Kriete said. "We're not going to move the command over until (the building) is mission-ready."

[NV] Man killed after trespassing at nuclear site in Nevada (San Francisco Chronicle)
[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/29/2019 12:33 AM, Staff, 337K]

Authorities shot and killed a man who entered a secured federal site north of Las Vegas where the government used to test nuclear bombs.

A spokesman for the National Nuclear Security Administration says the man failed to stop at the security gate on Monday at the Nevada National Security Site. Darwin Morgan says the man drove for about 8 miles before he parked, got out of his car and approached security officials.

Nye County Sheriff's deputies and nuclear site officers told the man to drop the object in his hand and stop approaching. Morgan says they shot him when he refused.

The man, whose identity has not yet been released, died at the scene.

The FBI has been notified.

[China] U.S. officials to announce China-related enforcement on Monday (Reuters)
[Reuters](#) [1/28/2019 2:34 PM, Lisa Lambert and David Shepardson]

U.S. Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, and Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen will make an enforcement announcement relating to China at 4:30 p.m. EST on Monday, an official told Reuters.

The Justice Department web page where the announcement will be shown live said that Whitaker would join others "to announce national security related criminal charges."

[China] Huawei Executive Is Formally Accused by U.S. of Helping Evade Iran Sanctions (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/28/2019 9:45 PM, David E. Sanger, Katie Benner and Matthew Goldstein, 20737K]

The Justice Department unveiled sweeping charges on Monday against the Chinese telecom firm Huawei and its chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, outlining a decade-long attempt by the company to steal trade secrets, obstruct a criminal investigation and evade economic sanctions on Iran.

The pair of indictments, which were partly unsealed on Monday, come amid a broad and aggressive campaign by the United States to try to thwart China's biggest telecom equipment maker. Officials have long suspected Huawei of working to advance Beijing's global ambitions and undermine America's interests and have begun taking steps to curb its international presence.

The charges underscore Washington's determination to prove that Huawei poses a national security threat and to convince other nations that it cannot be trusted to build their next generation of wireless networks, known as 5G. The indictments, based in part on the company's internal emails, describe a plot to steal testing equipment from T-Mobile laboratories in Bellevue, Wash. They also cite internal memos, obtained from Ms. Meng, that prosecutors said link her to an elaborate bank fraud that helped Huawei profit by evading Iran sanctions.

The acting attorney general, Matthew G. Whitaker, flanked by the heads of several other cabinet agencies, said the United States would seek to have Ms. Meng extradited from Canada, where she was detained last year at the request of the United States.

The charges outlined Monday come at a sensitive diplomatic moment, as top officials from China are expected to arrive in Washington this week for two days of talks aimed at resolving a monthslong trade war between the world's two largest economies. Trump administration officials have insisted that Ms. Meng's detention will not affect the trade talks, but the timing of the indictment coming so close to in-person discussions is likely to further strain relations between the two countries.

Ms. Meng is the daughter of Huawei's founder and one of the most powerful industrialists in the country. Her arrest has outraged the Chinese government, which has since arrested two Canadians, in apparent retaliation. The indictment now presents Canada with a politically charged decision: whether to extradite Ms. Meng to face the fraud charges, or make a legal or political determination to send her back to Beijing.

In a statement on Tuesday, China's Foreign Ministry called on the United States and Canada to let Ms. Meng go.

"For a long time, the U.S. has used state power to smear and attack certain Chinese companies in an attempt to stifle legitimate business operations," it said. "Behind that, there is strong political motivation and manipulation. We strongly urge the U.S. to stop unreasonable suppression of Chinese companies, including Huawei, and treat Chinese enterprises fairly and objectively."

A spokesman for Huawei, Joe Kelly, said it "is not aware of any wrongdoing by Ms. Meng, and believes the U.S. courts will ultimately reach the same conclusion." The company also denied violating American laws.

The indictment unsealed against Ms. Meng is similar to the charges leveled against the

Huawei executive in filings made by federal prosecutors in connection with the bail hearing in Canada. It claimed that Huawei defrauded four large banks into clearing transactions with Iran in violation of international sanctions through a subsidiary called Skycom. Federal authorities did not identify the banks, but in an earlier court proceeding in Canada after Ms. Meng's arrest, prosecutors had identified one of the banks as HSBC.

The most serious new allegation in the indictment, which could have bearing on the extradition proceeding in Canada, is the contention by federal prosecutors that Huawei sought to impede the investigation into the telecom company's attempt to evade economic sanctions on Iran by destroying or concealing evidence.

The indictment said Huawei moved employees out of the United States so they could not be called as witnesses before a grand jury in Brooklyn. And authorities said the company destroyed evidence in order to hinder the inquiry.

Richard P. Donoghue, the United States attorney for the Eastern District of New York, said that the telecom firm's actions began in 2007 and "allowed Iran to evade sanctions imposed by the United States and to allow Huawei to profit."

Ms. Meng's lawyer in the United States, Reid Weingarten, a leading white-collar lawyer at Steptoe & Johnson in Washington, did not immediately comment on the indictment.

The arrest of a top executive for sanctions evasion is unusual. In 2015, Deutsche Bank was fined \$258 million for violating American sanctions on Iran and Syria. No executives involved in the scheme were indicted, though six employees were fired.

Ms. Meng is under house arrest at one of two residences that she owns in Vancouver. American officials said Monday that they will request her extradition before a deadline on Wednesday. The next stage of her case will be decided at the Supreme Court of British Columbia.

"Companies like Huawei pose a dual threat to both our economic and national security," said Christopher A. Wray, the F.B.I. director, who joined Mr. Whitaker and two other cabinet members, Wilbur Ross, the commerce secretary, and Kirstjen Nielsen, the homeland security secretary.

Mr. Wray argued that "the magnitude of these charges make clear just how seriously the F.B.I. takes this threat."

"Today should serve as a warning that we will not tolerate businesses that violate our laws, obstruct justice or jeopardize national and economic well-being," he added.

Parts of the indictment were redacted and left open the question of whether the United States had secretly indicted Ms. Meng's father, Ren Zhengfei, a former People's Liberation Army officer and member of the Communist Party. A United States government interview with Mr. Ren from 2007 is cited in one of the indictments, to make the case that he misled investigators, and the name of at least one of those indicted is blacked out from the publicly filed version of the indictment.

Mr. Whitaker fueled the speculation about an indictment of Mr. Ren when he told reporters

on Monday that the criminal activity "goes all the way to the top of the company."

The Justice Department also accused Huawei of conspiring to steal trade secrets from a competitor, T-Mobile. The charges relate to a criminal investigation that stemmed from a 2014 civil suit between the two companies.

In that case, T-Mobile accused Huawei of stealing proprietary robotics technology that the telecom company used to diagnose quality-control issues in cellphones. Huawei was found guilty in May 2017. The indictment cited internal emails from Huawei and its American subsidiary that appeared to set up a bonus system for employees who could illicitly obtain the T-Mobile testing system.

"These are very serious actions by a company that appears to be using corporate espionage not only to enhance their bottom line but to compete in the world economy," Mr. Whitaker said.

The legal drama now shifts to Canada, where the government has warned that it will not extradite Ms. Meng if it appears that the request is being made for political reasons. President Trump said after her arrest that he would consider using her case for leverage in the upcoming trade negotiations, which fueled speculation that the United States may be more interested in Ms. Meng's value in winning trade concessions than in obtaining a conviction.

Canada's ambassador to Beijing was fired over the weekend by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for suggesting that the case against Ms. Meng was political and that Canada might accede to Chinese demands and return her home.

Mr. Whitaker declined to say Monday whether the White House would interfere in the criminal case against Ms. Meng. But the array of officials present at the announcement was clearly intended to demonstrate a coordinated government effort to go after Huawei.

"Given the seriousness of these charges, and the direct involvement of cabinet officials in their rollout, today's announcements underscore that there is a unified full-court press by the administration to hold China accountable for the theft of proprietary U.S. technology and violations of U.S. export control and sanctions laws," said David Laufman, the former chief of the Justice Department's counterintelligence and export control section.

The indictments could further complicate the trade talks that the administration is holding this week with Beijing. The Trump administration is seeking significant changes to China's trade practices, including what it says is a pattern of Beijing pressuring American companies to hand over valuable technology and outright theft of intellectual property.

"The Americans are not going to surrender global technological supremacy without a fight, and the indictment of Huawei is the opening shot in that struggle," said Michael Pillsbury, a China scholar at the Hudson Institute who advises the Trump administration.

Lawmakers like Senator Mark Warner, Democrat of Virginia, who have long argued for action to be taken against Chinese technology providers including Huawei and ZTE, a smaller firm that has faced similar accusations, called the indictment "a reminder that we need to take seriously the risks of doing business with companies like Huawei and allowing

them access to our markets."

Mr. Warner said that he would continue to press Canada to reconsider using any Huawei technology as it upgrades its telecommunications network.

On Tuesday, American intelligence officials are expected to cite 5G investments by Chinese telecom companies, including Huawei, as a worldwide threat. And the United States has been drafting an executive order, expected in the coming weeks, that would effectively ban American companies from using Chinese-origin equipment in critical telecommunications networks.

[China] US charges Chinese tech giant Huawei, top executive (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/28/2019 11:59 PM, Michael Balsamo and Eric Tucker, AP, 9763K]

The Justice Department unsealed criminal charges Monday against Chinese tech giant Huawei, a top company executive and several subsidiaries, alleging the company stole trade secrets, misled banks about its business and violated U.S. sanctions.

The charges were announced just before a crucial two-day round of trade talks between the United States and China are scheduled to begin in Washington. Trade analysts say they could dim prospects for a breakthrough.

The sweeping indictments accuse the company of using extreme efforts to steal trade secrets from American businesses — including trying to take a piece of a robot from a T-Mobile lab.

The executive charged is Huawei's chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, who was arrested in Canada last month. The U.S. is seeking to extradite her, alleging she committed fraud by misleading banks about Huawei's business dealings in Iran.

David Martin, Meng's lawyer in Canada, didn't immediately respond to messages seeking comment. Meng is out on bail in Vancouver and her case is due back in court Tuesday as she awaits extradition proceedings to begin.

Huawei is the world's biggest supplier of network gear used by phone and internet companies and has long been seen as a front for spying by the Chinese military or security services. A spokesman did not immediately return phone messages seeking comment.

The Justice Department charges that Huawei used a Hong Kong shell company to sell equipment in Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions. Huawei had done business in Iran through a Hong Kong company called Skycom and alleged that Meng misled U.S. banks into believing the two companies were separate, according to prosecutors.

"As I told high-level Chinese law enforcement officials in August, we need more law enforcement cooperation with China," acting Attorney General Matt Whitaker said at a news conference with other Cabinet officials, including Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen. "China should be concerned about criminal activities by Chinese companies — and China should take action."

The officials provided details from a 10-count grand jury indictment in Seattle, and a separate 13-count case from prosecutors in the Eastern District of New York.

Among the accusations, prosecutors say Huawei stole trade secrets, including the technology behind a robotic device that T-Mobile used to test smartphones.

Beginning in 2012, Huawei hatched a plan to steal information about T-Mobile's robot, named "Tappy," and Huawei engineers secretly took photos of the robot, measured it and tried to steal a piece of it from T-Mobile's lab in Washington state, according to prosecutors. T-Mobile declined to comment.

The Huawei case has set off diplomatic spats among the United States, China and Canada. President Donald Trump said he would get involved in the Huawei case if it would help produce a trade agreement with China. But Ross said Monday that the indictments are "wholly separate from our trade negotiations with China."

The two countries agreed Dec. 1 to negotiate for 90 days in an effort to defuse worsening trade tensions. Trump has postponed a scheduled increase in U.S. tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods from 10 percent to 25 percent during the talks. A breakdown in negotiations would likely lead to higher tariffs, a prospect that has rattled financial markets for months.

Monday's announcement of criminal charges "is certainly not a propitious sign for U.S.-China trade tensions and could hamper prospects for even a partial deal in the coming weeks," said Eswar Prasad, an economics professor and China expert at Cornell University.

There is no allegation Huawei was working at the direction of the Chinese government. In past instances, the U.S. government has singled out Beijing in corporate or digital espionage and has recently charged several Chinese hackers and intelligence officials.

The arrest of Meng, the daughter of Huawei's founder at Vancouver's airport, has led to the worst relations between Canada and China since the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. China detained two Canadians shortly after Meng's arrest in an apparent attempt to pressure Canada to release her. A Chinese court also sentenced a third Canadian to death in a sudden retrial of a drug case, overturning a 15-year prison term handed down earlier.

[China] Justice Dept. charges Huawei with fraud, ratcheting up U.S.-China tensions (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/28/2019 1:08 AM, Ellen Nakashima and Devlin Barrett, 9763K] Video: [HERE](#)

The Justice Department announced criminal charges Monday against Huawei Technologies, the world's largest communications equipment manufacturer, and one of its top executives — a move likely to intensify trade tensions between the United States and China.

A 13-count indictment filed in New York City against Huawei, two affiliates and its chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, details allegations of bank and wire fraud. The company also is charged with violating U.S. sanctions on Iran and conspiring to obstruct justice related to the investigation.

Canadian officials arrested Meng on a U.S. warrant Dec. 1. She has since been released on bail, and her travel is confined to Vancouver and surrounding areas. Meng could face up to 30 years if found guilty on all counts.

On Monday evening, the Canadian Justice Department confirmed it had received a formal request for Meng's extradition from the United States to stand trial. The request comes even as Beijing has pressured Canada to release Meng.

Top U.S. law enforcement officials, including acting attorney general Matthew G. Whitaker and FBI Director Christopher A. Wray, held a news conference in Washington to announce the charges.

"The criminal activity in this indictment goes back 10 years and goes all the way to the top of the company," Whitaker said.

Wray said firms like Huawei "pose a dual threat to both our economic and national security, and the magnitude of these charges make clear just how seriously the FBI takes this threat."

Huawei attorney Reid Weingarten said he was confident "justice will be done."

"The U.S. government and China have an extremely complex, multifaceted relationship. Our client, Sabrina Meng, should not be a pawn or a hostage in this relationship," he said. "Ms. Meng is an ethical and honorable businesswoman who has never spent a second of her life plotting to violate any U.S. law, including the Iranian sanctions."

In a statement in Beijing, a Foreign Ministry spokesman decried the indictments. "For some time, the U.S. has used its government power to discredit and crack down on specific Chinese companies in an attempt to stifle their legitimate operations," Geng Shuang said. "We strongly urge the U.S. to stop the unreasonable suppression of Chinese companies, including Huawei, and treat Chinese companies objectively and fairly."

The indictment threatened to further strain relations between Washington and Beijing as officials from both countries prepare for talks this week aimed at ending a months-long economic impasse that has contributed to huge swings in the stock market. Although President Trump had suggested he was willing to help secure Meng's release if China met his demands for a trade deal, Justice and Commerce department officials insisted Meng's criminal case was a separate matter.

Prosecutors said that Huawei — and Meng in particular — lied to banking authorities to avoid questions about whether the company evaded U.S. sanctions prohibiting firms from doing business with Iran. The indictment alleges that Huawei's misrepresentations to the U.S. government and various banks about its business dealings in Iran date back to 2007.

According to the indictment, Meng in 2013 made a presentation to a bank executive in which she repeatedly lied about the relationship between Huawei and a company in Iran called Skycom, which prosecutors alleged functioned as a subsidiary. U.S. law prohibits banks operating in the United States from processing dollar transactions related to Iran through the United States.

The Justice Department also charged that when Huawei became aware of the U.S. investigation in 2017, the company's American affiliate sought to obstruct that work by trying to move witnesses with knowledge of Huawei's Iran-based business back to China, where

FBI agents could not interview them.

The charges come as the two countries' leaders seek to end their months-long trade dispute and with China's lead trade negotiator, Liu He, scheduled to meet with U.S. officials in Washington in coming days.

Huawei is one of China's "national champions," promoted and protected by the ruling Communist Party. The arrest of Meng, the daughter of Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei, sparked outrage in China, which called for her immediate release and condemned the move as a U.S.-led effort to thwart the telecom giant and constrain China's global ambitions.

Shortly after, in a move widely seen as retaliation for Meng's arrest, Chinese authorities detained two Canadians, including a former diplomat, on security charges.

The charges grew from a long-running investigation by federal authorities into a rival Chinese telecom company, ZTE, which investigators found in 2012 was secretly diverting U.S.-made computer equipment to Iran through a front company. That probe uncovered evidence that Huawei also was diverting equipment to Iran through Skycom.

Skycom — on whose board of directors the indictment says Meng served from 2008 to 2009 — was one of the two affiliates charged. The other was Huawei Device USA.

According to the indictment and a Justice Department news release, at least two other defendants have been charged but not yet apprehended. Their identities remain under seal. The indictment also said that the FBI in 2007 interviewed Ren, the founder, and that he "falsely stated" that Huawei did not conduct activity in violation of U.S. export laws. It is not clear whether he has been charged.

In 2017, ZTE pleaded guilty to violating U.S. sanctions against Iran and North Korea, and paid \$892 million in fines imposed by the Justice, Treasury and Commerce departments.

As part of the settlement, ZTE admitted it shipped U.S. telecommunications equipment to Iran in violation of the law that bars shipment of goods originating in the United States to Iran. Investigators also obtained documents that indicated ZTE modeled some of its sanctions-evading behavior after another company, code-named F7.

F7 was understood by government investigators to be a reference to Huawei, said two people familiar with the case.

Since Meng's arrest, Canadian officials have stressed that her case is a legal matter, not a political one. But that message has not been consistent, complicating the standoff.

Shortly after Meng's arrest, Trump suggested he might be willing to make a deal for her release if he could cut a trade agreement with China, raising concerns from observers about politicization of the judicial process.

Asked Monday if Trump's suggestion remained a possibility, Whitaker said: "The U.S. Department of Justice does its investigations and charging decisions independent from the White House."

Last week, Canada's ambassador to China, John McCallum, shocked many by saying at a news conference that he thought Meng could make some "strong arguments" to avoid extradition, including what he termed Trump's "political involvement."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau immediately distanced his government from the comment, and McCallum walked it back — only to tell a reporter the following day that it would be "great" for Canada if the United States dropped the case. Trudeau fired McCallum over the weekend.

Authorities also unsealed a separate 10-count indictment in Washington state, charging two affiliates — Huawei Device Co. and Huawei Device USA — with conspiring to steal trade secrets, wire fraud and obstruction of justice. That indictment alleges Huawei conspired to steal from T-Mobile USA the technical details of a phone-testing robot.

The robot, nicknamed "Tappy," was of such great interest to Huawei that the company secretly took photos and measurements of the robot and, in one instance, stole its arm so that Huawei engineers could try to replicate it, according to prosecutors. Investigators said that after T-

Mobile learned of Huawei's efforts and threatened to sue, Huawei produced a report falsely claiming the thefts were the work of rogue employees. In fact, U.S. officials said, the FBI had obtained emails showing that in July 2013, Huawei offered bonuses to employees based on the value of information they stole from other companies.

"Huawei clearly knew it was part of an organized effort to steal technology," said Annette Hayes, first assistant U.S. attorney for the Western District of Washington. "This is part of Huawei's M.O."

[China] U.S. charges Huawei, affiliates with theft and lying about Iran sanctions (Politico)

[Politico](#) [1/28/2019 6:24 PM, Matthew Choi, 2577K]

The Justice Department on Monday announced criminal charges against Huawei and its affiliates, accusing the Chinese telecommunications firm in two indictments of violating intellectual property law and lying about its compliance with U.S. sanctions against Iran.

Huawei was charged with violating confidentiality agreements with T-Mobile by photographing, measuring and stealing part of a T-Mobile-developed robot, as well as lying to banks about the firm's ties with Iranian affiliate Skycom to appear to comply with U.S. sanctions, acting Attorney General Matt Whitaker said at a Justice Department news conference that was also attended by FBI Director Christopher Wray and other officials.

The actions name Huawei's CFO, Meng Wanzhou, who was arrested Dec. 1 in Vancouver, also on charges of lying about violating U.S. sanctions against Iran, leading to fierce backlash from Beijing and adding strains among Chinese, Canadian and U.S. officials as the three countries renegotiate their trade relationships.

Whitaker reiterated the Justice Department's desire to have Meng, who has been characterized as a Chinese equivalent to Facebook CFO Sheryl Sandberg, extradited to the United States. She had been free on bail in Canada for several weeks, awaiting extradition procedures by the United States. Whitaker said Monday that the department planned to file the extradition paperwork by the end of the month.

The action also comes just two days before the Trump administration will host Chinese Vice Premier Liu He for two days of talks aimed at defusing a bilateral trade war. Trump plans to raise duties on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods to 25 percent, from 10 percent currently, on March 2 if the two sides do not reach a deal. He has already imposed a 25 percent duty on another \$50 billion of Chinese goods, and Beijing has retaliated by hitting \$110 billion of American exports.

POLITICO reported in August that the White House was working on two executive orders and a presidential memorandum that would restrict U.S. industry from using Chinese products in the U.S. telecommunications infrastructure. While not naming Huawei and ZTE directly, the orders would effectively bar the companies from selling to wireless firms that make up the backbone of U.S. networks.

Additionally, President Donald Trump last year signed a defense bill that bars the U.S. government, including the Pentagon, from procuring equipment or services from Chinese telecoms, though it allowed those companies to do business with the U.S. private sector. Sen. Marco Rubio was among lawmakers who wanted to reinstate a full U.S. ban on ZTE that the Trump administration imposed but later lifted. Members of both parties see the Chinese telecoms as vehicles for cyberespionage and intellectual property theft.

On Tuesday, U.S. intelligence chiefs are expected address the growing cybersecurity threat posed by China at the annual Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on worldwide threats. Over the past few months, Washington lawmakers have sounded the alarm posed by Huawei and ZTE, especially as the U.S. moves toward rolling out 5G networks. At a December hearing on Chinese espionage activities, Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley said hysteria about Russian hacking overshadowed a "greater, more existential threat" from China.

Both sides have endeavored to keep the Huawei episode separate from the trade negotiations. But the arrest of the prominent Chinese businesswoman has added to the tense atmosphere.

Altogether, the Justice Department announced 23 new charges on Monday against Huawei and its affiliates: 10 in the case alleging theft of T-Mobile's trade secrets and 13 in the case involving the company's Iranian affiliate Skycom.

Trump has previously hinted he would be willing to use Meng as a bargaining chip, possibly intervening in the Justice Department case against Meng in exchange for "the largest trade deal ever made" with China, Reuters reported in December.

But other senior members of the Trump administration have distanced Meng's case from trade negotiations.

"This is a criminal justice matter. It is totally separate from anything I work on or anything that trade policy people in the administration work on," U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer told CBS in early December.

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products in the U.S. telecommunications infrastructure. While not naming Huawei and ZTE directly, the orders would effectively bar the companies from selling to wireless firms that make up the backbone of U.S. networks.

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On Tuesday, U.S. intelligence chiefs are expected address the growing cybersecurity threat posed by China at the annual Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on worldwide threats. Over the past few months, Washington lawmakers have sounded the alarm posed by Huawei and ZTE, especially as the U.S. moves toward rolling out 5G networks. At a December hearing on Chinese espionage activities, Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley said hysteria about Russian hacking overshadowed a "greater, more existential threat" from China.

Both sides have endeavored to keep the Huawei episode separate from the trade negotiations. But the arrest of the prominent Chinese businesswoman has added to the tense atmosphere.

Altogether, the Justice Department announced 23 new charges on Monday against Huawei and its affiliates: 10 in the case alleging theft of T-Mobile's trade secrets and 13 in the case involving the company's Iranian affiliate Skycom.

Trump has previously hinted he would be willing to use Meng as a bargaining chip, possibly intervening in the Justice Department case against Meng in exchange for "the largest trade deal ever made" with China, Reuters reported in December.

But other senior members of the Trump administration have distanced Meng's case from trade negotiations.

"This is a criminal justice matter. It is totally separate from anything I work on or anything that trade policy people in the administration work on," U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer told CBS in early December.

[China] US unveils its criminal case against Huawei, alleging China giant stole trade secrets and violated Iran sanctions (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/29/2019 12:55 PM, Julia Horowitz, 5847K]

The United States has filed criminal charges against Huawei, escalating its fight against the Chinese tech giant and potentially complicating efforts by Washington and Beijing to negotiate an end to their bruising trade war.

The Justice Department on Monday unsealed two cases against Huawei that detail a slew of allegations. One indictment accuses Huawei of trying to steal trade secrets from T-Mobile (TMUS), and of promising bonuses to employees who collected confidential information on competitors. A second indictment claims the company worked to skirt US sanctions on Iran.

The agency also revealed formal charges against Meng Wanzhou, Huawei's chief financial officer. Meng was arrested in Canada in December, and the United States is looking to extradite her.

"Today we are announcing that we are bringing criminal charges against telecommunications giant Huawei and its associates for nearly two dozen alleged crimes," Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker said in a statement. "China must hold its citizens and Chinese companies accountable for complying with the law."

FBI Director Christopher Wray said at a press conference that Huawei "relied on dishonest business practices that contradict the economic principles that have allowed American companies and the United States to thrive."

"The prosperity that drives our economic security is inherently linked to our national security," Wray said. "And the immense influence that the Chinese government holds over Chinese corporations like Huawei represents a threat to both."

Huawei said Tuesday it was "disappointed" by the US move to bring charges against it.

"The company denies that it or its subsidiary or affiliate have committed any of the asserted violations of US law set forth in each of the indictments, is not aware of any wrongdoing by Ms. Meng, and believes the US courts will ultimately reach the same conclusion," it said in a statement.

The Chinese government reacted angrily to the charges, accusing the United States of using "its state power to smear and crack down on targeted Chinese companies in an attempt to kill their normal and legal business operations."

"We strongly urge the United States to stop its unreasonable crackdown on Chinese companies, including Huawei," Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said in a statement. He added that the United States should "immediately withdraw its arrest warrant on Ms. Meng and refrain from making a formal extradition request to avoid walking farther down a wrong path."

A 10-count indictment, which was filed in Washington state, claims that Huawei worked for years to steal T-Mobile's proprietary phone testing technology, known as "Tappy." Huawei supplied phones to T-Mobile, and had access to some information about Tappy because of that relationship.

Huawei was also building its own phone-testing robot in China. Federal prosecutors claim the company repeatedly directed its own employees to gather details about how Tappy worked — a violation of the confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements it had with T-Mobile.

Employees were allegedly asked to send information such as photos, measurements and the serial numbers of various components. One employee was caught stealing one of the robot's arms by placing it in his bag, according to court documents.

US prosecutors say that Huawei then obstructed justice when the T-Mobile, which is based in Washington, threatened to sue it.

Huawei allegedly came up with a false and misleading report about the attempts to steal Tappy technology, in which it blamed rogue employees. At the same time, the company launched a formal bonus program that rewarded employees who stole trade secrets from competitors, according to the indictment.

The government also unsealed a 13-count indictment against Huawei and Meng in Brooklyn federal court. That document details an alleged scheme by Huawei to deceive financial institutions and the US government about its business in Iran.

According to the indictment, the deception goes back to mid-2007, when Huawei's founder, Ren Zhengfei, falsely told the FBI that the company did not violate any US export laws, and that it had not dealt directly with any Iranian company.

The company and Meng are also said to have claimed that an affiliate, Skycom, was a separate company in order to conduct business in the country, when in fact it was a subsidiary.

US officials claim that more deceptive statements followed a series of Reuters articles detailing Huawei's control of Skycom.

The indictment details an episode in 2013 when Meng is said to have made false claims at a meeting with one of Huawei's banks. Though it's not named in court documents, Meng's lawyer previously identified the bank as HSBC (HSBC).

Meng walked through a PowerPoint presentation in Chinese, according to the indictment. A translation later sent to the bank allegedly included "numerous misrepresentations," such as a claim that Huawei's work with Skycom consisted of "normal business cooperation."

HSBC is said to have cleared more than \$100 million in Skycom transactions that traveled through the United States between 2010 and 2014 before ending the relationship around 2017.

Meng has denied any wrongdoing. Huawei said Tuesday that it had attempted to discuss the case with the US Justice Department after her arrest in December but that "the request was rejected without explanation."

In response to a request for comment, HSBC said that "the US Department of Justice has confirmed that HSBC is not under investigation in this case."

The charges from the United States increase pressure on Huawei, one of China's tech champions and a crucial part of the country's efforts to take a key role in the rollout of superfast 5G wireless networks.

The United States has said for years that Huawei poses a potential national security threat. But government efforts to rein in alleged abuses by the company have escalated in recent months.

Meng's arrest in December set off a geopolitical firestorm and has strained relations between the US, Canada and China. China has repeatedly called the detention of Meng,

who was released on bail, a political move.

But the United States on Monday reiterated its intention to move forward with the extradition process. Meng is due back in court again in Canada on February 6.

Congress is also considering legislation that would ban the sale of US parts to any Chinese telecom firm that has violated US export control laws or sanctions, a measure that expressly targets Huawei.

"It has been clear for some time that Huawei poses a threat to our national security, and I applaud the Trump administration for taking steps to finally hold the company accountable," Senator Mark Warner, a Democrat, said in a statement Monday.

Importantly, the charges come as the United States and China are racing to cut a deal on trade before March 1, when US tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese goods will otherwise rise to 25% from 10%. Vice Premier Liu He is scheduled to travel to the United States for two days of talks starting Wednesday.

It's not clear how Monday's announcement will factor into negotiations. President Donald Trump previously suggested that he may intervene in the Meng case if it would help reach a trade deal with China.

Huawei is under fire in other parts of the world, too.

Earlier this month, a Huawei executive was arrested in Poland on charges of spying for China. The company has since fired the employee. And Germany and other European countries are reportedly considering barring Huawei equipment from the country's 5G networks. The company is already banned from supplying 5G equipment to Australia and New Zealand.

[Afghanistan] Taliban Talks Raise Question of What U.S. Withdrawal From Afghanistan Could Mean (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/29/2019 1:45 AM, Mark Landler, Helene Cooper and Eric Schmitt, 20737K]

President Trump's headway in Afghan peace negotiations with the Taliban raises the same question that has bedeviled other presidents who extracted American troops from foreign wars: Will the departing Americans end up handing over the country to the same ruthless militants that the United States went to war to dislodge?

A hasty American withdrawal, experts said, would erode the authority and legitimacy of the Afghan government, raising the risk that the Taliban could recapture control of the country. Short of that, it could consign Afghanistan to a protracted, bloody civil war, with Taliban fighters besieging the capital, Kabul, as they did in the 1990s.

These scenarios now seem possible because of the progress in direct talks between the United States and the Taliban. The chief American negotiator, Zalmay Khalilzad, said Monday that American and Taliban officials had agreed in principle to the outlines of a deal in which the insurgents would guarantee that Afghan territory is never used by terrorists, setting the stage for a total pullout of American troops.

While current and former American diplomats and military officials voiced cautious optimism about the negotiations, they questioned whether the Taliban and the administration in Kabul would ever agree to a power-sharing arrangement, given that the Taliban still refuse even to speak to the government of President Ashraf Ghani. Some fear that the Taliban will seek to overthrow the government once the Americans are gone.

"It's a pretty significant risk," said Bruce O. Riedel, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, who ran President Barack Obama's first Afghanistan policy review. "It won't be the same people — they're mostly dead. But you will find like-minded extremists taking advantage of the void."

Mr. Trump's eagerness to pull out troops only adds to that risk, he said. The talks with the Taliban accelerated after Mr. Trump ordered the Pentagon to cut the American troop presence in Afghanistan in half. Unlike Mr. Obama or President George W. Bush, Mr. Trump has not visited Afghanistan or built a relationship with Mr. Ghani.

Analysts also questioned whether the Taliban were unified enough to deliver on the agreement, and whether the Afghan National Army and police were strong enough to prevent the country from sliding back into chaos. Perhaps the greatest concern raised by the American officials, many with years of experience fighting the Taliban, is how the United States would enforce the deal and protect its counterterrorism priorities.

"It's a good start," said Gen. John F. Campbell, a former American commander in Afghanistan, "but if our primary strategic interest is that Afghanistan does not become another safe haven for terrorists, we need to put some measurements in place to make sure that doesn't happen."

Such yardsticks, officials said, would include linking the drawdown of American troops over a period of months or a few years to the ability of Afghan security forces to combat any resurgent threat from Al Qaeda, the Islamic State or other violent extremist groups.

Senior national security aides have tried to use an intelligence assessment — which says a complete withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan would lead to an attack on the United States within two years — to convince Mr. Trump that a residual counterterrorism force must remain in the country.

The intelligence assessment, initially prepared in 2017 as part of Mr. Trump's Afghanistan strategy review, was renewed late last year, according to Defense Department officials.

During internal discussions, Jim Mattis, who resigned as defense secretary last month, pointed to the estimate that some 20 terrorist groups, many of them offshoots of Al Qaeda and the Islamic State, would quickly use the freedom afforded by an American troop pullout to try to launch operations against Western targets.

Concluding that Mr. Trump does not have a grasp of the internal politics and feuding that have vexed American policymakers in Afghanistan for the past 18 years, Defense Department officials have tried to put the consequences of a full American pullout in as stark terms as possible. If the troops are withdrawn, they argue, an attack on the United States could occur in two years and Mr. Trump would shoulder the blame.

Mr. Mattis's successor, Acting Defense Secretary Patrick M. Shanahan, told reporters on Monday that while he had been briefed on the negotiations with the Taliban, the Defense Department had not been asked yet to prepare for a complete withdrawal.

Defense officials said the Pentagon wanted to keep a counterterrorism force on the ground in Afghanistan, perhaps stationed at Bagram Air Base near Kabul. Such a force, they said, would focus primarily on conducting raids against members of some of the 20 terrorist groups on the intelligence assessment list.

The groups include the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan, known as Islamic State in Khorasan, and Al Qaeda. It also includes the Haqqani network, but that group is at the core of the Afghan Taliban, so it was unclear how negotiations would address that.

"It's necessary to provide our own counterterrorism operation so that we can keep a lid on things and prevent these groups from being able to run around without fear of drone strikes," said Caitlin Forrest, an Afghanistan expert with the Institute for the Study of War.

Other experts said American counterterrorism operations in Yemen and Libya — where the United States has a very small number of troops working with local security and intelligence agencies — could serve as a model for missions in Afghanistan.

"The residual agreement will include intelligence assets and a residual counterterrorism liaison or perhaps rotating force," predicted Karl W. Eikenberry, a former top American commander in Afghanistan who later served as the ambassador to Kabul.

Barnett R. Rubin, an Afghanistan specialist who is a senior fellow at New York University's Center on International Cooperation, said other options included coupling a strong intelligence-gathering apparatus on the ground with the United States' ability to carry out drone or other airstrikes from elsewhere in the region or from warships at sea.

Yet another possibility would be to create a new counterterrorism force authorized by the United Nations Security Council, and include American and Afghan participation. "The best counterterrorism force is a government including the Taliban that wants to cooperate," Mr. Rubin said.

James Dobbins, a former top Obama administration official for Afghanistan and Pakistan, said it was imperative that the United States remain in Afghanistan while the Taliban and Afghan government enter into talks and reach any agreement, and leave only when a deal is implemented.

"Don't withdraw until there is an enduring agreement that provides for peace," Mr. Dobbins said. "If we pull out too soon, it means the country descends into civil war, and extremist groups like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State gain new scope for far-flung attacks."

Afghan officials are especially suspicious that Mr. Trump will make a deal with the Taliban behind their backs. His emissary, Mr. Khalilzad, insisted on Monday that he did not discuss a transitional Afghan government with the Taliban during their six days of talks in Doha, Qatar — an assertion that some in Afghanistan found difficult to believe.

"They're deeply worried they're about to be sold out by the U.S., and rumors are rife in

Kabul that the U.S. is making significant concessions without the Afghans at the table," said Daniel F. Feldman, who served as special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan under Mr. Obama.

Mr. Feldman said Mr. Khalilzad deserved time to show results. But Mr. Trump, who is hungry for a foreign-policy victory after the government shutdown, may not have the patience to wait for the diplomacy with the Taliban to bear fruit. And once the troops are gone, the ability of the United States to influence events will rapidly ebb.

The ultimate question, analysts said, is whether the Trump administration viewed its goal as simply withdrawing troops or leaving behind a comprehensive settlement.

"Is this the beginning of the end of the U.S. war in Afghanistan or the beginning of the end of the war in Afghanistan?" said Laurel E. Miller, who succeeded Mr. Feldman as Mr. Obama's special representative.

Ms. Miller said she believed the Afghans were resilient enough to stand up to a resurgent Taliban. But President Ghani has warned that without American support and money, his government would quickly collapse.

"We will not be able to support our army for six months without U.S. support and U.S. capabilities," he said a year ago on the CBS program "60 Minutes."

[Afghanistan] U.S., Taliban move closer to deal on American troop exit (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/28/2019 7:22 PM, Pamela Constable, et al., 9763K]

U.S. and Taliban officials have moved closer to an agreement that could meet a Taliban demand for withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan, officials here indicated Monday, a potential step toward ending more than 17 years of American involvement in the country's long conflict.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, speaking from his palace in Kabul, addressed what appeared to be a significant breakthrough in talks between American officials and Taliban representatives in Doha, Qatar, calling on insurgents to begin "serious talks" with his government and embrace a "speedy peace."

The tentative agreement for a framework to pull out U.S. troops, in exchange for Taliban promises to deny al-Qaeda and the Islamic State a foothold on Afghan soil, comes as Washington races to clinch a deal just weeks after President Trump ordered the withdrawal of up to half of the 14,000 American troops in the country but stopped short of announcing the plan.

But both U.S. and Afghan officials said several major issues remain to be resolved before a peace agreement can be reached, including U.S. demands for an extended cease-fire and the Afghan government's insistence on being included in talks about the Taliban's future role in government and society.

Strong support across the U.S. government for a political solution reflects a recognition of the elusiveness of a military victory against a militant group that has defied almost two decades of warfare with U.S. and NATO forces.

It also reflects the toll that a war that began in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks has taken on Afghanistan's people, government and economy.

During six days of talks in Qatar last week, Taliban and U.S. representatives outlined but did not formally agree on a broad plan in which U.S. troops would leave the country in exchange for the insurgents pledging to ensure that Afghan territory would not be used by them or other Islamist militant groups to harm American interests.

Significant obstacles remain to reaching a peace deal, though — or even beginning substantive talks.

"This is a major breakthrough. It's the closest we've ever been to ending this 18-year war. But a framework shouldn't be mistaken for a deal. There is still a lot to flesh out," said Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia program at the Wilson Center. "Above all, the Afghan government needs to be brought into these discussions. And even with all this momentum, a fundamental challenge will remain in place: how to ensure that the Taliban holds up its end of the bargain and doesn't take up arms again, in the event of a deal."

Though U.S. officials expressed cautious optimism Monday, the Pentagon hasn't adjusted its plans to continue aiding Afghan national forces fighting the Taliban.

In Washington, acting defense secretary Patrick Shanahan called the developments "encouraging" but said he had not been asked to prepare for a full troop withdrawal.

News of a potential breakthrough generated anxiety within the Afghan government, which has been excluded from the talks because the insurgents view it as an American puppet. Speaking in a televised address, Ghani warned that a deal without Afghan government involvement could lead to the kind of "catastrophic" civil strife that followed the Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989.

Speaking after being briefed by Zalmay Khalilzad, the Trump administration's special envoy for Afghan peace, Ghani assured Afghans that he would not accept a deal that undermines their rights and the nation's unity.

Khalilzad told the New York Times on Monday that U.S. and Taliban officials had agreed in principle on the two key elements of an eventual deal. But he said a U.S. troop pullout still hinges on the Taliban's acceptance of a cease-fire and direct talks with the Afghan government on domestic issues as part of a full-fledged peace accord.

"Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, and 'everything' must include an intra-Afghan dialogue and comprehensive ceasefire," he said Saturday on Twitter after leaving Doha. Talks between the two sides are expected to resume next month.

Ghani, who met with Khalilzad late Sunday in Kabul, said in his speech that no agreements would be concluded without the government's full participation.

Taliban officials, for their part, issued a statement late Saturday saying that progress had been made but that further talks were needed to deal with "unsolved matters." The statement added pointedly that Taliban policy was made "very clear" during the talks: "Until

the issue of withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan is agreed upon, progress in other issues is impossible."

Among crucial issues to be addressed in future talks are the Taliban's role in a post-peace governing system and the extent to which its strict Islamic codes could be reimposed on a society that has known democratic freedoms for the past 17 years. A statement from Ghani's office on Monday said Khalilzad told him the Doha talks did not include such issues.

The issue of Afghan inclusion in the peace process is especially sensitive for Ghani, who is seeking reelection in a vote slated for July. He has opposed suggestions that an interim government be formed to implement a peace plan, and he has expressed concern that a hasty U.S.-Taliban deal could come at the expense of Afghan democracy and freedoms.

Several Afghan critics derided Ghani's assertion that his government would be consulted on U.S. troop pullout plans. They noted that Trump has already said he wants to withdraw thousands of troops and that Khalilzad has been under White House pressure to arrange a deal with the Taliban as fast as possible.

"America does not need our advice or consultation for leaving. It came here for its own interests, and it will leave for its own interests," said Hafiz Mansour, an opposition legislator. "Trump can decide to pull out troops at any moment, and the U.S. is looking for a face-saving approach to do it. But our troops do not have the capacity to defend the country. We will need foreign help for years to come."

Trump's troop reduction plans have dismayed military officials who have said Afghan forces require ongoing help to execute offensives and defend urban centers.

Ghani has worked closely with U.S. military officials since taking office, strongly endorsing a buildup in U.S. training and advising of Afghan forces over the past two years. At an international economic conference last week in Davos, Switzerland, Ghani said that 45,000 members of the Afghan security forces had died since he took office in 2014, a much higher toll than previously reported.

Washington's push for a deal comes 18 months after the president — initially setting aside his impulse to order an immediate withdrawal — approved a strategy for Afghanistan that included thousands more U.S. troops and more-aggressive rules of engagement.

Since then, the president has grown impatient with the lack of progress, as a stalemate between U.S.-backed Afghan forces and the Taliban persisted and violence continued to spike.

Against that backdrop, according to Barnett Rubin, a former State Department official and Afghanistan expert at New York University, U.S. negotiators have been authorized for the first time to put the withdrawal of American troops on the table in their talks with militant representatives.

"Our national security strategy has now changed so that fighting terrorism is no longer our top priority," Rubin said, referring to the Pentagon's new focus on competing with China and Russia. "So we don't want to have so much of our resources tied up in Afghanistan."

Even if a peace deal emerges with the Taliban, both Washington and Kabul still have to contend with a common enemy in the Islamic State, an offshoot of which has been carrying out attacks in Afghanistan.

The Pentagon might theoretically seek to withdraw the bulk of troops under a peace deal but leave a counterterrorism mission in the country to combat the Islamic State and al-Qaeda — or conduct periodic strikes from outside Afghanistan.

Hanging over the flurry of diplomatic efforts are questions about how much time Trump will allow to attempt a negotiated solution.

"The American departure could be 280 characters away," said Christopher Kolenda, a retired Army colonel who commanded troops in Afghanistan and took part in talks with the Taliban during the Obama administration. "The question is: Does the United States depart as part of a durable peace agreement that supports our interests, or does it depart in a way that allows Afghanistan to descend to a new level of civil war?"

[Afghanistan] U.S.-Taliban talks hint at change in Afghanistan. Here's why.
(Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/28/2019 2:13 PM, Adam Taylor, 9763K]

It has been more than 17 years since the start of the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan. Now a new round of talks with the Taliban has raised hopes that an end to the war could finally be in sight.

Following six days of talks in Qatar last week, my colleague Pamela Constable reported, representatives of the United States and Taliban "outlined but did not formally agree on a broad plan in which U.S. troops would leave the country in exchange for the insurgents pledging to ensure that Afghan territory would not be used by them or other Islamist militant groups to harm American interests."

After so many false starts in previous negotiations, it's worth asking whether anything has actually changed this time — and whether either side has made concessions on some of the key issues. Here's what we know.

How unusual are U.S. talks with the Taliban?

In the past, the United States has often avoided talking directly with the group. Even when the Taliban controlled most of Afghanistan, between 1996 and 2001, the United States did not formally recognize the group as the legitimate Afghan government (only a handful of countries ever did).

Bill Richardson, then the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, traveled to Kabul in 1998 to negotiate with the Taliban. Although he secured an agreement to hold peace talks to end the fighting then taking place in the country, the deal broke down shortly after his departure. A subsequent effort the following year also failed.

After the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the United States led an invasion of Afghanistan in a bid to capture al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. U.S.-led forces ousted the Taliban from control across much of the country, but the group remained a powerful insurgent force

and later regained control of many areas it had lost.

In 2010, then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates suggested that there could be reconciliation with the Taliban that would allow the group to remain part of Afghanistan's "political fabric." But talks between the United States and the Taliban were complicated by Washington's belief that the peace process should be an "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned" process; the insurgents refused to meet with the Afghan government, which they consider a U.S. puppet.

This changed last summer, when U.S. representatives began meeting with the Taliban in Qatar — without any representatives of the Afghan government present — and the United States appointed Zalmay Khalilzad, a former U.S. ambassador, to be an envoy for peace talks.

Has the United States changed its view of troop withdrawal?

The Taliban has long said that the removal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan is a necessary requirement for a peace deal. They may have a sympathetic ear in President Trump, who is a critic of the continued U.S. presence in Afghanistan — though he has been persuaded several times that the U.S. military still needs troops there.

But a full withdrawal has long hinged on whether Afghan government forces would be able to handle the threat from the Taliban without U.S. support. Even with U.S. support, the Afghan government is estimated to control only 55.5 percent of the country, according to the most recent report from the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

The U.S. military also has been forced to scale back its face-to-face contact with Afghan security forces after several "insider" attacks last year.

It's unclear whether the U.S. has faith that the Afghan government can either withstand pressure from the Taliban or persuade the group to agree to a lasting cease-fire. Either way, critics of talks with the Taliban say they can't be trusted not to work against the Afghan government.

"The Taliban have been playing the long game, hoping to wait the Americans out before defeating the inadequately trained Afghan forces," Husain Haqqani, a former Pakistani ambassador to the United States, wrote in Foreign Policy in December.

Has the Taliban changed its views on the use of its territory?

The group has long argued that its ambitions are only local, but it has been aligned with international terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda. It also harbored bin Laden from 1996 onward.

The United States has long argued that the group needs to stop offering safe haven to terrorists such as bin Laden. Despite years of talks, however, the Taliban consistently refused to eject him, often saying he was lost or demanding more evidence that he was involved in acts of terrorism.

"It became clear that the call for more evidence was more a delaying tactic than a sincere effort to solve the bin Laden issue," former assistant secretary of state Karl Inderfurth told

The Washington Post in October 2001.

Speaking to the New York Times on Monday, Khalilzad, the U.S. envoy, said the Taliban had committed "to our satisfaction" to making sure Afghanistan would not be used this way again. It's not yet clear what those commitments might be.

Notably, the Taliban is not closely allied with the Islamic State, which now has a presence in Afghanistan. But researchers have suggested that al-Qaeda has a "serious skeleton capability in the region" that could allow it to regroup.

What role is there for the Afghan government?

The Taliban has long refused to deal with Afghanistan's government, arguing that it is not legitimate. But Khalilzad suggested to the New York Times that the Taliban would need to agree to a cease-fire and talk directly to the Afghan government before talks could proceed further.

It is not yet known yet whether the Taliban would agree to those terms, but the Afghan government has welcomed the possibility of direct negotiations. On Monday, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani called on the Taliban to "begin serious talks" with his government and reach a "speedy peace."

The biggest question is whether the Taliban will be able to give up on its long-held view of creating a purely Islamic state to make a political settlement with the democratically elected government — as well as whether it can make improvements in key areas such as the treatment of women and minorities.

[Afghanistan] The Trump administration's tentative deal with the Taliban could return Afghanistan to chaos (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/28/2019 3:52 PM, Staff, 9763K]

A tentative deal between the Trump administration and the Taliban appears to offer the United States a negotiated way out of its longest war — a prospect most Americans would welcome. Unfortunately, it seems to do so mostly on the enemy's terms. U.S. forces would leave the country, but there would be no guarantee that the government and political order they have spent 17 years defending, at enormous cost, would survive — or that the gains Afghans have made in women's and other civil rights would be preserved.

As described by envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, the "framework" for an accord reached in talks last week begins with a commitment by the United States to a troop pullout and a Taliban pledge to prevent Afghan territory from serving as a base for international terrorism. Mr. Khalilzad said that bare-bones exchange could be supplemented by the Taliban's agreement to a cease-fire and talks with the Afghan government. But the insurgents have not yet agreed to those steps; the group is to conduct internal consultations about them before talks resume next month.

Unless it were linked to a full peace settlement, a withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces would leave the Afghan government deeply vulnerable. As it is, its army and police forces have been suffering heavy losses and losing ground to the Taliban even with the backing of a modest number of Western troops. While some analysts believe the Taliban would not seek to re-create the fundamentalist and profoundly repressive regime they led up until late

2001, they remain implacably hostile to democracy. Afghan women say they fear any end to the conflict would come at their expense.

It's also not clear how the Taliban would deliver on its promise to "prevent Afghanistan from ever becoming a platform for international terrorist groups or individuals," as Mr. Khalilzad described it to the New York Times. As it is, a branch of the Islamic State has entrenched itself in the mountainous east of the country, with the aim of establishing a new caliphate. U.S. and Afghan government forces have been unable to eliminate the terrorists, and it's hard to believe the Taliban would have the capacity to do so even if it had the will.

Negotiations with the Taliban are the only way out of the Afghan war. When Mr. Trump increased U.S. troop levels to 14,000 in 2017, his purpose was to force the enemy to bargain. Now that bargaining is underway, the president has seemingly grown eager to pull the plug on the mission. Last month, he ordered the force reduced by nearly half. That, no doubt, has curtailed Mr. Khalilzad's leverage. The Taliban may calculate that, rather than insist on an acceptable political settlement, the White House will settle for the fig leaf of their assurances about preventing terrorist attacks.

It should not. An end to the Afghan war is desirable, but not at the expense of everything the United States has helped to build there since 2001, including a civil society where girls go to school. President Ashraf Ghani warned Monday against rushing into a deal that could return Afghanistan to the chaos it saw following the Soviet withdrawal. He should be heeded.

Presidential Tweets

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet1](#) [1/28/2019 8:16 AM] Tariffs on the "dumping" of Steel in the United States have totally revived our Steel Industry. New and expanded plants are happening all over the U.S. We have not only saved this important industry, but created many jobs. Also, billions paid to our treasury. A BIG WIN FOR U.S.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet2](#) [1/28/2019 8:21 AM] Numerous states introducing Bible Literacy classes, giving students the option of studying the Bible. Starting to make a turn back? Great!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet3](#) [1/28/2019 8:41 AM] Howard Schultz doesn't have the "guts" to run for President! Watched him on @60Minutes last night and I agree with him that he is not the "smartest person." Besides, America already has that! I only hope that Starbucks is still paying me their rent in Trump Tower!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet4](#) [1/28/2019 8:50 AM] "In the Media's effort to destroy the President, they are actually destroying themselves. Given all of the tremendous headwinds this President has faced, it's amazing he has accomplished so much." DERROY MURDOCK @foxandfriends I agree!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet5](#) [1/28/2019 9:28 PM] In the beautiful Midwest, windchill temperatures are reaching minus 60 degrees, the coldest ever recorded. In coming days, expected to get even colder. People can't last outside even for minutes. What the hell is going on with Global Waming? Please come back fast, we need you!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet6](#) [1/28/2019 9:46 PM] How does Da Nang Dick (Blumenthal) serve on the Senate Judiciary Committee when he defrauded the American people about his so called War Hero status in Vietnam, only to later admit, with tears pouring down his face, that he was never in Vietnam. An embarrassment to our Country!

{End of Report}



DHS MORNING BRIEFING

Prepared for the Office of Public Affairs (OPA)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

By TechMIS

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[Mobile User Copy](#)

TO: Homeland Security Secretary & Staff

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Top News

Congress to pursue divergent paths to reopening government, but stalemate no closer to resolution (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/21/2019 2:59 PM, Jeff Stein and Erica Werner, 9763K]

Congress takes up legislation in coming days to reopen the federal government after a new offer from President Trump, but divergent efforts in the House and Senate look destined to go nowhere, leaving hundreds of thousands of federal workers facing a second missed paycheck at week's end with the impasse no closer to resolution.

The Senate, led by Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), will take up a proposal announced by Trump on Saturday to trade temporary protections for young undocumented immigrants and others for \$5.7 billion the president is seeking for his border wall. The legislation, released late Monday, would reopen the government through Sept. 30 while funding a variety of other immigration security measures and spending \$12.7 billion on hurricane and wildfire disaster relief. But Democrats have rejected the plan, so it appears unlikely to garner the 60 votes necessary to advance.

The House, led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), will pass a series of spending bills that would reopen portions of the government that have nothing to do with the wall. The legislation will include some security priorities supported by both parties, including a total of about \$1 billion for immigration judges and ports of entry along the border. But the House

legislation is dead on arrival in the Senate, where McConnell has made clear he will not advance any spending bills Trump won't sign.

The bill being voted on in the Senate also contains significant changes to asylum procedures for Central American minors, a fact that came to light only when the legislation was released late Monday night and sparked an angry reaction from immigrant rights activists. The legislation would require these minors to apply for asylum in their home countries, not at the U.S. border, as now occurs, and they would be returned home if they sought to apply for asylum at the U.S. border. It would also put new caps on asylum claims from Central American minors.

These changes, along with some others in the bill, appeared certain to harden Democratic opposition to the legislation.

The partial government shutdown, already the longest in U.S. history, entered its 31st day Monday.

Even if Trump's proposal fails in the Senate, Republicans hope to use the development to put the onus on Democrats and cast them as the ones who are standing in the way of solving the shutdown, after a series of public polls have shown Trump blamed more than Democrats for the impasse.

"Democrats are kidding themselves (they don't really believe it!) if they say you can stop Crime, Drugs, Human Trafficking and Caravans without a Wall or Steel Barrier. Stop playing games and give America the Security it deserves. A Humanitarian Crisis!" Trump wrote Monday on Twitter.

"Nothing has changed with the latest Republican offer; President Trump and Senate Republicans are still saying, 'Support my plan or the government stays shut.' That isn't a compromise or a negotiation — it's simply more hostage-taking," said Justin Goodman, a spokesman for Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.). "Democrats are staying firm with our position: Open the government first, and then we can have a serious discussion about the issues at hand."

Trump also planned to meet with conservative leaders on Tuesday to sell them on his plan, according to an official familiar with the meeting, following criticism coming from some on the right who have characterized it as "amnesty" for unauthorized immigrants.

For their part, House Democrats have been discussing the need to set out in greater detail their own priorities for border security, to show what they support and not just what they oppose, an effort that is expected to be fleshed out this week and could take the shape of a public announcement or legislation to fund the Homeland Security Department, which has been shut down along with dozens of other agencies since Dec. 22. The Democratic priorities could include funding for things such as sensors, drones and more customs officers — but no money for Trump's wall, aides said.

The shutdown is beginning to hurt the American economy amid a number of emerging threats to the nation's economic health, from Trump's ongoing trade war to slowing expansions in China and Germany. JPMorgan projected that the economy is losing at least \$1.5 billion a week from the shutdown, and financial elites gathered this week in Davos,

Switzerland, have expressed alarm that another recession may be on the horizon.

The Trump administration has taken certain steps to blunt the impact of the shutdown, effects of which will nevertheless multiply over time, including at airports, where Transportation Security Administration employees are increasingly calling out sick. The TSA says that as of Sunday, 10 percent of employees are taking unscheduled absences, compared with 3.1 percent a year ago. "Many employees are reporting that they are not able to report to work due to financial limitations," the agency said.

Without action by Congress and Trump, hundreds of thousands of federal employees are also set to miss their second paycheck Friday. On Sunday, the National Governors Association sent a letter to congressional leaders saying some states are beginning to run out of money to pay federal welfare benefits used by 1 million adults and 2.5 million children, with North Carolina expected to exhaust its funding in early February.

The Trump administration also provided money for states to administer food stamps through February but has said it cannot guarantee that benefits would continue should the shutdown stretch into March.

It is also not clear if the Internal Revenue Service, working with only 60 percent of its overall staff, is prepared for tax filing season to begin this month.

Schumer released legislation Sunday to prohibit landlords from evicting federal workers or contractors hurt by the shutdown, although that bill was not expected to pass.

Trump's proposal Saturday represented his first attempt since the shutdown began to offer a broader deal that would involve both border security and other parts of the immigration system. The president offered three years of deportation protections for immigrants who were brought to the United States illegally as children and had qualified for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which the president terminated earlier in his tenure. (A federal court has delayed the end of the program.)

Democrats rejected the proposal from the start, saying that the government cannot be held hostage and must be reopened before negotiations on immigration policy can begin. They added they would not trade a temporary measure for a permanent wall and pointed out that Trump was offering only to temporarily prolong a program he tried to kill. Trump also offered to back off plans to end a program, known as temporary protected status, that has allowed hundreds of thousands of people to come to the United States after fleeing natural disasters and violent conflict at home. All told, about 1 million immigrants covered under DACA and TPS would be eligible for temporary relief, the administration said.

Even as his proposal was rejected by Democrats, Trump also faced fire from some conservatives who derided his immigration overtures as "amnesty," although the opposition did not appear as widespread as last year's when similar complaints torpedoed an even bigger deal that would have created a path to citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants while fully funding Trump's border wall.

Trump's offer, followed by its swift rejection by Democrats and the hard right, left the shutdown looking as intractable as ever — even while serving as evidence that Republicans are growing uneasy about allowing the shutdown to continue indefinitely. Democrats have

maintained a united front throughout the standoff, and after Pelosi released a letter last week suggesting Trump delay his Jan. 29 State of the Union address unless the shutdown has been resolved, McConnell encouraged Trump to shift the debate by making his new offer, which McConnell promised to bring to a vote — even though McConnell had previously said that only a bipartisan agreement would break the impasse.

The shutdown is affecting about a quarter of federal agencies but is limited in scope because Congress passed legislation funding the Pentagon and some other major agencies, including the Health and Human Services Department. Medicare and Social Security benefits are not affected because they flow independently of congressional appropriations.

Trump long claimed that the border wall would be paid for by Mexico before he started demanding billions from U.S. taxpayers to build it. The \$5.7 billion he is asking for now would pay for about 230 miles of new wall.

Senate immigration bill includes border wall money, 52,000 detention beds, 750 border agents (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/21/2019 4:39 PM, Stephen Dinan, 527K]

Senate Republicans on Monday released the text of their bill to carry out President Trump's new immigration plan to end the government shutdown, saying they're intent on holding an initial vote later this week.

The bill, dubbed "End the Shutdown and Secure the Border Act," includes Mr. Trump's \$5.7 billion request for border fencing and a new \$12.7 billion disaster relief package, combined with bills to reopen nine government departments that have been without money for a month.

It would also grant a three-year amnesty from deportation to about 1 million migrants who are currently here under executive actions, but whose legal status beyond that is highly questionable. That includes some 700,000 illegal immigrant "Dreamers" who are protected by the Obama-era DACA program, and another 325,000 migrants who are under a tentative humanitarian protected status.

The bill also includes funding for a daily average of 52,000 detention beds to hold immigrants awaiting deportation. That's in line with Mr. Trump's request, but far more than Democrats have said they are willing to accept. A new contingent of 750 Border Patrol agents is also part of the plan — which Democrats have also been cool to.

And the legislation includes changes to the law to allow for children from key Central American countries to apply for asylum from outside the U.S. — but in exchange, it allows the government to speed up deportations for illegal immigrant children from Central American who sneak into the U.S., putting them on par with children from Mexico who are already subject to expedited removals.

The bill, introduced by Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby, runs to 1,301 pages.

"The president has proposed a serious compromise to end this shutdown," Mr. Shelby said. "It would not only fund the government and secure the border, but also provide immigration

reforms the Democrats have long supported."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell could bring it to the chamber floor Tuesday and force an initial vote to head off a Democratic filibuster Thursday.

But Democratic leaders have already signaled resistance to the plan even before seeing the details, based on the outline Mr. Trump announced over the weekend.

Prodded by left-wing activists and immigrant-rights advocates, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has called the concept of a border wall "an immorality" and has said she won't approve any new money for the project.

Democrats also object to changes to speed up deportations from within the U.S., arguing the children and families attempting to jump the border aren't illegal immigrants as much as they are refugees from a rough life back home, who deserve a chance to make a claim for protection here.

Instead Democrats say they want to focus on drug trafficking at the border, and they have proposed more customs officers and scanning technology to man the land border crossings where they say most of those hard drugs transit.

A bill to reopen the government's shuttered departments, combined with those more limited border measures, is slated for a vote in the House this week.

House Dems add \$1 billion in border spending to reopen government (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/19/2019 11:12 AM, John Bowden, 3038K]

House Democrats will offer \$1 billion in funding for border security measures in a bill to reopen the government next week, a Democratic source told CNN on Saturday.

CNN reports that none of the money will be eligible for use in construction of President Trump's signature border wall as Democrats view other border security measures as more effective.

News of the Democrats' plan comes hours before Trump is scheduled to give a live address at the White House on border security and the ongoing partial government shutdown, which entered its 29th day on Saturday.

The bill would be the 10th Democratic bill to reopen the government since Democrats took control of the House this month, though none of the plans have made headway in the Senate due to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's (R-Ky.) refusal to bring up any bill for a vote without the support of Trump.

Speculation has swirled around the planned announcement over whether Trump will offer his own compromise package to Democrats, or whether he will instead declare a national emergency over illegal border crossings and seek to circumvent Congress to acquire funds for the border wall.

Trump appeared to back away from the latter plan earlier this month, lamenting that such an option would likely face court battles from Democrats.

"It's the easy way out, but Congress should do this," Trump told reporters at the time.

The fight over the shutdown ramped up this week after Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) wrote a letter to Trump urging him to reschedule or submit in writing his annual State of the Union speech.

Trump later countered by preventing congressional delegations from traveling overseas on military flights during the shutdown. Trump's move canceled plans for Democrats to visit troops in Afghanistan over the weekend.

Polls have suggested that more Americans view Trump as at fault for the shutdown, while smaller percentages blame House Democrats.

Senate GOP blocks bill to reopen Homeland Security (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 11:18 AM, Jordain Carney] Senate Republicans blocked legislation on Friday that would have temporarily reopened the Department of Homeland Security.

Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) asked to take up a House-passed bill that would fund the department through Feb. 8. It's the third time Democrats have tried to bring up the stopgap measure.

But Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) objected to the request "on behalf of the majority leader," referring to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.).

It's the third time McConnell has blocked the bill to temporarily reopen DHS, which is at the center of the shutdown fight. He's also blocked a bill that would reopen the rest of impacted department and agencies three times, most recently on Thursday.

McConnell warned for weeks that he will not let the Senate take up any government funding bill that isn't the product of a deal between congressional Democrats and Trump, arguing they would amount to "show votes."

"There's no way around it. Having show votes in the Senate doesn't solve the problem," McConnell told reporters on Tuesday.

But Democrats are trying to build pressure on the Senate GOP leader, who has remained publicly on the sidelines amid the stalemate between Trump and Democrats.

"Senate Republicans again in a few minutes, at the request of President Trump, who does not yet want this to happen, will object to that request," Kaine said on Friday before he tried to pass the DHS bill.

"If the issue in dispute is border security ... then why punish the very people who are providing that safety and security? How does it help promote safety and security to not pay the very border patrol agents charged with protecting the border?" Kaine asked.

Kaine is expected to come back to the floor multiple times next week to try to get the House bills passed. He's also forcing the Senate to hold a rare Saturday session.

Under the Senate rules any one senator can ask for consent to vote on or pass a bill. A

single senator can also block that request.

The back-and-forth on the Senate floor comes as the shutdown is expected to enter its 30th day on Sunday with no clear path forward.

Roughly a quarter of the government has been shut down since Dec. 22 over an entrenched fight on funding for Trump's proposed wall on the U.S.-Mexico border wall.

Trump is demanding more than \$5 billion for his signature wall. Democratic leadership has pointed to \$1.3 billion as their cap and argued that it must go to fencing.

Trump says he's 'still thinking' about Pelosi's request to postpone State of the Union (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/20/2019 9:06 AM, Brett Samuels, 3038K]

President Trump said early Sunday that he will respond "soon" to Speaker Nancy Pelosi's (D-Calif.) request to postpone the State of the Union address amid an escalating clash between the two leaders.

"Nancy, I am still thinking about the State of the Union speech, there are so many options - including doing it as per your written offer (made during the Shutdown, security is no problem), and my written acceptance," Trump tweeted.

"While a contract is a contract, I'll get back to you soon!"

Pelosi's spokesman, Drew Hamill, responded on Twitter that the Speaker's office "never received a 'written acceptance' from the President."

Trump had not previously addressed Pelosi's call to reschedule the State of the Union directly, though multiple reports indicated the White House was weighing alternative options, including delivering the speech in the Senate chamber.

Pelosi said last week that the address scheduled for Jan. 29 should be postponed due to the ongoing partial government shutdown, which has lasted 30 days and counting. She suggested the two sides "work together to determine another suitable date after government has re-opened."

The Democratic leader has cited security concerns associated with the shuttering of several government agencies, which has left Secret Service members without pay.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), however, said the agency would be able to guarantee the safety of the event, despite the shutdown.

The president indirectly responded to Pelosi's postponement by refusing to provide U.S. military transportation for her planned congressional delegation trip to Afghanistan and Belgium.

Trump on Sunday lashed out at Pelosi in a series of tweets, targeting her over her opposition to his immigration proposal that would reopen the government.

The president decried her as a "radical Democrat" and accused her and other party

members of acting with the 2020 election in mind.

"Nancy Pelosi has behaved so irrationally & has gone so far to the left that she has now officially become a Radical Democrat," Trump wrote in a tweet. "She is so petrified of the 'lefties' in her party that she has lost control."

"And by the way, clean up the streets in San Francisco, they are disgusting!" the president added in a barb at Pelosi's district.

Trump on Saturday proposed a deal that would include more than \$5 billion in funding for a wall along the southern border; a three-year extension of protections for "Dreamers," immigrants who benefit from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, and Temporary Protected Status holders; and funding for additional immigration judges.

Pelosi called Trump's proposal a "non-starter" shortly before the president unveiled the details. Other Democrats joined her in opposition a short time later, calling it "non-serious" and "more hostage taking."

Some hard-line conservatives panned the proposal, likening it to amnesty.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said he would bring Trump's proposal up for a vote this week.

Trump To Pelosi: 'I'll Get Back To You Soon' On State Of The Union (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/20/2019 10:14 AM, Evie Fordham, 867K]

President Donald Trump said he had "so many options" for delivering the State of the Union address after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi asked him to delay it because of the partial government shutdown.

"Nancy, I am still thinking about the State of the Union speech, there are so many options – including doing it as per your written offer (made during the Shutdown, security is no problem), and my written acceptance," Trump wrote on Twitter Sunday. "While a contract is a contract, I'll get back to you soon!"

Pelosi sent Trump a letter Wednesday seeking to delay the State of the Union address or have the president deliver a written address. Pelosi cited the Department of Homeland Security's partial funding and said the Secret Service would not be able to provide adequate security. Trump's address is scheduled for Jan. 29.

Many congressional Republicans have floated plans to allow Trump to bypass Pelosi's invitation to deliver the address. Republican Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul suggested Trump bypass the House of Representatives entirely and deliver the speech from the Senate floor Thursday. Republican Kentucky Rep. Thomas Massie echoed Paul's suggestion in a tweet Saturday.

"Could [Donald Trump] deliver the State of the Union Address in the Senate? The Senate floor is smaller than the House floor, but as you can see in this photograph, there are enough seats if some of us sit in the gallery," Massie wrote on Twitter Saturday.

Pelosi and Trump's standoff stems from the parties' disagreement over border wall funding

that led to the partial government shutdown in the first place. Sunday marked day 30 of the partial government shutdown triggered by the inability of Congress and the White House to agree on funding the southern border wall Trump wants. Pelosi has said a border wall would be "immoral."

Trump also accused the Democrats of being only focused on 2020 after Pelosi rejected Trump's offer to bring Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) extensions into a compromise to reopen the government Saturday.

"Nancy Pelosi and some of the Democrats turned down my offer yesterday before I even got up to speak," Trump wrote on Twitter Sunday morning. "They don't see crime [and] drugs, they only see 2020 – which they are not going to win. Best economy! They should do the right thing for the Country [and] allow people to go back to work."

Homeland Security says it will provide security assistance to Super Bowl despite shutdown (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/18/2019 11:57 PM, Noah Gray, 5847K]

The Department of Homeland Security says it will still provide federal support to the Super Bowl this year, despite the partial government shutdown.

Super Bowl LIII -- an event that requires the support of more than 40 federal, local and state agencies -- takes significant federal support in order to be played, according to federal and local officials. The Atlanta Police Department and Department of Homeland Security will take the lead on security plans, officials say.

DHS press secretary Tyler Q. Houlton told CNN that, regardless of the shutdown, DHS and other federal agencies will be able to continue with plans for the Super Bowl.

"The Department takes the security of special events like the Super Bowl extremely seriously, and we continue executing our protection responsibility and supporting our local public safety partners for this event. The current lapse in government funding will have no effect on our commitment to assuring a safe and secure event," Houlton said in a statement to CNN.

This year's Super Bowl is scheduled to be played on February 3 in Atlanta. CNN has reached out to the National Football League about any security concerns related to the shutdown.

Any federal officials working on plans for the Super Bowl have been deemed essential and will not be paid until congressional Democrats and President Donald Trump come to a deal to reopen the government.

Other key agencies involved in security for the event include the FBI, the Secret Service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency on the federal side, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Georgia State Patrol, Georgia World Congress Center Authority Police and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency on the state side and the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, Atlanta Fire Rescue and Grady EMS on the local side.

"We are not disclosing numbers, except to say every Atlanta police officer will be on duty, working 12-hour shifts from January 26 to February 5," Atlanta police spokesman Carlos

Campos told CNN.

Campos said the Atlanta Police Department is the lead agency and all other agencies are assisting it, "for which we are obviously very grateful," he added.

A DHS official told CNN that "an ICE official is the federal coordinating officer for this year's Super Bowl. All of DHS is involved."

The Super Bowl is different from an event such as the State of the Union or a major political event that could be the target of terrorism, but it still receives an extremely high security rating from the federal government. It is known as a "SEAR 1" event, one that "may require the full support of the United States Government," according to Coast Guard guidance. The event received the same designation last year, an official told CNN.

Each year, DHS rates large-scale events in the United States to determine a threat level and determine how much federal support each event receives, former DHS official Ed Cash tells CNN. Such events could include the State of the Union address, a Super Bowl, NASCAR races, the United Nations General Assembly or a papal visit.

An official said the State of the Union is a national special security event, with the US Secret Service taking the lead in conjunction with US Capitol Police and many other federal and local agencies.

Will government shutdown impact security at Super Bowl LIII? (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/21/2019 2:21 PM, A.J. Perez and Nancy Armour, 6053K]

Super Bowl LIII could be the first major sporting event in more than two decades held during a government shutdown, although federal officials told USA TODAY Sports that those attending the game or the events surrounding it shouldn't worry any more than the first 52 games that were played with a fully employed government.

"Nothing has been curtailed," FBI spokesman Kevin Rowson told USA TODAY Sports. "We are fully operational."

This year's Super Bowl, scheduled for Feb. 3 between the Los Angeles Rams and New England Patriots, is a SEAR 1 event, the federal government's second-highest security classification. The State of the Union address, categorized at the highest level (NSSE), is scheduled for Jan. 29, although House Speaker Nancy Pelosi suggested to President Trump last week that it be postponed because of security concerns surrounding the shutdown.

While not necessarily a terrorism target, a SEAR 1 event is of enough national or international importance to require federal support and equipment, as well as cooperation and coordination between federal, state and local authorities.

"The Department (of Homeland Security) takes the security of special events like the Super Bowl extremely seriously, and we continue executing our protection responsibility and supporting our local public safety partners for this event," DHS spokesperson Tyler Q. Houlton said in a statement last week. "The current lapse in government funding will have no effect on our commitment to assuring a safe and secure event."

More than 1,500 public safety personnel are involved in Super Bowl security, Rowson said, though it's not clear how many of those are federal agents and officials. (None of the FBI agents are currently being paid.) Or how many will be working the Super Bowl without pay if the shutdown has not been resolved.

The Secret Service, FBI, TSA, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Customs and Border Protection are among the federal agencies charged with working with local law enforcement and private security to secure the Super Bowl and many of the surrounding events/

"The federal agencies involved – HSI (Homeland Security Investigations) , FBI, ICE and CPB – are essential and will be working as usual, but many aren't going to be getting paid," said John Torres, CEO of the security consulting company Guidepost Solutions and a former HSI agent. "They'll still do their jobs whether they are paid or not."

Security consultant Alope S. Chakravarty told USA TODAY Sports that federal law enforcement officials who have't gotten paid as the shutdown drags on "are professionals who don't do their jobs for money, but their families are impacted like anyone else's would be."

"You could ... see a drop off in efficiency," said Chakravarty, a former federal prosecutor who worked the Boston Marathon bombing case and is currently a partner at Snell & Wilmer. "While agents at the FBI, Secret Service and other agencies will be working because (Super Bowl security) was already budgeted, the people who support them, like analysts, could be furloughed. Analysts may not be at their terminals because of the shutdown."

Rowson and Atlanta Police Department spokesman Carlos Campos said the shutdown will not impact security. Federal, state and local officials have been planning for the Super Bowl for two years, and are fully prepared.

"An event like (the) Super Bowl is all about planning, preparation and partnerships," Rowson said in an email.

"We want to assure the public that we have planned for this to ensure that nothing happens," Rowson added. "But if something does happen, we are ready, and prepared to transition into crisis response and investigation."

That means most of the federal employees working the Super Bowl will be doing it without pay if the shutdown is ongoing. DHS is one of the nine departments that is unfunded but workers who are considered "essential" are still expected to do their jobs.

The Fiesta Bowl on Jan. 2, 1996 was the last major sporting event held during a shutdown. The federal government was closed for 21 days as President Bill Clinton and Congress sparred over the budget. Nebraska won the game to claim the national title.

While four World Series (1977, 1978, 1979 and 1986) overlapped with prior shutdowns, the 1978 World Series (Los Angeles Dodgers vs. New York Yankees) was the only one that came during a lengthy standoff (18 days).

Trump Offers Deportation Protections in Exchange for Wall Funding (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/19/2019 7:27 PM, Annie Karni and Sheryl Gay Stolberg, 20737K]
President Trump, facing a growing public backlash over the partial government shutdown, shifted course on Saturday and offered Democrats a deal: temporary protections for roughly 700,000 young undocumented immigrants in exchange for \$5.7 billion in funding for a wall along the southern border.

But the proposal, which Mr. Trump unveiled in a 13-minute address from the White House, appeared dead on arrival in the Capitol. Speaker Nancy Pelosi rejected it even before Mr. Trump spoke, and Senator Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leader, denounced the offer as "not a compromise but more hostage taking."

With the shutdown entering its fifth week and polls showing a majority of the public blaming Mr. Trump, the president's advisers have been searching for an exit strategy. Saturday's speech grew out of talks that Vice President Mike Pence and the president's son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner, have had in recent days with lawmakers including Senator Mitch McConnell, the majority leader.

The proposal was Mr. Trump's first public offer to Democrats since the partial shutdown began nearly a month ago. It came after an acrimonious week of tit-for-tat politics, in which Ms. Pelosi told the president he could not deliver his State of the Union address in the Capitol until the shutdown was over, and the president retaliated by grounding a plane that was supposed to take Ms. Pelosi on a fact-finding mission to Afghanistan.

In casting the plan as a compromise, the president sought to shift pressure to Democrats — who have repeatedly refused to give Mr. Trump any money for his border wall — to end the shutdown. But Democrats continued to insist they will not negotiate with Mr. Trump over border security until the government reopens.

Over the course of his administration, Mr. Trump has repeatedly sought to curb both legal and illegal immigration. He has revoked Temporary Protected Status, or T.P.S., which offers crucial protections for immigrants, for people from some Latin American and African countries. And he has moved to rescind Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, an Obama-era program that shielded the young undocumented immigrants known as Dreamers from deportation.

In the deal he outlined on Saturday, Mr. Trump offered to restore T.P.S. protection for 300,000 people, and said he would allow 700,000 Dreamers to keep their protections for three more years in exchange for \$5.7 billion for a border barrier.

"That is our plan," Mr. Trump said. "Border security, DACA, T.P.S. Many other things. Straightforward, fair, reasonable and common sense with lots of compromise." The proposal, Mr. Trump added, was intended to "break the logjam and provide Congress with a path forward."

The speech was the second time during the shutdown that the president addressed the nation about the immigration crisis. But unlike his first address, a prime-time broadcast from the Oval Office that leaned heavily on dark messaging about the dangers of crime and illegal drugs flowing across the border, Mr. Trump seemed on Saturday to soften his tone.

He paired the address with his first naturalization ceremony at the White House, a move intended to underscore the idea that he supports legal immigration. And his language was markedly different; instead of insisting on the "big beautiful wall" he promised during his 2016 campaign, Mr. Trump took care to use the word "barrier" as well — and seemed to pare back his vision for it.

Calling the wall "a powerful and beautifully designed see-through steel barrier on our southern border," Mr. Trump said: "This is not a 2,000-mile concrete structure from sea to sea. These are steel barriers in high priority locations. Much of the border is already protected by natural barriers such as mountains and water."

Mr. Trump noted that he had adopted some Democratic proposals on border security. The president proposed \$800 million for humanitarian assistance and \$805 million for drug detection technology, in addition to funding for 2,750 more border agents and law enforcement officials and 75 new immigration judge teams.

In her talking points, issued to Democrats, Ms. Pelosi said her party favored "new drug, weapons and contraband scanning technology at official ports of entry," and "filling the more than 3,000 vacancies for customs officers." Ms. Pelosi also intends to bring up legislation in the coming days that includes an additional \$1 billion for border security, including \$563 million for 75 new immigration judges and support staff.

Even so, Democrats roundly criticized the president's plan. They were particularly incensed that Mr. Trump's offer extended protections to Dreamers and T.P.S. recipients that he himself revoked. And they said the deal was a nonstarter because it did not offer any permanent protections for Dreamers.

"I think it's simply more fake promises raising false hopes," Senator Richard Blumenthal, Democrat of Connecticut, said. "It will fool few Americans because it's neither serious nor credible as a real remedy for Dreamers."

Some on the right also pushed back, describing the proposal as amnesty. James Carafano, a national security expert at the Heritage Foundation who worked on Mr. Trump's transition, was among the critics. "Amnesty encourages further illegal immigration, incentivizes the tragedy of human trafficking and undermines our citizens' confidence in the rule of law," he said.

Mr. Pence, briefing reporters after Mr. Trump's remarks, said the speech reflected a painstaking process of listening to lawmakers, including rank-and-file Democrats who made it clear they believed that protections for DACA and T.P.S. recipients must be included in a border security deal.

And he pushed back forcefully against critics like Mr. Carafano who said the measure amounted to an unacceptable amnesty for undocumented immigrants.

"There is no pathway to citizenship in this proposal," Mr. Pence said.

But that was one reason many Democrats considered it unacceptable. Other senior administration officials made it clear that part of Mr. Trump's strategy was to try to drive a wedge within the party between those who want to hold out for a much more generous

solution and those who may feel enough political pressure to end the shutdown that they will feel obliged to support it.

Noting that Tuesday is the deadline for the government to reopen in time to prevent federal employees from going a second consecutive pay period without a check, Mick Mulvaney, the acting chief of staff, said Senate Democrats had a tricky decision to make. He also noted that the president's ability to declare a national emergency was "absolutely" still a tool available to Mr. Trump to find funds to build the wall if a legislative agreement could not be reached.

Now it will be up to Mr. McConnell to put legislation incorporating Mr. Trump's proposal on the Senate floor.

Mr. McConnell — who has insisted he will not put any legislation on the floor unless the president will sign it — spoke to Mr. Trump, Mr. Kushner and Mr. Pence on Thursday night about finding a way forward.

Mr. McConnell told the president that before he could bring up legislation on the Senate floor, he needed a "public reassurance" that Mr. Trump would sign it, one person close to the talks said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to describe sensitive discussions.

The president's proposal "strikes a fair compromise by incorporating priorities from both sides of the aisle," Mr. McConnell said in a statement after Mr. Trump's speech.

If Mr. McConnell does indeed put a bill on the floor, as the president said he would, Senate Democrats will have to decide whether to block it or let it come up for a vote. Despite Democrats' vow to reject the measure, it could create an opening for negotiations between the two sides.

The shutdown stalemate is creating increasing nervousness on Capitol Hill, especially among Republicans seeking re-election in Democratic-leaning states. One of them, Senator Susan Collins of Maine, is among only a handful of Republicans who have broken with the president and called for the government to reopen without a border security deal.

On Saturday, she praised the president, saying she hoped that Mr. Trump's offer would "lead to constructive debate that will end this impasse."

White House aides and allies of Mr. Trump said Saturday that Mr. Trump succeeded in ratcheting up the political pressure on Ms. Pelosi, especially if the Senate succeeded in passing a bill.

"The Democrats' talking points have been that the president is solely responsible for shutting down the government," Marc Short, the former White House legislative director, said. "This puts more onus on them to come back and say why this proposal is insufficient."

But one reason Democrats are so leery of the deal is that they have been down this road with the president before. Last year, Mr. Trump and Mr. Schumer negotiated \$25 billion in wall money for a pathway to citizenship for the Dreamers. But that deal fell apart when hard-line White House advisers persuaded the president to back away.

The standoff over the shutdown, some former aides noted, was the first time Mr. Trump has had to engage in meaningful, high-stakes negotiations. But even that has come as a last resort, in what some have likened to negotiating out of desperation after failing to score political points.

Republicans Push Trump Immigration Plan, Seeking to Corner Democrats on Shutdown (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/20/2019 5:29 PM, Sheryl Gay Stolberg, 20737K]

President Trump attacked Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Sunday for rejecting his proposal to end the partial government shutdown, as he and Republican leaders in Congress sought to put Democrats on defense, a place they have rarely been during the shutdown stalemate.

In a series of morning tweets, Mr. Trump said Ms. Pelosi had behaved "so irrationally" in spurning his offer to restore the temporary protections he took away from some undocumented immigrants in exchange for \$5.7 billion for a border wall. He also pushed back against conservative critics who called the plan amnesty for immigrants who came to the United States illegally.

Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader, plans to bring up legislation as early as Tuesday that would wrap Mr. Trump's proposal into a broader package that would include billions of dollars in disaster relief and immediately reopen the government, an aide said. The move is intended to ratchet up pressure on Democrats, who have insisted they will not negotiate with Mr. Trump until the shutdown is over.

"President Trump has put forward a serious and reasonable offer to reform parts of our broken immigration system and reopen government," Representative Kevin McCarthy, the Republican leader, said on Twitter. "The moment now turns to Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer. The country is watching."

But there was little indication from Democrats, who have denounced Mr. Trump's plan as "hostage taking," that they would abandon that position.

"If he opens up the government, we'll discuss whatever he offers, but hostage taking should not work," Senator Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leader, told reporters in New York on Sunday, adding, "It's very hard to negotiate when a gun is held to your head."

With the shutdown now in its fifth week, and 800,000 federal employees still furloughed or working without pay, pressure is rising on both Republicans and Democrats to end it. If it lasts until Friday, Congress will be forced to reckon with another grim milestone: Affected workers will miss their second paycheck.

As Republicans go on offense in the Senate, Democrats will stay on offense in the House, where they have already passed a string of government funding bills that Mr. McConnell — who has largely remained on the sidelines during the shutdown debate — has refused to take up. On Wednesday, Ms. Pelosi plans to bring up a package of six bills to fund shuttered government agencies, ignoring Mr. Trump's requests.

The measures gained approval last year from Republicans on the House and Senate Appropriations Committees; in effect, Ms. Pelosi will be daring Republicans to vote against their own legislation. Democrats will also begin talking more about their own vision for border security — a shift in strategy for a party that has focused mostly on the economic

and personal toll of the shutdown.

Amid the posturing, however, there were some hints that Mr. Trump's proposal, which he unveiled in a 13-minute White House address on Saturday, might open the door to talks that could result in a deal. Vice President Mike Pence, in an appearance on "Fox News Sunday," suggested that Mr. Trump's proposal might be amended on the Senate floor.

"Well, of course," Mr. Pence said, when the host, Chris Wallace, asked if he was open to negotiation. "The legislative process is a negotiation." And Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, a centrist Democrat, described Mr. Trump's plan as "a starting point" on NBC's "Meet the Press," though he added, "You've got to start by reopening the government."

Polls show the public largely blames Mr. Trump for the shutdown, and his advisers have been searching for an exit strategy. Last week, Mr. McConnell told Mr. Trump, Mr. Pence and White House advisers that he needed the president to put forth a public offer so he could bring legislation to the floor.

"McConnell's view of shutdowns is when you're in one, it's a great opportunity for both sides to get things," said Scott Jennings, a Republican strategist and former McConnell aide who remains close to him. "And what I think is dumbfounding everyone here is: Why aren't the Democrats treating it as a situation where they could get something? The president has opened the door for them to get something, so let's talk."

Throughout his administration, Mr. Trump has sought to limit both legal and illegal immigration. Last year, he moved to rescind Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, which shielded from deportation hundreds of thousands of young unauthorized immigrants known as Dreamers. He also revoked Temporary Protected Status, or T.P.S., for some undocumented immigrants from Latin American and African countries.

In the plan he unveiled on Saturday, Mr. Trump offered to restore the DACA and T.P.S. protections for three years. But Democrats say that is a nonstarter, because it does not offer a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, and because Mr. Trump is simply giving back protections that he himself took away.

The McConnell aide, Don Stewart, said the Republican legislative package would include seven appropriations bills that would fund government agencies that have been partially closed for a month.

"The legislation that the majority leader will bring to the floor this week would both reopen the remaining portions of the government, fund disaster relief, fund border security and address immigration issues that both Republicans and Democrats would like to address — all in one bill," Mr. Stewart said.

Mr. McConnell would need votes from all Republicans and seven Democrats for the package to pass. But only a handful of Democrats in Republican-leaning states might feel pressured enough to cross the aisle. A spokesman for one of them, Senator Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, said Mr. Manchin — who just won re-election — would remain undecided on the Republican proposal until he saw it.

In broadening the package beyond Mr. Trump's plan, Mr. McConnell may be trying to pick up additional Democrats — especially those who are eager to vote for disaster relief.

"He's starting to move the pieces around to see what's going to fly and what's not going to make it," said Jim Manley, who was a top aide to Harry Reid, the former Democratic leader from Nevada. "He's trying to put the pressure back on Democrats, and he's trying to see what the possibilities of a deal are by putting a larger package there. He's trying to see how large the package has to be to bring Democrats on board."

But Mr. Trump seemed to be holding fast. He retweeted a series of endorsements of his proposal from Republican lawmakers on Sunday evening, and earlier in the day, he took aim at Ms. Pelosi and pushed back against conservative critics who have described the plan as amnesty for undocumented immigrants.

"Nancy Pelosi and some of the Democrats turned down my offer yesterday before I even got up to speak," Mr. Trump wrote. "They don't see crime & drugs, they only see 2020 — which they are not going to win. Best economy! They should do the right thing for the Country & allow people to go back to work."

Mr. Trump went on: "Nancy Pelosi has behaved so irrationally & has gone so far to the left that she has now officially become a Radical Democrat. She is so petrified of the 'lefties' in her party that she has lost control...And by the way, clean up the streets in San Francisco, they are disgusting!"

And to his conservative critics, Mr. Trump wrote: "No, Amnesty is not a part of my offer. It is a 3 year extension of DACA. Amnesty will be used only on a much bigger deal, whether on immigration or something else. Likewise there will be no big push to remove the 11,000,000 plus people who are here illegally — but be careful Nancy!"

Ms. Pelosi took to Twitter to strike back. "@realdonaldtrump, 800,000 Americans are going without pay. Re-open the government, let workers get their paychecks and then we can discuss how we can come together to protect the border," she wrote, using the hashtag #EndTheShutdown.

Trump's full address on new proposal for border wall, security and DACA as shutdown continues (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/19/2019 5:00 PM, Staff, 9763K] Video: [HERE](#)

President Trump spoke from the White House Jan. 19 in a rare Saturday address that outlined a new proposal for border security, immigration reform and ending the shutdown.

Trump offers to temporarily protect 'Dreamers' if Democrats fund his wall (Los Angeles Times)

[Los Angeles Times](#) [1/19/2019 4:40 PM, Eli Stokols, 3575K]

President Trump on Saturday suggested a compromise for fully reopening the government that would temporarily protect certain refugees and immigrants who came to the U.S. illegally years ago as children if Democrats back a scaled-down version of his proposed border wall.

The proposal, which Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) plans to bring up for a

vote within days, almost certainly won't be enough to end the standoff that has closed government agencies for more than four weeks, depriving some 800,000 workers of paychecks. Even before Trump spoke, Democrats rejected his offer as inadequate.

But, along with steps by Democrats in the House to provide additional money for border security, it marked the first moves toward compromise after days in which the tension between Trump and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ratcheted up significantly and no negotiations took place between them.

In notable contrast with his statements over past weeks, Trump's televised address from the White House Diplomatic Reception Room included no jabs at Democratic leaders. Instead, he called repeatedly for "compromise," saying that "both sides" should "put down their armor."

He also, more explicitly than ever, acknowledged the reality that his current plans are a far cry from his campaign pledge of a wall along the entire southern border. The current proposal would provide a \$5.7-billion installment to build steel fencing along 230 miles of the frontier, he said. As recently as December, Trump emphatically denied that he'd abandoned his idea of a concrete wall, after his former chief of staff, John F. Kelly, said otherwise in an interview with The Times.

It's "not a 2,000-mile concrete structure from sea to sea," the president said, but "steel barriers in high-priority locations."

With polls showing that most Americans blame him for the unpopular shutdown, Trump said, "I am here to break the logjam."

So far, his plan doesn't appear likely to meet that goal.

In a statement released before Trump spoke, Pelosi called the proposal "a compilation of several previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable and in total, do not represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives. It is unlikely that any one of these provisions alone would pass the House, and taken together, they are a nonstarter."

In particular, she noted, the protections for the immigrants known as Dreamers, as well as for certain refugees, would be temporary, lasting only three years. Democrats have insisted that those immigrants who arrived so long ago as children — and who were protected by President Obama's program called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA — should receive permanent legal status and an opportunity to achieve citizenship.

Trump ordered an end to the program in 2017, but federal courts have mostly blocked him. With current DACA beneficiaries protected by the courts likely into at least 2020, pending a Supreme Court review, the president's temporary proposal is even less enticing to the Democrats and immigrant advocates.

Sen. Richard J. Durbin of Illinois, the second-ranking Senate Democratic leader, echoed Pelosi, and both leaders reiterated the party's insistence that the president and McConnell must fund and reopen the government before any negotiations on border security funding take place.

In addition to offering limited protection for the roughly 700,000 DACA beneficiaries, Trump also offered a three-year extension of the three-decades-old Temporary Protected Status program that covers more than 300,000 people in the United States, mostly from Central America. The president moved to end that protection soon after taking office, putting those people, many of whom have lived legally in the U.S. for decades and have children born here, at risk of deportation. In October, a federal judge blocked the administration from ending the protections for many of those people.

Sen. Charles E. Schumer, the Democratic minority leader from New York, in a tweet noted the president's contested efforts to end both programs as he dismissed Trump's offer: "It was the President who singled-handedly took away DACA and TPS protections in the first place – offering some protections back in exchange for the wall is not a compromise but more hostage taking."

The president touted a third program he'd tried to kill. He proposed "a new system" that would "protect migrant children from exploitation and abuse" by allowing Central American minors to apply for asylum in their home country rather than at the U.S.-Mexico border. In 2017 he abruptly ended Obama-era programs to do just that.

While Democrats consider the president's overall proposal inadequate, Trump also risks attack from immigration hard-liners who have derailed several previous efforts at compromise. They consider both the DACA program and extension of the Temporary Protected Status program as forms of amnesty.

Ann Coulter, the conservative commentator, tweeted: "Trump proposes amnesty. We voted for Trump and got Jeb" — a reference to former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, an immigration moderate whom Trump defeated for the 2016 Republican nomination. Coulter was among the conservative critics who last month prompted Trump to reverse his support for Senate Republicans' Senate bill funding the government, but not the wall — precipitating the partial shutdown on Dec. 22.

"This is not an amnesty bill," Vice President Mike Pence told White House reporters, adding, "There is no pathway to citizenship in this proposal."

As for Democrats, when Pence was asked why they should see the DACA extension as a concession given that federal courts currently are preserving the program, he replied by echoing Trump, "I think most legal experts believe the Supreme Court will strike down DACA."

Trump's DACA overture only added to the frustration of people reliant the protections available since 2012.

Bryan Pena, a 19-year old beneficiary in Los Angeles' Lincoln Heights neighborhood, said he thinks Democrats should hold out for comprehensive immigration reform.

"Three years is nothing," he said. "If we take that compromise, then someone else is going to suffer. I think there should be a new pathway to citizenship for everybody, not just DACA people."

Pena, who studies nursing at Cal State Los Angeles, said he has worried about losing the

only home he's ever known and being deported since Trump's election.

"I wear running shoes every day, because I feel like I always have to be ready to sprint," he said.

Karla Estrada, another DACA recipient in Los Angeles, called Trump's proposal unacceptable and a "classic divide and conquer" strategy.

"Instead of finding real solutions for immigrants, they want a temporary fix," she said. "We need real solutions, not alleviation tactics that play with the lives of undocumented immigrants. The exchange of real lives for a wall is immoral."

Trump began the day standing his ground on a border wall. "Everybody knows that walls work," he said earlier Saturday, emphasizing the main sticking point on the nearly month-old stalemate. Democrats are dead-set against it, but he has refused to sign funding for about a quarter of the government unless they acquiesce. His demand for an installment of \$5.7 billion is several times more than he sought during the two years that Republicans controlled both houses of Congress.

Democrats, now a majority in the House, to date had refused to agree to more than \$1.3 billion for border security measures, and not for a wall. House Democrats are planning to hold votes next week on funding bills for the closed agencies that would include roughly \$1 billion more for additional border security improvements, Pelosi confirmed.

That additional money, which would amount to an increase of \$328 million over last year's funding, would be allocated not for a wall but to improve infrastructure at ports of entry and to pay for additional immigration judges to process asylum cases at the border. Most drugs and many asylum-seekers come through the official entry points, according to the government, and not across the border expanse where the president wants to have a wall.

The latest developments follow days of escalating skirmishes.

After the Speaker informed the president Wednesday that he would need to postpone or cancel his scheduled Jan. 29 State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress because of security concerns, given limited resources during the shutdown at the Secret Service and Homeland Security Department, Trump responded Thursday by canceling Pelosi's secret weekend trip to visit troops in Afghanistan.

"It's not personal for me," Trump said Saturday morning. Pelosi, he told reporters, is "being controlled by the radical left."

"I think that's a very bad thing for her. It's a very bad thing for the Democrats," he said during brief remarks to reporters on the South Lawn before departing for Dover Air Force Base to meet with the families of four Americans, including two service members, killed last week in an attack in Syria.

Continuing to depict the situation along the border as a crisis that demands a federal response, though illegal entries continue their two-decade decline, Trump pointed to another caravan of Central American migrants heading north through Mexico.

"Caravans are coming up. They have a big one coming up," he said. "I'm disappointed Mexico is not stopping them."

He continued: "If we had a wall, we wouldn't have a problem. But we don't. We have too many open areas."

Yet migrants in past so-called caravans have sought to enter legally at check points, to seek asylum. Inexplicably, Trump pointed to the city of San Antonio, which is not surrounded by a wall and is about 150 miles from the border at its closest point, as proof of his argument.

"You look at San Antonio, you look at so many different places," he said. "They go from one of the most unsafe cities in the country to one of the safest cities, immediately."

Trump Offers Democrats A New Plan In Hopes Of Opening The Government (NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/21/2019 5:07 AM, Staff, 4491K] Audio: [HERE](#)

As the partial government shutdown drags on, Rachel Martin talks to GOP strategist Scott Jennings about the options his party has to move forward and break the stalemate.

Trump Extends Offer To End Shutdown, Extend DACA; Democrats Say 'No Deal' (NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/20/2019 8:01 AM, Ayesha Rascoe, 4491K] Audio: [HERE](#)

They oppose President Trump's proposal, which temporarily would protect some young people who immigrated illegally and provide \$5.7 billion for a border wall.

TRANSCRIPT

LULU GARCIA-NAVARRO, HOST:

A sign of some movement or another stalemate as the government shutdown enters its fifth week depends, as always, on who you ask. NPR's White House reporter Ayesha Rascoe breaks down the latest calculations being made here in Washington.

AYESHA RASCOE, BYLINE: President Trump says it's time to make a deal to reopen the federal government.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: Both sides in Washington must simply come together, listen to each other, put down their armor, build trust, reach across the aisle and find solutions.

RASCOE: After weeks of a political stalemate, Trump said he would back a three-year extension of the Obama-era DACA program, a program he's tried to end. DACA blocks the deportation of people brought to the country illegally as children. Trump says he will also allow immigrants with temporary protected status - or TPS - to remain in the country for three more years. These extensions will be tied to \$5.7 billion in funding for a wall on the southern border.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

TRUMP: This is not a 2,000-mile concrete structure from sea to sea. These are steel barriers in high-priority locations.

RASCOE: In addition, the White House is asking for more money to hire border agents and immigration judges. Trump argues his proposals should be able to get support from Republicans and Democrats.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

TRUMP: That is our plan - border security, DACA, TPS and many other things - straightforward, fair, reasonable and common sense with lots of compromise.

RASCOE: But top Democrats in Congress have already come out against the plan. They say Trump must first agree to end the shutdown before any negotiations over border security can begin. And they contend a wall would be ineffective at stopping people from entering the country illegally. Trump acknowledged his deal doesn't address all concerns but says it would allow time for lawmakers to work toward a more comprehensive update of immigration laws.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

TRUMP: The good news is these problems can all be solved but only if we have the political courage to do what is just and what is right.

RASCOE: The Senate plans to vote on Trump's proposal in the coming week. Ayesha Rascoe, NPR News, the White House.

Trump offers trade of Dreamers-for-wall that Democrats quickly reject (Roll Call)

[Roll Call](#) [1/19/2019 4:32 PM, John T. Bennett and Niels Lesniewski, 90K]

President Donald Trump on Saturday pitched what he described as a plan that could end a partial government shutdown — but Democrats made their opposition clear before he uttered a single word about it.

His new offer amounted to a somewhat surprising and sudden reversal for Trump and senior White House officials. That is because earlier this week, a senior White House official indicated the president was opposed to making a new offer unless House and Senate Democrats made the next move. It also appeared insufficient for Democrats as furloughed federal workers begin lining up at food banks and came amid worries about the shutdown's effect on an already slowing U.S. economy.

Democrats rejected Trump's proposal as a "nonstarter," saying that the offer amounted to nothing more than cleaning up a mess of his own making and that a discussion of immigration policy could come after the shutdown was ended.

Trump called the country's immigration system "badly broken," saying "decades of political stalemate" and "partisan gridlock" are to blame. He again described the situation at the southern border is a humanitarian and security "crisis."

He said the southern border is too "porous" as he ticked off what he said are anecdotes and

statistics that show lethal narcotics and crime-creating migrants are moving too freely into the country.

"The good news is all these problems can be solved, but only if we have the political courage to do what is right," the president said, calling on both political parties to "put down their armor ... and come together." But Democrats say he has done little, if any, actual negotiating toward a plan that can pass both chambers of Congress.

"The radical left can never control our borders. I will never let it happen," he said, referring to the far-left wing of the Democratic Party. "Walls are not immoral," he said, rebutting a top Democratic anti-wall talking point. By pitching the plan, Trump again contradicted a stance espoused just a few days earlier by one of his senior aides.

"That's the worst negotiating. Why keep making an offer against yourself?" the official told Roll Call on Wednesday, joking that a young child would know such a tactic was unwise. "We've made multiple moves."

Yet, three days later, the president stood in the Diplomatic Reception Room and did just that.

The president told the country in a late-afternoon address that he would sign into law any bill the House and Senate pass that would extend protections to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients and individuals with temporary protected status. In exchange for what essentially is his first offer to Democrats in weeks, Trump made clear he still is insisting on \$5.7 billion he contends are needed to build a physical barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border.

The proposal floated by Trump is built around a version of the the so-called Bridge Act, which protects undocumented migrants brought to the U.S. as children, also known as "Dreamers." The stalemate over funding for the border wall has resulted in a partial government shutdown that is now in its 29th day.

The president described himself as trying to break a "logjam" with a plan that is a "compassionate response to the tragedy at our southern border" that is based on needs identified by "homeland security professionals."

He noted Democrats have supported the notion of a "physical barrier or wall in the past." But, to the opposition party, Trump's massive barrier has become a sign of racism and anti-migrant feelings that are present among the far right wing of the GOP.

The president spoke shortly after overseeing a naturalization ceremony for five new American citizens in the Oval Office for individuals from the United Kingdom, Iraq, Jamaica, Bolivia, and South Korea.

"We're all equal," Trump said during his immigration remarks. "We're one team, and proudly saluting on American flag."

The Bridge Act, first proposed in 2016 by Minority Whip Richard J. Durbin, D-Ill., and Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., now the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, would grant three years of temporary legal status and work authorization for "Dreamers" enrolled in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program as well as those currently qualified but not

enrolled. The bill does not address Temporary Protected Status recipients, though Democrats have authored similar legislation addressing that population.

The 2016 legislation, introduced just a month after Trump's election, won bipartisan support from Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer of New York, Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, the top Democrat on Judiciary, as well as Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and former Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz. A House version of the bill introduced in early 2017 by former Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Colo., won bipartisan support but was never called up for a vote by Republican leaders.

But despite its bipartisan roots, key Democratic lawmakers voiced their opposition to the president's proposal even before he was back at the White House after an unannounced trip to a military base in Dover, Del., where the bodies of four U.S. troopers who were killed in Syria were returned earlier in the day.

Democrats on Capitol Hill panned the Trump proposal, with a senior House Democratic aide saying that it could not pass in either chamber.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., called the proposal a "non-starter" and a "compilation of several previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable and in total, do not represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives."

"It is unlikely that any one of these provisions alone would pass the House," she said in a statement after spending much of the week in an extraordinary tit-for-tat with the president.

"Democrats were not consulted on this proposal. Similar inadequate offers from the Administration were already rejected by Democrats. The BRIDGE Act does not fully protect Dreamers and is not a permanent solution," the aide said in a statement. "This is not a compromise as it includes the same wasteful, ineffective \$5.7 billion wall demand that shut down the government in the first place."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has confirmed he intends to try to bring the president's proposal to the floor.

"This bill takes a bipartisan approach to re-opening the closed portions of the federal government. It pairs the border security investment that our nation needs with additional immigration measures that both Democrat and Republican members of Congress believe are necessary. Unlike the bills that have come from the House over the past few weeks, this proposal could actually resolve this impasse. It has the full support of the President and could be signed into law to quickly reopen the government," McConnell said in a statement.

"Everyone has made their point—now it's time to make a law. I intend to move to this legislation this week," the Kentucky Republican said. "With bipartisan cooperation, the Senate can send a bill to the House quickly so that they can take action as well."

Trump said that vote would come next week. Should it pass both chambers and become law, the president said he would use weekly bipartisan meetings at the White House to try to cobble together a comprehensive immigration reform package.

But it appears that is a long way off.

Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer called for the reopening of the government first before the two sides could have "a civil discussion and come up with bipartisan solutions."

"It was the President who singled-handedly took away DACA and TPS protections in the first place — offering some protections back in exchange for the wall is not a compromise but more hostage taking," the New York Democrat said in a statement.

Even Bridge Act author Durbin was quick to signal his opposition as the White House must convince at least a handful of Senate Democrats to support the Trump proposal.

"First, President Trump and Senate Majority Leader McConnell must open the government today," he said in a statement. "Second, I cannot support the proposed offer as reported and do not believe it can pass the Senate. Third, I am ready to sit down at any time after the government is opened and work to resolve all outstanding issues."

Jim Manley, a former senior aide to then-Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, agreed with Durbin. "So as far as I can tell this so called deal trump is going to unveil this afternoon won't get 60 votes in the senate," he tweeted. "The question is whether it sets the stage for additional negotiations."

The now-Democratic strategist called the president's plan "seemingly somewhere between the end of the beginning of the shutdown and the beginning of the end. Or something like that."

But GOP lawmakers and former Trump aides already are pressing Democrats to endorse the White House's latest proposal. Thomas Bossert, a former Homeland Security adviser to Trump, tweeted a message for Pelosi: "Will [@SpeakerPelosi](#) deal or demagogue? President [@realDonaldTrump](#) to offer DACA for border security."

Amid the posturing are bipartisan and experts' concerns about what the shutdown stalemate and its many ripple waves means for what was an already slowing U.S. economy. The White House, for instance, this week said the impact is expected to be worse than even it initially calculated.

The White House initially forecast a 0.1 percentage point hit to growth every two weeks that a quarter of the federal apparatus remains shuttered. Reports surfaced Tuesday, however, citing administration officials saying that has been updated to show a 0.1 percentage-point dip every week. But senior White House officials are downplaying that new estimate.

Lawrence Kudlow, the chief White House economic adviser, said Friday the economy is "strong" enough to withstand any "temporary" hit spawned by the partial government shutdown.

"The switch will turn" when the nine Cabinet agencies and smaller offices are again funded and functional and "you won't even know it happened," Kudlow told reporters outside the West Wing Friday evening. Though he said the "hardship" some furloughed federal workers who aren't getting paid are experiencing is "bad," the wealthy Kudlow insisted that soon everyone "can go back to watching Netflix ... and college basketball."

Democrats have criticized Trump and his aides for, in their view, appearing blind to some furloughed workers' situation. Kudlow appeared aware of such criticism, adding, "I know I shouldn't have just said that."

Donald Trump Offers Democrats Temporary DACA Amnesty for 230 Miles of Wall (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/19/2019 4:49 PM, Charlie Spiering, 2015K]

President Donald Trump proposed a compromise plan to reopen the government and get funding for his promised border wall on Saturday.

The president offered to give Democrats a three-year extension of work permits for 700,000 DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients and 300,000 Temporary Protected Status immigrants in exchange for \$5.7 billion for 230 miles of physical barriers on the Southern border.

"This is not a 2000 mile concrete structure from sea-to-sea," Trump said. "These are steel barriers in high priority locations. It will be done quickly."

Trump also promised \$800 million in humanitarian aid, \$805 million in port and border screening security, 2,000 new border agents, and 75 new immigration judge teams to handle cases at the border.

The president delivered his remarks in the Diplomatic room at the White House, restating the problems that the country faces with the current broken immigration system.

Trump presented his plan as a way to "break the logjam" by building a compromise with Democrats, address the immediate crisis at the border and reopen the federal government. The federal government has been partially shut down for 29 days.

He again highlighted the difficulties that migrants face as they try to take advantage of a broken immigration system, highlighting the dangers of the journey to the Southern border.

"I want this to end, it's got to end now," he said. "These are not talking points, these are the heartbreaking realities."

Trump said that McConnell was in support of the proposed compromise and would hold a vote in the Senate later next week.

He described his plan as "straightforward, fair, reasonable, and common sense with lots of compromise" and said that it was only the beginning of larger immigration reform in his second term.

Trump also promised to hold weekly bi-partisan meetings at the White House to work on a larger immigration reform effort with Democrats, if an immediate deal could be made.

"We can do a finished product, a great product, a product that we can all be proud of having to do with that elusive immigration problem," Trump said.

Trump offers immigration compromise to end partial shutdown; Dems cool to offer (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/19/2019 4:18 PM, Adam Shaw, 9216K]

President Trump, in a televised White House address Saturday, offered Democrats a compromise package on immigration in an effort to end the nearly monthlong partial government shutdown -- although some prominent Democrats were dismissing the olive branch as a "non-starter" before Trump even spoke.

Trump announced that he was prepared to back a three-year extension of protections for 700,000 immigrants who came to the country illegally as children and were shielded from deportation under the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. This, in exchange for the \$5.7 billion he has requested for a barrier on the southern border with Mexico.

"Walls are not immoral," he said, adding that a wall "will save many lives and stop drugs from pouring into our country."

"This is not a concrete structure from sea to sea," he said, addressing some previously expressed concerns about the so-called "wall." "These are steel barriers in high-priority locations."

The offered deal would also extend protections for 300,000 recipients of the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program -- which protects immigrants from designated countries with conditions that prevent nationals from returning safely.

"Our immigration system should be a source of pride, not a source of shame as it is all over the world," Trump said, before urging politicians to "take off their armor" and find solutions.

It would allocate \$800 million for drug detection technology to secure ports of entry, 2,750 new border agents and law enforcement professionals, and 75 new immigration judges to reduce an immense backlog of asylum requests.

He said that all his proposals have been supported by Democrats before.

He spent much of the address talking about the dangers that an open border presented, describing a "very wide and open gateway for criminals and gang members to enter the United States." However, he also teased the possibility of future, broader immigration reform if his proposals were accepted by Congress.

"If we are successful in this effort, we will have the best chance in a long time at real, bipartisan immigration reform, and it won't stop here, it will keep going until we do it all," he said.

Government sources told Fox News before the announcement that the speech would form the basis for new legislation he hopes to get before the Senate next week. The proposal is similar to a compromise put forward by Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., that would include three year work permits for DACA recipients and extension of legal status for TPS holders, in exchange for the wall funding. Graham called the proposal "fantastic" in a tweet after the announcement.

"Let's get it done," he tweeted. House Republicans were scheduled to be briefed about the proposal in a conference call at 5 p.m. ET.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., praised Trump for his "bold solution" to reopen the government.

"Compromise in divided government means that everyone can't get everything they want every time," McConnell said in a statement. "The President's proposal reflects that. It strikes a fair compromise by incorporating priorities from both sides of the aisle."

"@POTUS has put forth a reasonable, good faith proposal that will reopen the government and help secure the border. I look forward to voting for it and will work to encourage my Republican and Democratic colleagues to do the same," Romney wrote.

But Trump's proposal was quickly swatted down by Democrats. Indeed, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi came out ahead of the announcement to say the anticipated proposal comprised a "compilation of several previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable and in total, do not represent a good-faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives."

"It is unlikely that any one of these provisions alone would pass the House, and taken together, they are a non-starter," she said in a statement. "For one thing, this proposal does not include the permanent solution for the Dreamers and TPS recipients that our country needs and supports."

Striking a similar tone, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said it was unfortunate that in an effort to resolve the shutdown, Trump "keeps putting forward one-sided and ineffective remedies."

He urged the president to open up the government as a prelude to productive and bipartisan solutions on immigration and the southern border.

"It was the president who singlehandedly took away DACA and TOS protections in the first place," Schumer's statement read. "Offering some protections back in exchange for the wall is not a compromise, but more hostage taking."

The partial government shutdown, which has dragged on for 29 days and led to hundreds of thousands of federal workers being furloughed or working without pay, is the result of Republicans and Democrats being unable to come to an agreement over Trump's demand for wall funding. Trump has said he will not sign a bill to open the government unless it includes that funding, while Democrats have refused to consider the \$5.7 billion figure, instead offering \$1.3 billion for general border security.

Trump's move marks a rare outreach in a week where both sides appear to have hardened in their positions, with Trump canceling a Democratic delegation's military flight to Afghanistan after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called on him to delay his State of the Union address earlier in the week. On Saturday before the speech, Trump described Pelosi as being "controlled by the radical left."

Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin, D-Ill., also rejected the proposal ahead of the

announcement.

"First, President Trump and Senate Majority Leader [Mitch] McConnell must open the government today. Second, I cannot support the proposed offer as reported and do not believe it can pass the Senate. Third, I am ready to sit down at any time after the government is opened and work to resolve all outstanding issues," he said in a statement.

Pelosi said that Democrats intended to pass six bills next week and other legislation to open the government, "so that we can fully negotiate on border security proposals."

"The president must sign these bills to re-open government immediately and stop holding the American people hostage with this senseless shutdown. Each day he prolongs this needless crisis, Coast Guardsmen, FBI agents, border patrol officers, TSA agents, and hundreds of thousands more workers are forced to live without knowing how they can feed their families or pay their bills," she said in her statement.

Trump proposes wall-for-DACA in bid to end U.S. government shutdown (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/19/2019 11:09 AM, Steve Holland and Jan Wolfe]

U.S. President Donald Trump proposed an immigration deal on Saturday in a bid to end a 29-day partial government shutdown, including temporary protections for "Dreamers" and other immigrants, but Democrats immediately dismissed it.

Insisting on his demand for \$5.7 billion to fund a U.S.-Mexico border barrier as part of any bill to fully reopen the government, Trump sought to pile pressure on Democrats by appealing to immigrants they have tried to help.

In a speech from the White House, Trump offered three years of protections for young undocumented immigrants known as "Dreamers," as well as for holders of temporary protected status (TPS), another class of immigrants.

Decrying what he called a "badly broken" U.S. immigration system, Trump said, "I am here today to break the logjam and provide Congress with a path forward to end the government shutdown and solve the crisis along the southern border."

But the protections he proposed fell far short of the path to citizenship for Dreamers that Democrats and some Republicans in Congress have been urging for years.

In a statement after Trump's speech, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell called the plan a "bold solution to reopen the government, secure the border, and take bipartisan steps toward addressing current immigration issues."

A spokesman for McConnell said he would seek Senate passage of the proposal next week.

Democrats insisted talks on border security occur only after the government is reopened. Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said, "It was the president who singled-handedly took away DACA and TPS protections in the first place. Offering some protections back in exchange for the wall is not a compromise but more hostage taking."

Even before Trump spoke, House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi said his offer

as reported in advance was "unacceptable," did not "represent a good-faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives," and was unlikely to gain the votes needed to pass the House or the Senate.

About a quarter of the U.S. government has been partially shut down since Dec. 22, as funding has expired for reasons mostly unrelated to the border or immigration.

Some 800,000 federal workers have been staying home on furlough or working without pay.

Trump has refused to consider legislation needed to fully reopen the government unless it includes \$5.7 billion to help pay for a border wall or other barrier, which he says is needed to keep out illegal immigrants and drugs.

The full cost of such a barrier could eventually top \$24 billion, according to some government estimates.

Trump also asked Congress for \$782 million to hire an additional 2,750 border agents, law enforcement officers and staff, and another \$563 million to hire 75 new immigration judge teams to reduce a backlog in immigration courts.

The Dreamers, mostly young Latinos, are protected from deportation under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which protects certain people who illegally entered the United States as children. It provides about 700,000 immigrants with work permits, but no path to citizenship.

Vice President Mike Pence told reporters Trump's proposal for the Dreamers and border humanitarian assistance was based on conversations with rank-and-file Democrats.

He said Trump hopes millions of Americans will pressure Democrats to go along with the deal. Pence said conservatives should not worry that Trump is providing amnesty to Dreamers, saying, "This is not an amnesty."

"We hope once people get past the initial statements and initial reaction, when they really look at this legislation, when it comes to the floor of the Senate, they'll see it as an effort by the president to take ideas from both parties," said Pence.

White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney said declaring a national emergency on the border to fund a wall without congressional approval remained an option but was not Trump's preferred solution.

"Can the Democrats separate themselves from the extreme left and work out a compromise on border security? I think a lot of members want to do that," Mulvaney said.

Former President Barack Obama put DACA in place in 2012 through an executive order. Most of his fellow Democrats since then have sought more lasting protection for the Dreamers. The Trump administration said in September 2017 it would rescind DACA, but it remains in effect under court order.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is given to nationals from designated countries affected by armed conflict, natural disaster, or other strife. TPS holders are permitted to work and

live in the United States for limited times.

The Trump administration has shown a deep skepticism toward the TPS program and has moved to revoke the special status for immigrants from El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras and other nations.

Polls showed Americans increasingly blame Trump for the shutdown, the 19th since the mid-1970s. Most past shutdowns have been brief. The current one has had no impact on three-quarters of the government, including the Department of Defense, which has secure funding.

Trump says no amnesty for 'Dreamers,' signals support in broader deal (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/20/2019 10:40 AM, David Morgan]

President Donald Trump said on Sunday his proposed immigration deal to end a 30-day partial government shutdown would not lead to amnesty for "Dreamers," but he appeared to signal support for amnesty as part of a broader immigration agreement.

In a morning Twitter storm, Trump also said he would not seek the removal of millions of illegal immigrants living in the United States, while bashing House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her fellow Democrats for turning down an offer he made on Saturday, including for Dreamers, the immigrants brought to the United States illegally as children.

"No, Amnesty is not a part of my offer. It is a 3-year extension of DACA. Amnesty will be used only on a much bigger deal, whether on immigration or something else," Trump said on Twitter.

"Likewise there will be no big push to remove the 11,000,000 plus people who are here illegally-but be careful Nancy!"

The Dreamers are protected from deportation under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

DACA was put in place under former President Barack Obama. The Trump administration said in September 2017 it would rescind DACA, but it remains in effect under court order.

Trump did not make clear what he was referring to regarding the 11 million people mentioned in his tweet. About 12 million people are living in the United States illegally, according to U.S. Department of Homeland Security estimates.

In a Saturday speech from the White House, Trump offered three years of protections for Dreamers and for holders of temporary protected status (TPS), another class of immigrants from designated countries affected by armed conflict, natural disaster or other strife.

Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell welcomed the plan as a "bold solution," while a spokesman said McConnell would seek Senate passage of the proposal this week.

The legislation will include bills to fund government departments that have been closed during the shutdown, as well as some disaster aid and the president's immigration proposal,

a McConnell aide said. The plan will contain \$12.7 billion in disaster aid, said another Senate source who asked not to be named.

But Trump's amnesty tweet caught some Republicans off guard.

"I don't know what the president's calling amnesty," Senator James Lankford, an Oklahoma Republican, told ABC's "This Week" program. "That's a longer debate and obviously not something we can solve quickly."

Trump appeared to be responding to conservative critics who accused him of proposing amnesty and reneging on a campaign promise, which could alienate his right-wing base.

About one-quarter of the U.S. government shut down on Dec. 22 over Trump's demand for \$5.7 billion to fund a wall along the border with Mexico, which Democrats have refused to consider. Some 800,000 federal workers have been ordered to stay home or work without pay during the shutdown.

The promise of a border wall was a mainstay of Trump's 2016 presidential election campaign. As a candidate, he said Mexico would pay for the barrier, but the Mexican government has refused.

The shutdown has caused widespread disruptions.

The Transportation Security Administration on Sunday reported an 8 percent national rate of unscheduled absences on Saturday, compared with 3 percent a year ago. More than 50,000 TSA officers are working without pay.

Some airports experienced longer wait times at security checkpoints, and Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport closed one of its checkpoints because of excessive absences.

On Sunday, a day after Trump's DACA proposal, there appeared to be signs of movement, even as Democrats insisted the government should reopen before proceeding with talks over border security.

"What the president proposed yesterday - increasing border security, looking at TPS, looking at the Dreamers - I'll use that as a starting point. But you've got to start by reopening the government," U.S. Senator Mark Warner said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Warner, a Virginia Democrat, also said Congress should approve pay for federal workers affected by the shutdown before they miss another paycheck this week.

Bennie Thompson, the Democratic chair of the House Homeland Security Committee, said Democrats were not opposed to physical barriers on the southern border but that Trump's changing position posed a problem for resolving the border security issue.

"I would not rule out a wall in certain instances," Thompson said on ABC's "This Week" on Sunday.

Trump offers immigration compromise to Democrats for wall funding in bid to end shutdown (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/19/2019 5:40 PM, Dave Boyer, 527K]

President Trump offered Democrats a deal to end the 29-day-old government shutdown Saturday by extending protections for hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants in return for \$5.7 billion in border wall funding.

"I am here today to break the logjam and provide Congress with a path forward to end the government shutdown and solve the crisis on our southern border," Mr. Trump said in an address from the White House. "This is a common-sense compromise both parties should embrace."

Top Democrats quickly rejected the offer, saying the president must agree to reopen the government before they'll negotiate on immigration or border security.

"I cannot support the proposed offer as reported and do not believe it can pass the Senate," said Senate assistant Democratic leader Richard Durbin of Illinois in a statement. "First, President Trump and Senate Majority Leader McConnell must open the government today. Second, I cannot support the proposed offer as reported and do not believe it can pass the Senate. Third, I am ready to sit down at any time after the government is opened and work to resolve all outstanding issues."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called the president's plan "a compilation of previously rejected initiatives."

Rep. Ted Lieu, California Democrat and a member of House leadership, tweeted: "We will never allow a shutdown as a negotiating tactic. Need to reopen government first."

The proposal capped a week of escalating clashes between the president and Mrs. Pelosi, who has refused to consider money for a border wall. After she withdrew her invitation for Mr. Trump's State of the Union address, the president blocked Mrs. Pelosi and a congressional delegation from traveling on a military plane to visit U.S. troops Afghanistan.

White House aides said the proposal shows that Mr. Trump is willing to negotiate while Democratic leaders continue to stonewall on a solution to reopen government.

Just before his announcement, Mr. Trump hosted a naturalization ceremony in the Oval Office for five new citizens. Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen administered the oath of citizenship, with the president and Vice President Mike Pence applauding.

"You have just earned the most prized possession anywhere in the world," the president told them. "Each of you worked hard for this moment. You followed the rules ... By taking this oath, you have forged a sacred bond with this nation."

As an olive branch to Democrats, Mr. Trump is supporting the BRIDGE Act, a bipartisan bill that grants protections from deportation for about 700,000 illegal immigrants who qualified for the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

He also is backing legislation that would extend for three years reprieves from deportation for about 300,000 others with temporary protected status.

The president said once the government reopens and "we have made a down-payment on border security," he plans to convene weekly bipartisan meetings at the White House "so we can do a finished product" on immigration reform.

"That is our plan," Mr. Trump said. "Straightforward, fair, reasonable and common-sense, with lots of compromise."

He said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Kentucky Republican, has pledged to bring the proposal for a vote this coming week.

The BRIDGE Act would allow those immigrants to remain in the country and receive work authorization for three years after the deal is approved. It would not grant a pathway to citizenship, unlike the Dream Act.

The proposal was a departure from Mr. Trump's position against including DACA in a border-wall deal. He has stated he prefers the courts to sort out the program's fate; in 2017, Mr. Trump announced plans to phase out DACA.

The Supreme Court took no action Friday on Mr. Trump's bid to end deportation protections under DACA, suggesting the program may stay in place at least until the end of this year.

Sens. Lindsey Graham, South Carolina Republican, Mr. Durbin, and others introduced the BRIDGE Act in 2017 to allow people who are eligible for or who have received work authorization and temporary relief from deportation under DACA to remain in the U.S.

Mr. McConnell called the plan "a bold solution to reopen the government, secure the border, and take bipartisan steps toward addressing current immigration issues." He said he intends to vote on the proposal in the coming week and send the package to the Democrat-controlled House.

"Everyone has made their point—now it's time to make a law," Mr. McConnell said. "With bipartisan cooperation, the Senate can send a bill to the House quickly so that they can take action as well. The situation for furloughed employees isn't getting any brighter and the crisis at the border isn't improved by show votes. But the president's plan is a path toward addressing both issues quickly."

But a prominent group that advocates for reductions in legal immigration quickly came out against the plan. Roy Beck, president of NumbersUSA, said the president's offer "is a loser for the forgotten American workers who were central to his campaign promises."

"An amnesty-for-wall trade would once again reward previous immigration lawbreakers without preventing future immigration lawbreakers," Mr. Beck said in a statement. "This kind of amnesty deal will incentivize more caravans, more illegal border crossers and more visa overstayers at the expense of the most vulnerable American workers who have to compete with the illegal labor force."

Influential conservative activist Ann Coulter tweeted her opposition as well: "Trump proposes amnesty. We voted for Trump and got Jeb!"

Mr. Trump cited the suffering of illegal migrants and their children, the damage done to Americans by drug smuggling, and the crimes committed in the U.S. by illegal immigrants.

"As a candidate for president, I promised I would fix this crisis," he said. "And I intend to keep that promise one way or the other. The good news is these problems can all be solved, but only if we have the political courage to do what is just and what is right."

The president noted that he and other administration officials have met with Democratic lawmakers in recent days, although not with Democratic leaders.

"Both sides in Washington must simply come together, listen to each other, put down their armor, build trust, reach across the aisle and find solutions," Mr. Trump said. "It is time to reclaim our future from the extreme voices who fear compromise and demand open borders."

Trump yields on 3 immigration policies in effort to reach compromise on wall (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/20/2019 4:39 PM, Stephen Dinan, 527K]

President Trump's latest immigration proposal marks a retreat on three areas of policy in what the White House said was a "good faith" effort to try to break the gridlock that for more than a decade has thwarted every effort to strike a compromise on the thorny issue.

In each of those areas — the Obama-era DACA program, Temporary Protected Status and a new path for asylum for children in Central America — Mr. Trump had canceled the Obama administration's initiatives.

On Saturday, he did an about-face and proposed to restore each of those programs. Going further, he offered approval to write them into law, giving them a permanence Mr. Obama could never win from Congress during his tenure.

In exchange, he is asking for \$5.7 billion for his plans to build a border wall as well as changes to make it easier to deport illegal immigrant families and cut down on abuses of the asylum system.

He also proposed items both sides generally agree on, such as more technology to scan for drugs in vehicles at legal border crossings and a boost in the number of immigration judges to cut into the backlog of cases.

"Today represents a compromise offer," Vice President Mike Pence told reporters in a briefing after the president's announcement.

The embrace of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals is a major change. Just days ago, Mr. Trump said he didn't want to do anything until the Supreme Court had a chance to decide on his 2017 attempt to phase out the deportation amnesty that is protecting about 700,000 "Dreamers." Lower courts have split on that phaseout, leaving its future unclear. Mr. Trump proposed writing the DACA program into law for those already using it, giving them a guaranteed three years of protections.

Mr. Pence said Mr. Trump has been "persuaded this is the right thing to do, now."

On Temporary Protected Status, the Homeland Security Department has signaled an end to the protection for as many as 300,000 people, some who have been protected for two decades by a program that, as its name suggests, was supposed to be temporary.

The White House in immigration negotiations last year resisted adding protected status holders into any deal, but that resistance has dissipated. Indeed, Temporary Protected Status was the issue that sparked Mr. Trump's harsh comments about those countries last year when Democrats say he called Haiti and Central American nations "s—hole" countries.

Mr. Pence on Saturday said Mr. Trump readily embraced adding the protected status deal into his proposal this time.

The Trump administration in 2017 also canceled the Obama administration's Central American Minor program, which was designed to give children looking to get asylum in the U.S. a chance to apply from their home countries rather than make the dangerous trek north.

The program drew slim participation and was nixed — drawing serious criticism from Democrats, who said the president was forcing people to take the dangerous journey.

Mr. Trump is proposing to restart the Central American Minor program, this time with the full protections of law rather than an executive action.

Democrats would prefer to look at a full pathway to citizenship for the 1.5 million people who could qualify for DACA and the hundreds of thousands under Temporary Protected Status.

They also said Mr. Trump's offer is disingenuous because he put Dreamers and TPS recipients in danger.

"It was effectively saying, 'Look, I created a problem by taking away protections for Dreamers. I created another problem by taking away protections for refugees. I'm willing to undo part of the damage temporarily that I have inflicted to get my wall,'" Rep. Adam B. Schiff, California Democrat, said on CBS's "Face the Nation" program. "Well, that's really not much of an offer. And it wasn't intended to be."

Mr. Trump has moderated his own request from an original plan for \$18 billion to construct 700 miles of border barriers to the current proposals of \$5.7 billion to build 230 miles.

He also wants to make it easier to deport illegal immigrant families by cutting down on abuses of the asylum system — items he has sought for two years. He has been stymied by Democrats who say illegal immigrants deserve a chance to make claims in the U.S.

Mr. Trump's deal also includes items that both sides generally agree on, such as more technology to scan for drugs in vehicles at legal border crossings and a boost in the number of immigration judges to cut into the backlog of cases.

The Senate, led by Republicans, is slated to vote on Mr. Trump's plans next week.

But House Democrats are unlikely to go along. Speaker Nancy Pelosi, California Democrat,

rejected the president's proposal. She said she will have her chamber vote instead on those few areas of overall agreement such as the immigration judges and scanning technology.

Trump pitches deal: Protection of immigrants here with DACA, TPS for \$5.7B in border security (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/19/2019 5:15 PM, Anna Giaritelli, 629K]

President Trump offered a deal to Democrats Saturday that includes extensions of protections for recipients of the Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals programs in return for \$5.7 billion for an additional barrier at the southern border.

Trump reiterated he still wants \$5.7 billion for a physical barrier at the U.S.-Mexico border, but he said it would be a "strategic deployment" of resources, "not a 2,000 mile concrete structure from sea to sea."

"Much of the border is already protected by natural barriers, such as mountains and water. We already have many miles of barrier including 115 miles that we are currently building or under contract," he said. "Our request will add another 230 miles this year in the areas our border agents most urgently need."

As part of his "negotiation," he said he will give legal status, different from a pathway to citizenship, to DACA recipients, as well as continued protections for those in the U.S. under TPS. DACA recipients were brought to the country illegally as children, while people with TPS status are from certain countries that have been affected by conflict or natural disasters.

"Number one is three years of legislative relief for 700,000 DACA recipients brought here unlawfully by their parents at a young age many years ago. This extension will give them access to work permits, social security numbers, and protection from deportation, most importantly," Trump said during a speech at the White House Saturday afternoon.

"Secondly, our proposal provides a three-year extension of Temporary Protected Status or TPS. This means that 300,000 immigrants whose protected status is facing expiration will now have three more years of certainty so that Congress can work on a larger immigration deal, which everybody wants, Republicans and Democrats."

The Republican leader said those two steps have the potential to "build the trust and goodwill" that would be required to move on additional immigration reforms with lawmakers.

Trump's pitch to House and Senate leaders comes 29 days into the partial government shutdown. Both the White House and congressional Democrats have refused to cave or negotiate, forcing the administration to make its move Saturday.

Trump said he's also willing to give \$800 million of his ask for humanitarian assistance. Half of all people apprehended for illegally entering the country in November and December were families fleeing Central America.

Another \$805 million would go toward drug detection technology at border crossings.

Trump also asked for an additional 2,750 U.S. Border Patrol agents and other law

enforcement officers, as well as 75 new immigration judges.

Two years ago — in his first week as president — Trump signed an executive order that included a request for 5,000 additional Border Patrol agents and 10,000 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers. Neither of those demands were fulfilled.

More judges would allow the number of asylum cases of those who are taken into custody and seeking asylum to get decided on quicker. Cases in 2018 took one to two years, sometimes longer. Because of ICE's inability to hold people for more than 20 days, families seeking asylum were released into the country.

The backlog of cases now sits at nearly 900,000 cases, Trump said.

Trump also shared plans for a system that would allow those under the age of 18 to apply for asylum in the U.S. from their home country.

Under TPS, those from certain countries who were in the U.S. illegally at the time of a natural disaster, war, famine, or similar situation, were allowed to legally remain and work in the country for two-year terms until their home country said they could be repatriated.

Many of these countries had had their programs renewed many times, some for up to 15 years. Those using the program were now long-term residents in the U.S. who did not want to return.

Since Trump came into office, DHS has announced plans to conclude temporary protected status programs for Nepal, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Sudan, Liberia, Haiti, Somalia, Syria, and Honduras.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen has extended protections 18 months for recipients from Syria, South Sudan, and Yemen.

The administration has struggled with how to deal with DACA for nearly a year and a half since it tried to terminate the program.

On Sept. 5, 2017, former Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the program, created through a 2012 memorandum by former President Barack Obama's Homeland Security secretary, Janet Napolitano, was unconstitutional because the Immigration and Nationality Act mandated Congress, not the executive branch, to set immigration levels.

The order had given children of illegal immigrants the chance to apply for a two-year permit that provided legal protections and work permits.

DACA was to be halted over the next six months and ended March 5.

However, after the program wound down, multiple states sued the Trump administration. Two of those lawsuits have resulted in judges issuing temporary injunctions mandating the program continue while legal challenges to Trump's decision are decided by the courts.

Current recipients are able to apply for renewal while the cases are pending, but no new applicants who would otherwise be covered by the program can apply.

Two cases — one in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in California and another in the Eastern District of New York — have both received preliminary injunctions.

Judges in those lawsuits imposed preliminary injunctions that prevented the program from ending on March 5 and allow the more than 535,000 DACA recipients whose protections expire between now and September to apply for renewal.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services was also mandated by the courts to continue accepting renewal applications from 689,000 DACA recipients while the issue is decided by the courts. It is not accepting new requests.

Last January, the White House proposed a four-point immigration plan as a way of starting negotiations with Democrats. Trump's proposal included a pathway to citizenship to the nearly 700,000 DACA recipients, as well as 1 million others who were eligible for the program since it was rolled it out in 2012, but did not enroll.

Trump's proposal also called for \$25 billion in border wall funding, rescinding of the diversity visa lottery and replacing it with a merit-based system, and ending "chain migration," or visa sponsorships to family members. That deal died in the Senate.

The conservative House Freedom Caucus initially was not supportive of the idea of continuing protections for that group. However, in May, Chairman Mark Meadows, R-N.C., said even some of the most conservative immigration bills include a pathway to citizenship for the so-called "Dreamers."

"I think even in some of the more conservative bills that have been talked about there is the ability to become citizens. And so that's the narrative that's not really out there," Meadows said. "Making sure that those DACA recipients do not have to face deportation and that ultimately they can become citizens."

Meadows said the issue was whether DACA recipients would go to the back of the citizenship line or be put at the front.

Reformers Worry DACA Work Permit Amnesty-for-Wall Funding will Encourage More Caravans (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/19/2019 7:26 PM, John Binder, 2015K]

Pro-American immigration reformers say President Trump's plan to offer a work permit amnesty to about a million illegal aliens and foreign nationals could encourage more caravans of Central Americans to come to the United States at the U.S.-Mexico border.

In a weekend announcement, Trump offered Republicans and Democrats a plan to give amnesty in the form of three-year work permits to a little more than 700,000 illegal aliens who are enrolled in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

The deal gives the roughly 325,000 foreign nationals living in the U.S. on Temporary Protected Status (TPS) amnesty to remain in the country. In return, about a fifth of border wall funding — \$5.7 billion — would be secured to build a barrier at the U.S.-Mexico border.

"Enacting an amnesty for young people right at the time that yet another caravan is en route

to the United States and planning to enter illegally is exactly the wrong thing to do as a matter of policy," Center for Immigration Studies Director of Policy Jessica Vaughan told Breitbart News. "It's also the wrong thing to do as a matter of politics, because this would be an embarrassingly huge win for the Democrats and more-migration Republicans. It's not a deal, actually; the President would be getting rolled."

Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ) said he supports the deal, challenging the idea that the plan is "amnesty" for illegal aliens, noting that it is a mere extension of the current DACA program and does not include a pathway to U.S. citizenship for illegal aliens.

"The President is showing great resolve to fix a problem that has festered for decades into a current national crisis," Gosar said. "The priority the nation faces is securing the border. The President's proposal to extend provisional status to DACA illegals is generous and the Democrats should accept. The President's proposal does not include amnesty. We support the President's offer."

Roy Beck, the president of NumbersUSA — which represents the interests of American workers in the immigration debate — told Breitbart News in a statement that the plan outlined by Trump will incentivize more illegal immigration.

"The offer the President announced today is a loser for the forgotten American workers who were central to his campaign promises," Beck said in a statement to Breitbart News.

"An amnesty-for-wall trade would once again reward previous immigration lawbreakers without preventing future immigration lawbreakers," Beck continued. "This kind of amnesty deal will incentivize more caravans, more illegal border crossers, and more visa overstayers at the expense of the most vulnerable American workers who have to compete with the illegal labor force."

Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) spokesman RJ Hauman told Breitbart News of the plan:

Why are we trying to exchange just a quarter of what we want [on immigration] for an amnesty?

There is a chance that the wall will never be built but the amnesty happens immediately and is irreversible. It is 1986 all over again – when the amnesty happened immediately and the reforms never happened.

NumbersUSA's Rosemary Jenks blamed previous amnesties for the current skyrocketing levels of illegal immigration at the southern border, saying such a deal is not the answer to securing wall funding.

"Amnesty — President Obama's unconstitutional DACA program — is why we have a crisis on the border in the first place," Jenks said in a statement to Breitbart News. "More amnesty will only encourage more illegal immigration and abuse of our laws."

Hauman said the same.

"There's one thing that will cause another crisis — another amnesty. this whole thing started

with the DACA magnet," he told Breitbart News. "The notion that we're about to solve the problem with more of what caused the problems in the first place is ridiculous."

The deal is already being turned down by House and Senate Democrats, aides tell the news media. Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) said the deal is a "non-starter" for her caucus. Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) said he will also oppose the offer.

For DACA Recipients, President's Temporary Offer Feels Like More Chaos (NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/20/2019 8:01 AM, Lulu Garcia-Navarro, 4491K] Audio: [HERE](#)

NPR's Lulu Garcia-Navarro gets the reaction of immigration activist Greisa Martinez Rosas, a DACA recipient herself, to President Trump's latest offer to reopen the government.

TRANSCRIPT

LULU GARCIA-NAVARRO, HOST:

For more reaction, we are joined now by Greisa Martinez Rosas. She's with United We Dream, a DACA advocacy organization. And she's a DACA recipient herself.

Good morning.

GREISA MARTINEZ ROSAS: Buenas Dias. Good morning.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: Good morning. To remind our listeners, DACA is the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, aimed at giving legal immigration status to those brought to the U.S. without documents as kids. And that includes the so-called DREAMers. So what is your reaction to the president's offer?

MARTINEZ ROSAS: Yeah. So DACA is a program that - I'm someone that is lucky enough to be able to be protected by. And what Donald Trump said yesterday was officially, you know, just another trick and another cruel game to try to trick the American public that he wants to open the government. If he could and if he wanted to, he could protect me and the TPS holders. He could ensure that the 800,000 federal workers would go back to work tomorrow. But he doesn't. He wants to keep our country in chaos.

And, honestly, I'm very concerned. This is - continues to be a tactic of his. And it doesn't just impact immigrants like myself or those immigrants that are in detention centers. It means that there's one person in this country that feels so strongly that he's the one in the right that he is willing to hold all of us hostage. And all of the advancements and all of the changes that we need do not move unless he wants it to. And so, you know, I'm disappointed. I am - but I am - I'm committed to continue to fight until we're able to retake our democracy from this man.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: So President Trump says that he is very interested in border security. He now talks about the wall in a completely different way, saying it's only going to be in certain sections. So far in the wrangling over this barrier, there's been no mention of DACA, unlike the last time. The Democrats say they want that to be a separate issue. Do you think permanent protections for DACA should be part of these negotiations?

MARTINEZ ROSAS: Look. What's important for me when I think about the current

conversation around borders and the detention and more deportation agents that Trump is also demanding with border money is that this is part of his white nationalist agenda, that he wants to use me, the federal workers and TPS people to have an exchange conversation. And what is clear to me is that these are definitely different conversations. There's one about protecting people that he himself...

GARCIA-NAVARRO: But are you asking the Democrats? This is about the Democrats. Are you asking them to solve this issue and put it on the table in the negotiations with President Trump?

MARTINEZ ROSAS: Look. What we need is permanent protection. And what he is offering is not that. And what I think that the Democrats should pass - permanent protection for immigrating people that do not come at the cost of more enforcement, more money for the wall, more agents, more detention centers.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: So it shouldn't be part of these negotiations then.

MARTINEZ ROSAS: That's right.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: OK. The Supreme Court hasn't yet taken up DACA. The court is likely to do so, though. And there's no guarantee how it would rule. That seems to portend a ticking clock. Does that make you nervous without a deal?

MARTINEZ ROSAS: (Laughter) I think that life under Trump has been really nerve-wracking, I will say. So yes, it's something that we're keeping our eye on. I think that there is a possibility that they decide to not grant the ability for the Supreme Court to hear the case. And so I am looking at the optimistic side but preparing for all cases. And I do know that people are - we're asking people to apply for DACA renewals, which means that more people get more protection for a longer time. So we're keeping our eye on it while at the same time, calling for Congress to defund money for these agencies that are the ones responsible for deporting us and detaining us.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: That's Greisa Martinez Rosas, deputy executive director of the immigrant advocacy organization United We Dream. Thank you so much for speaking with us.

MARTINEZ ROSAS: Thank you.

In Trump's Immigration Announcement, a Compromise Snubbed All Around (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/20/2019 2:17 AM, Julie Hirschfeld Davis, 20737K]

Immigrant advocates denounced it as cruel. The conservative right howled that it was amnesty.

What President Trump billed on Saturday as a compromise to end the country's longest government shutdown pleased neither the Democratic congressional leaders whose buy-in he needs to strike a deal nor the core supporters whose backing has always been at the heart of his insistence on a border wall.

Instead, in offering temporary protections for about one million immigrants at risk of

deportation in exchange for funding for a wall, Mr. Trump did something rarely seen during his presidency. He tried to reach beyond his base of supporters — which polls have begun to show is losing patience with him as the partial shutdown drags into its fifth week — and speak to a broader swath of Americans.

The Saturday afternoon speech from the West Wing was an attempt by Mr. Trump to, at the very least, shift the narrative of the past several weeks and show that rather than spoiling for a longer shutdown fight or making unreasonable demands, he was looking for a broadly acceptable way out of a morass he once boasted he was proud to wade into.

"I think you could tell by the president's remarks today," Vice President Mike Pence said, "that we're reaching out."

Yet in seeking to inch toward the center, Mr. Trump alienated portions of his hard-right base, the core supporters he most depends on and the group he and his closest aides have most feared losing. That raised the possibility that, in his zeal to get out of an intractable situation, he may have landed himself in the worst of all worlds, without a clear solution or the support of his most ardent followers.

The tensions and anger over the policy have been quietly playing out in the West Wing as well, as Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law and senior adviser, fended off Stephen Miller, the architect of much of Mr. Trump's immigration agenda. Mr. Kushner has long been a proponent of protections for undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children, while Mr. Miller has pressed for aggressive measures to crack down on both legal and illegal immigration.

In recent days, as White House officials had been working out the details of the compromise, Mr. Miller intervened to narrow the universe of immigrants who would receive protection, according to people familiar with the internal discussions who described them on the condition of anonymity.

While the original idea had been to include protections for as many as 1.8 million undocumented immigrants eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, the Obama-era program known as DACA that protected those illegally brought to the United States as children, Mr. Trump ultimately proposed shielding only the 700,000 who are enrolled.

Mr. Kushner conceded in a briefing after the president's speech that he did not see the proposal as a solution for the DACA program, which Mr. Trump moved to rescind in 2017.

"At this moment in time," Mr. Kushner said, "this is a good path forward."

Many conservatives did not share that view.

"Trump proposes amnesty," the conservative commentator Ann Coulter said on Twitter. "We voted for Trump and got Jeb!" she added, referring to Jeb Bush, who challenged Mr. Trump for the Republican nomination in 2016 and supported a broad immigration overhaul that would have given undocumented immigrants a path to legal status.

Still, in the eyes of many White House officials, the prospect that Mr. Trump could use the proposal to shift blame for the shutdown and pressure Democrats to end the impasse was

worth trying. Mr. Pence argued on Saturday that the speech was a "sincere effort" by Mr. Trump to break the logjam, and he and other White House officials suggested that the measure could attract enough support to succeed from centrist Democrats fed up with the shutdown and willing to side with Republicans.

But such a coalition did not appear to be forming, and courting one bears considerable risk for a president who is most comfortable when he is defying convention, eschewing compromise and being hailed as a hero by supporters who often equate bipartisan deal making with weak-kneed capitulation.

The vast majority of Democrats knocked the approach. While many of them have pressed for measures to protect DACA recipients and immigrants living in the United States under Temporary Protected Status enacted when their countries were destabilized by war or catastrophe, most regard the proposal he put forth on Saturday as woefully inadequate. It offers only three years of protections for the DACA recipients and those who hold T.P.S., which the Trump administration has also moved to end for several countries.

"This is not an amnesty bill," Mr. Pence said. "There is no pathway to citizenship in this proposal."

That was high on Speaker Nancy Pelosi's list of reasons to call the plan "unacceptable."

That is unlikely to matter to the president. Despite saying publicly last month that he would be proud to own a shutdown over the wall, and privately displaying confidence that his base would stick with him through the fight, Mr. Trump has been dismayed to find otherwise in recent days.

An NPR poll released last week showed Mr. Trump's approval ratings down and the first cracks in backing among critical supporters, including whites without a college education and white evangelicals.

Such pressure from what he has called the forgotten men and women who elected him and chant "Build! The! Wall!" at his arena rallies has swayed Mr. Trump before, including last year, when the conservative news site Breitbart branded him "Amnesty Don" for considering a similar deal that would have provided \$25 billion in wall funding for a path to legal status for those the DACA program was created to help. The president ultimately abandoned that agreement, concerned about angering his base and after Mr. Miller and others advised him he should insist on additional immigration restrictions.

On Saturday night, Breitbart panned Mr. Trump's latest idea with the headline "Three-Year Amnesty, Most of Border Remains Open."

A temporary DACA fix for a permanent wall? Trump proposal gathers more Dem resistance (Politico)

[Politico](#) [1/20/2019 3:33 PM, Caitlin Oprysko, 2577K]

'The president is offering a solution and what we have from Democrats so far is just soundbites,' Vice President Mike Pence says.

A day after President Donald Trump's proposal to reopen the government put the ball back in Democrats' court, some Republicans on Sunday said the offer should be viewed as a

jumping off point for negotiations. But, Democrats continued to reject some of the deal's key provisions, making it unclear what the next step will be.

Vice President Mike Pence said Sunday that Democrats' rejection of the deal the White House offered this weekend aimed at ending the partial government shutdown was disappointing but hinted there was still room for negotiating.

"There's a legislative process that is going to begin on Tuesday in the United States Senate," Pence said on "Fox News Sunday" of Trump's offer.

The proposal that Trump laid out Saturday would include his \$5.7 billion demand for a barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border and funding for immigration judges, border personnel and other technology in exchange for a three year deportation reprieve for immigrants who came to the U.S. illegally as minors as well as immigrants with temporary protected status.

In addition, Senate Republicans plan to include \$12.7 billion in disaster aid and government funding through the end of the fiscal year in their bill to advance Trump's immigration proposal.

The president's plan will test Democrats' solidarity, pitting border security funding against protections for young immigrants and refugees. Now, it will also force Democrats to vote against bipartisan funding levels, aid for disaster-hit communities and an extension of the Violence Against Women Act, according to a summary of the Senate plan, obtained by POLITICO.

Trump said Saturday that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) plans to put the president's deal up for a vote this week. Democrats dismissed the offer — despite it containing legislation crafted in part by members of their caucus — demanding that the president reopen the government before they negotiate border security.

Asked why the White House had not taken that route, Pence cited the insistence of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) at a meeting weeks ago that she would not provide the president with funding for a border wall even if he agreed to open the government for another 30 days to allow for talks.

"It was disappointing to see Speaker Pelosi reject the offer before the president gave his speech," Pence said. "The president is offering a solution and what we have from Democrats so far is just soundbites."

Democrats have rejected the deal's temporary TPS and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals protections, seeking a permanent fix for both programs. At the same time, Democrats refuse to fund a border wall they have maintained is expensive and inefficient.

The No. 3 House Democrat reiterated his party's demands, while also offering a path out of the shutdown, contending that Trump's proposal contained only half-hearted concessions.

"We would love to have a permanent fix for DACA and TPS just as he wants a permanent wall," House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-S.C.) said on CBS' "Face the Nation." "I think it's a non-starter for him to ask for a permanent wall and for us to have a temporary fix."

He noted that Democrats would be open to investments in detection technology like drones that could amount to a "smart wall" and that Trump has recently shifted his rhetoric away from asking for a concrete wall, which he applauded. But he continued to insist that Trump reopen the government before any of those issues could be broached.

Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.) made that demand as well.

"Let me just also make clear that what the president proposed yesterday, increasing border security, looking at TPS, looking at, at the Dreamers, I'll use that as a starting point," he said on NBC's "Meet the Press." "But you've got to start by opening the government."

Pence said Sunday that the White House had met with rank-and-file Democrats in order to lay out a "balanced, good faith compromise" and "set the table for a deal" with Democratic leadership and appeared to suggest that Democrats could offer changes in the Senate. The vice president also said that "of course" Trump is willing to negotiate further on the offer.

"What the president directed us to do, our negotiation team, was to reach out with rank and file Democrats in the House and in the Senate," he said on "Face the Nation." "What the president presented yesterday really is an effort to bring together ideas from both political parties."

But while Pence suggested that Trump's offer isn't final, in addressing criticism of the proposal levied by immigration hardliners on the right he seemed to dismiss the possibility of granting Democrats' demands.

"This is not amnesty, there's no pathway to citizenship, there is no permanent status here at all, which is what amnesty contemplates," Pence said of the DACA and TPS provisions in Trump's offer, emphasizing that the president supports "temporary" relief.

Even as Democrats continued to stand their ground, congressional Republicans on Sunday applauded the president for putting forth the deal he did, criticizing their colleagues across the aisle for rejecting it while also shutting down the proposals some have countered with.

Trump's offer "represents progress, not perfection," Sen. John N. Kennedy (R-La.) said on "Face the Nation."

But while Democrats have promised not to provide any funding for a border wall, he warned that "if you bring a plan to him that doesn't include a wall, it's dead as four o'clock."

GOP Conference Chairwoman Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.) echoed Pence's insistence that the White House offer does not amount to amnesty for Dreamers or those with TPS, but would not commit to including such a proposal in negotiations to reopen the government.

"The president really wants to come to an agreement here," she said on NBC's "Meet the Press." "He has put offers on the table. The responsible thing for the Democrats to do is put a counteroffer on the table if you don't like this one."

Trump took to Twitter on Sunday to clarify his stance on amnesty: "No, Amnesty is not a part of my offer. It is a 3 year extension of DACA. Amnesty will be used only on a much bigger deal, whether on immigration or something else. Likewise there will be no big push to

remove the 11,000,000 plus people who are here illegally-but be careful Nancy!"

The president also spent a chunk of the afternoon retweeting Pence and others supportive of his proposal,

While lawmakers debated the specifics of Trump's proposition, one GOP senator broadly categorized the proposal as "a straw man proposal" that is not intended to become law.

"What I encouraged the White House to do and multiple others encouraged the White House to do is put out a proposal," Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) said during an interview with host Martha Raddatz on ABC's "This Week."

"They've listened to a lot of Democrat and Republican members for the last month. They've heard all the demands, they know all the background on it," said Lankford, a member of the Senate's Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

"Put out a straw man proposal. Get something out there the president can say, 'I can support this' — and has elements from both sides. Put it on the table, then open it up for debate."

He continued: "The vote this week in the Senate is not to pass the bill, it is to open up and say: 'Can we debate this? Can we amend it? Can we make changes?'"

When challenged about the lack of public Democratic support for the offer, the vice president blamed party leadership for tamping down dissent.

"We've had good conversations with Democrat members of the Senate but look, their leadership has discouraged them in the House and the Senate from engaging the administration so I want to respect those conversations," he said.

On "Fox News Sunday," Pence pushed back on host Chris Wallace's suggestion that Democrats would ultimately vote down the compromise.

"I'm not sure that's true, Chris," he said. "I'm not sure that's true. We've had a lot of dialogue."

Pence played coy on whether he thought the package could garner the seven Democratic votes needed to pass in the Senate, telling Wallace, "We'll see."

Democrats Reject Trump Border Wall Proposal, Calling It A 'Non-Starter' (News: NPR)
[NPR](#) [1/19/2019 5:28 PM, Ayesha Rascoe and Domenico Montanaro]

With negotiations over reopening the government at a standstill, President Trump offered to back temporary protections for some immigrants brought to the country illegally as children, many of whom are now adults, in exchange for funding for a wall on the Southern border.

In a White House speech on Saturday, Trump also offered to extend the Temporary Protected Status program that blocks deportation of certain immigrants fleeing civil unrest or natural disasters.

The proposal had multiple components, including requests for:

\$800 million for urgent humanitarian assistance;

\$805 million for drug-detection technology to secure ports of entry;

2,750 additional border agents;

75 new immigration judge teams for a court backlog of nearly 900,000 cases;

Allowing Central American minors to apply for asylum in their home countries;

\$5.7 billion for strategic deployment of physical barriers, or a wall, but not, Trump said, a 2,000-mile concrete structure. The president said he wants to add 230 miles this year and claimed the crime rate and drug problem "would be quickly and greatly reduced" and that "some say it would be cut in half."

In exchange for:

Three years of legislative relief for some 700,000 recipients of the Obama-era initiative known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, which protects some immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally as children from deportation. The Trump administration had moved to end DACA, but the decision was challenged in court and is currently held up in legal proceedings. Trump's proposal would give an extension of legal status;

A three-year extension of Temporary Protected Status for some 300,000 facing expiration;

The president said these measures would allow three more years of certainty to work on a larger immigration deal.

However, even before he spoke, the deal appeared to be dead on arrival with Democratic leaders. They insisted Trump needs to open the government before beginning any negotiations over border security or barrier funding.

Before the speech, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., responded to initial reports of the president's offer by calling it "a compilation of several previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable." She added that Trump's proposal does not "represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives."

Some 800,000 federal workers throughout the country have either been furloughed or made to work without pay. Workers have now missed one paycheck and will miss another if the shutdown is not resolved in the next week. Trump has signed legislation to give back pay to federal workers once the government is reopened.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., pledged to put Trump's proposal up for a vote this week.

"Everyone has made their point — now it's time to make a law," McConnell said in a statement shortly after the speech. "I intend to move to this legislation this week. With bipartisan cooperation, the Senate can send a bill to the House quickly so that they can take action as well. The situation for furloughed employees isn't getting any brighter and the

crisis at the border isn't improved by show votes. But the president's plan is a path toward addressing both issues quickly."

Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., head of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, praised Trump's move and put the ball in Democrats' court.

But not everyone in the conservative base was happy with Trump's proposal. Conservative commentator Ann Coulter called Trump's move "amnestying millions of illegals."

During this, the longest partial government shutdown in U.S. history, Trump has suffered in the polls, which have found more people blame the president than congressional Democrats. And that number is on the rise. An NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist poll also found Trump's approval rating down to 39 percent and slipping with his base.

Coming out Saturday and making this speech was an attempt by the president to reclaim the narrative and appear conciliatory. Democrats indicate the president did not reach out to them before the speech and don't see what he's doing, as Pelosi noted, as a good faith effort at compromise.

Trump's offer is based, in part, on bipartisan legislation proposed by Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Dick Durbin, D-Ill., known as the Bridge Act. The bill would give three years of protections to the so-called "DREAMers" — immigrants who came to the U.S. illegally as children. But before Trump's speech, Durbin, a member of the Democratic leadership in the Senate, rejected Trump's use of the bill in this way and called for the government first to be reopened before any negotiations on a border barrier could take place.

"First, President Trump and Senate Majority Leader McConnell must open the government today," said Durbin, the minority whip in the Senate. "Second, I cannot support the proposed offer as reported and do not believe it can pass the Senate. Third, I am ready to sit down at any time after the government is opened and work to resolve all outstanding issues."

This is the latest move by the White House in the midst of its showdown with Democrats, who have balked at providing the money for construction of a border wall. Democrats contend that Trump's push for the wall is immoral and that it is an ineffective way to stop illegal crossings.

Trump argues a wall is necessary for national security. He has refused to sign any spending bill without funding for it. Back in December, the president indicated that he would sign temporary funding measures to keep the government open but then faced a backlash in conservative media over it. He reversed course, which led to the shutdown.

Until now, the White House had said it would be open to negotiating on the amount of money it will accept for a wall but has been noncommittal about offering other concessions to Democrats.

Almost a year ago, Democrats offered some \$25 billion in exchange for a path to citizenship for those almost 700,000 DACA recipients. Democrats say Trump balked at the offer, demanding more after Democrats thought they had a deal.

Democrats have passed several bills out of the House to fund and reopen agencies that are

currently shut down. McConnell has not brought them to the floor of the Senate, deferring instead to the need for negotiations between Trump and Democrats.

Podcast: Shutdown Drags On As Democrats Reject Latest Trump Proposal (NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/21/2019 6:00 AM, Staff, 4491K] Audio: [HERE](#)

President Trump offered an extension of temporary protections for DACA recipients in exchange for funding for the border wall. Democrats called it a "non-starter". What comes next? And a viral video captures a tense scene at the Lincoln Memorial between white high school students and a Native American demonstrator.

Pelosi: Trump proposals to reopen government a 'non-starter' (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/19/2019 3:44 PM, Tal Axelrod, 3038K]

Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) on Saturday called reports of a deal to be proposed by President Trump to end a record-long partial government shutdown a "non-starter."

"Democrats were hopeful that the President was finally willing to re-open government and proceed with a much-needed discussion to protect the border. Unfortunately, initial reports make clear that his proposal is a compilation of several previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable and in total, do not represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives," she said in a statement.

"It is unlikely that any one of these provisions alone would pass the House, and taken together, they are a non-starter."

Reports surfaced Saturday that Trump would propose a deal that would temporarily extend protections for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program recipients and introduce legislation extending the legal status of Temporary Protected Status holders in exchange for his requested \$5.7 billion for a border wall.

Pelosi slammed the deal for not including "the permanent solution for the Dreamers and TPS recipients that our country needs and supports."

The White House and congressional Democrats are at an impasse in negotiations to end a partial government shutdown that entered its 29th day Saturday, extending its record as the longest shutdown in U.S. history.

Trump has not changed his demand for border wall money despite multiple declarations from Democrats that such funds should be separated from discussions on a spending bill.

The House speaker included several border security measures her party would support, including increased infrastructure investments at ports of entry, advanced technology to detect drugs and other contraband and increased customs personnel and immigration judges.

"Next week, Democrats will pass a package of six bills agreed to by House and Senate negotiators and other legislation to re-open government so that we can fully negotiate on border security proposals. The President must sign these bills to re-open government immediately and stop holding the American people hostage with this senseless shutdown," Pelosi said.

While negotiations have remained tense between the two ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, the feud between Pelosi and Trump has become increasingly personal.

The California Democrat sent a request to the White House this week to postpone the State of the Union address, scheduled for Jan. 29, until a time when the government was open and suggested border wall funding could be an issue of "manhood" for the president. Trump responded by cancelling a congressional delegation trip to Afghanistan and excoriating Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) on social media.

No deal: Nancy Pelosi rejects Trump's offer to legalize Dreamers for wall money (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/19/2019 4:35 PM, Susan Ferrechio, 629K]

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Saturday she will not take up President Trump's offer to trade off \$5.7 billion in wall funding for a three-year extension of a program providing legal status for "Dreamers."

Pelosi, D-Calif., issued a statement just before Trump's announcement, calling the plan "a compilation of several previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable and in total, do not represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives."

Pelosi said the proposal does not achieve what Democrats have long sought for the "Dreamers," which is a pathway to citizenship or permanent legal status.

"It is unlikely that any one of these provisions alone would pass the House, and taken together, they are a non-starter."

Pelosi rejected the wall and repeated Democratic offers to increase other border security at ports of entry and to boost technology along the border. Some overlapped with the president's offer, such as money for additional immigration judges and bolstering security at the nation's ports of entry, where most illegal drugs enter.

Trump attacks top Democrat for rejecting Mexico wall deal (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/20/2019 2:17 AM, AFP, 2015K]

US President Donald Trump bitterly attacked top Democrat Nancy Pelosi on Sunday after she rejected a deal on immigration and the Mexico border wall that would end a 30-day-old government shutdown.

Pelosi, speaker of the House of Representatives, on Saturday called Trump's offer of temporary protections for about a million immigrants in return for \$5.7 billion to fund the wall a "non-starter."

"Nancy Pelosi has behaved so irrationally & has gone so far to the left that she has now officially become a Radical Democrat," Trump tweeted. "She is so petrified of the 'lefties' in her party that she has lost control."

"...And by the way, clean up the streets in San Francisco, they are disgusting!" he added, in a seemingly gratuitous aside. Pelosi is from San Francisco.

The offer also was assailed by prominent anti-immigrant voices, which denounced it as tantamount to amnesty.

"No, Amnesty is not a part of my offer. It is a 3 year extension of DACA," Trump said in another tweet, referring to former president Barack Obama's program to shield undocumented immigrants who entered the country as children.

Besides the 700,000 immigrants already enrolled in the so-called DACA or "Dreamers" program, Trump's proposal would also extend to another 300,000 people who had been protected from deportation under another program.

He said that while there would be "no big push" to remove the 11 million people in the country illegally, he warned: "but be careful, Nancy!"

Vice President Mike Pence, who has been leading the administration's contacts with members of Congress, said a bill with the president's proposal would be introduced in the Republican-controlled Senate as early as Tuesday.

In shutdown fight with Trump, Dems reject immigration deal they once sponsored (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/21/2019 10:32 AM, Alex Pappas, 9216K]

Democrats once said the so-called BRIDGE Act was urgently needed to protect young immigrants brought to the country illegally as children.

But now that President Trump has offered to essentially include it as part of a compromise to re-open shuttered government agencies, those same Democrats are rejecting it -- unwilling to trade border wall funding for the immigrant protections they have long sought.

"We must move on the Bridge Act quickly to protect DREAMers," Illinois Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin said back in December 2016.

Durbin, along with South Carolina Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, unveiled the bill before Trump took office; others who signed on as sponsors included California Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein. The president would eventually try to end the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that shielded the 700,000 immigrants illegally brought to the United States as children from deportation, leaving the program in legal limbo ever since.

On Saturday, though, Trump announced he was prepared to back a three-year extension of protections for DACA recipients, and extend protections for 300,000 recipients of the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program -- which protects immigrants from designated countries with conditions that prevent nationals from returning safely. The BRIDGE Act, likewise, included a three-year DACA extension.

But Durbin, like virtually every other congressional Democrat, said he would oppose Trump's offer considering it's attached to \$5.7 billion for a barrier on the southern border with Mexico.

"I cannot support the proposed offer as reported and do not believe it can pass the Senate," Durbin said, adding he is "ready to sit down at any time after the government is opened and

work to resolve all outstanding issues."

Durbin, speaking to reporters in Illinois over the weekend, argued there are some differences between what the president is proposing and what's in his version of the BRIDGE Act, saying he wants to extend protections to more people than Trump does.

"He talked about protecting those already in the program," Durbin said. "Our bill talked about those eligible for the program."

But Republicans accused Democrats of turning their back on a deal they once supported.

"@POTUS offers to support 2 bills sponsored by Dems (TPS & DACA extensions) in exchange for Border Security (something Democrats claim to support) & the immediate response from Dem leaders is No?" Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., tweeted.

The president, in a televised White House address Saturday, offered Democrats the compromise package in exchange for the \$5.7 billion in wall funding -- a request that is at the heart of the deadlock that triggered the longest government shutdown in history.

"Walls are not immoral," he said, adding that a wall "will save many lives and stop drugs from pouring into our country."

While the Democratic leadership in Congress has come out against the compromise, they are facing some pressure to deal. The editorial board of the Washington Post over the weekend called on Democrats to come back to the table. In an editorial titled "Make a deal. Save the dreamers," the paper argued Trump "should not be rewarded for having taken the government hostage" but said Trump's offer to compromise "should be welcomed."

Meanwhile, some in Trump's conservative base are coming out against the deal -- signaling significant concessions were put forward over the weekend -- with commentator Ann Coulter and others accusing the president of offering "amnesty."

The plan would also allocate \$800 million for drug detection technology to secure ports of entry, 2,750 new border agents and law enforcement professionals, and 75 new immigration judges to reduce an immense backlog of asylum requests.

The partial government shutdown has dragged on for a month now and led to hundreds of thousands of federal workers being furloughed or working without pay.

Trump has said he will not sign a bill to open the government unless it includes that wall funding, while Democrats have refused to consider the \$5.7 billion figure, instead offering \$1.3 billion for general border security.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Romney backs Trump on partial shutdown, says 'I don't understand' Pelosi's position (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/19/2019 12:24 PM, Adam Shaw, 9216K]

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, on Friday backed President Trump's stance on the partial government shutdown, backing his call for a wall on the southern border and saying he

doesn't understand Democrats' positioning on the issue.

"You (Pelosi) and your fellow Democrats have voted for over 600 miles of border fence in the past, why won't you vote for another few miles now?" said Romney, speaking in Ogden, Utah after visiting with officials about the shutdown's impact on the community. "I don't understand their position, I really don't."

The stalemate was sparked by Republicans and Democrats unable to come to an agreement on Trump's call for \$5.7 billion for funding for a wall or barrier on the border. Democrats have said they won't go close to that number, and have instead offered less than \$2 billion for more general "border security."

According to The Associated Press, Romney backed Trump and said that the U.S. deserves border security -- including a barrier on the southern border.

While Romney is a fellow Republican, he has been a frequent critic of Trump, particularly Trump's conduct in office. Earlier this month, he made headlines with an op-ed in The Washington Post where he said Trump's behavior "is evidence that the president has not risen to the mantle of the office."

Romney, who ran for president in 2012, said Trump should be bringing the country together, and demonstrate "the essential qualities of honesty and integrity, and elevate the national discourse with comity and mutual respect."

Trump responded to the Post op-ed a day later: "I wish Mitt could be more of a team player. I am surprised he did it this quickly. If he fought really hard against President Obama like he does against me, he would've won the election."

On Friday, he called on both sides to "make a deal" and end the situation by which federal workers are not being paid.

"On policy, it strikes me like there's not a big gap but the politics have drawn people into different corners," Romney said.

He also said he planned to keep working other senators to find temporary solutions -- such as making sure essential government employees working still get paid.

And on Saturday, after Trump rolled out a proposal to end the shutdown -- essentially offering some relief for so-called Dreamers brought to the U.S. illegally by their parents as children, in exchange for the border barrier funding -- Romney sounded a note of approval for the proposal via Twitter.

"@POTUS has put forth a reasonable, good faith proposal that will reopen the government and help secure the border. I look forward to voting for it and will work to encourage my Republican and Democratic colleagues to do the same," Romney wrote.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

'It's anyone's guess what happens next': Democrats shoot down Trump's plan to end shutdown (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/19/2019 2:33 PM, Michael Collins and Christal Hayes, 6053K]
Apparently, it didn't work.

President Donald Trump's offer to extend protections for some young immigrants in exchange for border wall funding and possibly bring an end to the partial government shutdown was immediately shot down by congressional Democrats who called the proposal "inadequate" and predicted it wouldn't pass either the House or the Senate.

Even before Trump officially made his speech and put protections for young immigrants in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program on the bargaining table, Democrats denounced the offer, saying it wasn't enough to end the historic 28-day shutdown.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., called Trump's proposal "unacceptable" and said it was a "non-starter" that wouldn't pass in Congress.

She said the offer did not "represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives," especially since the president's proposal only offered temporary solutions for DREAMers, undocumented immigrants brought to the country before their 18th birthday.

"It is unlikely that any one of these provisions alone would pass the House, and taken together, they are a non-starter," Pelosi said.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., dismissed Trump's offer as "not a compromise but more hostage taking."

"It's clear the president realizes that by closing the government and hurting so many American workers and their families, he has put himself and the country in an untenable position," Schumer said. "Unfortunately, he keeps putting forward one-sided and ineffective remedies. There's only way out: open up the government, Mr. President, and then Democrats and Republicans can have a civil discussion and come up with bipartisan solutions."

Sen. Dick Durbin, one of the co-sponsors of the Bridge Act, legislation that extends protections DREAMers for three years, said he wasn't ready to support the measure and cast doubt over whether Republicans would agree to such terms.

"First, President Trump and Senate Majority Leader McConnell must open the government today," said Durbin, D-Ill., "Second, I cannot support the proposed offer as reported and do not believe it can pass the Senate. Third, I am ready to sit down at any time after the government is opened and work to resolve all outstanding issues."

Other Democrats echoed Durbin's thoughts and added the House would not pass a bill that includes \$5.7 billion in "wasteful" spending for a border wall.

"It's clearly a non-serious product of negotiations amongst White House staff to try to clean up messes the president created in the first place," said one Democratic aide, speaking on condition of anonymity to await the president's speech. "He's holding more people hostage for his wall."

A senior House Democratic aide said the proposal would not pass the House or Senate, in part because "it includes the same wasteful, ineffective \$5.7 billion wall demand that shut down the government in the first place."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., called Trump's offer "a bold solution" to reopen the government, secure the border and take bipartisan steps toward addressing immigration issues.

"Compromise in divided government means that everyone can't get everything they want every time," he said. "The president's proposal reflects that. It strikes a fair compromise by incorporating priorities from both sides of the aisle."

Unlike previous bills, McConnell said, Trump's proposal could break the impasse that led to the government shutdown and said he plans to put the proposal on the floor for a vote this week.

While Democrats seemed resistant to Trump's plan, experts say his move shifts pressure from the White House and Republicans to Democrats, who for years have been advocating for boosted protections for immigrant children.

"This forces the Democrats to decide whether they hate Trump more than they love the DREAMers," said Scott Jennings, a conservative political commentator who worked in the White House under President George W. Bush and is a former McConnell aide.

Jennings said Trump "appears to be putting a legitimate offer on the table, and Democrats appear to have no interest in negotiating an end to the shutdown.

"Why reject this offer out of hand?" he asked. "Pelosi said Trump's offer is not in good faith. If that's her position, how does the shutdown ever end? I think Trump made a wise move today that gives everyone something—border security, DREAMer protections, humanitarian aid. Most reasonable people think stalemates end when negotiations lead to solutions in which everyone wins. But what is the win for Pelosi? To solve a problem, or to please her base?"

Jacob Neiheisel, an associate professor of political science at the University of Buffalo, said what happens next will revolve around how the public perceives Trump's announcement and the Democratic response.

"I think it was a publicity stunt but it does aim to put Democrats in a bad position that they're not budging at all," Neiheisel said. "This is all a blame game, so it all will depend on whose blame game is better."

But, he added, Trump is unlike normal presidents and politicians and could hold out even if he continues to get heat for the shutdown.

"It's anyone's guess what happens next," he said.

'Save The Dreamers': WaPo Implores Democrats To Take Trump's Wall Deal (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/20/2019 4:03 PM, Chris White, 867K]

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and congressional Democrats are losing one big voice in their opposition to President Donald Trump's push for a border wall: The Washington Post's editorial board.

WaPo noted in a Sunday editorial reasons why Pelosi should rebuke the president's most recent offer to temporarily extend protections for the so-called Dreamers. But the paper eventually explained that taking the deal would ultimately help those who came here through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

"He should not be rewarded for having taken the government hostage. Any piece of a wall would reinforce his hateful, anti-immigrant rhetoric," WaPo noted. "He's unreliable, having made and withdrawn similar offers in the past."

WaPo's editorial board has criticized Trump in the past for what its writers call pushing immigration policies that would "cripple the economy." It's taking a different approach now. Sunday's editorial explains why young people who came to the U.S. through the Obama-era program are in peril of being deported.

If nothing happens soon, then the Dreamers could get the short end of the stick, WaPo noted.

"If no deal is reached, the Supreme Court is likely at some point to end that dispensation, as Mr. Trump has demanded, and they will be sent back into the shadows, or to countries of which they have no memory."

Trump offered Pelosi and congressional Democrats a deal Saturday.

His deal included \$800 million in urgent humanitarian assistance, \$805 million in new drug detection technology and three years of legal relief from deportation for DACA recipients in exchange for the \$5.7 billion for "strategic deployment of physical barriers"

Pelosi was not impressed. She preemptively shot down the proposal in a statement before the president's announcement.

Liz Cheney: Pelosi 'Commandeered' The House On The DACA Issue She's Now Voting Against (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/20/2019 2:41 PM, Molly Prince, 867K]

The third-ranking House Republican, Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney, criticized House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Sunday for opposing proposals she recently supported as a way to resist negotiating with President Donald Trump.

"It's very difficult to understand when you've got the president's proposal that obviously includes money for the border wall, also includes an extension for the DACA folks, also includes an extension for TPS. Those are issues, DACA in particular, that Speaker Pelosi, she commandeered the floor of the House of Representatives for eight hours less than a year ago on particularly this issue of helping to ensure that people that are here, the so-called dreamers, are not deported," Cheney told Chuck Todd while on "Meet the Press."

"For [Pelosi] now to simply reject out of hand when the president actually has said, 'Okay, let's look at ways we can come closer,' it shows you they're just not interested in negotiating," Cheney continued.

The Republican-led House passed a stopgap funding bill Dec. 20 that included appropriations to construct a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. However, with a 51-seat majority, Senate Republicans fell short of the necessary 60 votes needed to send it to Trump's desk for signature.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer vowed to kill any legislation in the Senate that includes border wall funding, and consequently, a partial government shutdown has been in effect since Dec. 22.

Both sides of the aisle have been locked in a political stalemate over an appropriations bill, and as a way to come to the negotiating table, Trump introduced a plan Saturday that included a three-year extension of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and those in Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Democrats have been avid proponents of both issues.

Pelosi rejected Trump's proposal before it was even formally announced, calling it a "non-starter."

"Speaker Pelosi has said she will be a champion of the dreamers," Cheney said. "When she's willing to play games, when she's willing to pull political stunts, but she's not actually willing to come up with solutions, it makes it very difficult to come to an agreement here."

Homeland Security Committee chairman: 'I would not rule out a wall in certain instances' (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/20/2019 10:15 AM, Michael Burke, 3038K]

Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.), the new chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, said Sunday that he wouldn't rule out supporting a border wall "in certain instances."

"I would not rule out a wall in certain instances. The notion that we can't have barriers is just something that's not true," Thompson said on ABC's "This Week" when asked if Democrats were willing to negotiate on President Trump's demand for a wall along the southern border.

But Thompson also called on Trump to "have a plan" and said the president has shifted his position on the issue.

"You have to have a plan and the plan that the president initially started with is not where he is now, and so we don't know where he will be tomorrow," he said.

"But clearly, Democrats are for border security. But we are not for this constantly moving the ball just for a talking point," Thompson added.

Trump's long-promised wall sparked the ongoing partial government shutdown, which began on Dec. 22 and is now in its 30th day. The shutdown was triggered when Trump refused to sign a bill to fund the government that didn't include funding for the wall, a key element of his presidential campaign.

The president on Saturday proposed a deal to end the shutdown that would include temporary protections for young undocumented immigrants and more than \$5 billion in

funding for the wall.

Democratic leadership has so far dismissed the proposal, with Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) calling it a "non-starter."

Top Homeland Security Dem breaks with party: 'I would not rule out a wall in certain instances' (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/20/2019 12:38 PM, Gregg Re, 9216K]

House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., broke with some of his fellow congressional Democrats on Sunday by acknowledging in an interview that he "would not rule out a wall in certain instances," although he cautioned that the White House needs a better "plan" than simply using a wall as a "talking point."

However, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who preemptively rejected Trump's proposed border wall compromise on Saturday as a "nonstarter," has pledged not to fund the president's border wall under any circumstances -- and, Thompson suggested in an interview with ABC News' "This Week," Trump is stuck with her.

"Mr. President, Democrats will work with you," Thompson said. "But you can't pick what Democrats you work with. We have picked our leaders, and you have to work with our leaders."

Thompson continued, "The notion that we can't have barriers is just something that's not true."

Thompson maintained that Democratic leaders remain open to negotiation, one day after President Trump unveiled a plan to offer several immigration-related concessions to Democrats in order to obtain \$5.7 billion in funding for a wall on the southern border and end the ongoing partial federal government shutdown, now in its 30th day.

"I'm saying that we will sit with the chief, the president, whomever, and we will work through it," Thompson told anchor Martha Raddatz. Vice President Pence, speaking to "Fox News Sunday," said that the White House "of course remained open to negotiations."

Pelosi said earlier this month that "a wall, in my view, is an immorality" and "the least effective way to protect the border and the most costly."

That view has the support of the party's progressive wing. In an interview last week, for example, Democratic Texas Rep. Veronica Escobar told CNN that "we know walls don't work, that they don't stop drugs, that they don't stop migration."

Escobar also suggested she was open to destroying existing walls, remarking that they are "really ugly" and "monuments to division."

However, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., appeared to side with Thompson's position Wednesday on Fox News' "Special Report with Bret Baier," arguing that border walls "obviously" work in some areas and rejecting suggestions that barriers should be removed where they already exist.

The No. 2 House Democrat additionally asserted that the question of whether to fund

President Trump's proposed border wall -- a dispute at the center of the unprecedented partial federal government shutdown -- is "not an issue of morality."

But Hoyer, pressed by Baier, distanced himself from those comments.

"Obviously, they work some places," Hoyer responded, when asked if he favored removing border walls. "But the president wanted to first build a wall apparently 1,954 miles of -- and he changed that very substantially. "

He added: "A wall is -- that protects people is not immoral. I think the issue is whether it works. ... And the debate ought to be not on morality or racism, I will -- I will say that we're not pleased with some rhetoric that has come about dealing with those -- coming across the border, and we think some of the rhetoric was in fact racist. We think some of that rhetoric was to inflame and was not based upon facts."

Similarly, Thompson on Sunday questioned whether Trump's funding would go toward an effective wall.

"The president initially started with is not where he is now, and so we don't know where he will be tomorrow. ... Clearly, Democrats are for border security," he said. "But we are not for this constantly moving the ball just for a talking point."

Democratic leaders have previously supported building border walls. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and other Democrats, including then-Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, supported the Secure Fence Act of 2006, which authorized the construction of some 700 miles of fencing at the border. As of 2015, virtually all of that fencing had been completed, according to government figures.

Border Patrol officials have also said that walls are effective. ("We certainly do need a wall. Talk to any border agent and they will tell you that," Border Patrol Chief Carla Provost said on Fox News' "Your World" last month.)

Public pressure to resolve the shutdown one way or the other has mounted in recent weeks, as increasing numbers of airport security officials call out sick and worries grow as to how tax returns and food stamps will be processed.

Trump last week signed a bill guaranteeing back pay for federal workers who have been furloughed or forced to work without pay during the shutdown, which started Dec. 22. The workers are set to miss their next full paycheck on Friday.

Meanwhile, Fox News has learned that Senate Republicans scrambled on Saturday evening to put together legislation tracking President Trump's compromise proposal to end the ongoing partial federal government shutdown, and the text of a bill should be ready on Monday.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., indicated to Republican senators on Saturday that he would try to move to start debate on the bill Tuesday.

Tacked onto the legislation will be supplemental money for disaster relief and extensions on the Violence Against Women Act, Fox News has also learned.

In a televised White House address on Saturday afternoon, Trump offered Democrats a three-year extension of protections for 700,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, in exchange for the \$5.7 billion he has been seeking for a barrier along the nation's southern border with Mexico.

The offered deal would also extend protections for 300,000 recipients of the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program -- which protects immigrants from designated countries with conditions that prevent nationals from returning safely.

Procedural hurdles would likely prevent the Senate from taking immediate action on legislation that implements Trump's proposal, however. The motion to proceed to start debate on the bill would require 60 votes. If Democrats don't cooperate, McConnell will need to file a cloture motion on Tuesday to cut off debate on the motion to proceed, which would not ripen for a vote until Thursday. Republicans hold a 53-47 majority in the Senate.

In his interview with "Fox News Sunday," Pence, asked whether Republicans have the 60 votes to break a potential filibuster, responded: "As the president often says, 'We'll see.'"

Democratic Homeland Security Chair: I 'Would Not Rule Out a Wall in Certain Instances' (Free Beacon)

[Free Beacon](#) [1/20/2019 12:27 PM, Andrew Kugle, 105K]

Rep. Bennie Thompson (D., Miss.), chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, said on Sunday that he does not deny the effectiveness of border walls in certain instances.

ABC's "This Week" host Martha Raddatz asked Thompson if he would rule out a wall in any negotiations with President Donald Trump.

"I would not rule out a wall in certain instances," Thompson said. "Now the notion that we can't have barriers is just something that's not true, but again, Martha, you have to have a plan and the plan that the president initially started with is where he is now. We don't know where he will be tomorrow."

Trump and Congress remain at an impasse over funding for Trump's proposed wall along the southern border. The standoff has resulted in a partial government shutdown that is now in its 30th day.

Over 800,000 furloughed federal government workers have gone without a paycheck, with some of them still having to work. Trump is adamant Congress approve wall funding while Democratic leaders like Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D., Calif.) remain adamant no funding will go towards a border wall. Pelosi has gone as far as saying a border wall is "immoral."

Some Democrats have distanced themselves from Pelosi's view by saying some physical barriers are necessary along the border.

"You just heard the chief of border protection for the San Diego sector tell me barriers are an essential part of effectively controlling the border because it allows for agents to focus on specific threats like smuggling drugs and he was showing me exactly the kind of barriers that President Trump was talking about ... so why are Democrats opposed to any physical wall in addition to updated technology?" Raddatz asked.

"Well, I don't think Democrats are opposed to any physical barriers. It's just the president constantly involves his description of the wall just as he indicated Mexico was going to pay for whatever was there. So what we have to do is sit down, work through this and let the public know exactly what we're talking about and what they can expect. We're not there yet. Democrats historically have supported certain barriers, certain other things to protect this country," Thompson said.

Pelosi cancels effort to continue Afghanistan trip after Trump revealing travel plans 'significantly increased danger,' official says (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/18/2019 12:55 PM, John Parkinson, 2413K]

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Friday accused President Donald Trump and his administration of endangering the lives of Americans, including her own, by publicly revealing a congressional delegation's plans to travel by commercial aircraft to Afghanistan.

"We had the prerogative to travel commercial and we made plans to do that until the administration leaked we were traveling commercially and that endangers us," Pelosi told reporters in the U.S. Capitol at midday Friday. They were her first public comments since Trump blocked her and the delegation from using a military aircraft on Thursday, saying in a letter she could fly commercially instead. "We weren't going to go because we had a report from Afghanistan that the president outing our trip had made the scene on the ground much more dangerous because it's just a signal to the bad actors that we're coming."

Pelosi had tried to salvage aspects of a congressional delegation to Afghanistan blocked by Trump, but was unable to continue the trip on commercial aircraft due to "increased" danger to officials on the trip, her spokesman said Friday.

In what was becoming an increasingly personal feud in their political standoff over Trump's demand that congressional Democrats agree to pay for his proposed border wall, the president on Thursday torpedoed plans at the last minute for the delegation to utilize a military aircraft to make the trip, citing the government shutdown as the reason. The day before, Pelosi had called for a delay in Trump's State of the Union address, scheduled for Jan. 29, until after the government shutdown ends.

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders made Trump's letter to Pelosi public in a tweet.

Pelosi, who said the trip would have been her ninth to Afghanistan, admonished the president, cautioning that "you never give advance notice of going into a battle area."

"You just never do. Perhaps the president's inexperience didn't have him understand that protocol. The people around him, though, should have known that. That's very dangerous," she said. "But the more important thing is the people who we would be meeting with, our civilians there. Our own troops first and foremost, again, they take so many risks for us. We didn't want to heighten the risk for them."

Pelosi said that by publicly releasing the letter, the president "heightened the danger on the ground." As the lawmakers considered whether to fly commercially, Pelosi said the State Department "doubles down and says we don't think you should come because the president's statement has made it dangerous."

"The fact that they would leak that we were flying commercial is a danger not only to us but to other people flying commercially. It's very irresponsible on the part of the president," Pelosi said. "We'll go again. We'll go another time."

Pelosi declined to explain why she believes the White House leaked word of her commercial travel plans, telling reporters "I rest my case."

Asked if she believes the move was in retaliation of her letter to Trump asking the president to schedule a new date for the State of the Union after the shutdown ends, Pelosi laid on thick sarcasm.

"I would hope not," Pelosi quipped. "I don't think the president would be that petty, do you?"

Pressed on her accusations that Trump endangered the lives of Americans and U.S. troops, Pelosi answered: "That's what the State Department reported to us."

"This is a fact, this isn't even an opinion. Anyone in the presence of a high level or any level of a congressional delegation in a region, you heighten the danger," Pelosi said.

Overnight, before the rescheduled commercial flight, the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service provided an updated threat assessment, "detailing that the President announcing this sensitive travel had significantly increased the danger to the delegation and to the troops, security, and other officials supporting the trip," according to a statement from Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill.

A U.S. official familiar with the trip's logistics told ABC News that security planners voiced concerns about the idea of the speaker and her delegation flying to Afghanistan outside of typical military-travel arrangements.

Hammill said that the White House also leaked plans for the delegation to continue on commercial travel.

"This morning, we learned that the Administration had leaked the commercial travel plans as well," Hammill noted. "In light of the grave threats caused by the President's action, the delegation has decided to postpone the trip so as not to further endanger our troops and security personnel, or the other travelers on the flights."

A senior Pelosi aide pointed to "multiple administration" sources telling reporters Friday morning that the delegation would continue on commercial aircraft. ABC News was among those contacted.

The White House denied that the administration leaked word of the commercial travel plans.

"When the Speaker of the House and about 20 others from Capitol Hill decide to book their own commercial flights to Afghanistan, the world is going to find out," an administration official who refused to go on the record told ABC News. "The idea we would leak anything that would put the safety and security of any American at risk is a flat out lie."

Pelosi was still in her office in the U.S. Capitol when she received a letter from the president

Thursday afternoon, where Trump announced he was postponing the excursion due to the shutdown. Trump suggested Pelosi fly commercially if she wished to continue her travel.

The delegation had loaded onto a bus operated by the U.S. Air Force for the drive out to Joint Base Andrews. Instead, the bus drove lawmakers to the East Plaza of the Capitol, where members disembarked from the bus and walked into Pelosi's office.

After huddling with Pelosi for hours behind closed doors, Reps. Adam Schiff, Eliot Engel, Stephen Lynch and Mark Takano -- who all had planned to join the trip - quietly left the Capitol, declining to comment as they rolled suitcases through the basement of the Capitol. Reps. Susan Davis and Elaina Luria were also members of the delegation. Friday morning, Trump continued to criticize Pelosi for scheduling the trip during the shutdown.

Later Friday morning, the White House released a memo from the Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Russell Vought, to the "heads of all executive Departments and agencies, blocking any congressional delegation from using military aircraft.

"In light of the current partial government shutdown, the President has asked me to direct the heads of all executive departments and agencies of the Administration on new policies in support of Legislative Branch travel," the memo reads. "Under no circumstances during a government shutdown will any government owned, rented, leased, or chartered aircraft support any Congressional delegation, without the express written approval of the White House Chief of Staff."

The partial government shutdown is now in its 28th day. The House of Representatives returns to session next Tuesday, likely ensuring the shutdown will continue through the long Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday weekend.

Pelosi cancels Afghanistan trip, cites Trump 'leak' (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/18/2019 6:37 AM, Associated Press, 2015K]

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Friday canceled her plans to travel by commercial plane to visit U.S. troops in Afghanistan, saying President Donald Trump had caused a security risk by talking about the trip.

It was the latest twist in what has become a Washington game of brinkmanship between Pelosi and Trump, playing out against the stalled negotiations over how to end the partial government shutdown.

Earlier in the week, Pelosi had asked Trump to reschedule his Jan. 29 State of the Union address, citing security issues at a time when the Homeland Security Department and other agencies remain unfunded.

Trump responded by canceling the military plane that was to have carried Pelosi and a congressional delegation to Afghanistan on the previously undisclosed troop visit. Trump suggested she travel by commercial plane instead.

Trump had belittled the trip as a "public relations event" — even though he had just made a similar warzone stop — and said it would be best if Pelosi remained in Washington to

negotiate to reopen the government.

"Obviously, if you would like to make your journey by flying commercial, that would certainly be your prerogative," wrote Trump, who had been smarting since Pelosi, the day before, called on him to postpone State of the Union address.

On Friday, Pelosi announced that her plan to travel by commercial plane had been "leaked" by the White House.

Spokesman Drew Hammill said Pelosi and accompanying lawmakers were prepared to take a commercial flight but canceled after the State Department warned that publicity over the visit had "significantly increased the danger to the delegation and to the troops, security, and other officials supporting the trip."

The White House said it had leaked nothing that would cause a security risk.

The political tit-for-tat between Trump and Pelosi laid bare how the government-wide crisis has devolved into an intensely pointed clash between two leaders determined to prevail. It took place as hundreds of thousands of federal workers go without pay and Washington's routine protocols — a president's speech to Congress, a lawmaker's official trip — become collateral damage.

Denying military aircraft to a senior lawmaker — let alone the speaker, who is second in line to the presidency after the vice president, traveling to a combat region — is very rare.

Hammill said the speaker planned to travel to Afghanistan and Brussels to thank service members and obtain briefings on national security and intelligence "from those on the front lines." He noted Trump had traveled to Iraq during the shutdown, which began Dec. 22, and said a Republican-led congressional trip also had taken place.

Trump's trip to Iraq after Christmas was not disclosed in advance for security reasons.

Rep. Adam Schiff of California slammed Trump for revealing the closely held travel plans.

"I think the president's decision to disclose a trip the speaker's making to a war zone was completely and utterly irresponsible in every way," Schiff said.

Some Republicans expressed frustration. Sen. Lindsey Graham tweeted, "One sophomoric response does not deserve another." He called Pelosi's State of the Union move "very irresponsible and blatantly political" but said Trump's reaction was "also inappropriate."

There have been few signs of progress in shutdown negotiations. On Thursday, Vice President Mike Pence and senior adviser Jared Kushner dashed to the Capitol late in the day for a meeting with Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. And the State Department instructed all U.S. diplomats in Washington and elsewhere to return to work next week with pay, saying it had found money for their salaries at least temporarily.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump wanted Pelosi to stay in Washington before Tuesday, a deadline to prepare the next round of paychecks for federal workers.

The White House also canceled plans for a presidential delegation to travel to an economic forum in Switzerland next week, citing the shutdown. And they said future congressional trips would be postponed until the shutdown is resolved, though it was not immediately clear if any such travel — which often is not disclosed in advance — was coming up.

Trump has still not said how he will handle Pelosi's attempt to have him postpone his State of the Union address until the government is reopened so workers can be paid for providing security for the grand Washington tradition.

Pelosi told reporters earlier Thursday: "Let's get a date when government is open. Let's pay the employees. Maybe he thinks it's OK not to pay people who do work. I don't."

Pelosi reiterated she is willing to negotiate money for border security once the government is reopened, but she said Democrats remain opposed to Trump's long-promised wall.

The shutdown, the longest ever, entered its 28th day on Friday. The previous longest was 21 days in 1995-96, under President Bill Clinton.

In a notice to staff, the State Department said it can pay most of its employees beginning Sunday or Monday for their next pay period. They will not be paid for time worked since the shutdown began until the situation is resolved, said the notice.

The new White House travel ban did not extend to the first family.

About two hours after Trump grounded Pelosi and her delegation, an Air Force-modified Boeing 757 took off from Joint Base Andrews outside Washington with the call sign "Executive One Foxtrot," reserved for the first family when the president is not traveling with them. It landed just before 7 p.m. at Palm Beach International Airport, less than 2 miles (3 kilometers) from the president's private club.

The White House did not answer questions about the flight.

Pelosi says Trump 'outing' war zone trip made it more dangerous (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/18/2019 10:18 AM, Lauren Fox, 5847K]

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Friday she was forced to nix her Afghanistan trip after President Donald Trump barred her from using a military aircraft and she was told by the State Department diplomatic security that it was too dangerous to fly there commercially.

"We weren't going to go because we had a report from Afghanistan that the President outing our trip had made the scene on the ground much more dangerous because it's just a signal to the bad actors," Pelosi told reporters at the Capitol.

"You never give advance notice of going into a battle area. You just never do. Perhaps the President's inexperience didn't help him understand that protocol. The people around him, though, should have known that, because that's very dangerous," she said.

The speaker also said the President's announcement of the trip had endangered members of Congress and American troops, and that she was just relaying what the State Department told her office.

"This is a fact. It's not even an opinion," she said.

Asked how Pelosi knew that the leaks were coming from the White House when the White House denied it, she paused and said: "I rest my case."

Pelosi added she and the members will "go again" at a different time.

The canceled Afghanistan trip marked an escalation in a weeks-long standoff between Pelosi and the President over the government shutdown.

On Wednesday, Pelosi sent a letter to the President asking him to consider moving his State of the Union address or to deliver it in writing -- citing security concerns because some of the agencies tasked with protecting the event are affected by the ongoing shutdown.

On Thursday, Trump retaliated, blocking Pelosi and members of Congress from using a military jet for a trip they had planned to take to Afghanistan to visit American troops.

Pelosi said she hoped that the President wouldn't be canceling a trip to visit the troops out of spite.

"I don't think the President would be that petty do you?" she said.

Earlier Friday, her spokesman released a statement saying that while Pelosi and the congressional delegation set to travel with her were prepared to use commercial travel for their trip, the risks associated with the trip only grew after details of those plans to a war zone leaked.

"In the middle of the night, the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service provided an updated threat assessment detailing that the President announcing this sensitive travel had significantly increased the danger to the delegation and to the troops, security, and other officials supporting the trip," Drew Hammill, her spokesman, said. "This morning, we learned that the administration had leaked the commercial travel plans as well."

Pelosi spokesman says White House leaked commercial travel plans to Afghanistan (Roll Call Online)

[Roll Call Online](#) [1/18/2019 10:08 AM, Lindsey McPherson, 90K]

The shutdown feud between Speaker Nancy Pelosi and President Donald Trump escalated Friday after the California Democrat's office revealed it had made commercial travel arrangements to continue an Afghanistan trip the president tried to cancel — but the administration leaked their plans.

There was already a security risk with the speaker and her congressional delegation continuing the overseas troop visit after Trump announced Thursday where they'd be going. But the heightened threat from Trump leaking the commercial travel plans led the delegation to call off the trip for now, a Pelosi spokesman said.

"After President Trump revoked the use of military aircraft to travel to Afghanistan, the delegation was prepared to fly commercially to proceed with this vital trip to meet with our

commanders and troops on the front lines," Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill said in a statement.

"In the middle of the night, the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service provided an updated threat assessment detailing that the president announcing this sensitive travel had significantly increased the danger to the delegation and to the troops, security, and other officials supporting the trip," Hammill added. "This morning, we learned that the administration had leaked the commercial travel plans as well."

The delegation has decided to postpone the trip "in light of the grave threats caused by the president's action," Hammill said.

Multiple administration sources told Hill reporters early Friday morning that the Pelosi delegation was flying commercially, Hammill said later in a tweet.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders pushed back at Pelosi's office, telling Roll Call "Absolutely," when asked if she thinks Speaker Pelosi and her staff are lying when they claimed the administration leaked her efforts to use commercial flights.

The White House had issued a statement accusing Pelosi and her office of lying, but it had no name attached. Sanders had denied multiple times earlier in the day when Roll Call and others requested it be made on the record.

"Frankly, that's unbecoming of the speaker to make that type of accusation," Sanders said. "It's outrageous that she would accuse the president of the United States in jeopardy. In fact, the reason he didn't want her to go is he's trying to protect American citizens. He wants to secure our border. He wants a solution. He wants her to stay here to help him find it."

Sanders did not respond to a Roll Call reporter's shouted follow-up question on why Trump released a Thursday letter to Pelosi that mentioned her Afghanistan plan.

On Friday, a twitter account linked to the Taliban mocked Pelosi in a tweet that included this threat: "Taliban is waiting" followed by emojis of silverware.

The decision is not just about the safety of the lawmakers.

Hammill said they did not want "to further endanger our troops and security personnel, or the other travelers on the flights."

"Whether here or abroad, the speaker always thanks our troops, diplomats and intelligence community for their heroism and service," Hammill said. "The speaker commends her colleagues on the delegation, who personally and officially have dedicated their lives to protect and defend the American people."

Democratic Senator Seeks Perjury Investigation of Kirstjen Nielsen (New York Times)
[New York Times](#) [1/19/2019 12:48 AM, Glenn Thrush, 20737K]

A Democratic senator asked the F.B.I. on Friday to open a perjury investigation into the homeland security secretary, Kirstjen Nielsen, over her congressional testimony about the Trump administration's policy of separating migrant families at the southern border.

The senator, Jeff Merkley of Oregon, cited a previously unreleased document from December 2017 that showed that Ms. Nielsen's staff considered a range of options for dealing with the influx of families seeking asylum, including a policy that would "separate family units."

But testifying before the House Judiciary Committee last month, Ms. Nielsen said that "we've never had a policy for family separation." She also denied in subsequent interviews and statements on social media that she had pursued such a policy.

"In light of these conflicting facts," Mr. Merkley wrote in a letter to the F.B.I. director, Christopher A. Wray, "the F.B.I. should immediately investigate whether Secretary Nielsen's statements" violate "federal statutes that prohibit perjury and false statements to Congress."

In an internal Department of Homeland Security draft released by Mr. Merkley on Thursday, department officials wrote that "D.H.S. is considering separating family units, placing the adults in adult detention, and placing the minors under the age of 18 in the custody" of the Department of Health and Human Services "as unaccompanied alien children."

That prompted Mr. Merkley to tell Mr. Wray, "Compelling new evidence has emerged revealing that high-level Department of Homeland Security officials were secretly and actively developing a new policy and legal framework for separating families as far back as December 2017."

A spokeswoman for the department denied that the agency ever had such a policy.

"What this predecisional, predeliberative memo — as well as previously leaked predecisional, predeliberative documents — shows is that the secretary was provided a menu of options to prevent the humanitarian crisis we predicted at that time and which has manifested itself today," the spokeswoman, Katie Waldman, said in an email. "Secretary Nielsen specifically rejected a policy proposal to separate all family units in D.H.S. custody."

The federal government has reported that nearly 3,000 children have been separated from their parents under the zero-tolerance policy put in place by the Department of Homeland Security last year. But the policy could have affected thousands more, according to a report by government inspectors released this week.

Dem senator requests FBI investigate Nielsen for potential perjury (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 2:13 PM, Tal Axelrod, 3038K]

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) on Friday requested that the FBI investigate Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen for possible perjury regarding comments she made about the administration's zero-tolerance immigration policy.

"The FBI has previously indicated that the Department of Justice requires a formal criminal referral from Congress to initiate an investigation concerning Congressional testimony," Merkley said in a letter to FBI Director Christopher Wray. "I write today to execute such a criminal referral."

"Compelling new evidence has emerged revealing that high-level Department of Homeland Security officials were secretly and actively developing a new policy and legal framework for separating families as far back as December 2017," he added.

The FBI did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Spokeswoman Katie Waldman said in a statement to The Hill that the department "has never had a blanket policy of separating families in custody."

"As Secretary Nielsen has said publicly and testified multiple times, DHS has never had a blanket policy of separating families in custody," Waldman said in the statement. "What this pre-decisional, pre-deliberative memo — as well as previously leaked pre-decisional, pre-deliberative documents — shows is that the Secretary was provided a menu of options to prevent the humanitarian crisis we predicted at that time and which has manifested itself today."

Waldman went on to claim that Nielsen "specifically rejected a policy proposal to separate all family units in DHS custody."

"Secretary Nielsen specifically rejected a policy proposal to separate all family units in DHS custody. Instead, the Department followed the existing decades-long practice used by multiple administrations of only separating minors from adults 1) when DHS is unable to determine the familial relationship, 2) when DHS determines that a minor may be at risk or 3) when the parent or legal guardian is referred for criminal prosecution," she added.

Waldman continued, stating DHS did not issue "a new, changed or blanket policy regarding family separations."

Merkley on Thursday provided NBC News with a draft document of what would eventually become the White House's immigration policy. The senator's office said the December 2017 document was leaked to them by a government whistleblower.

In the draft, Trump administration officials discussed targeting parents of migrant families with prosecution as a deterrent, saying the "increase in prosecutions would be reported by the media and would have a substantial deterrent effect."

The draft also said DHS was "considering separating family units, placing the adults in adult detention and placing the minors under the age of 18 in the custody of [the Department of Health and Human Services] as unaccompanied alien children."

A Justice Department official suggested in the document that Customs and Border Protection agents could deny asylum hearings to children who had already been separated from their parents.

"If CBP issues an ER [expedited removal] for the entire family unit, places the parents in the custody of the U.S. Marshal, and then places the minors with HHS, it would seem that DHS could work with HHS to actually repatriate [deport] the minors then," the official wrote.

It is unclear from the draft whether the government planned on reunifying children with their parents prior to the deportation.

The policy "was specifically designed to gain media attention and generate a 'substantial

deterrent effect,' " Merkley wrote in his letter to Wray. "Despite this fact, while testifying under oath before the House Committee on the Judiciary, Secretary Nielsen stated unequivocally 'I'm not a liar, we've never had a policy for family separation.' "

DHS responded to NBC News, saying that it was considering "all legal options" to deal with the "crisis" on the southern border.

"The Trump administration has made clear that all legal options are on the table to enforce the rule of law, rein in mass unchecked illegal immigration, and defend our borders," DHS spokesperson Katie Waldman told NBC regarding the document.

Senate Dem on call for Nielsen investigation: I am 'sick and tired of this administration lying' (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/21/2019 10:37 AM, Jordain Carney, 3038K]

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) said on Monday that he is asking for the FBI to investigate Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen for possible perjury because he is "sick and tired" of the administration "lying" to Congress.

"I am just sick and tired of this administration lying to the American people, lying to Congress, doing it under oath and it's time for some real accountability," Merkley told CNN's "New Day."

Merkley sent the bureau a request on Friday asking it to probe Nielsen for potentially lying to Congress. He said on Monday that that FBI had not yet responded to his request, but "this is the official, right way to initiate a referral to the FBI for a pursuit of an investigation regarding perjury."

Merkley, in his letter to the FBI, said that "compelling new evidence has emerged revealing that high-level Department of Homeland Security officials were secretly and actively developing a new policy and legal framework for separating families as far back as December 2017."

Merkley's office gave NBC News a December 2017 draft document last week of what would eventually become the White House's immigration policy.

In the draft, administration officials discussed targeting parents of migrant families with prosecution as a deterrent, saying the "increase in prosecutions would be reported by the media and would have a substantial deterrent effect.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), according to the draft, was also "considering separating family units, placing the adults in adult detention and placing the minors under the age of 18 in the custody of [the Department of Health and Human Services] as unaccompanied alien children."

DHS spokeswoman Katie Waldman said in a statement to The Hill late last week that the department "has never had a blanket policy of separating families in custody."

"What this pre-decisional, pre-deliberative memo — as well as previously leaked pre-decisional, pre-deliberative documents — shows is that the Secretary was provided a menu of options to prevent the humanitarian crisis we predicted at that time and which has

manifested itself today," Waldman said.

She added that Nielsen "specifically rejected a policy proposal to separate all family units in DHS custody."

Jeff Merkley Requests FBI Perjury Investigation into Kirstjen Nielsen (Roll Call)

[Roll Call](#) [1/18/2019 3:04 PM, Katherine Tully-McManus, 90K]

At issue is testimony before Congress about family separations at border

Sen. Jeff Merkley is requesting that the FBI open a perjury investigation into Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, based on testimony she gave to Congress in December on family separations at the southern border.

Testifying before the House Judiciary Committee in December, Nielsen stated "I'm not a liar, we've never had a policy for family separation."

Memos made public Thursday show that officials from the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security were exploring family separation policies as a deterrent for illegal immigrants a full year before that testimony.

The memo, which was titled "Policy Options to Respond to Border Surge of Illegal Immigration," laid out options for speeding up deportation of migrant children by denying them their legal right to asylum hearings after separating them from their parents and families.

Merkley's letter to the FBI is focused on that statement and the contrast with the memo, which is dated December 2017, a year before her testimony.

"In light of these conflicting facts, the FBI should immediately investigate whether Secretary Nielsen's statements violate 18 U.S. Code § 1621, 18 U.S.C § 1001, or any other relevant federal statutes that prohibit perjury and false statements to Congress," he wrote.

The practice of separating children from their families, part of a "zero tolerance" approach to immigration, sparked backlash last year as reports of children younger than five years old were placed in government custody and taken from their parents.

"The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has previously indicated that the Department of Justice requires a formal criminal referral from Congress to initiate an investigation concerning Congressional testimony. I write today to execute such a criminal referral," wrote Merkley.

Leaked memo shows Trump administration weighed separating families at border, Sen. Merkley wants Nielsen investigated for perjury (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/18/2019 1:18 PM, Staff, 2413K]

Memo challenges claims by DHS chief that separating families was never policy.

Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley on Friday asked the FBI to open a perjury investigation into Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen following the leak of a 2017 internal draft document that explored separating families as a way to curb illegal immigration at the

border.

The memo challenges the assertion by Nielsen last June on Twitter and in media briefings saying "we do not have a policy of separating families at the border. Period."

The Dec. 16, 2017, document, provided by Merkley's office, which said it received it from a whistleblower, appears to be an internal memo on legal options to address families who were arriving at the border. Among the options listed: the "prosecution of family units" and "separate family units."

"Because of the large number of violators, not all parents could be criminally prosecuted," the memo noted. "However, the increase in prosecutions would be reported by the media and it would have a substantial deterrent effect."

What would happen to their children? The memo said they would become "unaccompanied minors," or UACs. "This will require close coordination with (Health and Human Services), to ensure that sufficient capacity is available to detain the UACs," the document stated.

Merkley points to Nielsen's public comments that U.S. policy never called for separating families. He notes that Nielsen at one point told the House Judiciary Committee: "I'm not a liar. We've never had a policy of family separation."

"Compelling new evidence has emerged revealing that high-level Department of Homeland Security officials were secretly and actively developing a new policy and legal framework for separating families as far back as December 2017," Merkley, from Oregon, wrote in a letter to FBI Director Christopher Wray.

In a statement on Friday, DHS spokeswoman Katie Waldman said, "As Secretary Nielsen has said publicly and testified multiple times, DHS has never had a blanket policy of separating families in custody. What this pre-decisional, pre-deliberative memo — as well as previously leaked pre-decisional, pre-deliberative documents — shows is that the secretary was provided a menu of options to prevent the humanitarian crisis we predicted at that time and which has manifested itself today. Secretary Nielsen specifically rejected a policy proposal to separate all family units in DHS custody."

Shortly after the December 2017 memo was drafted, in April 2018, the Trump administration announced a "zero-tolerance" policy at the border that resulted in the separation of some 2,700 kids from their families in a matter of weeks.

Waldman said the administration was responding to an uptick of border arrests, which it blamed on a lack of a border wall and a court settlement that prohibits detention of children for longer than 20 days. Officials have said previously they believe that court settlement, known as the Flores Agreement, encouraged people to travel with minors.

"In part we were predicting -- and trying to prevent -- the exact humanitarian and security crisis we are confronted by now," Waldman said. "It would be malpractice to not seriously examine every single avenue to gain operational control of the border and ensure that those who are entering our country have a legal right to be here."

In court filings, the administration has estimated a total of 2,737 children were separated

from their families under "zero tolerance." But a report released Thursday by internal government investigators found that there were likely "thousands" more kids separated from families in 2017, before that policy took effect. The Health and Human Services inspector general said that the number of kids separated from their families under the current administration is "unknown."

While enforcement deterrents like the ones described in the memo have been effective in stopping adult men from entering further into the U.S. for economic reasons, experts at the nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute say those methods don't address the current humanitarian crisis.

"There is no evidence that such deterrence tactics work against the humanitarian flows today," MPI analyst Sarah Pierce told ABC News. "So not only is it immoral, but it is misguided and foolish."

Sen. Merkley Asks FBI to Investigate DHS Secretary (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [1/18/2019 5:03 PM, AP, 2894K]

A Democratic senator is asking the FBI to investigate whether Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen lied during testimony before the House Judiciary Committee.

Sen. Jeff Merkley said in a letter to the FBI that a December 2017 memo shows DHS officials outlined a policy to separate families.

In April 2018, the Trump administration instituted the "zero-tolerance" policy where anyone caught crossing the border illegally was criminally prosecuted. It resulted in the separation of nearly 2,800 children.

Nielsen said at the hearing last December there wasn't a policy to separate families. She said the separations under zero tolerance happened because children can't be jailed with parents.

Homeland Security officials said the secretary rejected the 2017 memo's suggestion and reiterated there was no policy to separate families. The FBI had no comment.

Merkley, of Oregon, is considering a presidential run.

U.S. Senator Merkley seeks FBI probe of DHS chief for possible perjury (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/18/2019 5:03 PM, Richard Cowan and Mica Rosenberg]

A Democratic U.S. senator on Friday asked the FBI to probe whether Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen committed perjury when she testified to Congress that the administration never had a policy to separate immigrant families.

Senator Jeff Merkley has been an outspoken critic of the Trump administration's moves last year to target immigrant families crossing into the United States for enforcement actions.

The administration implemented a 'zero tolerance' policy to criminally prosecute and jail all illegal border crossers, including those traveling with their children, leading to a wave of family separations last year.

The policy and disturbing images of young of children being held in cages sparked a public backlash, causing the administration to subsequently change course on family separation. President Donald Trump signed an executive order to end the practice on June 20, 2018.

In his letter to FBI Director Christopher Wray, Merkley noted emerging evidence that the Department of Homeland Security, as far back as December, 2017, had been developing a new policy to separate families.

Merkley released a memo on "Policy Options to Respond to Border Surge of Illegal Immigration," which he said was created by senior Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice officials discussing family separation as a deterrent for migrants.

Yet, the senator from Oregon noted, during testimony to the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee on Dec. 20, 2018, Nielsen said, "I'm not a liar, we never had a policy for family separation."

The FBI declined to comment and DHS did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Office of Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) said on Thursday it had identified "thousands" more separated children in addition to the 2,737 included as part of lawsuit challenging family separations brought by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) last year.

The auditor said in a report that prior to the officially announced 'zero tolerance' policy, the government began ramping up separations in 2017 for other reasons related to a child's safety and well-being, including separating parents with criminal records or lack of proper documents.

Trump campaigned for president on a promise to stop the flow of illegal immigrants and drugs over the southwestern U.S. border with Mexico. His demand for \$5.7 billion to build a wall on the border with Mexico has led to the longest-ever partial government shutdown, now in its 28th day.

What the 2017 draft memo reveals about the administration's family separations policy (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/18/2019 1:40 PM, Priscilla Alvarez, 5847K]

A newly released draft memo by officials in the departments of Homeland Security and Justice reveals how far the Trump administration was willing to go to deter migrants, many of whom are seeking asylum, from approaching the US-Mexico border.

The draft memo, dated December 2017, was obtained by Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon. It not only provides a snapshot of the administration's plans to roll out policies aimed at dissuading migrants from trekking north but also shows how early on those options were being discussed.

Merkley told CNN the memo was obtained via a government whistleblower.

The draft, called "Policy Options to Respond to Border Surge of Illegal Immigration," was put together at a time when border apprehensions had dropped compared to the previous

year. In December 2017, 40,519 people were apprehended at the border, roughly 18,000 fewer than December 2016, according to Customs and Border Protection data.

Below is a breakdown of some of the options floated in the draft memo that eventually took effect.

This is listed under a section titled "short term (next 30 days) options." And as became evident months later, it came to fruition.

In April 2018, then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the "zero-tolerance" policy that led to families being separated, given that children cannot be kept in federal jail with their parents. The policy sparked outrage across the country and was later reversed in a June executive order.

The draft memo makes clear that the administration was aware of the attention the policy might bring. And that was the point.

"The increase in prosecutions would be reported by the media and it would have substantial deterrent effect," the memo states.

The title, "Separate Family Units," and explanation of this section are significant. It explicitly states what the administration had long denied. After the rollout of the "zero-tolerance" policy, the administration repeatedly said that there was no intention to separate families. In June 2018, DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said on Twitter, "We do not have a policy of separating families at the border. Period." But the draft memo demonstrates that that was not the case.

The draft explains that children would be placed in the custody of Health and Human Services as unaccompanied children, which ultimately led to a slew of issues when trying to reunify families. A new inspector general report released Thursday laid out how the lack of documentation and tracking of children created a number of challenges for HHS. The report found that "thousands" more children were separated from a parent or guardian last year than was previously reported.

While not acted upon, comments in the margins also suggest denying children asylum hearings. "If CBP issues an ER [expedited removal] for the entire family unit, places the parents in the custody of the U.S. Marshal, and then places the minors with HHS, it would seem that DHS could work with HHS to actually repatriate the minors then," the comment reads.

"It would take coordination with the home countries, of course, but that doesn't seem like too much of a cost to pay compared to the status quo."

Last year, the administration rolled out a controversial policy that required that adult members of a sponsor's household to submit fingerprints to the FBI when applying to take in a child. Immigrant advocates argued that the policy led to children remaining in shelters for longer periods of time because sponsors -- some of whom live in mixed-status households -- were afraid to come forward.

The administration, as shown in the draft, was aware of the possible repercussions.

"There would be a short term impact on HHS where sponsors may not take custody of their children in HHS facilities, requiring HHS to keep the UAC's in custody longer," it reads, under a section titled, "near term (2-6 months) options." The policy was reversed in December.

Last year, the Trump administration erected a temporary tent facility in Tornillo, Texas, to hold children who had arrived unaccompanied at the southwest border or been detained as a result of the administration's "zero-tolerance" policy.

The facility came under scrutiny last November when the HHS Inspector General Daniel Levinson warned of "significant vulnerabilities," including not properly vetting staff and a "dangerously low number of clinicians."

It's expected to shut down before the end of the month.

Responding to the release of the memo Thursday, DHS spokeswoman Katie Waldman said, "The Trump administration has made clear that all legal options are on the table to enforce the rule of law, rein in mass unchecked illegal immigration, and defend our borders."

Nearly 300 families may have been separated before 'zero tolerance' took effect, admin says (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/21/2019 8:05 PM, Priscilla Alvarez, CNN, 5847K]

Nearly 300 undocumented immigrant parents may have been separated from their children months before the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy along the border took effect, and officials did not keep a full record of separations, Customs and Border Protection admitted in a letter released Monday.

The separations took place in west Texas in 2017, Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan said in a letter to Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon.

"[F]ollowing an increase in family unit apprehensions in El Paso, US Border Patrol's El Paso Sector undertook a limited effort to pursue prosecutions against all amenable adults, including parents in family units," McAleenan wrote. "CBP records indicate that this led to approximately 283 parents referred for prosecution between July and November 2017."

Bringing criminal charges against parents for unlawful entry required separating them from their children.

A DHS official previously confirmed to CNN that the agency had tested the policy of prosecuting parents caught illegally crossing the border in the El Paso sector.

Last week, the Health and Human Services inspector general found that "thousands" more children had been separated than the government previously reported. According to the report, some separations occurred before the policy was announced in April 2018. The report notes that they've been released from custody, but it does not say who they were released to or if they were reunited with their parents.

The IG report described the challenges faced by the Department of Health and Human

Services in identifying which children had been separated from a parent or guardian when apprehended at the US-Mexico border.

In his letter, McAleenan acknowledged that separations had occurred before the administration's "zero-tolerance" policy went into effect and that records were not consistently maintained prior to April of last year.

"First, while separations have occurred historically for decades in the interest of child safety and welfare, the occurrence was limited, as it is currently," McAleenan wrote. "Additionally, prior to April 19, 2018, when the US Border Patrol implemented changes to its e3 Detention Module, separations were not consistently recorded in the US Border Patrol systems of record." He added that changes were later made to "improve record keeping and information sharing on these cases."

Wyden responded to the letter in a statement: "This Orwellian response from Custom and Border Protection does not respond to the pressing questions about the fate of children and their parents. It fails to deliver the data necessary to understand what happened to these kids and their families."

'Depth of the horror of family separation is unknown,' says congresswoman in border district (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/18/2019 4:23 PM, Victoria Moll-Ramirez, 2413K]

Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-TX) said she and her constituents suspected the initial numbers the government was providing about child separations were inaccurate.

"We knew the numbers were greater. We kept asking for information. We kept asking for transparency," she said on ABC News' The Debrief. "Of course, none of that happened."

Her reaction comes on the heels of a federal report that stated more children were separated at the border than originally estimated.

Kirstjen Nielsen, the secretary of the department of homeland security, has defended the so-called zero-tolerance and said it was never U.S. policy to separate children.

On Thursday, a spokesman for DHS said the department was looking at every option.

"The Trump administration has made clear that all legal options are on the table to enforce the rule of law, rein in mass unchecked illegal immigration, and defend our borders," said a spokeswoman in an emailed statement.

Still, Escobar does not feel confident the American public is getting the complete truth.

"I think the depth of the horror of family separation is unknown," she said.

Watch the video above for the full segment.

Oversight of child separations is both parties' responsibility (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/20/2019 7:29 AM, Erin Dunne, 629K]

On Friday, Democrats in the House and Senate called for new investigations into the Trump administration's policy of child separations at the southern border. This came in light of newly public information in an inspector General report on the implementation of the separations, as well as a leaked draft memo outlining government intent in these policies. Republicans should stand by their colleagues and demand answers.

The Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services's report, released Thursday, revealed that the government had separated thousands more children at the border than previously acknowledged, that the separations began months before the policy was announced, and that the program was so mismanaged that "the total number of children separated from a parent or guardian by immigration authorities is unknown."

As the report explains, "thousands of children may have been separated during an influx that began in 2017, before the accounting required by the court, and HHS has faced challenges in identifying separated children."

The report also noted that even after President Trump, facing public outcry, ended the policy in June 2018, separations continued.

The failures documented in the report also include, for example, a lack of a unified tracking system for separated families and even after the court ordered that children be reunited, that separated children "were still being identified more than five months after the original court order to do so." Those findings were compounded by a leaked draft memo on the separation policy shared with Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., by a whistleblower, which contained a significant amount of misleading and false information. The suggested policies outlined in that memo offer a dizzying array of ideas to stack hardships on individuals, including children and often contrary to existing laws and protections, who crossed the border.

Under the heading "SHORT TERM (next 30 days) OPTIONS", the first bullet point, for example, reads: "Increase Prosecution of Family Unit Parents: Instruct CBP and ICE to work with DOJ to significantly increase the prosecutions of family unit parents when they are encountered at the border."

The explicit goal of that policy, already in effect "on a limited basis in the El Paso Sector," is to criminally charge parents, holding them in custody while designating children as unaccompanied minors and placing them in the custody of Health and Human Services. The last sentence of that section makes the goal clear: "The increase in prosecutions would be reported by the media and it would have substantial deterrent effect."

The second point is even more explicit, titled: "Separate Family Units." That point goes on to outline what eventually became the policy of child separations: "Announce that DHS is considering separating family units, placing the adult in adult detention, and placing the minors under the age of 18 in the custody of HHS as unaccompanied alien children."

Another short-term idea floated in the memo includes changing the designation of children classified as unaccompanied minors to deny them access to legal protections. Next to that suggestion, an edited comment reads: "This is one of the easiest decisions anyone will ever have to make. There is absolutely no reason not to change this misguided policy."

Other policy options included the collection of fingerprints of sponsors for unaccompanied minors, expansion of ICE detention facilities, holding of children for longer than 20 days, expanding expedited removal, and even reforming the Trafficking in Victims Protection Reauthorization Act to cut protections for minors, including those subject to abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

Importantly, while these policies were explicitly outlined in December 2017, government officials were still denying their existence despite evidence to the contrary in June 2018:

"This misreporting by Members, press & advocacy groups must stop. It is irresponsible and unproductive. As I have said many times before, if you are seeking asylum for your family, there is no reason to break the law and illegally cross between ports of entry."

— @SecNielsen

"We do not have a policy of separating families at the border. Period."

— @SecNielsen

The findings from both documents point to a deliberate and systematic government policy that created chaos and left young children literally lost in a negligent and overwhelmed bureaucracy — problems that were covered up and denied in lies to Congress and the public.

As the documents make plain, there are clear and valid reasons for concern over the policy of child separations at the border. That is exactly the sort of government abuse that lawmakers of all political leanings should be intent on investigating.

Republicans must not leave fighting such abuse to the Democrats.

Instead, they must join Merkley, who has asked for the FBI to investigate alleged perjury by DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, who testified under that there was no policy of separations. They must also support the now-Democratic controlled House Committee on Energy on Commerce that has requested documents from HHS as part of its investigation into the handling of child separations.

After all, fighting the unacceptable treatment of children must be a bipartisan issue.

Poll: Trump's Support Among Hispanics Soars Amid Fight for Border Wall (Breitbart) [Breitbart](#) [1/18/2019 6:06 PM, John Binder, 2015K]

President Trump's support among Hispanic American voters has soared as he is refusing to buckle to pressure from Republicans and Democrats to reopen the federal government without funding for his proposed wall along the United States-Mexico border.

In the latest NPR/Marist/PBS Poll, about 50 percent of Hispanic American voters this month said they approve of the job Trump is doing in the middle of the government shutdown. This is a 19 percentage point increase from last month, when only about 31 percent of Hispanic voters said they approved of Trump.

The poll revealed that since the start of the shutdown, Trump's approval has barely changed among nearly all demographic groups. For example, Trump's approval — since doubling down on obtaining border wall funding — with swing voters has hardly moved, with

about 37 to 38 percent approving of the job he is doing between December 2018 and January 2019.

The data does suggest Trump could be losing ground with white American voters for the administration's lack of progress on the issue of immigration. Last month, about 50 percent of white voters said they approved of Trump. This month, only about 40 percent of white voters said they approved.

In the meantime, support for Trump's proposed border wall has skyrocketed in popularity with swing voters, as Breitbart News reported.

This time last year, an ABC News/Washington Post poll found that only 34 percent of voters supported a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border. Today, support for the wall has climbed to 42 percent overall. Most notable, about 40 percent of swing voters now say they support a border wall. This is a ten percentage point increase in support for the wall among swing voters since last year.

Currently, the federal government has remained partially shut down as House Democrats block any funding for physical barriers at the U.S.-Mexico border. A handful of Senate Republicans crafted a plan to give amnesty to illegal aliens that ultimately failed to gain traction.

Border crossings in November 2018 — the last month from which data is available — hit close to 52,000, marking the highest level of illegal immigration in the month of November since 2006. Projections indicate that illegal immigration for next year will reach 600,000 border crossings, the highest level of illegal immigration in more than a decade. Meanwhile, drug overdoses in 2017 killed an unprecedented 72,287 U.S. residents, nearly three times the number of individuals killed by global terrorism. Nearly 50,000 of those deadly overdoses were caused by either heroin or fentanyl.

Trump points to a migrant caravan and unverified claim about Muslim prayer rugs as he continues push for wall (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 11:08 AM, John Wagner, 9763K]

The president's arguments, in morning tweets, represented his latest attempt to portray a security crisis at the border using what Democrats have derided as scare tactics.

The tweets come as Trump and congressional Democrats remain at an impasse over his demand for \$5.7 billion in border-wall funding that has led to a partial government shutdown now in its 28th day.

In one tweet, Trump referenced a Washington Examiner story that prominently quoted an unnamed rancher from a remote, southwestern part of New Mexico who said that her discovery of prayer rugs suggested "terrorist threats" unappreciated by the general public.

In a video that accompanied the story, the rancher acknowledged that she "never seen any Middle Easterners" herself. She did not explain how she knows the blankets she says she has discovered are prayer rugs nor did the video show any such rugs.

"People coming across the Southern Border from many countries, some of which would be a big surprise," Trump said in his tweet that referenced the Examiner story.

In advance of last year's midterm elections, Trump also sought to highlight what he said was a threat from "all sorts of people" of Middle Eastern descent joining a caravan making its way through Central America toward the U.S. border.

He at one point acknowledged "there's no proof of anything" before adding "but there very well could be" large number of Middle Easterners in the caravan.

In his tweets Friday, Trump pointed to a new caravan of Central American migrants crossing into Mexico from Guatemala that had been the subjects of segments earlier on "Fox & Friends," a show the president regularly watches.

"Another big Caravan heading our way. Very hard to stop without a Wall!" Trump tweeted.

Later Friday morning, Trump claimed the Republican party remained united around his position not to "cave" on border security.

"A beautiful thing to see, especially when you hear the new rhetoric spewing from the mouths of the Democrats who talk Open Border, High Taxes and Crime. Stop Criminals & Drugs now!" Trump wrote.

Several prominent Republican senators have urged Trump in recent days to agree to reopen the government on a temporary basis before turning to negotiations over wall funding and related issues.

Trump touts story about finding 'prayer rugs' along border (Politico)

[Politico](#) [1/18/2019 10:49 AM, Caitlin Oprysko, 2577K]

President Donald Trump on Friday sought to prop up his administration's claims that migrants who enter the U.S. illegally at the southern border don't come from only Mexico and Central America, in an attempt to justify his demands for a border wall.

Trump cited a story from conservative news outlet the Washington Examiner in which an unnamed rancher living in New Mexico claimed to have found "prayer rugs," or pieces of carpet used by Muslims for prayer, near her property.

The story does not include any first-person accounts of seeing such migrants, however. U.S. Customs and Border Protection in Arizona said recently that it had arrested migrants from seven countries trying to enter the U.S. illegally there, but none of the countries it named were majority Muslim.

Trump, however, indicated the story supports his administration's argument that people are crossing the southern border from many countries.

He has also claimed that terrorists are crossing the border there, though he did not mention it in the tweet Friday. The State Department has said there is no credible evidence terrorist groups send operatives across the Mexican border.

"Border rancher: 'We've found prayer rugs out here. It's unreal.' Washington Examiner People coming across the Southern Border from many countries, some of which would be a big surprise," Trump wrote in the tweet, appearing to use it as evidence to support his

claims.

CBP did not immediately respond to questions about the natures of the arrests mentioned in its tweet this week. Nor did it respond to requests for comment for the Examiner's story, which rests on solely secondhand accounts from residents who said they were aware of migrants from places outside of Central America and Mexico entering the U.S. through its southern border.

In a video accompanying the article, the rancher — who was granted anonymity "for fear of retaliation by cartels who move the individuals" — said that though she doesn't "have any proof" of her claims and has "never seen any Middle Easterners" near the border herself, she says she has been told by trusted Border Patrol agents and has seen what she said were prayer rugs.

"There's a lot of people coming in not just from Mexico," she told the Examiner. "People, the general public, just don't get the terrorist facts of that. That's what's really scary. You don't know what's coming across. We've found prayer rugs out here. It's unreal. It's not just Mexican nationals that are coming over."

She also says that "the percentage of what Border Patrol classifies as OTMs [other than Mexicans] has really increased in the last couple years, but drastically within the last six months. Chinese, Germans, Russians, a lot of Middle Easterners, those Czechoslovakians they caught over on our neighbor's just last summer."

The article cites a second rancher in the same New Mexico town whose neighbor said they found migrants from the Philippines on their property last year.

The president has caught heat for his repeated suggestions that "terrorists" like Islamic State militants could sneak into the U.S. through the border with Mexico because of a lack of the extensive border wall he has promised to build.

A quarter of the federal government has been shut down for close to a month over the issue, as lawmakers resist his demands to appropriate funding for his border wall. Trump has sought to paint a recent influx of migrants at the border as a humanitarian crisis as well as a national security issue, claiming without evidence that caravans of asylum-seeking migrants are flush with criminals.

He has also been criticized for making generalizations about the Muslim faith, railing against "radical Islamic terrorism" throughout his campaign and his presidency and instituting early on a travel ban on Muslim-majority countries that he later watered down.

Case of terror suspect caught sneaking into U.S. roils immigration debate (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/21/2019 8:05 PM, Stephen Dinan, 527K]

Zabi-Ullah Hemmat wasn't just one of 415,816 illegal immigrants caught at the southwest border in fiscal 2016. Nor was he just another of the 84 people from Afghanistan apprehended by Border Patrol agents that year.

What made Mr. Hemmat of special interest to authorities is that when he was snared by agents after 11 p.m. on a chilly November night and they ran his name through federal

databases, he came back listed on the no-fly terrorist watch-list.

Mr. Hemmat is one of the terrorism suspects caught trying to sneak into the U.S. from Mexico — a category of people that is very much part of the current debate over illegal immigration, with President Trump insisting his border wall would deter people from being able to reach American soil and Democrats saying there's no real danger.

Mr. Hemmat's case suggests both may be wrong.

He was indeed on U.S. terrorism lists, linked to both the Taliban and a plot somewhere in North America, according to Department of Homeland Security documents. But after he was caught, wandering in southern Arizona with two Mexican guides and five other men from Afghanistan and Pakistan, he said he had snuck in by crawling under an existing border fence near Nogales, Arizona.

Democrats say the number of potential terrorists who do try to enter via the land border is negligible, and several news reports over the last week say the numbers amount to the low double digits each year.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen says the exact numbers are too sensitive to release, but she says it's on the increase.

Homeland Security does say it "encountered" more than 3,000 "special interest" migrants — people whose nationalities and travel patterns made them potential national security concerns — at the southern border in 2018.

"I am sure all Americans would agree that one terrorist reaching our borders is one too many. These are just the terror suspects we know about who reach our border," Ms. Nielsen said on Twitter, defending the White House's claims.

The Washington Times has not been able to independently verify a total number of terrorists who have entered via the southwest border, but it has spent several years tracking cases such as Mr. Hemmat's, where someone with terrorist connections was nabbed after sneaking in.

Among those were four Turkish men who claimed ties to a Marxist insurgency known by the acronym DHKP/C, who paid \$8,000 apiece to be smuggled into the U.S. They traveled from Istanbul via Paris to Mexico City, then shuttled to the border where they were caught in 2014.

Analysts at the time said the men's arrival exposed the existence of networks capable of smuggling potential terrorists into the U.S.

The worries were big enough that the government created Operation Citadel, a joint program with Homeland Security, the Pentagon and international partners intended to try to clamp down on those smuggling networks.

One of the big successes of Operation Citadel was sniffing out Sharafat Khan, who ran a network that smuggled people from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh from Asia to Brazil then up the spine of South and Central America, through Mexico to the U.S. border.

Court documents show U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement nabbed upwards of 100 people from 2014 to 2016 who identified being smuggled by Khan. In some cases the migrants were flagged en route by American partners in countries such as Panama and Colombia. Other times they managed to reach the U.S. border before being detected.

Four of those, including Mr. Hemmat, popped up on U.S. terrorist watch lists. ICE acknowledged those in a statement last month, upon Khan's deportation, obliquely noting that "several of the individuals smuggled by Khan's organization had suspected ties to terrorist organizations."

It's not known how many others Khan smuggled managed to evade detection, nor whether any of those were on terrorism lists.

Smuggling network leads long trip to border

Khan, a Pakistani who also went by the alias "Dr. Nakib," lived in Brasilia, where he oversaw recruiters who found clients in Central Asia and operators who would shepherd the migrants on the journey, arranging transportation and food and lodging.

Mr. Hemmat flew through Dubai to Brazil, then began a trip that lasted months, through Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico. Along the way, Khan's clients were forced on a 100-mile walk through the Darien Gap, a tropical forest in Panama that cannot be crossed by vehicle. The foot journey can take up to 10 days.

Court documents don't say how much Mr. Hemmat paid, but Khan's going rate ranged from \$3,000 to \$15,000, authorities said in court papers.

During the trip Mr. Hemmat was detected transiting Panama, where officials took his fingerprints as part of Operation Citadel. They alerted U.S. officials, but released him and he continued on his journey. The documents seen by The Times do not give a reason for his release.

Finally at the U.S.-Mexico border in November 2015 he met up with five other men, one from Afghanistan and four from Pakistan, and two Mexicans who were to serve as foot guides.

One was a repeat smuggler, having done prison time for a past conviction. The other was an illegal immigrant who had been deported from the U.S. but was determined to get back to Tucson, Arizona, to the construction site where he had been working as a mason. That man received a \$2,000 discount on the \$3,000 crossing fee in exchange for serving as a guide.

They crawled through a hole underneath an outdated section of border wall near Nogales in broad daylight — and then immediately got lost, wandering for three days and three nights, with temperatures dipping near freezing at night. They didn't have heavy clothing and quickly ran out of food and water.

It didn't help that the Mexicans only spoke Spanish, while the clients spoke their native

tongues, and one, Mr. Hemmat, also spoke some English — though neither of the foot guides did.

Things got testy along the way, with the clients saying the foot guides got "aggressive" with them when they complained about the bungled arrangements.

Near midnight on the third day, they were detected by a Border Patrol surveillance unit and agents swooped in, nabbing them near Patagonia, about 15 miles north of the boundary line.

Hemmat, others flagged on no-fly list

The exact nature of Mr. Hemmat's terrorist dealings remains murky, though documents say he was listed among the more than 80,000 names on the no-fly list as of 2016.

A border alert said Mr. Hemmat had been flagged for past involvement in a plot to conduct an attack in the western hemisphere, either in Canada or the U.S. No more details were provided in the secret document viewed by The Times. Mr. Hemmat also had family ties to members of the Taliban, the border alert said.

Mr. Hemmat told agents he was a doctor and performed vaccinations in Afghanistan. He and the five men with him all intended to lodge asylum claims, according to court documents. It appears those claims failed and he was to be deported.

It's not clear what finally happened, though there is no record of a criminal case against Mr. Hemmat. ICE didn't respond to inquiries about Mr. Hemmat.

Just months before Mr. Hemmat and his group were caught, Border Patrol agents in Arizona nabbed two other men from Pakistan who were flagged for terrorist ties. The documentation seen by The Times showed one was on the watch-list as an associate of a known or suspected terrorist. The other was not watch-listed, but did have "derogatory information" in the system, where he was also identified as an associate of a known or suspected terrorist.

They, too, were smuggled by Khan, as was another Pakistani man detained in Panama during his trip north with two others. When Panamanian authorities ran his identity, they found him on a U.S. terrorism watch-list.

Authorities say Khan maintained safe houses and paid people in each country along the route, selling his services to anyone willing to pay.

Authorities sniffed him out in late 2014 and began working with international partners to probe his activities and to keep track of those he was smuggling.

Brazil served a search warrant on Khan in the spring of 2016, and he fled, making a run for Pakistan. He was snared during a layover in Doha in June 2016 and extradited to the U.S.

After a lengthy legal battle, Khan was convicted and sentenced to 31 months in prison.

"Sharafat Khan organized an intricate network that was open to the highest bidder to

transport undocumented migrants, regardless of who they were, from Pakistan and elsewhere through Brazil and Central America and then into the United States," Angel M. Melendez, special agent in charge at ICE's Homeland Security Investigations office in New York said at the time of Khan's sentencing.

The judge who sentenced him was more direct about the risks.

"You don't know whether they're seeking a better life or whether they're trying to get in here to engage in terrorism," Judge Reggie B. Walton told Khan at his sentencing. "Just because you had good intentions doesn't mean the people you were helping have good intentions. People could have died, people could have gotten injured, families could have lost loved ones."

Trump offers to limit his border wall to strategic locations (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/20/2019 7:00 AM, Nolan Rappaport, 3038K]

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) should give serious consideration to the settlement proposal that President Donald Trump made in his televised address from the White House.

Her objection all along has been to building a wall across the entire length of the Mexican border, and Trump no longer intends to erect "a concrete structure from sea to sea."

He has acknowledged that much of the border is already protected by natural barriers, such as mountains and water. He wants the \$5.7 billion he has requested for a strategic deployment of steel barriers at high priority locations.

The border already has many miles of barriers, including 115 miles that are being built or are under contract. He just plans to add another 230 miles this year at locations where they are most urgently needed.

These barriers would not make illegal crossings impossible, but they would make illegal crossings more difficult and make it easier for the Border Patrol to apprehend crossers.

His request includes \$800 million for humanitarian assistance; \$805 million for drug detection technology; 2,750 more border agents and law enforcement officers; and 75 more immigration judges.

In what he describes as an effort to build trust and goodwill, the legislation he is offering to implement his proposal also would extend the status of 700,000 DACA participants for three years.

This is just a temporary measure, but the outcome of the litigation over the DACA program is uncertain, and the participants will be extremely vulnerable if the program is terminated. DACA participation is sufficient in itself to establish deportability, and they can't apply for asylum. There is a one-year time limit on filing asylum applications and they all have been here for more than a year.

The legislation also would extend the status of 300,000 current Temporary Protected Status recipients for three years.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has promised Trump that his bill will be

brought to the floor of the Senate this week.

Trump also mentions the immigration court backlog crisis in his address. He says that it is not possible to provide an asylum hearing for every illegal crosser who sets one foot on American soil.

The asylum provisions state that aliens who are physically present in the United States may apply for asylum irrespective of their immigration status, unless one of the stated exceptions applies.

In my opinion, the sheer number of illegal crossers is the real border crisis. It has overwhelmed our immigration courts, making it virtually impossible to enforce immigration laws.

This has produced a powerful magnet that encourages illegal crossings. Undocumented aliens who want to come here are extremely unlikely to be deported once they have reached the interior of the country.

How bad is the backlog?

As of November 30, 2018, the immigration courts had a backlog of 809,041 cases. This did not include an additional 330,211 cases that had not been put on the active docket yet, for a total backlog of 1,139,252 cases.

The average wait for a hearing is 1,018 days.

The immigration court has 395 judges. They have to complete 700 cases a year to get a satisfactory performance rating, which would produce a total of 276,500 cases a year. At that rate, it would take more than four years to clear the backlog — assuming the judges do not receive any new cases, which will never be the case.

The 75 additional judges that Trump wants to hire will not make a significant difference, but he

is proposing another method for reducing the demand for asylum hearings that is more promising. He wants to allow Central American minors to apply for asylum in their home countries.

I made a similar suggestion in July 2014, when I wrote, "Meet the Challenge of Unaccompanied Alien Children at the Southwest Border: Is there a better way?"

I pointed out that the United States does not have to assume sole responsibility for helping the unaccompanied alien children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. I proposed removing them to a safe location outside of the United States where the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees could process them for refugee status.

President Barack Obama did this on a more limited basis with the Central American Minors (CAM) refugee program in December 2014, which provided USCIS in-country refugee processing for qualified children in those Central American countries.

Trump should be encouraged to reinstate and expand this program.

According to Trump, his proposal is just a first step towards dealing with the rest of the serious immigration issues with more comprehensive legislation. Once the government is open and the immediate crisis at the border has been addressed, he will hold weekly bipartisan meetings on reforming our immigration system.

While I know that Pelosi would like more than Trump is offering, his proposal is a reasonable compromise that warrants serious consideration. The ball is in her court now.

'Not a 2,000-mile concrete structure from sea to sea': Is Trump scaling back border wall plan? (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/19/2019 7:24 PM, Christal Hayes, 6053K] Video: [HERE](#)

President Donald Trump is offering to extend temporary protection for people brought to U.S. illegally as children in a bid to secure border wall funding. Trump has struggled to find a way out of a four-week partial government shutdown.

Some people who tuned in to watch President Donald Trump's proposal on Saturday to end the 28-day government shutdown took issue with one particular line of the 13-minute address.

The president proposed a compromise: the \$5.7 billion to build a wall along the southern border for temporary protections for undocumented immigrants, including children. He called the proposal "a common-sense compromise both parties can embrace."

"To physically secure our border, the plan includes \$5.7 billion for a strategic deployment of physical barriers, or a wall," Trump said. "This is not a 2,000-mile concrete structure from sea to sea. These are steel barriers in high-priority locations."

Those at home took notice that Trump seemed to downplay the scope of his wall plan, which he has boasted about during campaign rallies. Many also noted the very public way Trump noted that the wall would not be made of concrete as he had said and wouldn't extend the full length of the border.

"Not sea to sea, not paid for by Mexico, only steel slats. #Trump is walking back more than Michael Jackson," one Twitter user said after the speech.

Another chimed in, saying the president "finally acknowledged that the wall will not be from sea to sea or 1954 miles, because it is would be physically impossible given the terrain. The right will not be happy."

Trump's proposal also drew criticism from some hard-line conservatives, who argued it would encourage more illegal immigration.

"A Big Beautiful Concrete Border Wall will be a monument to the Rule of Law, the sovereignty of the USA, & @RealDonaldTrump," Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, wrote on Twitter. "If DACA Amnesty is traded for \$5.7 billion(1/5 of a wall), wouldn't be enough illegals left in America to trade for the remaining 4/5. NO AMNESTY 4 a wall!"

Conservative commentator Ann Coulter accused Trump of proposing "amnesty" for

undocumented immigrants.

"100 miles of border wall in exchange for amnestying millions of illegals," she tweeted. "So if we grant citizenship to a BILLION foreigners, maybe we can finally get a full border wall."

While the president's comments have changed significantly when it comes to what the wall will be made of and how much it will cost, Trump and his Cabinet have said multiple times that a wall would not stretch the entire length of the U.S.-Mexico border, which extends about 1,933 miles.

A look at Trump's "evolving" remarks on his proposed border wall shows that as far back as 2015, the president called for a wall extending 1,000 miles, or about half the length of the border.

"As far as the wall is concerned, we're going to build a wall. We're going to create a border. We're going to let people in, but they're going to come in legally. They're going to come in legally," Trump said at a presidential debate in 2015, according to The Times. "And it's something that can be done, and I get questioned about that. They built the Great Wall of China. That's 13,000 miles. Here, we actually need 1,000 because we have natural barriers. So we need 1,000."

Already, 34 percent of the border has a wall or fence, about 654 miles. But other areas of the border without fencing would be difficult to enclose because of the Rio Grande and private property, which the government would have to seize, setting up years of legal challenges.

While Democrats dither over the border wall, deadly fentanyl floods our communities (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/20/2019 12:00 AM, Beth Bailey, 629K]

On Christmas Day, 18-month-old Ava Floyd ingested "a large quantity" of fentanyl while her parents were producing and packing the potent drug for sale at their home in Clinton Township, Mich. That afternoon, Ava died at a local hospital. An autopsy found that her tiny body contained "15 times as much fentanyl as officials have seen in recent overdose deaths."

I read the heartbreaking story of Ava's death just before I entered my daughter's room to turn her ambient sound machine from lullabies to white noise. From the side of her crib, I looked down at my daughter's sprawled-out sleeping form, all 23 pounds of her brimming with limitless potential. I reached my hand down to touch her chest, to feel it rise and fall, thinking of the thousands of hours I have devoted to keeping her safe and happy.

As I often do, I worried about her future.

Before I read about Ava, I mostly worried about what might happen when my daughter began to attend the local high school, just over an hour west of Clinton Twp., which has earned its nickname, "Heroin High," from the drug problems that plague our town. At the playgroup where I bring my daughter twice a week, mothers who graduated from the high school sometimes share stories about how heroin sales take place at the school, despite the constant surveillance of security guards. When they sense my abject horror, they say things like, "It's not a big deal, you just learn to stay away from it," as though heroin is a

series of unmarked physical pits in the hallways that an unwary student might accidentally fall inside.

After I read about Ava, it became clear that the opioid crisis will not wait until high school to affect my child. Just like Ava Floyd, my daughter was 18 months old at Christmas. Now, she is something Ava will never be: 19 months old.

Fentanyl can strike anyone, at any age, on account of the unique method by which it can be absorbed: through contact with the skin. A relative in the Drug Enforcement Administration warned me last year that, because of fentanyl's increasing use and availability, I should wipe the handle of any grocery cart I use. He explained that people who have developed a tolerance to fentanyl may have handled the cart before me, and that the quantity required for the average adult to overdose and die is just 3 milligrams. Smaller still, he said, was the amount required to kill my daughter.

While many balk at the notion that merely touching fentanyl can lead to an overdose, any contact with the mucous membranes can introduce the drug to the bloodstream. Additionally, according to the American College of Medical Toxicology, the use of alcohol-based sanitizer is both "ineffective in removing fentanyl and may increase drug absorption."

I always try to remember, along with extra diapers and wipes and snacks and the grocery list and fastening the car seat safety clip at my daughter's chest and not her stomach, to watch the places, people, and things my inquisitive daughter's hands touch. Whenever I wipe the handle of every cart we use, I will always wonder whether that maneuver is endangering, or protecting, my child.

Our border crisis is real. About 90 percent of heroin and 80 percent of fentanyl in the U.S. is sourced from Mexico. While rehabilitation and addiction recovery services are a key component of the strategy for dealing with America's opioid crisis, we must also address the porousness of our border.

When we fail to keep deadly drugs out of our country, Americans lose. We lose family members and friends, and the capacity those people possessed to positively change the world. We allow American money to be funneled into the hands of vicious Mexican cartels that inflict horrific retribution on those who oppose them.

For the past two weeks, I have written about the congressmen, like Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., who refuse to acknowledge the border crisis, or forget the drug epidemic facing the nation, including southeast Michigan. I have written letters to each of my Democratic congressional representatives detailing the crisis and my concerns, and I have heard nary a peep in response.

Trump insists that a 'border crisis' is ravaging America – Here's what numbers tell us (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/19/2019 12:35 AM, Jessica Tarlov and Harlan York, 9216K]

In a country still deeply divided over the 2016 election, it comes as no surprise that we're talking past each other when it comes to border wall funding.

Tempers are running hotter than ever before. We may be canceling the State of the Union for the wall. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and a group of congressmen and women may not

be going on a trip abroad – including a visit to a conflict zone – because of the wall. And we have been thrust into one of the core issues of the 2020 election campaign because of the wall.

What's missing from all of this wall talk, though, is the reality of the "border crisis" that President Donald Trump insists is ravaging our nation.

Border crossings by immigrants without visas have occurred for decades, and for a long time, border crossers were treated pretty loosely by a system that knew America was a better landing place for many people from other parts of the world – particularly for our neighbors to the south.

That ended in the post-9/11 world. By 2010, comparatively few immigrants were entering the U.S. without inspection. Presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama were all enforcement-minded on immigration. President Clinton signed the most draconian immigration laws of the modern era. And President Obama was so tough on immigration that he became known as the "deporter-in-chief."

Data is a stubborn thing. And today, the government's own data isn't working in favor of the Trump administration. According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection's 2017 Border Security Report, illegal border apprehensions have fallen 90 percent since the year 2000. The border has never been more secure than it is now.

This begs the question of whether we need to spend \$5 billion building a wall. Historically speaking, walls have never really kept out "invading hordes." Our current legal system and procedures are doing an effective job, according to the numbers.

But let's say for the sake of argument that Trump gets his money. He'll promptly face tremendous legal barriers to building the border wall.

Trump isn't the first person to try to build a wall. But much of Texas is privately owned, and not all owners want a wall running through their land. There are boundary issues still on the table between the U.S. and Mexico, not to mention indigenous land claims and rights.

President Bush tried to get governmental control of the land when he was in power. Some owners gave in, but others held tight, and they're unlikely to capitulate now.

In 2009, the Homeland Security inspector general concluded that the Border Patrol had "achieved [its] progress primarily in areas where environmental and real estate issues did not cause significant delay." There is no fast way to move the wall construction along; border land has been in stasis for the past decade.

What's more, the wall would, in theory, only be as strong as its weakest link.

A wall is, by its very nature, something that people can go over, under and through, depending on how well it's kept up and guarded. In fact, escaping through and over walls is one of the great movie tropes of all time. All you need is a ladder, a shovel, a terrible storm, a break in the guard duty, and you are free to go. It's happened for centuries in real life too. Remember the Berlin Wall? The Great Wall of China? Jericho?

All this is to say that current immigration laws work to keep our country safe. Let's spend the money extending those.

The figures are clear. The numbers of illegal immigrants entering the country have dropped significantly in the last 10 years while the numbers of those overstaying their visas have risen. However, overstays only represented about 1 percent of those who lawfully travelled to the United States in 2017.

It's not our borders that are the problem. They are statistically more secure than they have ever been.

Congress set aside \$1.2 billion for the 700-mile border fence that was constructed in 2006. It ended up spending \$3.5 billion for construction of the current combination of pedestrian fences and vehicle impediments. This fence line was far smaller than the one being considered today.

Imagine if instead we spent a fraction of that money extending and improving our immigration laws and processes?

This wall isn't the answer. Reform is. This country has been waiting for comprehensive immigration reform that benefits both parties' positions for more than two decades. Now's a good time to finally do it.

Schumer wants answers from Trump on eminent domain at border (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 10:46 AM, Alexander Bolton, 3038K]

Senate Democratic Leader Charles Schumer (N.Y.) sent a letter this week to Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen demanding more information about how the administration plans to use eminent domain against private landholders to build a border wall.

Schumer and fellow Democratic Sens. Dick Durbin (Ill.), Tom Udall (N.M.) and Martin Heinrich (N.M.) are raising concerns about a 153-year-old chapel in the Rio Grande Valley. The Justice Department has filed a lawsuit seeking an easement to build on the property.

The lawmakers warned that the administration's effort to invoke eminent domain against the Roman Catholic diocese threatens to infringe on religious freedom.

"The Trump administration's lawsuit against the diocese raises important questions on the exercise of eminent domain to build a border wall and the impact it will have on religious organizations and American taxpayers," the senators wrote in Thursday's letter.

The diocese has challenged the Trump administration's claim of eminent domain, arguing that building a border wall on its property is inconsistent with Catholic values and would restrict access to La Lomita Chapel.

The four senators pointed out in their letter that the Trump administration has not provided detailed information about how many landowners will lose property along the U.S.-Mexico border or the timetable for acquiring land.

About 67 percent of the property along the border does not belong to the federal

government, meaning the administration would need to seize significant amounts of land to build the wall.

Trump defended the use of eminent domain in a Rose Garden appearance earlier this month.

"Eminent domain is something that has to be used, usually you would say for anything that's long, like a road, like a pipeline or like a wall or a fence," he said.

He told reporters that his administration would use eminent domain only when landholders refuse to sell land needed to construct the wall. He also pledged to pay fair prices.

"I think it's a fair process. I think it's a process that's very necessary, but I think it's fair," Trump said. "A lot of times we'll make a deal, and I would say a good percentage of time we're making deals."

He said a lot of the money the administration has received for border security has been spent on purchasing land to build barriers.

The senators warned in their letter to Nielsen that the federal government "must exercise extreme caution when seizing private property with respect to sacred sites like La Lomita Chapel."

"Eminent domain should not be invoked in violation of any religious organization's First Amendment right of free exercise of religion," they wrote.

The lawmakers asked the Homeland Security secretary to inform them by month's end how many religious organizations and citizens will have their land seized through eminent domain to build a wall.

They have also asked for the estimated costs and timetable for planned land seizures and demanded to know whether Homeland Security has ever waived or plans to waive the requirements of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to build a wall.

Despite shutdown, DOJ moves forward with land-grab cases for border fence (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/18/2019 7:40 PM, Nick Valencia and Priscilla Alvarez, CNN, 5847K]

Justice Department attorneys are continuing to work on cases to seize land from property owners along the US-Mexico border, despite other cases being put on hold until the government reopens.

A case to acquire nearly 5 acres of private land in the Southern District of Texas for the purpose of erecting fencing proceeded this week. The court transcript, dated January 15, reveals how some federal attorneys are moving forward amid the shutdown.

The judge in the case, Micaela Alvarez, acknowledged the shutdown in her opening remarks.

"In light of the fact that even with the shut down, I understand that the attorneys handling these matters on behalf of the Government are not being furloughed and they still have to appear—I wanted to get these cases disposed of as quickly as possible, one way or the

other," she said.

"This is all I'm allowed to work on, Your Honor," said Assistant US Attorney Eric Paxton Warner.

According to Justice Department guidance, in the event of a lapse in appropriations, civil litigation -- which these cases fall under -- "will be curtailed or postponed to the extent that this can be done without compromising to a significant degree the safety of human life or the protection of property."

A spokeswoman for the US Attorney's Office Southern District of Texas said, "It is within the discretion of the US Attorney to determine excepted or non-excepted duties."

She added, "In collaboration and agreement of the Department of Justice, US Attorney Patrick deemed that the ongoing border fence litigation, among other matters, were excepted and will continue to be as long as the federal courts are open."

Asset forfeiture litigators and affirmative civil litigators, for example, also continue to work. Some prosecutors are funded separately and not affected by the lapse in funding.

There are at least "six or seven attorneys" for the government working exclusively on fencing cases, according to the court transcript. Alvarez referred to them as the "golden children," likely because of President Donald Trump's focus on erecting additional barriers along the southern border.

But these cases aren't directly pegged to the President's signature wall. They have been ongoing for years.

In 2006, President George W. Bush signed the Secure Fence Act, authorizing some 700 miles of fencing along the US-Mexico border. While some of that land was owned by the government, other areas weren't. The government needed to acquire private property to build on the land, kicking off a slew of lawsuits. Approximately 80 cases are still outstanding, according to the Justice Department.

Tuesday's land condemnation case dates to 2008. It involves defendant Pamela Rivas, who the government says is the "only party left in this cases to settle with" after at least a year of negotiations. Another family that also owned some of the land settled.

Warner said the government wants to build an "18-foot fence" on the land, according to the court transcript.

"We can't build wall right there," Warner said. "There's no levee that runs through Los Ebanos, so it won't look like the rest of Hidalgo County where we take half the levee and dump it on the north side and build a wall."

The land is slotted for fencing in 2019 "if there is any money in the fiscal year," according to Warner.

Regardless of whether funds are available, the government is pressing forward, indicating the significance of these cases in a heated debate over the border wall. The Justice

Department also appears to be preparing for additional lawsuits in the area in the future: The department listed job postings for attorneys. Qualifications include "litigation of land condemnation cases."

Customs and Border Protection has said it would consider eminent domain in the future.

"It is always CBP's preference to acquire property through a voluntary, negotiated sale. The Government will attempt to negotiate an offer to sell using survey data and value estimates gleaned from the surveying process," reads an excerpt in a border wall Q&A on their site. "The Government will attempt to negotiate an offer to sell before moving forward with exercising eminent domain. However, if the Government and landowner are unable to reach a negotiated sale or if the Government is unable to obtain clean title, the Government will need to file an eminent domain action."

For now, however, the federal attorneys in southern Texas intend to continue their work on the cases at hand.

"We continue to work alongside our law enforcement partners from FBI, DEA, ATF, DHS, USMS and numerous others who are charged with conducting enforcement operations and advancing significant investigations," said US Attorney Ryan Patrick in a statement. "Our work is not impacted by the shutdown. It is essential to public safety."

Justice Department Is Hiring Lawyers To Take On Property Seizures For Trump Border Wall (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/18/2019 3:50 PM, Jason Hopkins, 867K]

In a strong indication the Trump administration is preparing for the next phase of the immigration battle, the Department of Justice is now hiring lawyers to handle border wall litigation in South Texas.

The two attorney positions — which are advertised to pay between \$53,062 and \$138,790 — are to be based in the southern Texas towns of Brownsville and McAllen. Preferred candidates are to have "at least four (4) years of civil litigation experience in litigation of land condemnation cases, oil and gas disputes, and real estate matters," according to the posting on USAJobs, adding that knowledge of the Spanish language "is helpful, but not required."

The jobs were first posted in December, with the deadline for applications closing on March 5.

The attorneys will likely be tasked with eminent domain and other property seizure legalities — issues that will undoubtedly arise if President Donald Trump is able to move forward with construction of a wall on the southern border.

The federal government is on the 28th day of a partial shutdown — the longest in U.S. history. Trump is demanding Congress send him a budget that includes \$5.7 billion in funding for 200-plus miles of new and replacement barriers on the U.S.-Mexico border, but liberal lawmakers have stood sharply opposed to the proposal.

The budget standoff between the president and Democratic leaders has reached a fever pitch.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Wednesday told reporters she would delay the State of the Union address, an annual speech by the president that is held in the House of Representatives, because of the government shutdown. Trump responded the following day by cancelling Pelosi's planned trip to Europe and the Middle East. Trump's letter reportedly came minutes before the speaker and Democratic staffers were to board a bus for the trip.

Trump, however, told Pelosi she was free to fly commercial if she so chooses.

Should the White House ultimately prevail in the border wall fight, the administration would then have to negotiate with property owners who reside on the wall's path. While the law typically favors the government in eminent domain cases, property owners could possibly drag out court cases for over a decade.

"Eminent domain is something that has to be used, usually you would say for anything that's long, like a road, like a pipeline or like a wall or a fence," Trump told reporters earlier in January in the Rose Garden. He made clear that the White House would wield eminent domain authority only if landowners refuse to sell the land needed for the wall, and he pledged that all landholders would receive fair prices.

"I think it's a fair process. I think it's a process that's very necessary, but I think it's fair," he explained. "A lot of times we'll make a deal, and I would say a good percentage of time we're making deals."

Finding a way through the border fence was easy. Winning the right to remain won't be. (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 7:00 AM, Maria Sacchetti, 9763K]

President Trump has deployed tear gas, military helicopters and miles of razor wire to stop migrant caravans from entering the United States. It took one day for Nubia Estrada's 8-year-old daughter, Elen, to discover a way in.

"Hold your breath," a group of men told Estrada as they helped her and her four children squeeze through a narrow gap in the fence on the westernmost part of the U.S.-Mexico border.

In a thick fog, with the Pacific Ocean lapping nearby, the family sprinted into California, joining thousands of migrants who have made their way into the country to seek asylum despite increasingly urgent government efforts to stop them.

In Trump's first two years in office, his administration has tried to narrow migrants' chances to qualify for asylum, slow the number allowed in at legal checkpoints and deny protections to those who crossed the border illegally. The government tried filing criminal charges for all who crossed illegally with their children, a measure that led to the separation of thousands of family members last spring.

But many of Trump's plans have been blocked or temporarily halted in federal courts, and the number of families coming in continues to rise.

Some, including Estrada's, seek the relative safety and minimal cost of a locally organized caravan, like the latest group that departed from Honduras this week. Others are smuggled

through remote, rugged passes, including two young children who died in U.S. government custody last month.

Estrada's story illustrates why U.S. efforts to keep the families from entering the country are not succeeding — a combination of unrelenting demand, limited detention space, restrictions on how long children can be detained and how fast they can be deported.

It also makes clear the significant obstacles that migrant parents and children face once they arrive.

Trump took to Twitter Dec. 20 to berate the caravan in which Estrada traveled and claim that the military, and immigration and border agents, had successfully kept its participants out.

"Remember the Caravans?" he wrote. "Well, they didn't get through and none are forming or on their way. Border is tight."

At that moment, Estrada, 34, was 250 miles past the border, in central California, staying in the modest two-bedroom bungalow of a half sister and brother-in-law she barely knew.

She had a monitoring device on her ankle, no money or work permit, and a list of immigration check-ins and court dates piling up. Her children were frustrated, bored, unruly.

It was dawning on her that the caravan was only the first leg of a long and difficult journey. Crossing into California, step by step

The caravan had been Estrada's salvation, a way out of Honduras for herself and her four children that didn't require the \$15,000 smuggler's fee.

She and her husband earned \$8 a day baking bread in a firewood oven attached to their adobe house and selling it on the street in their town of Jícaro Galán.

But last year a robber put a gun to her daughter Sheyla's head on a bus and stole their money. A cousin, Jefferson, was shot 10 times and killed in August. And Estrada's husband was growing increasingly violent, her children say.

One night in October, Estrada and her children watched news of the caravan on television. The next day they boarded a bus to join it, carrying two clothes-filled backpacks and \$40.

Estrada's sister in Honduras alerted a grown niece in Atlanta that the family was on its way. The niece called other relatives in America, who debated which of them could afford to take in a family of five. A cousin in Texas backed out. A different sister in California demurred.

That left Francisca Estrada de Espino, 56, who lives in Bakersfield with her husband and his two sons and who hadn't seen Estrada in many years.

She watched the caravan trudging in the rain on television and wept.

"How could my sister do this? It's so difficult," she recalled saying about the trek.

Estrada de Espino and her husband had crossed the border decades earlier, in an era when few migrants paid smugglers or landed in jail.

Rogelio Espino arrived in 1984 from Mexico to pick grapes and obtained a green card under the amnesty offered by President Ronald Reagan. He successfully applied for U.S. citizenship in 1997 after California's governor, Pete Wilson — a Republican, like Reagan — attempted to crack down on undocumented immigrants.

"He did me a favor," said Rogelio, a 54-year-old apartment maintenance worker.

Now a different Republican president was working to curtail immigration in every way possible.

Estrada had intended to cross the southern border at the legal checkpoint in Tijuana, Mexico, where advocates and lawyers were available to help and guide migrants. But food was scarce, daily crossings were strictly limited, and she ended up No. 1,520 on a dubious waiting list kept in a tattered notebook. One night, protesters threw rocks at the sports complex that was housing her family and thousands of others.

She and the children were terrified of returning to Honduras. They heard whispers about a tiny beach not far from the stadium, where a rusty border fence vanishes into the Pacific Ocean. A taxi ride later, they were scouring the metal strips for weak spots, padding over the sand as if searching for seashells. Elen soon poked her tiny hands through a cracked metal sheet.

They crossed into California in late November and immediately surrendered to the Border Patrol. Officials released them to her sister and brother-in-law, who traveled by bus to get them since they couldn't all fit in the Espinos' battered blue Mazda. Together, they rode the bus back to Bakersfield, a city of 380,000 that sits 110 miles north of Los Angeles.

The rose-colored house, with a yard overflowing with scrap metal parts, was quickly engulfed in the chaos of two teenagers and two young children who had been on the road for the past six weeks.

Espino installed an extra refrigerator and filled it with eggs, tortillas and pizza. His wife packed plastic containers with clothes from yard sales and Ross Dress for Less. They hung a hammock in the living room for Estrada, over a bed where her children could sleep. Nine people share one bathroom.

"I want to help them," said Estrada de Espino, a housewife.

But there was no money for lawyers, and the long list of legal organizations Estrada had been given were all at least an hour's drive away. Her hosts had little time to ferry her to appointments.

With the caravan, Estrada had been decisive. When her teenagers disappeared in the crowd for two days, she commandeered another migrant's phone to find them. She lost the children's birth certificates but had copies texted to her and printed in Tijuana. A gum infection cost her a front tooth, but it did not stop her journey.

In California, though, her confidence faded. She had no money for Christmas gifts. The kids gobbled food she could not pay for. They stayed home all day, screaming or blasting music, as her sister pursed her lips in disapproval.

She couldn't summon the courage to ask to borrow her sister's phone to call nonprofits for help. "They're feeding me," she whispered. "How can I use their phone to call a lawyer?"

Waiting for a case worker

Her life, for now, was shaped by check-ins with Immigration and Customs Enforcement on a palm-tree-lined street in Bakersfield.

"How can I get a work permit?" she said she asked an officer on her first visit. Instead of an answer, she was handed the list of faraway lawyers.

She was told to stay home at her sister's the following Monday, when a case worker with the federal contractor BI Inc. would visit to verify Estrada's new address.

Estrada was also told to keep her ankle bracelet charged, another way for the government to track her whereabouts.

In Honduras people had talked about immigrants who snip off the bracelets and run away. But Estrada and her sister wanted to follow the rules. "It's better not to act incorrectly," Estrada de Espino said.

Estrada rose early that Monday to make breakfast and keep an eye on the front window, jumping when someone parked outside. The case worker was supposed to show up sometime between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m.

The monitoring would eventually lead to an immigration court hearing that could determine the rest of their lives. But Estrada didn't want to tell a judge or anyone else that in addition to gang violence, she was fleeing a husband who had threatened to kill her and their children.

"He was a good person when he wasn't drunk," Estrada said softly, sitting on her sister's couch.

"She doesn't like to tell the story about him," 17-year-old Sheyla interrupted, sitting a few inches away. "When he came home drunk, we had to leave to find another place to sleep. He would come home and hit us."

Tears welled in her mother's eyes. But Sheyla's gaze was hard. She said her father would point to a rifle he owned for killing livestock and say, "I'll kill you with this."

Sheyla and 14-year-old Eiro said the threats happened "many times."

Estrada de Espino listened and handed her sister tissues.

"I don't like people to know my problems," Estrada said, clutching a teddy bear and watching the window.

At 12:12 p.m., a FedEx truck pulled up. At 3:08, the U.S. Postal Service arrived.

Sheyla cocooned herself in a blanket and texted her friends in Honduras; Eiro played an online soccer game. Erickson, 4, and Elen kicked soccer balls outside, stopping when they saw a group of schoolchildren pass. They hadn't been in school since mid-October.

At 3:27 p.m., a neatly dressed young woman from B.I. Inc. arrived at the front gate apologizing and holding a phone with a dead battery. Estrada finger-combed Erickson's hair and greeted her at the door.

After learning that a Washington Post journalist was with the family, the woman canceled the appointment without explanation and said she would come another day.

"Disculpa," the woman said in American-accented Spanish. "Excuse me."

The next day Estrada had another check-in with BI Inc. Again, she asked about working. The employee, she said later, told her she needed a permit to legally get a job but also acknowledged that many migrants work without one. The employee warned her to show up for her immigration appointments, Estrada said, and told her, the rest is "up to you."

Bumpy start to a new life

The next day Estrada and her sister took Elen and Erickson to enroll in school, walking several blocks in the crisp air.

Elen, excited, wore a frilly black-and-white dress from the plastic container in the living room. She smiled when they arrived at the school, where the signs were in Spanish and almost everyone seemed to be Latino — either immigrants or U.S.-born. The only disappointment came when the clerk said Erickson was too young for kindergarten.

"The houses are so pretty," Estrada said, gesturing to a small, tidy house with a pair of shade trees out front.

Even though her sister insisted she could stay as long as she needed, Estrada was anxious to start working, save money and get her own place. The sisters made plans to call a legal nonprofit, and Estrada asked whether she could find a job on a farm, maybe trimming grapevines for next season.

"I'll learn what I have to learn," Estrada said, "even if I have to collect garbage all day."

Her family's first immigration court hearing is scheduled for Jan. 31, but she received notices to appear in two different courtrooms, one of which is in a facility that immigration officials haven't used since 2012. The other is in San Francisco, a 4 ½ -hour drive away.

She still needs to check in periodically with immigration officials and spend one afternoon each week at her sister's house, waiting for the contractor to visit.

This month, her three older children started school.

Estrada missed being home for Christmas. She used to bring her mother fresh-baked bread, and a little money, every Christmas morning. She said she hoped to have the chance to go back to Honduras, at some safer time, and share the holiday with her mother again.

Returning home is a fantasy every immigrant shares, her sister told her, especially when they first arrive. But millions end up staying in America, with or without permission.

"That's how it is," Estrada de Espino said. "Once you leave, you don't want to go back."

Immigration Courts Have A Huge Backlog. The Shutdown's Making It Worse (NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/19/2019 7:01 AM, Farida Jhabvala Romero, 4491K] Audio: [HERE](#)

Hundreds of thousands of cases are awaiting hearings, but many are being canceled until the shutdown is resolved. For a Filipina mom in California, that means her seven-year-long wait will go on.

TRANSCRIPT

SCOTT SIMON, HOST:

The federal government shutdown is leading to thousands of people seeing their immigration court proceedings canceled. California has the most cancellations of any state - more than 9,000 - and the largest backlog of pending cases. From member station KQED, Farida Jhabvala Romero reports.

FARIDA JHABVALA ROMERO, BYLINE: It's the end of the school day at Oceana High, south of San Francisco. Hundreds of students blast out of classrooms and swarm the halls.

Navigating the crowd is Mario Guzman, a lanky 18-year-old from El Salvador. Like other seniors here, Guzman's waiting to hear whether colleges will let him in to pursue his passion.

MARIO GUZMAN: I want to major in either graphic design or animation.

ROMERO: But unlike his friends at school, Guzman's destiny doesn't just depend on college admissions. He's applying for asylum, and his fate lies with an immigration judge. But his final hearing was scheduled for January 3. It was canceled because most immigration judges are furloughed.

GUZMAN: It's really hard because I can plan to do things here, but, certainly, I don't know how much time I have here.

ROMERO: Guzman has been preparing for his hearing with his lawyer for months. And in that preparation, he's had to revisit some of the violence and terror that made him flee El Salvador. He says his cousin, who was like his brother, was shot by gang members.

GUZMAN: And seeing how the life of my cousin was destroyed, it was really hard for me.

HELEN LAWRENCE: So it's just pretty traumatic. And he's a high-schooler. And, you know, he's trying to go about his teenage life.

ROMERO: Helen Lawrence is Guzman's attorney.

LAWRENCE: I think, for him, it's just - he would like to get it over with, to move on.

ROMERO: Guzman has waited for about a year to get his day in court. But other people with canceled hearings have waited much longer. Jasmine Ngo is a single mother of two who lives in the Los Angeles area.

JASMINE NGO: My immigration case is going to be seven years in March.

ROMERO: She's had a green card for almost 30 years, but she was convicted of shoplifting, and now she's fighting deportation.

NGO: It's hard to move forward when you have something hanging over your head.

ROMERO: She doesn't know when she'll get her next court hearing.

NGO: It could be years. It could be months. We don't know.

ROMERO: The shutdown is a massive disruption to an already overburdened system, says Judge Dana Leigh Marks, a past president of the National Association of Immigration Judges.

DANA LEIGH MARKS: Because we are so backlogged and so short-staffed, the calendars are jam-packed and basically full for the next two to three years.

ROMERO: Marks is currently furloughed. But she says once she's back in court, she'll try to squeeze in as many canceled appointments as she can.

MARKS: But, by and large, they're going to go to the end of the line.

ROMERO: For some people, the shutdown may be a blessing. Marks says good, strong cases suffer by the delay, but weaker ones that are likely to lose may benefit by having more time to prepare. Every week the shutdown continues, an estimated 20,000 more cases are delayed nationwide.

For NPR News, I'm Farida Jhabvala Romero in San Francisco.

(SOUNDBITE OF ANI DIFRANCO SONG, "UNWORRY")

As More Migrants Are Denied Asylum, An Abuse Survivor Is Turned Away (Northern Public Radio)

[Northern Public Radio](#) [1/18/2019 7:23 AM, Joel Rose, 3K]

[Editorial note: consult audio at source link]

ACLU Sues Government Agencies For Supposedly Using Big Tech To Snoop On Black People (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/18/2019 1:27 PM, Chris White, 867K]

The American Civil Liberties Union in California filed a lawsuit Thursday targeting seven government agencies that the group claims are investing in the kinds of technologies supposedly violating people's privacy.

The ACLU's lawsuit specifically names the FBI, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the departments of Justice, State, and Homeland Security. Social media surveillance technologies put millions of people at risk, according to the lawsuit.

Technologies allowing agencies to pinpoint cell phones risk "chilling expressive activity and can lead to the disproportionate targeting of racial and religious minority communities, and those who dissent against government policies," the ACLU noted.

Recent reports have shown the extent to which wireless cell companies can distribute the geolocations of the many of their customers to outside vendors, oftentimes without permission.

Motherboard published a report on Jan. 8 fleshing out a marketplace in the resale of location data tracking cell phones, which led major U.S. wireless carriers to announce they would stop selling the repositories of data. Car dealers, bounty hunters and law officials were often given the kind of data allowing people to be located within a few blocks of their position.

Tech companies have been under pressure for months to be more transparent about their technologies, especially as it pertains to consumers personal data.

Facebook, for instance, has used facial recognition intelligence for years to recognize users. Engineers with the Silicon Valley company are also rolling out video artificial intelligence (AI) products like Portal, which allows a camera to follow users around rooms and automatically focus on their faces.

Recent media reports have also laid out the degree to which Facebook is able to cobble together and distribute users personal data. One report from The New York Times in December showed the company began forming data partnerships with the likes of Amazon, Microsoft and Yahoo.

The dual partnerships allowed Facebook to adhere itself to multiple social media platforms while insulating itself from competition. The partnership program became too unwieldy by 2013 for mid-level employees to govern, so the company resorted to relinquishing the reins to artificial intelligence.

[TX] Texas lawmakers push legislation on three key immigration issues (Houston Chronicle)

[Houston Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 6:20 PM, Paul Cobler, 199K]

As the national debate over funding for a border wall intensifies, Texas lawmakers are also taking a run at several immigration issues.

Bills filed by Democratic and Republican state lawmakers address the separation of Central American migrant families seeking asylum, in-state tuition at Texas universities for young immigrants who have lived in the state for more than three years, and weakening of the so-

called sanctuary cities law that passed in 2017.

Last week, immigration advocates highlighted the legislation and railed against President Donald Trump's policies as well as House Bill 413 by Rep. Kyle Biedermann, R-Fredericksburg, which would repeal an 18-year-old law that grants in-state college tuition for longterm residents of the state who are not U.S. citizens.

"The question today for our Legislature is in 2019 will they be upholding these values or will they continue to walk the path of divisiveness and believing the fake immigration crisis that Trump has presented before us?" said Adriana Carena, coordinator for Reform Immigration for Texas Alliance.

Top state lawmakers have framed the 140-day legislative session that began Jan. 8 as a return to "bread-and-butter" legislation like more funding for schools and reforms to tamp down escalating property taxes, rather than more controversial issues like last session's Senate Bill 4, which requires local police and sheriffs to fully cooperate with federal immigration authorities.

At the same time, leaders in both the Texas House and Texas Senate have indicated they will continue to spend roughly \$800 million in the next two-year budget for border security measures including patrols by state troopers.

Biedermann's HB 413 is the latest in a series of attempts to repeal the "Texas DREAM Act," which was passed in 2001. While previous efforts to repeal the law fell flat, Biedermann says he sees signs of support after Gov. Greg Abbott said the law was "flawed" last year during a debate.

Citing a tight budget, Biedermann told Austin TV news outlet KXAN in November the current law creates an unnecessary burden on taxpayers.

"Why should we give them a deduction or a subsidy at taxpayer expense when other Texans could use the funds also to be educated?" Biedermann said.

On the other side of the immigration debate, Sen. Jose Rodriguez, D-El Paso, has introduced three separate bills that look to water down Texas' ban on sanctuary cities, saying living in the border city has given him a more accurate understanding of the situation on the border than those sounding immigration alarms.

"Immigrants are tremendous contributors to our economy and our growth in this nation," Rodriguez said in a news conference at the Texas Capitol. "The policies of the present administration and some of the advocates in the majority party here in this dome don't recognize that."

All three of the bills target a key provision of the law by preventing specific local entities from working with federal immigration officers when they encounter people suspected of being in the country illegally.

Reps. Cesar Blanco, D-El Paso, and Mary Gonzalez, D-Clint, as well as Rep. Victoria Neave, D-Dallas, and Rep. Ramon Romero Jr., D-Fort Worth, have also introduced bills that would repeal sections of the sanctuary cities law — for example, one would prevent police

departments from reporting immigrants to federal authorities if police encounter them in places like hospitals, churches, universities and domestic violence shelters.

Foes of the sanctuary city law have long warned that it would hinder police investigations by making immigrants less likely to come forward as witnesses or victims of crime.

Two other bills from Gonzalez and Blanco would address the family separation issue by requiring increased reporting to state agencies on the number of children and adults in custody.

The Democrats, significantly outnumbered in both the Texas House and the Senate, acknowledge that their proposals are unlikely to pass. But the national battle over border security will keep the subject in the periphery for the foreseeable future, and they say their point of view is important to balance the hardline immigration talk coming from the White House.

"No longer are we going to let politicians like Donald Trump come to McAllen and say it isn't safe," Blanco said.

[CA] Governor earmarks funds for migrant shelter in proposed budget (San Diego Union Tribune)

[San Diego Union Tribune](#) [1/21/2019 5:00 PM, Kate Morrissey, 214K]

Gov. Gavin Newsom wants to use state funds to help migrant families arriving at the California border.

Much of the money will likely go to San Diego nonprofits and community organizations, collectively known as the San Diego Rapid Response Network, running a temporary shelter for families released by federal officials after asking for asylum at the southwest border.

In his proposed budget, Newsom allocated \$20 million available over three years beginning in July to fund a "rapid response network" to provide services during immigration or human trafficking emergency situations. He is also asking the legislature to approve \$5 million in funding to be used before this fiscal year ends in June.

Newsom visited San Diego's shelter shortly before being sworn in as governor, and he mentioned the experience in his inauguration speech.

"I went to San Diego and met volunteers providing relief to desperate migrants who others treat like criminals – like the 3-year old girl, just a year older than my youngest, at a shelter who captured my heart," Newsom said.

In a document detailing the budget ask, the governor's office also refers specifically to the San Diego shelter.

"The current influx of migrants seeking asylum at the California border with Mexico has strained the capacity and resources of the rapid response network of community-based organizations and nonprofits providing aid," it says. "Many of the organizations in San Diego that provide emergency shelter and rapid response services indicate that they are at full capacity and need supplemental resources to continue serving this population."

The Rapid Response Network has been pushing for support from local and state governments for months. The collective opened its temporary shelter after federal immigration officials announced in October that they would no longer help migrant families arrange travel plans with their sponsors across the country before releasing them in San Diego.

About 5,000 migrants have passed through the shelter since it opened, most staying one or two days before traveling on to cities all over the United States. The shelter itself has moved five times since it opened and has yet to find a permanent location.

Both the city and county of San Diego have made some efforts to find a space for the shelter.

The Board of Supervisors voted recently to try to identify a county-owned site to serve the migrant families. It also voted to make a working group to look at long-term solutions to support border arrivals. The county has staffed the current temporary shelter with medical personnel to conduct health screenings.

The city proposed using a closed juvenile detention facility in Alpine, and Mayor Kevin Faulconer touted his office's efforts in his recent State of the City speech.

"These political games are affecting real people," Faulconer said. "Look no further than the migrant families that federal immigration agents are dropping off on San Diego's street corners with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. For months, my administration has been working with nonprofits and our partners at the County and State to provide shelter and prevent this humanitarian crisis from becoming a San Diego crisis."

The mayor's office began meeting with the Rapid Response Network about a month and a half ago.

Norma Chávez-Peterson, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union in San Diego and Imperial counties, one of the organizations spearheading the network, called the recent attention received by officials "tide-shifting."

"It's been a combination of many, many, many different pieces that collectively got aligned and helped to really shed light," Chávez-Peterson said. "Until people see it, feel it, hear it — that moves folks to action."

She worried about the city's proposal to use Camp Barrett as a shelter. She was particularly concerned that the mayor's office published the location. Shelter organizers have worked hard to keep its whereabouts a secret to protect the arriving migrants.

Chávez-Peterson said the network is still exploring options and welcomes suggestions from community members as well as government officials. The shelter is scheduled to move again in early February, but organizers haven't yet found another temporary space, she said.

She anticipated that if the state funds the networks' efforts, some organizations would open a similar site in Imperial County. Border Patrol in the El Centro Sector currently bus migrant families to the San Diego shelter for help.

Bill Jenkins, who runs Safe Harbors Network, a group of churches and individual homes that provide shelter to asylum seekers who don't have sponsors to help them, hopes that as government officials take a growing interest in helping, some of the aid and attention might go to the migrants he works with.

He's been offering shelter to migrants since an influx of Haitians came to the Tijuana-San Diego border in 2016.

He doesn't see himself as in competition with the Rapid Response Network, but rather as another important part of supporting new arrivals in San Diego.

"The ones we get are the ones who have no support network and are going to require more long-term care," Jenkins said. "It takes both of us to do what we're doing."

Whether the funds will actually be made available, and what criteria will be required to get them, will be up to the legislature.

[Mexico] Mexico sets up new process for Central American migrants headed toward U.S. (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/21/2019 11:01 AM, Staff, 2890K]

A new caravan of some 1,800 Central Americans is making its way toward the U.S. They started crossing into Mexico from Guatemala late last week and continued arriving through the weekend.

On a bridge near the border where you enter Mexico from Guatemala, the lines of migrants extend as far as you can see. They're waiting to be officially registered by the Mexican government, reports CBS News correspondent Adriana Diaz.

In a new process that started a week ago in preparation for the caravan, the Mexican government gives people wrist bands to register them, their identities are verified, and five days later they get humanitarian visas allowing them stay in Mexico for a year to work and to live.

It's a stark contrast to last October when an earlier caravan that had more than 7,000 migrants at its height. The same bridge was packed and migrants jumped from the bridge to swim to Mexico. In that caravan, some 2,600 who reached the U.S. border and tried crossing illegally were arrested by U.S. border patrol. About 1,300 opted to return to their home countries. Roughly 2,900 received Mexican visas. Fewer than 700 are still in Tijuana along the U.S. border trying to get U.S. asylum.

Some people here have told us despite getting visas to stay in Mexico, they still plan to go to the U.S. border more than 2,000 miles away. One father saw that Diaz was American and asked her if the U.S. is letting migrants in if they are traveling with children.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[Mexico] Thousands of caravan migrants request temporary asylum in Mexico; some try returning to US (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/20/2019 7:44 PM, Griff Jenkins and Samuel Chamberlain, 9216K]
Thousands of Central American migrants, many of them from Honduras, are taking Mexico up on its offer of temporary asylum and work visas.

Mexican immigration officials said Sunday that 3,691 people associated with various migrant caravans have registered for temporary status in the country, and the number is expected to grow as more people arrive at the border with Guatemala.

Meanwhile, local officials in the southern town of Huixtla provided several buses to transport some of the more than 2,000 migrants on the next stage of their journey towards Tijuana. Others weren't so lucky and pressed on in blistering 90-degree heat.

Mexico has promised to allow migrants through the border crossing as long as they are orderly, and the country's new government has agreed to house third-country asylum-seekers while their claims are heard in the United States. The caravan is estimated to contain 1,800 people, including about 100 from El Salvador.

One migrant from Honduras told Fox News on Sunday that he was in the first caravan that reached the U.S.-Mexico border last October. The man said he made it to San Diego illegally, was caught and deported.

Another migrant named "Alex," who previously received protection under the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, told Fox News he grew up in Indiana after being brought to the U.S. from El Salvador as an infant. Alex said he received a letter nine months ago, after he turned 18, informing him that his DACA status was expiring and that he had 24 days to return to El Salvador or face prosecution.

Alex told Fox News he didn't know what to do as he watched the ongoing battle over immigration policy play out in Washington.

"I just want to get back to the life I had," he said. "It's all I know."

Also Sunday, a second caravan set out in the morning from San Pedro Sula, Honduras, the same location from which the current caravan originated last week. Local reports said that caravan had more than 1,000 people in it.

The second caravan's departure coincided with calls for a week-long national strike in Honduras to protest the policies of the country's president, Juan Orlando Hernandez.

[Mexico] Another Caravan Crosses Mexican-Guatemalan Border (The Wall Street Journal)

[The Wall Street Journal](#) [1/18/2019 5:30 PM, Juan Montes]
Some 1,500 Central Americans forced their way across Mexico's southern border early Friday and began their trek north toward the U.S. in the first migrant caravan of the year, stoking the heated political debate in the U.S. over a border wall.

An estimated 1,700 more were waiting at the border town of Tecún-Umán, Guatemala, with the aim of entering Mexico legally, a senior Mexican immigration official said.

Caravans have been gaining in popularity among migrants because they find safety in

numbers, but they account for a fraction of the overall number of migrants who come into Mexico. Most of the migrants who joined one of several caravans that formed last year ended up returning home, staying in Mexico or getting stranded at the border as they wait to apply for entry to the U.S.

U.S. President Donald Trump has used the latest migrant caravan as an argument that Congress approve funding for a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico.

"Another big Caravan heading our way. Very hard to stop without a Wall!" he tweeted on Friday. The U.S. government has been partially shut down since late December as Democrats balk at granting Mr. Trump the more than \$5 billion he wants for a wall or barrier on the U.S.-Mexican border.

Further south at Mexico's southern border, the estimated 1,500 migrants forced their way through a steel fence at the international bridge separating Guatemala from Mexico and are expected to reach Tapachula in southern Mexico late Friday, walking and hitchhiking.

The migrants, most of them from Honduras, set out Jan. 14 from San Pedro Sula, Honduras's second-largest and most violent city. Fleeing unemployment, poverty and violence, many of them are undeterred in their goal to get to the U.S., despite the prospect of being blocked and ending up deported back to Honduras.

"My life in Honduras is miserable," said Alison Rodriguez, a 19-year-old who said she was three-months pregnant. "Life is a risk, and if you don't risk you can't win."

Some members of the group broke padlocks to gain access to the port of entry during the night despite Mexican authorities' offer to give them temporary humanitarian visas within five days to live and work in Mexico. The procedure normally takes 30 days.

"You offer them the best, and they opt for the worst," the senior Mexican official said, adding the Mexican government would try to persuade them to apply for the visas.

Even before the highly visible earlier caravans set out from Central America in October, the Trump administration had sharply limited the daily number of asylum applications processed in ports of entry and sent soldiers to the border. The U.S. government has since announced plans to force most asylum seekers to wait in Mexico while their cases are adjudicated in the U.S.

The percentage of asylum seekers who are granted U.S. asylum by immigration judges is at a nearly 20-year low, down to a 33% approval rate in fiscal year 2018, according to the Migration Policy Institute, a think tank in Washington.

Mexico's Deputy Interior Minister Alejandro Encinas on Friday played down the importance of the caravans, saying their numbers are "infinitely smaller" than the total of more than 750,000 Central Americans who enter Mexico to work temporarily every year, mostly in agriculture in the country's southeast.

"We want to bring order," Mr. Encinas said at a press conference. "The vast majority of people who take part in the caravans are fleeing from violence and from poverty in their countries." He said Mexico can employ migrants in jobs Mexican workers aren't taking.

But there were others, he added, who seek to take advantage of this desperation to carry out people-trafficking and recruit people for criminal activities, "and in this we are going to be very strict."

The arrival of thousands caravan migrants in the northwest border city of Tijuana late last year led to protests by resident groups, and local officials complained about the lack of funds and resources to provide food, shelter and sanitary assistance for the Central American travelers.

But tension has eased in the city across the border from San Diego as the caravans have gradually broken up, according to government officials and shelter workers.

Of about 8,000 migrants who crossed into Mexico in October and November in several caravans, some 3,000 have returned voluntarily to their home countries, according to estimates from the Mexican government. About 1,500 have crossed illegally into the U.S., the Mexican officials said.

The number of caravan migrants encamped at Tijuana's main shelter has dropped by more than half, according to local government officials and social workers. Some 3,000 remain in or around Tijuana, many of them in a disused concert hall that was adapted in November as a shelter, 13 miles from the city's main border crossing.

Close to 1,000 migrants found work and obtained humanitarian visas from the Mexican government.

"Many of those with work are now renting rooms," said Agustín Novoa, a Catholic priest and director of Tijuana's Salesian Project, which runs migrant shelters and charities. "Tension has dropped to the extent that migrants are less visible now, partly because the new shelter is in a place in the city that is less central."

[Mexico] 800 New Caravan Migrants Break Border Gate into Mexico (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/18/2019 2:19 PM, Ildefonso Ortiz and Brandon Darby, 2015K]

Hundreds of migrants forced their way into Mexico by breaking the gates at one of the international ports of entry with Guatemala and are now being escorted north by federal police.

The incident took place overnight at the Rodolfo Robles international port of entry when a group of migrants broke the lock at the gate and forced their way into Mexico.

Milenio first reported on the incursion, reporting that Mexico's National Coordinator for Civil Protection David De Leon said he was not able to get a real headcount of the migrants but believes they numbered more than 800.

Rather than arrest or deport the migrants, Mexican authorities provided a police escort on their way north. According to Milenio, the move follows Mexico's new policy of providing security for migrants passing through the country.

In addition to the hundreds who entered in a violent fashion, Mexico documented 1,064 who are undergoing the immigration process to enter legally.

[Mexico] New migrant caravan enters Mexico, legally or not (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/18/2019 6:18 AM, AFP, 2015K]

Hundreds of Central Americans entered Mexico illegally as the latest migrant caravan to set its sights on the United States began crossing the Mexican-Guatemalan border en masse Friday.

Not content to wait five days for the humanitarian visas Mexico is offering them, several hundred migrants took to make-shift rafts to cross the Suchiate River, which forms the frontier, or snuck across the loosely guarded border bridge overnight, AFP correspondents said.

That could trigger a new Twitter firestorm from US President Donald Trump, who has urged Mexico to halt such caravans, and who tweeted early Friday: "Another big Caravan heading our way. Very hard to stop without a Wall!"

Caravans of migrants hoping to find safety in numbers have taken center stage in the raging US debate over Trump's proposed border wall, which has led to a government shutdown that is now the longest in history.

Around 2,000 migrants are traveling in the latest caravan — smaller than the one that swelled to 7,000 migrants late last year, leading Trump to warn of an "invasion" by "criminals" and "thugs" and send thousands of troops to the US-Mexican border.

Mexican authorities are urging the migrants to cross the border legally and offering expedited "visitor cards" that let them work and access basic health care in Mexico.

So far, 969 migrants from Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua have been registered under the program and given bracelets that they can exchange for visitor cards in five days.

But hundreds more migrants ignored the offer and crossed illegally, not content to wait in the park where the caravan has camped out in the border city of Tecun Uman, Guatemala.

"A lot of us aren't interested in waiting five days. Our goal is to reach the United States," said Alma Mendoza, a nurse and single mother making the trip with her three children.

"We don't have food, much less money. We want to reach our destination," she told AFP.

Other migrants said they would consider staying in Mexico.

"My goal is to reach the United States, but if I can't I'll stay in Mexico and work. They're giving us an opportunity," said Christian Medrano, 33, an industrial technician.

— 'AMLO' walking fine line —

The caravan set out Tuesday from San Pedro Sula, in northwestern Honduras, and has grown along the way.

The migrants are mostly fleeing poverty and crime in Central America's "Northern Triangle" of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Brutal street gangs have made the three

countries among the most violent in the world.

Another caravan of about 200 migrants set out Wednesday from El Salvador and is now in southern Mexico, possibly poised to join up with the first.

Many of the migrants are traveling in families, often with small children.

Those who reached Mexico's southern border have covered about 700 kilometers (435 miles) so far. They have roughly 4,000 kilometers to go if they take the same route as the last caravan, to Tijuana, across from San Diego, California.

When that caravan reached Mexico in October, the authorities tried to stop it with riot police. But the migrants stormed in anyway, tearing down border fences then crossing the river illegally when police refused to let them through.

Since then, Mexico has got a new government, led by President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, an anti-establishment leftist.

"AMLO," as the new president is widely known, has promised to treat migrants more humanely than previous governments. But he has also sought to stay on Trump's good side with talk of reducing migrant flows.

The October caravan largely dispersed after reaching Tijuana.

US Border Patrol agents fought back two attempts by the migrants to rush the border, firing tear gas to disperse them.

Some have since found work in Mexico, some crossed the border and filed asylum claims, and many returned home. About 400 remain in a shelter set up for them in Tijuana that is slated to be closed on Wednesday.

[Mexico] Migrant caravan freely crosses Mexican border after gates were left open, authorities avoided 'confrontation' (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/18/2019 10:06 AM, Griff Jenkins and Lukas Mikelionis, 9216K]

Around 1,000 Central American migrants marched freely through the Guatemala-Mexico border on Friday after the gates were left wide open, with Mexican authorities standing down from confronting the caravan.

The border gates were open only temporarily, but migrants – who crossed the bridge from Tecun-Uman to Ciudad Hidalgo – were surprised to find no locks on the gates, effectively giving them a free pass to enter the country without being stuck at the border or registering with immigration officials and now begin the trek to the U.S. border, which can range from between 1,000 to 2,500 miles depending on the point of entry.

There was little presence of police or border security officials. A Mexican official told Fox News that they "did not want to confront" the migrant caravan, fearing the repetition of last year's incident where violent clashes between police and the migrants broke out.

It remains unclear if the border gates were left open intentionally by the authorities or if migrants broke the locks.

President Trump, who is embroiled in a bitter standoff with Congressional Democrats over funding for the border wall, jumped on reports of migrants entering Mexico and warned that the caravan is coming towards the U.S.

"Another big Caravan heading our way. Very hard to stop without a Wall!" he wrote in a tweet.

The unrestricted crossing on Friday looked starkly different from the scene in October at the exact same location, when migrants tried to push through closed gates and ranks of riot police, prompting authorities to fire pepper spray.

It was thought on Thursday that Mexican authorities will follow the new procedures introduced by the government in the wake of the clashes that would force migrants to wait five days for their paperwork to be processed before letting them enter the country.

But some caravan members have told Fox News that they won't be following the new procedures, claiming they don't trust the government, and may even cross the border without waiting.

Since the last caravan crossing, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador was sworn in as the new Mexico president. He's an advocate of a more humane solution to the migrant caravan, including a jobs program for the migrants in an effort to stop the flow of migrants towards the U.S.

In exchange, the Mexican leader asks Trump to put in money to improve economic conditions in the region.

Guatemalan Officials estimated the caravan at 1,800 people as another two caravans are on their way - one from El Salvador with approx 150 ppl and another set to depart from Honduras on Sunday.

[Mexico] Hundreds of Central American migrants enter Mexico with few checks (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/18/2019 5:53 AM, Sofia Menchu]

Hundreds of mostly Honduran migrants entered southern Mexico on Friday, joining around 1,000 other people from Central America who crossed a day earlier and putting to the test Mexico's vows to guarantee the safe and orderly flow of people.

The cohort crossed the Guatemalan border into Chiapas state before dawn without needing the wrist bands that Mexican officials on Thursday gave migrants to wear until they could register with authorities, several migrants and an official told Reuters.

"The road today was open," said Marco Antonio Cortez, 37, a baker from Honduras traveling with his wife and children, ages 2 and 9. "They didn't give us bracelets or anything, they just let us pass through Mexico migration."

A migration official at the entry point, who asked not to be named because she was not authorized to speak to media, said that at least 1,000 people crossed from Guatemala into Mexico before dawn, without putting on wrist bands.

Asked why migrants did not receive wrist bands, David Leon, the director of civil protection,

said authorities faced a caravan of hundreds of people early in the morning and let them pass rather than risk a confrontation.

The migrant group proceeded on foot alongside cars on a highway, accompanied by federal police officers, arriving at a shelter in the city of Tapachula around midday.

Sitting by the side of the road rubbing cream onto his children's feet, 40-year-old Honduran migrant Santos Pineda said he and his family entered Mexico easily, and without having to provide documents or wear any wrist bands. The family's plan was to press on to the United States, he said.

A migration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said those who entered without wrist bands ran the risk of being detained for crossing illegally.

Around 300 mostly Honduran migrants with wrist bands were still waiting to cross into Mexico on Friday afternoon.

Mexico's migration institute said the migrants can stay in temporary shelters in Mexico until they receive humanitarian visas allowing them to remain in the country, or they can wait in Guatemala for their document to be ready.

Groups of migrants left El Salvador and Honduras earlier in the week, the latest in a string of caravans of people largely fleeing poverty and violence.

The caravans have inflamed the debate over U.S. immigration policy, with President Donald Trump using the migrants to try to secure backing for his plan to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexican border.

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador is pursuing a "humanitarian" approach to the problem, vowing to stem the flow of people by finding jobs for the migrants. In exchange, he wants Trump to help spur economic development in the region.

[Mexico] Fuel pipeline blaze in Mexico kills at least 67 (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/19/2019 9:17 AM, AFP, 2015K]

An explosion and fire in central Mexico killed at least 67 people after hundreds swarmed to the site of an illegal fuel-line tap to gather gasoline amid a government crackdown on fuel theft, officials said.

Early Saturday the Hidalgo state governor, Omar Fayad, had put the death toll at 66 dead and 76 injured, but one of the injured subsequently died in hospital.

The injured included at least eight minors, one of them 12 years old.

The blast occurred near Tlahuelilpan, a town of 20,000 people about an hour's drive north of Mexico City.

As soldiers guarded the devastated, still-smoking scene, forensic specialists in white suits worked among the blackened corpses — many frozen in the unnatural positions in which they had fallen — and grim-eyed civilians stepped cautiously along in a desperate search for missing relatives.

The pungent smell of fuel hung in the air. Fragments of burnt clothing were strewn through the charred brush.

When the forensic workers began attempting to load corpses into vans to be transported to funeral homes, some 30 villagers tried to stop them. They demanded their relatives' bodies, saying funeral homes were too expensive. The bodies were ultimately taken to a morgue, authorities said.

On Friday, when authorities heard that fuel traffickers had punctured the pipeline, an army unit of about 25 soldiers arrived and attempted to block off the area, Defense Secretary Luis Crescencio Sandoval told reporters.

But the soldiers were unable to contain the estimated 700 civilians — including entire families — who swarmed in to collect the spilled gasoline in jerrycans and buckets, witnesses said.

The armed soldiers had been moved away from the pipeline to avoid any risk of confrontation with the crowd when the blast occurred, some two hours after the pipeline was first breached, Sandoval said.

President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, a leftist who took office only weeks ago, traveled to the scene early Saturday.

He did not fault the soldiers, saying, "The attitude of the army was correct. It is not easy to impose order on a crowd." He vowed to continue fighting the growing problem of fuel theft.

"I am deeply saddened by the suffering in Tlahuelilpan," Lopez Obrador wrote on Twitter. He called on his "whole government" to extend assistance.

The US Secretary of Homeland Security, Kirstjen Nielsen, tweeted that her department "stands ready to assist the first responders and the Mexican government in any way possible."

Video taken in the aftermath showed screaming people fleeing the scene as an enormous fire lit up the night sky.

"I went just to see what was happening, and then the explosion happened. I rushed to help people," Fernando Garcia, 47, told AFP. "I had to claw through pieces of people who had already been burned to bits."

The tragedy comes during a highly publicized federal government war on fuel theft, a problem that cost Mexico an estimated \$3 billion in 2017.

Acting attorney general Alejandro Gertz described the latest disaster as "intentional" because "someone caused that leak. And the fire was a consequence of the crime."

But he acknowledged that investigators would be hampered by the fact that "the people closest to the explosion died."

Federal and state firefighters and ambulances run by state oil company Pemex rushed to help victims with burns and take the injured to hospitals.

Local medical facilities struggled to cope with the flood of arriving victims, said AFP correspondents at the scene.

The fire had been brought under control by around midnight Friday, the security ministry said.

Pemex said it was also responding to another fire at a botched pipeline tap in the central state of Queretaro, though in that case there were no victims.

Mexico is regularly rocked by deadly explosions at illegal pipeline taps, a dangerous but lucrative business whose players include powerful drug cartels and corrupt Pemex insiders.

Fayad said that two hours after the pipeline was punctured, "we were informed that there had been an explosion" and the flames "were consuming everything around."

About 15 oil pipeline explosions and fires causing more than 50 fatalities each have occurred around the world since 1993. Most were in Nigeria, where in 1998 more than 1,000 people died in such a blast. A fire after a pipeline rupture in Brazil killed more than 500 people in 1984.

– Rampant fuel theft –

The tragedy comes as anti-corruption crusader Lopez Obrador presses implementation of a controversial fuel theft prevention plan.

The government has shut off major pipelines until they can be fully secured and deployed the army to guard Pemex production facilities.

But the strategy to fight the problem led to severe gasoline and diesel shortages across much of the country, including Mexico City, forcing people to queue for hours — sometimes days — to fill up their vehicles.

The president, who took office on December 1, has vowed to keep up the fight and asked Mexicans to be patient.

At the scene, some locals blamed the shortages for the tragedy.

"A lot of people arrived with their jerrycans because of the gasoline shortages we've had," said Martin Trejo, 55, who was searching for his son, one of those who had gone to collect the leaking fuel.

He also lashed out at the army for failing to stop the looters.

"These lives would have been saved if they had done their jobs to remove people and not let them get close. They never did anything."

Tanker trucks are being used to deliver fuel, but experts say there are not nearly enough of

them.

Mexican bank Citibanamex estimated Wednesday that the shortages would cost Latin America's second-largest economy around \$2 billion, "if conditions return to normal in the coming days."

The roots of the fuel theft problem run deep in Mexico, where the practice — known locally as "huachicoleo," or moonshining — is big business for some communities.

[Mexico] Pipeline explosion witnesses describe scene where 73 died: 'People's skin came off' (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/20/2019 3:08 AM, Louis Casiano, 9216K]

Grief-stricken family members and witnesses to Friday's pipeline explosion in central Mexico -- which killed at least 73 people, burning many to just bones or ash, and injured at least 74 -- were still reeling from the tragedy Saturday.

"Some people's skin came off. ... It was very ugly, horrible. People screamed and cried," local journalist Veronica Jimenez told Reuters.

She said she arrived at the scene before the explosion, watching as some 300 people carried containers to collect fuel from an illegal tap in the pipeline Friday evening. After the blast, "They shouted the names of their husbands, brothers, their family members," she recalled, of people searching for loved ones.

On Saturday, health officials were taking DNA samples from relatives to help identify the dead, dozens of whom were badly burned. Hugo Olvera Estrada said he visited six nearby hospitals hoping to find his 13-year-old son, who joined the crowd at the spill and remains missing.

"Ay, no, where is my son?" he wailed.

Isaias Garcia, a farmer who witnessed the explosion from a distance, explained why so many had come to the area.

"Everyone came to see if they could get a bit of gasoline for their car," he said. "There isn't any in the gas stations."

"Some people came out burning and screaming," he added.

The tragedy comes as Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador -- known as "AMLO," who took office in December -- has vowed to eradicate fuel thieves who illegally drilled taps into pipelines an estimated 12,581 times during the first 10 months of 2018, an average of about 42 violations per day.

"We are going to eradicate that which not only causes material damages, it is not only what the nation loses by this illegal trade, this black market of fuel, but the risk, the danger, the loss of human lives," said Lopez Obrador, who ran on an anti-corruption platform before being elected last year.

The tragedy prompted reactions from officials in the United States, including Homeland

Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, who offered assistance from her agency in a tweet Saturday.

"Our condolences go out to those who lost their lives in Mexico yesterday. @DHSgov stands ready to assist the first responders and the Mexican Government in any way possible," she wrote.

Friday evening had begun much differently. Hundreds of people gathered in a festive atmosphere in a field in Tlahuelilpan in Hidalgo state - about 62 miles north of Mexico City - to where a duct had been punctured by fuel thieves, sending gasoline spewing 20 feet in the air.

Over two hours, hundreds descended on the site.

The pipeline, which was operated by state oil company Petroleos Mexicanos, or Pemex, then burst into flames and exploded. Pemex Chief Executive Octavio Romero said around 10,000 barrels of gasoline were rushing through the pipeline when it ruptured.

He said fuel theft costs Mexico up to \$3.5 billion annually, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Mexican Defense Secretary Luis Cresencio said Saturday that 50 soldiers are stationed every 12 miles along the pipeline, aided by patrols. They have been ordered not to confront fuel thieves out of fear that it could result in the shooting of unarmed civilians or soldiers being attacked by a mob.

"We don't want this sort of confrontation," Cresencio said.

In December, Lopez Obrador ordered pipelines closed, leading to gas shortages in central Mexico. Local media reports said more than half of the gas stations in Hidalgo were closed.

Arely Calva Martinez said the shortages have tempted some to get gas through illegal means. Her brother, she said, is a teacher and badly needed gas for his commute to work when he saw on Facebook that fuel had been spewing onto the field.

The brother, Marco Alfredo, and another brother, were at the field when the explosion occurred.

"I think if there had been gas in the gas stations, many of these people wouldn't have been here," Calva Martinez told the Associated Press while holding a photo of her brothers.

The brother of Erica Bautista and his wife were both missing Saturday. She said he faced "enormous lines" for gas and received a phone call alerting him of the fuel spill.

"We want to at least find a cadaver," she said while weeping.

[Central America] MS-13 and the violence driving migration from Central America (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/18/2019 6:32 AM, Arijeta Lajka, 2890K]

Its name has become a sinister shorthand for the fear of violence seeping across America's borders. MS-13, or "Mara Salvatrucha," is one of the largest gangs in the world, a menace in several countries and a frequent target of President Trump's rhetoric. Its violent grip in Central America is one of the forces driving thousands of migrants to flee for the U.S. — which, ironically, is where the gang got its start.

The Trump administration refers to MS-13 as "violent animals," and Mr. Trump often invokes MS-13's gruesome acts of violence to justify hardline policies against immigration.

"This is a crisis. You have human trafficking, you have drugs, you have criminals coming in, you have gangs, MS-13. We're taking them out by the thousands and bringing 'em back," the president said last week.

In recent months, migrants from the Northern Triangle — Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador — have headed to the U.S.'s southern border in much-publicized caravans to flee rampant violence and poverty. In 2017, there were close to 4,000 homicides in El Salvador, a nation of about 6 million people. Though that's down from over 6,600 killings in 2015, El Salvador still has one of the highest murder rates in the world.

"I got shot with a '38. I had like a fifty-cent-size hole on both of my sides," said Rafa Arturo, 45, an El Salvador native who spent much of his life in the U.S. before being deported. He was shot twice in 2016. He now lives in San Salvador with his 5-year-old son Jacob, who was born there. "It happened in front of my house," he added.

Rafa was just a toddler when he came to the U.S. with his parents, settling in Los Angeles. But after a string of convictions, Rafa was deported in 2008, leaving behind four daughters. According to public records, he was convicted for three crimes involving theft from 1992 to 2001. He now works in a call center in San Salvador and worries about the rampant violence.

"What I'm truly afraid is that, we go out someplace ... and then we get both shot," Rafa said. "The reason why I want to send Jacob to the States is because ... his safety. That's number one."

MS-13 and a rival gang, Barrio 18 or 18th Street, actively recruit members as young as 8 years old in El Salvador.

"You guys have been to a public school here, there's gang walls written already," Rafa said. "That's just the kindergarten school. By all means necessary, as a parent, I'll do whatever it takes to get my son to a next step."

Rafa tried to unite Jacob with his sisters in the U.S. but his visa was rejected multiple times. Out of options, Rafa is preparing to head to the border again, this time with Jacob — a dangerous journey to a country that will try to turn them back. Where did MS-13 come from?

"We have people coming into the country, or trying to come in — and we're stopping a lot of them," President Trump said of MS-13 last May. "You wouldn't believe how bad these people are. These aren't people. These are animals." The following month, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said "large criminal organizations such as MS-13 have violated our borders and gained a deadly foothold within the United States."

But MS-13 isn't exactly a foreign invader — it originated in Los Angeles.

During El Salvador's Civil War in 1980s, the U.S. provided right-wing governments political,

economic and military support against leftist guerrillas, while government forces were carrying out the bulk of human rights violations. As the government sent thousands to their deaths, civilians were indiscriminately targeted. Hundreds of thousands of Salvadorans fled as the war progressed, and many arrived to the U.S. undocumented.

Reagan-era immigration policies made it especially tough for Salvadorans to obtain asylum status or temporary legal status. Living in low-income neighborhoods, Salvadoran immigrants faced obstacles to landing steady employment and an education. Marginalized Salvadoran youth in LA neighborhoods joined gangs or formed their own.

"[Gangs] are really a social problem, and they attract young people who feel marginalized, who feel excluded from mainstream society," said Sonja Wolf, who researches street gang culture in Central America.

MS-13 initially began as MSS, a stoner gang made up of teenage immigrants who mostly smoked weed and listened to heavy metal music, according to anthropologist Thomas Ward. However, as more migrants arrived, MSS began to protect themselves from other gangs.

According to Ward, the group took a more malevolent turn when members in the LA County jail began adopting street gang subculture. It wasn't until the mid-1990s that the group became MS-13, as members began negotiating with the Mexican mafia for protection in jails and prisons from other Latino gangs.

The gang spread to other states when families moved for work. "Sometimes their children were affiliated with MS or had some kind of link," Ward said. "In order to fit in the new community, they would claim to be LA gangsters to get some clout and start up new cliques claiming MS."

This LA street gang became a problem for El Salvador after a change in U.S. immigration policy in 1996, when the U.S. increased the number of crimes that were subject to deportation. The U.S. also deported those with suspected gang links. El Salvador hardly had the infrastructure to handle the influx of returning migrants and dismantle criminal organizations, especially since it was still recovering from the war. Between 1998 and 2014, the U.S. deported over 81,000 migrants back to El Salvador.

Deportees reported prejudice against them when trying to find employment in El Salvador, according to Nestor Rodriguez, a sociology professor at the University of Texas at Austin. The Salvadoran press emphasized that planeloads of criminals were returning to the country. "They [deportees] would go to an employer, the employers would say roll up your sleeves. They would see tattoos and say if we need you, we'll call you," Rodriguez said.

Deportees returned to a society torn apart by war, a country they no longer had ties to. When Rafa returned to the country of his birth, he barely spoke Spanish and felt like an outsider. "Me and my son are an attraction, because I walk right here and talk to them in English," he told CBS News.

Meanwhile, the gang put down roots. El Salvador crafted policies to target gang members, but instead MS-13 grew more strategic and powerful, placing members in the police and military, even at the university where they studied law and accounting.

"The societal response was a gang repression, this iron first policy of trying to crack down," Ward said. "The gangs responded by becoming more organized and more rebellious, it created this cycle of violence that has perpetuated until some kind of new policy is instituted where they are not demonized."

Today, there are an estimated 10,000 active MS-13 gang members in local cliques in the U.S. and 50,000 across Central America.

The U.S. has a perspective that once these people are deported, "it's no longer our problem," according to Rodriguez. But he said, "This doesn't disappear. It's like a boomerang, and it's going to create more pressure for migration."

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Houston case reveals extortion, death threats among brutal tactics employed by human traffickers (Houston Chronicle)

[Houston Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 4:30 AM, Gabrielle Banks, 199K]

The Houston caller told the woman to send \$7,000 if she wanted to see her brother alive.

Ilsia Mazariegos-Salazar was not just afraid but bewildered since she had already paid human traffickers in Guatemala \$8,500 to shuttle her brother Migdael across two international borders last summer. Now the smugglers were demanding an additional fee, according to the caller, known as El Sobrino, The Nephew.

He threatened to have Migdael "killed, chopped up into pieces and disappeared" if she didn't come up with the money, Mazariegos-Salazar later told Homeland Security investigators. And he warned that Migdael would be killed if she told police about his threat, according to court documents.

"They had people everywhere," the New Jersey woman told authorities.

Federal agents tracked Ilsia's next call to a southwest Houston apartment complex and safely recovered Migdael in a prearranged undercover operation at an H-E-B outside the Beltway. Investigators found four other smuggled immigrants locked up a mile away in an apartment with boarded-up windows.

The Houston-based federal prosecution of six men charged with aiding in the Alief stash house and another residence offers a rare glimpse into the ruthless tactics experts say are used to extract cash in the underground human cargo trade in which Houston is a major hub.

"It's a vicious world. They know intimidation is a factor in getting paid," said David G. Ramirez, a former assistant special agent with Homeland Security who worked undercover for years in international smuggling operations. "It's not a customer-friendly business."

Although thousands of people are charged with harboring undocumented immigrants, the

case is one of just 16 federal prosecutions against 48 defendants in the region since 2014 on allegations of "hostage taking" by a smuggling crew.

Lawyers for four of the men declined to comment about the case, and one defendant remains a fugitive. Attorney Andrew Williams said his client was not involved in human smuggling but was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Williams said he has seen a rise in these kinds of prosecutions in recent years.

"They're becoming more common and people are getting greedier," said Williams, who had a previous client sentenced to 35 years in prison for holding immigrants hostage for ransom.

Hoping for an honest smuggler

Historically, immigrants smuggled into the U.S. face a number of known dangers, including the risk of heat exposure in the desert, a deadly rollover during car chases with local police, suffocation in the back of a big rig trailer, as well as brutal assaults, rapes and raids at stash houses.

"Every person who has family member that goes through the pipeline knows the danger," said Ramirez, the former undercover agent. "They can only hope they get an honest smuggler."

Like Ilesia, many relatives who finance clandestine international transit for loved ones consider the perils during the border crossing but they are often blindsided by smugglers' threats and the accompanying bribes they tack on at the end of the journey, said Special Agent Mary Magness of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, who is second in command over human smuggling investigations for Homeland Security in the sprawling Houston region.

Magness said that extortion occurs in almost every smuggling case.

Threats, exploitation, violence and abuse occur in an echo chamber because migrants who enter the country through illegal channels and relatives who finance their journeys are less likely to contact law enforcement, according to international human rights organizations.

But a scholar who has researched international smuggling and organized crime disputed Magness' assessment, saying the alleged threats to the New Jersey woman represent an aberration from what typically occurs at the end of a human trafficking transaction.

Sheldon X. Zhang, chair of the Criminology & Justice school at University of Massachusetts Lowell, said his field interviews with undocumented migrants and smugglers indicate most traffickers deliver on their original promise to family members.

"At the end of the day, smuggling is a business that relies on repeat customers," Zhang said. "There are rogue smuggling operators, but most established ones are hoping to secure further interactions with the migrant sending communities. Each success story brings more business."

A wad of cash tossed through the window

The New Jersey woman told federal agents the smugglers put her brother on the phone during calls on Aug. 12 and Aug. 20, according to testimony by a Homeland Security agent at a recent detention hearing.

Federal agents asked the New Jersey woman to place a monitored call to that same cell phone number and tell the man on the line that a friend in Houston would deliver the \$7,000. That call led them to the Sunset Crossing apartments on Beechnut west of the Beltway and authorities set up surveillance there, the agent testified.

At a prearranged meeting at a local supermarket on Aug. 23, two men were "extremely aggressive and uncooperative" with an undercover agent. The agent confirmed that Migdael was in the back seat as he tossed a wad of cash through the car window while other agents moved forward to make an arrest.

Migdael's anguished journey ended in the custody of immigration officials in Houston, where he will likely be called as a witness at trial, said Williams, the defense attorney.

Agents found four other immigrants at locked in an apartment at Sunset Crossing. The family of one Guatemalan migrant detained at the stash house had advanced \$15,000 smugglers for the man's safe arrival, and the crew was extorting relatives for an additional \$2,300, according to the agent's statement. A third Guatemalan family had paid about \$14,000 up front and was ordered to send a few thousands more.

As the federal investigation of the scheme progressed, agents raided another stash house in north Houston on Nov. 28, where they found two Indian nationals and four Guatemalans locked up in a detached garage, according to court records. Authorities also recovered three pistols, a shotgun, a rifle, ammunition, \$12,000 in cash and documents related to the rental properties at Sunset Crossing.

Six Mexican nationals— including a pair nicknamed Gordo, or fatty, and Viejon, Old Timer — ranging in age from 19 to 33 have been indicted in connection with the raids. All except the one fugitive have been detained without bond pending trial.

The are variously charged with illegally transporting foreign nationals across the border, harboring them and conspiring to hold them hostage, and threatening them with violence and death if relatives didn't pay a ransom.

Williams, who represents 19-year-old Daniel Lopez-Garcia, who was sitting in the front seat during the grocery store exchange, said his client had nothing to do with any hostage-taking scheme.

Ashley Kaper, a federal public defender representing defendant Joel Osornio-Cruz, 31, noted at his detention hearing this month that her client told officials he was a victim of the smugglers and was forced to help them at the north Houston stash house to pay off his own \$3,000 smuggling debt by cooking, grocery shopping, mowing the lawn, putting up a security fence and guarding his fellow captives.

One of the smuggled migrants, however, told officials that Osornio-Cruz also guided their group through the brush at the border, to bypass Border Patrol checkpoint, an agent

testified.

Thousands charged in Houston-area cases

Magness, the Homeland Security official in Houston, said human hand-offs like the one at the supermarket by smugglers probably take place daily in Houston — at shopping centers, at downtown bus stations, in suburban subdivisions. Federal prosecutors filed 407 human smuggling cases in the region last year and roughly 2,800 cases in the past five years, court records show.

She said smuggling organizations typically function like well-established businesses. They rely on many interrelated components, so an immigrant may interact with a dozen or more players along the way. Ring members focus on money, communications, security, accommodations, food, travel routes and transport during various portions of the trip.

"It's not unlike an airline," Magness said, "where there is a ticketing agent, someone handling your bags, the pilot, the flight attendants, the ground crew and the people in the tower ... The part where it gets muddled is once they've gotten into the U.S."

Williams, the lawyer for an alleged smuggling crew member in the Sunset Crossing case, said he has become familiar with extortions at stash houses. One client, Cesar Avila, who was convicted in a 2011 case, had been smuggled into the country only to find that his traffickers compelled him to guard the others to work off the money he owed, Williams said.

Witnesses, however, testified that Avila lived with them at the back of a garage at the stash house and held them at gunpoint. A fellow migrant told the court that Avila sexually assaulted her while she was in his custody. Avila faced up to life in prison but the judge gave him 35 years.

Williams, who has been appointed by judges to defend alleged smugglers for nearly 25 years, said prosecutors could elevate all stash house cases by adding a hostage-taking charge, but they only tend to charge that when there is a threat or violence. Unlike harboring migrants, a charge of hostage-taking carries a possible life sentence.

In Migdael's case, Ilsia may have saved his life, but she did not get what she paid for. As a witness in a criminal case, he likely will be tied up for months before his status is reviewed.

It's a better outcome than some families face, however, said Ramirez, the former undercover agent. Some crews occasionally follow up on gruesome threats of chopping people up and feeding them to hogs, he said.

"From the moment you put your lives in somebody else's hands it's scary," he said. "Extortion has now become typical in smuggling scenarios...It's a brutal world."

Afghan military interpreter freed after week in ICE detention (Houston Chronicle)

[Houston Chronicle](#) [1/18/2019 4:50 PM, St. John Banned-Smith, 199K]

An Afghan interpreter for the U.S. military, detained at a Houston airport and threatened with deportation, has been released after a week in custody, advocates and a government spokesman said.

The interpreter, Mohasif Motawakil, 48, who was detained at George Bush Intercontinental Airport Jan. 10 after arriving in the U.S. with his wife and five children, was freed Thursday, his lawyers said.

A spokesman for U.S. Customs and Border Protection confirmed the news.

"State Department has reviewed their initial decision, and Mr. Motawakil's visa has been reinstated and he has been deemed admissible for entry into the United States," the spokesman said in an emailed statement.

Afghan and Iraqi interpreters who worked alongside American troops can qualify for special immigrant visas granting them residency in the United States if they receive letters of support from American officials and show that their lives are in danger. The process takes years for many applicants, who undergo extensive security screenings.

Motawakil's family appears to have raised suspicion in part when he handed customs officers an envelope that was supposed to be sealed containing their medical records. Someone, apparently a family member, had mistakenly opened the envelope, according to lawyers with Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services, or RAICES, a legal advocacy group.

"It's shocking to see the way this administration is treating those who have supported our troops," Erika Andiola, chief advocacy officer for RAICES, said in an announcement of Motawakil's release. "The administration is engaged in a systematic attack on all who it thinks do not belong in this country, and this is just the latest evidence of that."

The detention of Motawakil and his family prompted a flurry of protests, and several members of Congress called for his release.

His wife and family were allowed to leave the airport after more than 24 hours, but their visas were revoked, meaning they would have to seek asylum and would no longer qualify for cash assistance and other benefits already allocated to them, such as help finding work and learning English.

Motawakil's family arrived late Saturday in San Antonio, where they are staying with another Afghan interpreter. Motawakil was held at Bush Intercontinental Airport for four days, then moved to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center in Montgomery County for three days before he was finally released, according to William Fitzgerald, with RAICES. Fitzgerald also confirmed that Motawakil's family's visas had been reinstated.

"It's exciting the interpreter has been released," said Betsy Fisher, policy director of the International Refugee Assistance Project, which sued the federal government last year over the delay in processing these visas for Afghans and Iraqis. "But CBP has a lot to answer for. Why was someone — in danger because they worked for US. and who secured a visa after years of vetting — arrested and detained with his family on arrival?"

U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Houston, one of those who pushed for Motawakil's release, said she was "grateful the process worked."

"America must always stand for human rights and dignity," Jackson Lee said Friday. "When

people sacrifice for the American cause, American values, such as translators in dangerous places, it is important to keep our promise — and our duty to do so. It's very important to the security of our troops and personnel around the world, and in dangerous places."

Thousands of Afghans and Iraqis and their families have entered the U.S. on special immigrant visas since Congress enacted The Afghan Allies Protection Act in 2009 and a similar program for Iraq in 2008.

Many face danger from the Taliban and other militants after working with U.S. troops. In 2014, the International Refugee Assistance Project, a nonprofit in New York City, estimated that an Afghan interpreter was killed every 36 hours.

Under the Trump administration, the number of Iraqis and Afghans coming here through these programs has drastically fallen, particularly after Trump in 2017 implemented a controversial ban on immigrants from certain Muslim countries.

Only about four dozen Iraqis were admitted in 2018 through a program Congress created specifically for those employed with the U.S. government or American contractors. More than 3,000 came in 2017.

Another Afghan translator on the same visa as Motawakil was similarly detained when he arrived at Newark Airport shortly after the so-called travel ban was announced in 2017. After more than a year in prison, he was granted asylum in 2018 and released.

On Friday, advocates for refugees said CBP's actions warranted continued scrutiny.

Jennifer Quigley, an advocacy strategist with Human Rights First, an international nonprofit, said the agency misused its discretion in Motawakil's case. Special immigrant visa applicants only receive visas only after extensive background checks that frequently last years.

"It's undermining the years of work the State Department and intelligence agencies have put in vetting these individuals," Quigley said.

Detained immigrants paid \$1 a day, with toothpaste costing \$11: report (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 11:04 AM, Aris Folley, 3038K]

A detained immigrant who was paid \$1 a day for his work at a privately run detention facility in California was reportedly subjected to higher than normal prices for goods at the site's commissary.

Douglas Cruz, a Honduran detainee who spent eight months at the Adelanto Detention Facility last year, told Reuters that he had to resort to bartering for cookies and ramen noodles because he couldn't afford goods at the commissary.

According to Reuters, a can of tuna was being sold at the commissary for \$3.25 — reportedly more than four times the price tag at a Target near Adelanto.

A separate center, run by CoreCivic Inc., which reportedly also pays \$1-a-day wages, charged detainees \$11.02 for a 4 oz. tube of Sensodyne toothpaste that costs \$5.20 on Amazon.com, according to Reuters.

"CoreCivic ensures all daily needs of detainees are taken care of including three meals a day, clothing, underwear, socks, shoes, sheets, blanket, towels, laundry bag and personal hygiene products such as soap, (toilet) tissue, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrush and disposable razors," Amanda Gilchrist, a spokeswoman for the company, told The Hill in a statement. "Detainees can choose to purchase additional items at the commissary, but the facility provides for all the daily needs listed above at no cost to the detainee."

Some immigration attorneys have reportedly said the hiked-up prices are part of a larger effort by privately run prisons and facilities to profit off cheap labor from inmates.

Adelanto, which is owned by Geo Group Inc., the largest for-profit corrections company in the U.S., has faced accusations from migrants and activists that it purposely skimps on basic essentials to coerce migrants into cheap labor.

Pablo Paez, a spokesman for the company, dismissed the allegations as "completely false" in a statement to Reuters, adding that detainees at facilities operated under Geo Group are given dietician-approved meals and a volunteer labor program.

The company said its commissary prices are "in line with comparable local markets" and that the Geo Group earns only a "minimal commission" on the goods. The bulk of that commission is reportedly directed to a "welfare fund" for other items for detainees.

A company representative told The Hill that the commissary is run by a third-party vendor, and that Geo Group does not profit off the commissary sales.

The representative also said the daily wage paid to detainees is set by the federal government and that detainees at its centers are provided about a dozen different types of hygiene products upon request.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is reportedly the top customer by revenue for Geo Group, which has added hundreds of beds to its immigration detention facilities in the past year.

[NY] It Was a Sanctuary for Immigrants in the Bronx. Then One of Its Owners Was Arrested (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/18/2019 7:19 PM, Christina Goldbaum, 20737K]

Offering traditional Mexican food and social justice conversations, La Morada in the South Bronx is equal parts restaurant and refuge. Run by an immigrant family from Oaxaca, it is home to both fresh tostadas and a community book exchange.

The purple walls are adorned with posters denouncing deportations and neighborhood children's art projects. And one member of the family once spent two weeks in an Arizona immigration jail — by choice — as a form of political protest.

But on Friday, an altercation between one of La Morada's owners and police officers turned the haven into a hostile flash point, fracturing an often strained relationship between police officers in the 40th precinct and the community they serve in the South Bronx.

The interaction resulted in the arrest of Yajaira Saavedra, a daughter of Natalia Mendez and

Antonio Saavedra, who opened the restaurant in 2009. Police also attempted to arrest her younger sister, Carolina, 25, but after Carolina started showing signs of a panic attack, police did not carry out the arrest, according to the Saavedra family.

A few hours later Ms. Saavedra, 30, was released and her arrest voided after police determined she had not committed a crime.

"As an undocumented immigrant, we are always on our toes when it comes to immigration raids and police raids," said Ms. Saavedra, who is a recipient of DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, the Obama-era program that protects undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children. "They both create terror."

Accounts of the incident depict an ill-fated encounter between police in the midst of sting operation that ended with an officer's safety in jeopardy and a community with deep-seated distrust of all police activity.

La Morada is situated in a part of the New York City where homicides, fueled by entrenched poverty and rival criminal crews fighting over turf, stubbornly persist.

Whereas some police precincts in New York now regularly experience no killings in a given year, the 40th precinct in the Bronx — made up of the Melrose, Mott Haven, and Port Morris neighborhoods — logged 14 in 2016, six in 2017, and eight last year.

To crack down on crime, officers in the 40th precinct are active in the area but have tried to limit negative interactions with residents to maintain public trust, according to the police.

"There has been a significant decrease in the number of interactions with the public while crime has continued to decrease," according to Lt. John Grimpel, an NYPD spokesman. "We continue to correct conditions while at the same time using discretion and precision."

After the community fallout from Ms. Saavedra's arrest, the 40th Precinct's Community Affairs Unit said they were doing outreach to explain what happened and hear community members' concerns. But that outreach does not always attract the community buy-in the unit needs to change residents' negative perception of the police.

"We put ourselves out there, we make ourselves available to the public, but we don't receive the participation from the community we would like to see," said Detective Claudia Mera of the Community Affairs Unit.

The unit holds a meeting once every three months and invites area residents to bring up concerns.

Still, there is no specific plan to address the incident at La Morada.

Members of the community believe the tactics they use have created a schism between law-abiding residents and police officers who treat all residents as a possible threat.

"I've been working in and with this community for two decades now and police brutality has always been an issue, relationships between the police department and the community have always been an issue," said Alyshia Galvez, 45, a cultural anthropologist who works in the South Bronx. "The way Yajaira was disrespected is the same way other members of the

community are disrespected on a daily basis."

For the South Bronx's immigrant community, a negative experience with the police is not just an issue of respect and trust. It also brings fears for their immigration status. For Ms. Saavedra, her arrest made that fear palpable.

"It doesn't matter if I live in a sanctuary city," she said. When the incident occurred, "I was just thinking that this could lead to my deportation."

It all began around 4:30 p.m. last Friday when an undercover officer from the Bronx narcotics unit made a felony purchase of narcotics on the street outside the restaurant and the individual from whom she purchased the drugs began acting aggressive, according to a police spokesman.

Noticing what appeared to be an arrest happening outside the restaurant, Ms. Saavedra began filming the incident on her phone, mindful of the stories she hears often from friends and customers of what she describes as prejudiced police practices in the neighborhood.

The police do "not have a good relationship with the community," Ms. Saavedra said. "We see them making unfair arrests, racially profiling us, so I started recording so if that happened it could be exposed."

As the undercover officer entered La Morada for her own safety, another plainclothes officer approached Ms. Saavedra's brother, Marco Saavedra, and asked him to momentarily close the restaurant to new customers. The siblings instead asked that the officers leave, explaining they did not want to be involved in any police activity.

"I could tell the officer was getting frustrated, and that's when he said he would 'flip the place upside down' if we didn't do what he told us to," said Mr. Saavedra.

The police officers then left the restaurant, returning minutes later with additional officers and handcuffing Ms. Saavedra.

Ms. Saavedra was trembling as she described her encounter on Monday morning after community members filled the restaurant offering their support.

"La Morada is like the watering hole for this community, it's our meeting point, and this family is an inspiration for us," said Vanna Valdez, a 31 year old resident who has lived in the neighborhood her entire life.

Ms. Saavedra's parents opened La Morada in 2009, after living in the United States for 17 years. When they came in 1992 after crossing the Sonoran Desert, their plan was to stay only one year. But settling into Washington Heights, her mother, Natalia Mendez, was impressed by the schools and the neighborhood so she sent for her children to come join them and begin life anew.

When she and her husband, Antonio, opened the restaurant on Willis Avenue it became a neighborhood sensation. Longtime neighbors and resident artists became regulars. Mayor Bill de Blasio stopped by. The five moles Ms. Mendez prepared for her customers soon earned glowing reviews from critics who praised the family's ability to bring both Oaxacan

food and its sense of selfless reciprocity to the neighborhood.

But the critical need the restaurant filled — providing neighbors a safe, positive, community-oriented space — also underscored the dangers that surrounded it.

The attention Yajaira's arrest garnered has made the incident a rallying cry for neighbors who have experienced similar interactions with the police and feel their voice is rarely heard.

On Friday residents arrived at the precinct to demand her release while others went to La Morada to comfort her family members, who were shocked by the way the officers treated Yajaira.

"This is the kind of thing I would see in Mexico not here in the United States, a country that respect laws," said Antonio Saavedra, Ms. Saavedra's father. "Where is the law? I don't see it here right now."

[MD] ICE confirms why it ended contract with Maryland county (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 6:33 AM, Staff, 337K]

Federal immigration officials have confirmed that they ended a contract with a Maryland county to house immigration detainees because local officials quit participating in a screening program.

The Capital reports that a spokesman for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said in an email that the decision to end the contract with Anne Arundel County was tied directly to the county's decision to no longer participate in the 287(g) program.

The program trains correction officers to screen inmates for immigration violations. County Executive Steuart Pittman withdrew from the program in December, saying it didn't make people safer.

ICE spokesman Vincent Picard said the agency partners with counties that cooperate with its public safety mission. He said ICE believes the county's decision to terminate the 287(g) program "undermines this mission."

[MI] Marine vet with PTSD held by ICE for 3 days before agency realized he was citizen (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/19/2019 3:14 PM, Anna Hopkins, 9216K]

A Marine vet with post-traumatic stress disorder was held for three days by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for possible deportation before authorities realized he was a citizen born in Michigan, lawyers said Wednesday.

Jilmar Ramos-Gomez, 27, of Grand Rapids, was deemed "a foreign national illegally present in the U.S." by ICE and was detained on Dec. 14. He was released on Dec. 17 after records demonstrated he was an American citizen.

"Why did they think he was a noncitizen? Did they get him confused with someone else? Who knows," American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) attorney Miriam Aukerman said. "This

is an individual who's incredibly vulnerable with a mental illness."

Ramos-Gomez was apprehended by police after being accused of trespassing and damaging a fire alarm at a Grand Rapids hospital on Nov. 21. He was placed in Kent County jail, and was set to be released on Dec. 14 after reportedly pleading guilty to the charges against him. At that point, he was turned over to ICE and taken to a detention center 70 miles away, though he reportedly had his U.S. passport with him.

Kent County Deputy Sheriff Chuck DeWitt shifted the blame when contacted for a comment. "Once he was released from our custody, he was under the domain of ICE," he said. "Where they take him is their process. Our procedures were followed."

Ramos-Gomez is undergoing mental health treatment, so little is known about the time he spent in ICE custody. However, Aukerman called the treatment of the veteran as "appalling."

Robert Kessler, an immigration lawyer based in Grand Rapids, was familiar with Ramos-Gomez because he aided in securing temporary residency for the veteran's mother, Maria Gomez. When Ramos-Gomez's mother told him what happened to her son, he took action.

"I immediately called ICE and shouted at them," he told The Washington Post. "And they called me back and said, kind of, 'Oops, yeah, come and get him.' They didn't say, 'Our bad,' but kind of implied that."

He added that the situation was a clear example of racial bias. "I think it's racial stereotyping. And it should have been evident that he had pretty significant mental health issues."

Ramos-Gomez served in the Marines from 2011-14, during which time he received accolades including a national defense service medal, a global war on terrorism service medal, an Afghanistan campaign medal, and a combat action ribbon. Upon returning home, the ACLU says he was "a shell of his former self," and suffered from PTSD as a result of things he'd seen in combat. According to his family, he often has episodes in which he experiences dissociative amnesia - disappearing for periods of time with no recollection of where's been.

[MI] Kent County changes its policy on ICE requests after Marine veteran mistakenly detained (Michigan Public Radio)

[Michigan Public Radio](#) [1/18/2019 5:40 PM, Dustin Dwyer, 31K] Video: [HERE](#)

The Kent County Sheriff's Department is changing its policy on cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

That's after ICE detained a Kent County resident and Marine combat veteran for possible deportation last month. The man, Jilmar Ramos-Gomez, is a U.S. citizen. He was handed over to ICE by the Kent County jail, after ICE sent a request to the jail to hold him.

Kent County Sheriff Michelle LaJoye-Young says she's outraged by the incident.

"I notified ICE officials earlier today that the Kent County Sheriff will hold detainees for ICE only after ICE presents to our office an arrest warrant signed by a federal judge or

magistrate," she said at a press conference this afternoon in Grand Rapids.

Other counties in Michigan, including Wayne, Ingham and Kalamazoo counties already had these policies on cooperation with ICE.

Immigration advocates and civil rights attorneys have been pressuring Kent County for months to change as well. The requests from ICE are considered "administrative warrants" which are not reviewed by any outside agency.

Data from Syracuse University show that Kent County has received about 2,000 of these requests in the past decade, more than double the number of any other county in Michigan.

Last year, Sheriff LaJoye-Young defended the practice of cooperating with the requests, saying that ICE had the authority to detain people without getting a warrant signed by a judge.

"It's not for us to determine if the legal process that congress set out is fair or if it's appropriate or sufficient," she said at the time.

Immigration advocates, including members of Movimiento Cosecha GR, the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center and the ACLU of Michigan all warned that holding suspects based solely on an ICE request, and not on a warrant reviewed by a judge, led to unnecessary harm, and could lead to mistakes.

In December, that's just what happened, when Jilmar Ramos-Gomez was turned over to ICE custody and held for deportation for three days before his mother was able to hire an attorney to get him out.

"I don't like that what they did to my son," the mother, Maria Gomez-Velasquez said. "Kent County need to wake up. They need to do their job."

This afternoon, Sheriff LaJoye-Young said she shares the outrage over what happened.

"Absolutely. Of course I do," she said. "Very sad and unfortunate situation."

LaJoye-Young says the Sheriff's Department is conducting an investigation into what went wrong. She says one thing she's learned so far is that her department did not report Ramos-Gomez to ICE.

Instead, it was the Grand Rapids Police who notified ICE when Ramos-Gomez was first arrested on November 21st of last year.

Ramos-Gomez was arrested for property damage and trespassing at a local hospital, where he made his way to the helipad area on the roof. His family says he suffers from mental issues, including PTSD, as a result of his service in the Marines in the Afghanistan war. They say that's what led to the incident at the hospital.

But Grand Rapids police didn't take it lightly.

"Our police department took this incident very seriously and believed it was a possible act of

terrorism," said Dave Kiddle, interim chief of the Grand Rapids Police Department, in a statement posted online. "In the interest of public safety and because there was a risk to federal airspace, we contacted federal authorities, including the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force and ICE."

In a statement posted by Fox17 in Grand Rapids, Immigration and Customs Enforcement said its officers interviewed Ramos-Gomez after his arrest. ICE says he claimed he was "illegally present" in the U.S.

[MI] Michigan sheriff: Warrant needed if ICE wants jail inmates (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/18/2019 4:27 PM, Staff, 337K]

The sheriff in western Michigan's largest county says her jail won't release people to federal immigration agents unless they present an arrest warrant from a judge.

The decision was announced Friday, after lawyers said a war veteran was picked up at the Kent County jail and detained for three days in December. Jilmar Ramos-Gomez was released by Immigration and Customs Enforcement after a lawyer proved he's a U.S. citizen born in Michigan.

Sheriff Michelle LaJoye-Young says she joins people who have expressed "outrage" over Ramos-Gomez' treatment by ICE.

The 27-year-old Marine veteran was in jail on charges related to an incident at a hospital. Grand Rapids police say they contacted ICE.

Ramos-Gomez has mental-health problems. ICE says he told them he was in the U.S. illegally.

[MI] Deported after 30 years in US, father still stuck in Mexico one year later, without wife and kids (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/19/2019 10:13 AM, Niraj Warikoo, Detroit Free Press, 6053K] Video: [HERE](#)

Inside a room in his aunt's home in Mexico, Jorge Garcia spends most of his days alone.

Separated from his wife and two children in metro Detroit, the 40-year-old father feels isolated, struggling to find work and make connections in a land he hasn't lived in for 30 years.

One year ago, the man from Lincoln Park, Michigan, was deported to Mexico. His emotional departure was captured in a Detroit Free Press story and picked up by media across the U.S. as immigration emerged as an explosive issue over the past year.

Born in Mexico, Garcia was brought to the U.S. when he was 10 years old by an undocumented adult and had lived in America for 30 years, working and paying taxes to help support his wife and two teenage children. He had no criminal record, but was too old to qualify for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), which allows the children of undocumented immigrants to live in the U.S.

Now, amid divisive debate in the country over immigration and President Donald Trump's

calls for a border wall, Garcia remains stuck in Mexico, unable to even get an appointment with the U.S. Embassy's office in Juarez, the first step for possible readmission into the U.S.

"It's been tough," Garcia, 40, told the Free Press by phone from his home about one hour from Mexico City. "I'm still trying to adjust to living in a different country."

He tries to talk often with his wife and children by phone, but it's not the same as being with them. From helping them with their homework to driving them to school, he's missing out on their lives.

"It's been pretty stressful," he said of being separated from his 16-year-old daughter and 13-year-old son. "Even though you can talk on the phone, it's not the same as talking to them in person."

His wife, Cindy Garcia, is also struggling without her husband at home.

Born and raised in Detroit, Cindy, 46, married Jorge in 2002. She's on retired disability after going through two C-sections and years of heavy lifting at work in a truck plant in Dearborn.

"It's harder when you drop off the kids at school," Cindy said. "You're at home by yourself and your mind starts to wander. You get sad and depressed knowing your spouse is not there when you need the moral support."

Cindy and her two children, Soleil Garcia, 15, and Jorge Garcia Jr., 13, miss Jorge especially during special moments, like birthdays. Last year, Jorge missed his daughter's Quinceañera, the 15th birthday celebration popular among Mexican-Americans, which often includes a father-daughter dance.

"It's been rough mentally, knowing that he is in a country that he doesn't know," Cindy said. For the children, "it's been hard because they lack their father in their lives. They're used to doing their homework with him, and now their dad is not here with them. It's very hard."

Cindy and her two children are currently on a holiday vacation, staying with Jorge in Mexico at his place in Nicolás Romero. They were able to celebrate Christmas, New Year's Day, and Jorge's birthday, and they were there to mark the one-year anniversary of him being deported.

"It's a day that is going to be stuck in my mind," Jorge said. When he was deported on Jan. 15, 2018, "I didn't think I would be separated from my family ... this long."

Jorge has been fighting to obtain legal status since 2005, hiring attorneys and spending fees in an attempt to get U.S. citizenship. In the past, he was allowed by immigration authorities to remain in the U.S., but that changed as Trump cracked down on immigration. In November 2017, he was told he had to leave by Jan. 15.

Escorted by federal agents, he hugged his crying wife and children on Martin Luther King Jr. Day before boarding the gates in a moment captured by the Free Press that went viral.

Jorge's attorney, Marya Lorenzana-Miles, said they are waiting to get an appointment with the U.S. Embassy. After that, they then have to apply for a waiver before Jorge can be

readmitted. His wife has to show she is suffering from hardship in order for Jorge to get the waiver, she said.

Lorenzana-Miles said it's taking longer for deported immigrants to get appointments with embassies.

"The system does not work properly," she said. "The system does not care about the family. The system is creating bigger problem and more problems."

The State Department, which oversees foreign embassies, referred questions to the Department of Homeland Security, which did not return a request seeking comment on Jorge's case.

In a statement last year, the Detroit office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) said Garcia was "an unlawfully present citizen of Mexico" who "was ordered removed by an immigration judge in June 2006." ICE said it had previously "exercised prosecutorial discretion on multiple prior occasions" before deciding to deport him.

Immigrant advocates say that across the U.S., deportations are ripping apart families, leaving kids without parents to support them, both financially and emotionally. Jorge worked as a landscaper and was active in his children's lives.

"It's not just my kids, it's a lot of kids being affected," Cindy said. "They all need their parents, to have them back in their lives to give them guidance. They're teenagers, they need that extra help and guidance."

Jorge wants to work in Mexico, but he said it has been difficult dealing with the local bureaucracies that require paperwork and other hurdles. One of his cousins occasionally helps him get small jobs in construction when they are available, but most of the time, he's unable to find work.

"It's hard to get jobs," he said.

Jorge said he hopes that the U.S. can pass immigration reform that would give a path to citizenship to people like him with no criminal records brought to the U.S. as children.

For now, he waits, filling his time with calls to his wife and thinking of his children. He remembers how easy it was to get around Detroit, while in Mexico, "I don't even feel comfortable going out to places here by myself."

[NV] Man in custody for 4 'brutal' killings that shook Reno communities: Officials (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/21/2019 11:49 AM, Emily Shapiro, 2413K] Video: [HERE](#)

A man was taken into custody this weekend in connection with four "brutal" murders that shook communities in the Reno, Nevada, area, officials said.

Wilbur Ernesto Martinez-Guzman, 19, was apprehended Saturday, Washoe County Sheriff Darin Balaam said at a joint news conference Sunday.

"We feel confident we have evidence that will link him to all four homicides," Balaam said.

"The information we have now indicates there are no outstanding suspects."

Martinez-Guzman "was likely in the United States illegally and was detainable," immigration officers verified Saturday afternoon, said Carson City Sheriff Ken Furlong.

Martinez-Guzman, who has been living in Carson City for about a year, is being held in the Carson City Detention Facility on immigration charges and charges related to possession of stolen property, Balaam said.

Investigators will be seeking an arrest warrant for the murders in the coming days, Washoe County District Attorney Chris Hicks said at the news conference.

No motive has been released, and authorities added that Martinez-Guzman was not known to the Carson City Sheriff's Office.

All four victims were found shot dead in their homes, reported ABC Reno affiliate KOLO.

The first of the four victims, 56-year-old Connie Koontz, was killed Jan. 9 or 10, KOLO reported.

Sophia Renken, 74, was found dead Jan. 13, according to KOLO, and then Gerald David, 81, and his wife Sharon David, 80, were found shot dead in their home on Jan. 16.

"Our communities were shaken by these brutal murders," Hicks said.

From Jan. 10 to Saturday, Jan. 19, investigators were following up on tips and leads in the four killings, and by Friday, those leads allowed agencies to focus on several specific locations in Carson City, Furlong said.

Friday afternoon surveillance teams were sent to find Martinez-Guzman and anyone associated with him, and by 7 a.m. Saturday, according to Furlong, investigators found him at a home in east Carson City.

Authorities said family members of all four victims were at Sunday's news conference.

A relative of Gerald and Sharon David told reporters, "We'd like to express our sincere sympathies to the families of the other victims. They are in our prayers. We will continue to keep our eyes on God, trusting in him, as we walk through the aftermath of this tragedy."

[NV] Man linked to 4 killings suspected of being in US illegally (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 11:31 PM, Staff, 337K]

Authorities investigating four recent Nevada killings say murder charges are pending against a man suspected of being in the U.S. illegally.

Wilbur Martinez-Guzman, 20, was arrested Saturday in Carson City and is being held on possession of stolen property, burglary and immigration charges.

Authorities say they expect to file murder charges against him in the coming days in the shooting deaths of an elderly Reno couple and two women who lived near the town of

Gardnerville.

Carson City Sheriff Ken Furlong said at a Sunday news conference that federal immigration authorities told his office Martinez-Guzman had lived in Carson City for about a year and was in the country illegally.

Furlong said Monday he didn't know where Martinez-Guzman is originally from, and a message left with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was not immediately returned. President Donald Trump mentioned the killings Monday in a tweet making the case for his long-promised border wall.

Authorities say Connie Koontz, 56, was found dead Jan. 10 in her home in Gardnerville Ranchos, about 15 miles (24 kilometers) south of Carson City. Three days later, 74-year-old Sophia Renken was found dead in her home about a mile from where Koontz lived.

On Wednesday, the bodies of 81-year-old Gerald David, and his 80-year-old wife, Sharon, were found in their home on the southern edge of Reno, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) north of Carson City.

Furlong said the investigation is ongoing and it's too soon to comment on a possible motive. He said Martinez-Guzman didn't yet have an attorney who could comment on his behalf.

This story has been corrected to show Martinez-Guzman is 20 years old, not 19.

[Central America] These Central Americans have a second chance at asylum after being "unlawfully" deported. First ICE needs to bring them back (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/21/2019 1:05 PM, Kate Smith, 2890K]

After years of rape, beatings and persecution from notorious gangs in their home countries, 12 Central Americans fled to the United States last year to seek asylum. But then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions had just issued a policy change: Domestic and gang violence would not be grounds for asylum.

They sued, and in December, a federal judge said the policy change was "unlawful," and those individuals would get a second chance. But six of them had already been deported back to their native countries and, per the judge's orders, ICE agents are responsible for bringing them back. All of six remain in Central America, and the government blames the shutdown.

Among the plaintiffs still stuck in Central America is Nora, an El Salvadorian women who survived years of beatings and rape by her partner, a known gang member. When Nora attempted to end the relationship in May of last year, her partner's gang targeted her, threatening to rape her and kill her children.

"In May, when Nora was walking home with her three young children, [her partner's friend] pursued her down the street and told her that he knew she lived alone with her children and that he would come to her house at night to have sex with her," according to the original complaint against Sessions' new asylum policy. "He showed her a gun in his waistband and then looked to her son, indicating that he would kill them both if she did not submit to his demands."

Shortly after the threat, Nora and her son fled El Salvador, seeking asylum in the United States. Even though an immigration officer believed her story — hers is a typical experience for women in the Central America — she did not pass her "credible fear" interview because of the new policy.

Generally, asylum is available to anyone who fears persecution in their home country because of their affiliation with one or more of five accepted groups: race, religion, nationality, political opinion or particular social group.

In his December ruling on the lawsuit, the judge called the policy change "arbitrary, capricious, and in violation of the immigration laws insofar as those policies are applied in credible fear proceedings."

Of the 12 plaintiffs in the case, *Grace v. Whitacker*, six had already been deported to Central America, five had been released from detention centers as they awaited removal, and one remains detained, according to Jennifer Chang Newell, an attorney with the ACLU's immigrants' rights project who worked to strike down Sessions' asylum policy.

The judge ordered that the six who had been removed be brought back to the United States for immigration proceedings. But the partial government shutdown has restricted ICE agents' ability to follow through, according to a status report filed by the government on January 18.

"Due to the lapse in appropriations, the normal process for paying departure and passport fees has become complicated," the report said.

Some of the plaintiffs have had to pay their own travel document fees — despite the judge's order saying that would be the government's responsibility — and told that they would be reimbursed eventually, according to the report.

"There's been a few logistical issues getting them back, things like travel documents, passports, parental consent and travel fees," said Newell in a telephone interview with CBS News on Friday.

As they wait, six of the plaintiffs remain in the countries and situations that prompted them to seek asylum in the first place. Nora and her son "continue to fear for their lives," according to the original complaint.

Though the plaintiffs will get a second chance at asylum, thousands others won't.

"If someone has already been removed because of the Sessions decision and they weren't part of the lawsuit, they're just out of luck," said Anne Dutton, an attorney at the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies who also worked on the case, in a telephone interview with CBS News on Friday.

What exactly happens to the plaintiffs next isn't clear. The government is appealing the decision. And last week's status report said part of the delay in returning the asylum seekers is because the "parties do not agree on the process that will be applied to the Plaintiffs once they are returned to U.S. soil."

The government argues that upon their arrival in the United States, Nora, her son and the other four should be detained until their credible fear interview, which could take months to schedule. Lawyers representing the Central Americans, however, believe that they should be able to begin that process without being held in a detention center.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[Central America] Federal Judge orders 12 immigrants to be given a second chance at asylum (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/21/2019 6:24 PM, Staff, 2890K]
Judge orders ICE to return deported immigrants

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Citizenship and Immigration Services

300 DHS employees to return to work Tuesday (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/21/2019 3:57 PM, UPI, 2015K]

Some 300 furloughed Department of Homeland Security employees were notified Monday to return to work to lessen the impact of the ongoing partial government shutdown.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen approved U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' request for the workers to return to work Tuesday with pay, the Washington Examiner reported.

The workers, all from the agency's E-Verify office, will be reinstated to new USCIS positions that are seen as necessary until the shutdown ends.

The E-Verify office offers employers a voluntary service to confirm the employment eligibility of their workers, and it has been shuttered since the shutdown began on Dec. 22.

"USCIS is fortunate that our highly trained and experienced E-Verify staff are returning to help support the agency's mission in other capacities until their program is fully functional," USCIS spokesman Michael Bars said in a statement reported by the Washington Examiner.

The workers will receive their regular paycheck despite taking on new positions, CNN reported, adding that the employees will be trained on their new positions starting Tuesday and will return to their E-Verify office positions once the shutdown ends.

The 300 employees stationed nationwide will take on positions that are funded by fees.

The move by Homeland Security follows the U.S State Department informing overseas employees to return to work no later than Tuesday after it was able to secure funds for two weeks' salaries.

The shutdown started mid-December due to an impasse over funding for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. President Donald Trump is looking for some \$5.7 billion to construct the border wall that congressional Democrats oppose.

Nearly 300 federal workers recalled from furlough to perform different jobs (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/22/2019 1:02 AM, Geneva Sands and Nick Valencia, CNN, 5847K]

Nearly 300 furloughed Department of Homeland Security employees are being called back to work amid the longest government shutdown in history.

Those federal workers -- all from the E-Verify division of US Citizenship and Immigration Services -- will be back on the job and the payroll starting Tuesday morning until a deal is reached to fund the parts of the government that are closed.

However, the E-Verify employees won't be going back to their pre-shutdown jobs for now. Instead they will be required to take on other responsibilities within Citizenship and Immigration Services. Employees will be assigned to jobs that are fee-funded, according to Citizenship and Immigration Services spokesman Michael Bars.

Employees will receive the same pay rate they did before the shutdown.

Citizenship and Immigration Services and a portion of the Federal Emergency Management Agency make up the majority of the DHS workforce that continued to report to work and to be paid during the shutdown from other than annual appropriations, according to a DHS official.

The E-Verify staff was an exception. It has been in furlough status since the shutdown began on Dec. 22.

"As you can imagine we are thrilled to have them back in our ranks, however, we continue to support all government employees who are working without pay and those who are not working," said Danielle Spooner, the president of American Federation of Government Employees Council 119, which represents Citizenship and Immigration Services employees.

Notices were sent to the some 300 E-Verify staff stationed around the country informing them they had to report to work this week and would be reassigned to other jobs until the end of the shutdown.

According to a notice obtained by CNN, employees went back on the payroll on Sunday and are required to report to the office after the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

The measures were proposed by Citizenship and Immigration Services and approved by DHS to help mitigate the impact of the partial government shutdown, according to Bars.

"USCIS is fortunate that our highly trained and experienced E-Verify staff are returning to help support the agency's mission in other capacities until their program is fully functional. We're thankful for their patience and flexibility during this time," Bars said.

Employees will receive training for their new job functions and will return to their E-Verify jobs when a deal is reached to fund the government, according to USCIS.

Although E-Verify employees will be back at work, the program itself, which allows businesses to electronically confirm the employment eligibility of their workers, will remain dormant.

Due to "the continued lapse in appropriations, you are still prohibited from performing work in support of the E-Verify program. As such, you will perform exempt (fee-funded) activities in support of the USCIS mission," read a notification sent to employees.

Participating in the E-Verify program is voluntary for employers, except for some state requirements and some federal hiring, according to a union official who works for the program.

"E-Verify is shut down right now, so employers cannot verify eligibility of employees," said the official.

However, Citizenship and Immigration Services took a "number of steps to minimize the burden on both employees and employers," such as suspending the "three-day rule" for creating E-Verify cases, said Bars.

"Fidelity to a lawful workforce doesn't stop with the suspension of the E-Verify program," said Bars in a statement to CNN. "USCIS is committed to protecting U.S. workers, the integrity of our immigration system, and our laws."

Although it wasn't immediately clear what jobs the E-Verify staff would be doing, the work would likely be immigration-related, which is fee-funded at the agency, according to the union official.

At least one reassignment was to the Field Operations Directorate to help process Notices to Appear -- a document that instructs an individual to appear before an immigration judge, according to an employee notification obtained by CNN.

E-Verify employees had mixed reactions to the news that they would be called back to work.

"I am most upset about being recalled for a job I wasn't hired for and having to pay back the furlough assistance loan immediately without back pay from the two missed checks," an E-Verify employee told CNN.

The employee, who said they had faced financial hardship during the past month, was concerned that previously agreed-upon telework options may not be available in the new role.

"I won't know if we'll be allowed to telework, however, I believe our pay stays the same," the employee said.

Spooner told CNN she had heard concerns about telework and requiring staff to work different jobs, but that she also had heard about people glad to be going back to work and making a living.

"I would like to think that most are happy to get back to work and these are small issues in comparison to being forced to work and not getting paid. That causes a financial hardship," said Spooner.

The union official, who had to take on outside work during the furlough, said, "I don't ever look a gift horse in the mouth."

"I need to go back to work because I need to pay my bills. There are some questions that employees have. What are we going to be doing? Were we hired for that?" said the union official, who works for E-Verify outside of Washington.

When asked if most people were happy to go back to work, the official said, "Absolutely."

E-Verify employees can return to work despite partial government shutdown, DHS says (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/21/2019 8:00 PM, Samuel Chamberlain, 9216K]

Approximately 300 employees of the federal E-Verify program who have been furloughed due to the partial government shutdown will be able to return to work Tuesday, the Department of Homeland Security announced late Monday.

The returning employees will be assigned to work temporarily on non-E-Verify related tasks until Congress approves funding for the program, which is meant to prevent illegal immigrants from gaining legal employment by comparing their identifying information against data gathered by DHS or the Social Security Administration.

"[U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services] is fortunate that our highly trained and experienced E-Verify staff are returning to help support the agency's mission in other capacities until their program is fully functional," spokesman Michael Bars said in a statement. "We're thankful for their patience and flexibility during this time."

The employees will return to work exactly one month after the start of the partial government shutdown, which has resulted from a lapse in funding for nine of the 15 Cabinet-level departments, including DHS. The stalemate stems from President Trump's demand that Congress allocate \$5.7 billion to construct a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Congressional Democrats repeatedly have refused to allocate any new funding for the wall and have pushed legislation that would provide an additional \$1.3 billion for border security — including 75 more immigration judges and infrastructure improvements — but no funding for the wall.

Over the weekend, Trump offered to provide temporary protections for some immigrants in exchange for wall funding, an idea that Democrats roundly rejected.

An estimated 460,000 federal employees have been working without pay, including Transportation Security Administration screeners at airports. Last week, the Internal Revenue Service announced that it had recalled approximately 46,000 furloughed employees to assist in processing tax returns and refunds.

Last week, Trump signed legislation guaranteeing back pay for federal workers who have been furloughed or forced to work without pay during the partial shutdown.

DHS reinstating 300 furloughed employees to carry out critical tasks (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/21/2019 8:00 PM, Anna Giaritelli, 629K]

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen has approved a request by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to reinstate 300 furloughed employees, a senior DHS official told the Washington Examiner.

The personnel have been out of work 30 days as a result of the partial government shutdown but will head back to the office Tuesday and will be paid for their work, the official said. Employees of the Immigration Records and Identity Services Directorate and other components of USCIS were notified Monday that they will be required to return to work in a day.

The group of reinstated personnel are from the agency's E-Verify office, which oversees a program that companies can use to validate a job applicant's legal ability to work in the country.

However, employees will not be going back to their normal jobs. All 300 workers will be trained starting Tuesday and then assigned to other USCIS jobs that have been deemed critical. They will continue in these new roles, the nature of which the official did not specify, until the shutdown concludes.

"USCIS is fortunate that our highly trained and experienced E-Verify staff are returning to help support the agency's mission in other capacities until their program is fully functional. We're thankful for their patience and flexibility during this time," USCIS spokesman Michael Bars said in a statement.

USCIS will pay the employees their normal pay despite doing different jobs for an undisclosed length of time.

The initiative is being funded with exam fees. Bars did not share the costs involved of bringing hundreds of employees back to work.

E-Verify was suspended due to the shutdown, but those filling out paperwork to start jobs are still required to fill out the Employment Eligibility Verification, or I-9, form.

Homeland Security citizenship office to bring back workers, with pay, during shutdown (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/21/2019 8:12 PM, Stephen Dinan, 527K]

E-Verify remains shut down due to lack of congressional appropriations

Homeland Security has found a way to bring back about 300 people who were furloughed under the government shutdown, finding them alternate jobs they can do until the funding crisis is over.

The employees work at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services on the E-Verify program, which allows businesses to check their workers' immigration status.

While most of USCIS is funded by fees and has remained open despite the funding lapse, E-Verify is paid for out of congressional appropriations, so when Homeland Security's money lapsed the program went offline and the workers were furloughed.

E-Verify will still be shut down, but the workers can come back to help out on other USCIS

missions, the agency said.

"USCIS is fortunate that our highly trained and experienced E-Verify staff are returning to help support the agency's mission in other capacities until their program is fully functional," said agency spokesman Michael Bars.

The employees are back on the payroll as of Tuesday and will be trained in their new temporary tasks.

E-Verify is voluntary for most of the country, though federal rules make it mandatory for some government contractors, and some states have made use of the program mandatory for businesses within their boundaries.

The program is a more thorough check of workers' status than the current I-9 forms, which most businesses use, but which are easily defrauded.

Some Democrats have chided President Trump for the shutdown curtailing E-Verify, saying while he's fighting for a border wall a more effective tool to combat illegal immigration has gone dark.

Administration officials say that even without E-Verify, businesses can still use the I-9 system.

In the meantime, businesses and employees alike are freed from deadlines that apply to E-Verify use.

Trump again endorses immigration changes for seasonal migrant farm workers (Roll Call)

[Roll Call](#) [1/18/2019 9:45 AM, John T. Bennett, 90K]

For the third time this week, President Donald Trump on Friday signaled support for immigration policy changes that would make it easier for seasonal farm workers to enter the United States.

Trump pleaded in a Friday morning tweet for someone to inform Speaker Nancy Pelosi that "her 'big donors' in wine country that people working on farms (grapes) will have easy access in!"

That came after he floated on Monday what his aides have called for in recent months, a rare break with his own hardline immigration stance in remarks to a farmers group. In that speech, the president said he wants to "actually make it easier for them to help the farmers because you need these people."

"A lot of people don't understand this. You need people to help you with the farms," he said Monday. "I'm not going to rule that out."

The president repeated a version of that during Thursday remarks at the Pentagon.

His endorsement of such changes could be a fig leaf to Democrats and part of any potential eventual deal to end the partial government shutdown that is in its 28th day. Talks remain stalled, however, as the sides are far apart on Trump's proposed border barrier.

Self-interest almost might be in play. Trump owns a winery in Virginia, and has sought workers through the seasonal farmworker program run by the Labor Department, according to past reports.

Democrats propose legal status for undocumented immigrant farmworkers (Roll Call)

[Roll Call](#) [1/18/2019 4:22 PM, Ellyn Ferguson, 90K]

Legislation would protect workers from deportation, ease labor shortages, proponents say

Two California Democrats filed legislation Thursday that would give undocumented immigrant farmworkers and their families a path to legal resident status and possibly U.S. citizenship.

The legislation by Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Rep. Zoe Lofgren is designed to ease agricultural worker shortages and protect undocumented workers already in the United States from deportation. The bills come as the nation grapples with an extended partial government shutdown fueled by an impasse between President Donald Trump and congressional Democrats over funding for a border wall and broader differences over immigration policies.

The companion Senate and House bills revive proposals by Feinstein in prior Congresses to allow immigrant farmworkers to apply for so-called blue cards from the Department of Homeland Security, which would provide temporary legal status for those who qualify. Applicants would have to undergo background checks, have no criminal records, and pay federal taxes, immigration processing fees and \$100 penalty fee to DHS.

The department could begin to adjust blue card workers to lawful permanent residence five years after the law takes effect. Eligible workers would have to have performed either 100 days of agricultural work each year for five years or 150 days of such work each year for three years.

Feinstein and Lofgren said the legislation would address a key labor issue for California and other states with produce and dairy operations that rely heavily on a pool of immigrant workers that is largely undocumented.

Some estimates put the share of agricultural workers in the United States illegally as high as 75 percent. Feinstein's bill has 11 co-sponsors, all Democrats, and Lofgren's bill has 58 co-sponsors, all Democrats.

"By protecting farmworkers from deportation, our bill would ensure that hardworking immigrants don't live in fear and that California's agriculture industry has the workforce it needs to succeed," Feinstein said in a statement. "Despite their significant contributions to California's economy and communities, farmworkers are a priority for deportation under the Trump administration's policies."

Lofgren said the legislation would allow farmworkers to focus on work and their families rather than fearing deportation.

"With this legislation, farmworkers will be able to improve their wages and working conditions, resulting in a more stable farm labor force and greater food safety and security

to the benefit of American employers, workers, and consumers," she said in a statement.

Jason Resnick, vice president and general counsel for Western Growers, called the legislation "a step in the right direction" although it is unclear how it will fare in a divided Congress.

Resnick said a broader revamping of immigration policy by Congress that makes changes to the H-2A visa temporary guest worker program would also help to address farmers' labor problems. The Labor Department issues H-2A visas for foreign agricultural workers hired by farmers to do seasonal work, such as harvesting crops.

Farmers complain the program is costly and cumbersome while farmworker groups say it provides inadequate pay and protection for the temporary workers.

Trump alluded to the program during a Jan. 14 speech to the American Farm Bureau Federation convention.

"You know, when we have proper security, people aren't going to come, except for the people we want to come because we want to take people in to help our farmers, et cetera," the president said. "We're going to make that actually easier for them — to help the farmers. Because you need these people."

He provided no specifics.

Trump has since repeated versions of those remarks, first on Thursday at the Pentagon and then in a tweet Friday, in which he signaled support for immigration policy changes that would make it easier for seasonal farm workers to enter the United States.

"Could somebody please explain to Nancy [Pelosi] & her 'big donors' in wine country that people working on farms (grapes) will have easy access in!" the president said on Twitter.

Michigan Sen. Debbie Stabenow, the top Agriculture Committee Democrat, said she would like to see Congress work on a comprehensive immigration bill that would address agriculture's needs as well as other issues. The Senate passed a comprehensive bill in 2013, but the House at the time opted for a more piecemeal approach.

"The real answer is and has always been a comprehensive immigration bill," Stabenow said. "It's certainly something we've not been able to have a discussion on in the last two years."

H-2B visas need fixing, employers and immigration attorneys say (Northern Public Radio)

[Northern Public Radio](#) [1/18/2019 5:36 PM, Andy Uhler, 3K]

You've probably heard of H-1B visas. Those are the ones lots of tech firms use to bring in highly skilled workers from countries like India. Lesser-known but still vital to the economy are visas like the H-2A. Those are temporary, seasonal visas handed out to the people who help grow and harvest our food. Then there are H-2Bs, also temporary and seasonal, but not farm-related. They're for the workers who staff tourist hotels, ski resorts or who do landscaping and other jobs. Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta tells the Wall Street Journal that H-2B visas are broken and need fixing. He said for one thing, there's too much of a

rush to apply at the beginning of the year. Selection might need to be random, rather than first-come, first-served. And, he said, some states with a lot of seasonal employment may need higher caps. Many employers and immigration attorneys would also like to see H-2B changes.

[Editorial note: consult audio at source link]

Supreme Court Hints It Won't Hear Trump's DACA Appeal This Term (Bloomberg)
[Bloomberg](#) [1/18/2019 5:45 PM, Greg Stohr, 5702K]

The U.S. Supreme Court took no action Friday on President Donald Trump's bid to end deportation protections for hundreds of thousands of young undocumented immigrants, suggesting the program may stay in place at least until the end of this year.

Under the court's usual practices, Friday was the last day to accept an appeal and schedule the case for the last week of arguments in late April. The court's current term runs through June, and the next one starts in October.

The administration is challenging rulings that are blocking Trump from rescinding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA. Lower court judges have said the administration's explanation -- that DACA is illegal -- isn't adequate.

A decision not to hear the case this term would be a blow to the administration, which had contended the case was especially urgent. The government took the unusual step of turning to the Supreme Court even before a federal appeals court had ruled. The administration said it wanted a "timely and definitive resolution of the dispute this term."

The San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals later ruled against the administration, saying it acted based on a faulty view of the law. The panel left open the possibility the administration could end the policy for other reasons.

DACA, begun under President Barack Obama, protects undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children. Dreamers, as the applicants are known, are shielded from deportation and allowed to apply for work permits.

DACA briefly became part of the debate over how to end the partial federal government shutdown. Some lawmakers floated the possibility of a compromise that would protect DACA while providing money for a border wall. Vice President Mike Pence rejected the idea, and Trump said he wants the Supreme Court to rule before he considers such a deal.

The Supreme Court is scheduled to issue a list of orders Tuesday. The court could reject the administration's appeals or agree to hear arguments in the term that starts in October.

The Supreme Court also took no action Friday on a list of other major cases, suggesting the justices will take a low profile in Justice Brett Kavanaugh's first term. Those cases include a Trump administration bid to ban most transgender people from serving in the military and appeals testing whether federal law bars job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

The court Friday also scrapped plans for a Feb. 19 argument involving the Trump administration's plan to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census.

The court, however, could reschedule the showdown for later this term to consider a trial judge's ruling this week barring the Commerce Department from adding the question. The Feb. 19 argument had been designed to tackle a preliminary issue.

Supreme Court Inaction Suggests DACA Safe for Another Year (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [1/18/2019 5:02 PM, Mark Sherman, AP, 2894K]

The Obama-era program that shields young immigrants from deportation and that President Donald Trump has sought to end seems likely to survive for at least another year.

That's because the Supreme Court took no action Friday on the Trump administration's request to decide by early summer whether Trump's bid to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program was legal. The program has been protected by several federal courts.

Based on the high court's usual practices, the earliest the justices would hear arguments in the case would be this fall, if they decide to hear the case at all. If arguments take place in October, a decision would not be likely before 2020, when it could affect the presidential campaign.

The administration "never asked for a stay of the rulings below which to us indicated it has known all along that there's no real rush to resolve these important issues," said Theodore Boutros Jr., a lawyer in Los Angeles who represents some young immigrants who challenged the administration's plans.

Trump and Congress could take the issue out of the court's hands altogether if they strike a deal on the program known as DACA, perhaps even in negotiations to end the partial government shutdown.

The immigration case is among several high-profile issues the court has apparently decided not to add to its calendar for decision by late June. Other pending appeals involve Indiana abortion restrictions, whether the main federal employment discrimination law protects LGBT people and Trump's policy to limit military service by transgender people. The court also has yet to act on a separate administration request to let the transgender policy take effect, even before the case is decided.

On immigration, the administration sought to end DACA in 2017, but federal courts in California, New York and Washington, DC, have prevented it from doing so. A federal judge in Texas has declared the program is illegal, but refused to order it halted.

DACA has protected about 700,000 people who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children or came with families that overstayed visas.

The Obama administration created the DACA program in 2012 to provide work permits and protection from deportation to people who, in many cases, have no memory of any home other than the United States.

The Trump administration has said it moved to end the program under the threat of a lawsuit from Texas and other states, raising the prospect of a chaotic end.

Then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions determined DACA to be unlawful because President Barack Obama did not have the authority to adopt it in the first place. Sessions cited a 2015 ruling by the federal appeals court in New Orleans that blocked a separate immigration policy implemented by Obama and the expansion of the DACA program.

Texas and other Republican-led states eventually did sue and won a partial victory in a federal court in Texas. Civil rights groups, advocates for immigrants and Democratic-led states all have sued to prevent the end of the program.

In November, a three-judge panel of the federal appeals court in San Francisco ruled that the administration decision to end DACA was arbitrary and capricious.

The appeals court noted that the federal government has a long and well-established history of using its discretion not to enforce immigration law against certain categories of people.

While the federal government might be able to end DACA for policy reasons under its own discretion, it can't do so based on Sessions' faulty belief that the program exceeds federal authority, the court held.

The administration has twice tried to sidestep the appeals courts and win a swift ruling by the Supreme Court. The justices rejected a first attempt last year as premature. In taking no action so far on the second request, the high court is signaling that it considers the issue less urgent than the administration does.

Supreme Court silent on 'Dreamers' appeal, other big cases (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/18/2019 5:37 PM, Lawrence Hurley]

It is looking increasingly likely that the U.S. Supreme Court will not hear Trump administration appeals involving the "Dreamers" immigrants, transgender troops and gay rights during its current term, meaning rulings in these major cases may not come until next year.

With time running out for the justices to take cases to decide in their current term that ends in June, they took no action on Friday in those high-profile appeals. If they eventually agree to hear the cases but not until the nine-month term that begins in October, chances of rulings being issued this year are slim, a blow to President Donald Trump.

Under the court's normal procedure, Friday was the last day the court would add new cases to be decided in its current term. The last arguments of the term typically are held in April. The court could next act on whether to hear pending appeals on Tuesday.

The administration in several big cases has tried to get appeals to the Supreme Court as quickly as possible, putting its faith in a bench with two Trump appointees and a 5-4 conservative majority.

Appeals remain pending before the court on Republican Trump's 2017 move, blocked by lower courts, to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program implemented in 2012 by his Democratic predecessor Barack Obama.

DACA protects about 700,000 immigrants, often called "Dreamers" based on the name of legislation that failed to pass Congress, from deportation and provides them work permits, though not a path to citizenship. Most of the "Dreamers" are Hispanic young adults.

With the lower courts ruling against the administration and the high court not yet taking action, DACA remains in place.

The justices also have not acted on whether to hear Trump's bid to revive his restrictions on transgender troops in the military, also blocked by lower courts, and three related cases on whether gay and transgender people are protected under a federal law that bars sex discrimination in the workplace.

The employment cases focus on whether gay and transgender people are covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bars employers from discriminating against employees on the basis of sex as well as race, color, national origin and religion.

The court on Friday canceled arguments that had been scheduled for next month in the administration's appeal relating to its contentious move to add a citizenship question to the 2020 U.S. census.

The administration had challenged the scope of evidence that U.S. District Judge Jesse Furman in Manhattan could use in considering his decision in a lawsuit filed by 18 U.S. states, 15 cities and various civil rights groups challenging the legality of the citizenship question.

The justices disclosed the cancellation of the Feb. 19 arguments in a notation on the court docket a day after the challengers, including New York state, filed court papers calling the administration's appeal moot because Furman issued his final decision this week invalidating the census question.

The Justice Department on Thursday said it would appeal Furman's ruling and it could seek to fast-track the case to the Supreme Court, but by Friday had not yet filed anything with the justices.

Court inaction implies 'Dreamers' safe for another year (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/18/2019 3:02 PM, Mark Sherman, AP, 1773K]

The Obama-era program that shields young immigrants from deportation and that President Trump has sought to end seems likely to survive for at least another year.

That's because the Supreme Court took no action Friday on the Trump administration's request to decide by early summer whether Trump's bid to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program was legal. The program has been protected by several federal courts.

Based on the high court's usual practices, the earliest the justices would hear arguments in the case would be this fall, if they decide to hear the case at all. If arguments take place in October, a decision would not be likely before 2020, when it could affect the presidential campaign.

The administration "never asked for a stay of the rulings below which to us indicated it has

known all along that there's no real rush to resolve these important issues," said Theodore Boutsos Jr., a lawyer in Los Angeles who represents some young immigrants who challenged the administration's plans.

Trump and Congress could take the issue out of the court's hands altogether if they strike a deal on the program known as DACA, perhaps even in negotiations to end the partial government shutdown.

The administration sought to end DACA in 2017, but federal courts in California, New York and Washington, D.C., have prevented it from doing so. A federal judge in Texas has declared the program is illegal, but refused to order it halted.

DACA has protected about 700,000 people who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children or came with families that overstayed visas. The Obama administration created the DACA program in 2012 to provide work permits and protection from deportation to people who, in many cases, have no memory of any home other than the United States.

Former Attorney General Jeff Sessions determined DACA to be unlawful because President Barack Obama did not have the authority to adopt it in the first place. Sessions cited a 2015 ruling by the federal appeals court in New Orleans that blocked a separate immigration policy implemented by Obama and the expansion of the DACA program.

Civil rights groups, advocates for immigrants and Democratic-led states all have sued to prevent the end of the program.

[Philippines] Philippines May Appeal Trump's Ban on Temporary U.S. Work Visas (Bloomberg)

[Bloomberg](#) [1/22/2019 3:17 AM, Cecilia Yap and Andree Calanzo, 5702K]

The Philippines wants more information on the Trump administration's move to stop issuing temporary worker visas to Filipinos, and may appeal the decision if it's found without basis.

The Southeast Asian nation will look for other countries where its citizens can work should the U.S. Department of Homeland Security pursue its ban on temporary worker visas for Filipinos, President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman Salvador Panelo said Tuesday.

"We need to know the basis of this decision," Panelo said during a televised briefing. "And if we see that there's none, we will ask for a reconsideration."

The Philippine Foreign Affairs Department, in a separate statement, reminded its citizens to respect U.S. immigration rules, and expressed openness to work with American authorities to address the issue.

The U.S. agency imposed the ban starting Jan. 19, saying in a notification last week that many Philippine citizens don't comply with the terms of the visas. Nearly 40 percent of Filipinos who received an H-2B visa overstayed, it said.

The H-2B visas allow a foreign worker to come temporarily to the U.S. for non-agricultural services on a seasonal basis. The Philippines accounted for 767 H-2B visas in fiscal year 2017, the most in Asia but less than 1 percent of the total given out worldwide, according to State Department statistics.

The U.S. Embassy in Manila also issues the greatest number of T-derivative visas, which are reserved for family members of victims of severe forms of human trafficking, the Homeland Security Department said. The embassy in Manila issued about 40 percent of total T-derivative visas issued worldwide from 2014 to 2016, and many of the victims were trafficked on H-2B visas, it said.

The Department of Homeland Security and Department of State "are concerned about the high volume of trafficking victims from the Philippines who were originally issued H-2B visas and the potential that continued H-2B visa issuance may encourage or serve as an avenue for future human trafficking," it said. The same ban was also imposed on Ethiopia and the Dominican Republic.

The move to ban Philippine temporary workers caused concern in Guam, an American territory. Governor Lou Leon Guerrero will restate Guam's continued need for skilled labor from the Philippines for its military and civilian construction projects, Pacific Daily News reported.

Customs and Border Protection

Sending troops to border is legal (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/21/2019 10:00 AM, Joseph Moreno, 3038K]

Few issues inspire more passion than that of immigration policy, particularly as the federal government remains paralyzed while our leaders in Washington fight over border wall and border security funding. These emotions have been further inflamed by the Trump administration recently using the United States military to help secure the southern border, a move which some have criticized as both unnecessary and improper as a matter of law. There are certainly policy and practical arguments to be made as to why military force is not the most effective way to enforce our immigration laws. However, from a strictly legal perspective, the current use of troops at the border is likely to withstand judicial scrutiny if challenged in court.

This began in November, at the request of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), President Trump approved the deployment by the Department of Defense (DoD) of roughly 3,000 National Guard and active component troops to the border between the United States and Mexico for 45 days. Their initial mission was to provide transportation, engineering, logistics, and medical support for Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents as they performed their law enforcement duties.

This was later broadened to include protecting CBP personnel which could include a show of force, crowd control, temporary detention, and searches of individuals who posed a threat to federal agents. However, the DoD made clear in defining the mission parameters that military personnel would not perform law enforcement-type functions such as arrests and searches and seizures. The mission was later extended to January 31 this year and will possibly be extended further.

There is in fact precedent for doing this. The last two administrations, both Democrat and Republican, also utilized the military at the southern border. In 2010, President Obama authorized approximately 1,200 troops for a year to support Operation Phalanx, whose

purpose was to provide transportation and logistical support to CBP. Prior to that, in 2006, the Bush Administration similarly deployed approximately 6,000 troops to the border for Operation Jump Start where they remained for two years in a similar capacity. In each case, forces were activated from the Army National Guard and deployed to various locations along the border between the United States and Mexico.

While federal law prohibits the military from conducting law enforcement activities, a number of exceptions and caveats that are frequently overlooked by critics of the current deployment. The Posse Comitatus Act (PCA), which is a post-Civil War criminal statute enacted in 1878, prohibits active duty Army and Air Force troops from providing direct assistance in "executing" the domestic laws of the United States. This refers to such activities as making arrests, searching for and seizing property, and investigating criminal activity. These are exactly the types of activities which the White House and the DoD prohibit all troops, not just at the border, from engaging in. However, the PCA does not prohibit indirect law enforcement assistance such as information sharing, training, and the use of certain military equipment and facilities.

In addition, the PCA does not apply to the Navy or the Marine Corps, and while the DoD has enacted a policy that applies the restrictions to the other service branches such policy does not have the force of law and could be changed going forward. The PCA also does not apply to the use of the Coast Guard, or to National Guard troops when under state control which is often the case. As a result, the DoD has a number of resources at its disposal that allow it to legally utilize military resources at the border despite the limitations thought to be imposed by the PCA.

Moreover, the Supreme Court has recognized that a president has the inherent authority under Article II of the Constitution to protect federal functions, property, and personnel. This is the authority that President Trump has asserted in his deployment of troops whose mission is not only to provide certain indirect law enforcement assistance to CBP agents but also to use force if necessary to protect them. This constitutional authority vested in the president is not restricted by the PCA.

Reasonable individuals can disagree on whether it makes sense to use the military to help secure the nation's borders. Since the September 11 attacks, the number of CBP agents has grown from 9,000 to nearly 21,000 and still they struggle to police a porous border that spans over 1,900 miles across four states. The military has immense resources and personnel that can be invaluable in supporting the national security goal of keeping our nation secure.

On the other hand, it is hard to deny that a military presence on the border is expensive, increases the potential for accidental deadly force against civilians, and adds more emotion to an already volatile situation with international implications. But regardless of where you come down policy wise and politically on the issue, the current deployment and use of military troops on the southern border likely is legal.

Border Patrol official on apprehensions spike... (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/20/2019 8:10 PM, Staff, 2890K]

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Mexican drug cartel leader indicted two decades ago admits transporting drugs to the U.S. (Los Angeles Times)

[Los Angeles Times](#) [1/18/2019 10:55 AM, Alejandra Reyes-Velarde, 3575K]

A leader in a Mexican drug cartel pleaded guilty Thursday to transporting cocaine and other narcotics to the U.S. and laundering drug proceeds, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Juan Jose Alvarez-Tostado Galvan, also known as "El Compadre," admitted that in his role as a financial manager in the Juarez cartel, he collected at least \$24 million in narcotics proceeds in Chicago, prosecutors said.

Alvarez-Tostado obtained large quantities of cocaine from Colombia and transported it to various locations in the U.S. through Mexico, according to his plea agreement. Once distributed, he admitted to collecting and laundering the drug proceeds.

He was indicted in 1998 along with more than 100 other people and three major Mexican banks. He was arrested in Mexico in 2005 and charged with operating a continuing criminal enterprise, money laundering and conspiracy. He was extradited to the U.S. in 2018.

His capture was part of a Los Angeles-based investigation — Operation Casablanca — into drug money laundering by Mexican banks that was launched in 1995. Undercover officers from what was then the U.S. Customs Service set up shop in an L.A. warehouse and posed as freelance money launderers seeking assignments from Mexican drug dealers and bankers.

The 1998 indictment alleged Alvarez-Tostado collected more than \$40 million from narcotics sales in the U.S. and transferred the money into Mexican bank accounts on behalf of Amado Carrillo Fuentes, the reputed chief of the Juarez cartel until his death in 1997 during plastic surgery.

According to his plea agreement, Alvarez-Tostado supervised the collection and laundering of drug proceeds from distributors in the U.S. The money was transferred to his suppliers in Colombia, often through wire transfers to U.S. bank accounts he controlled.

A co-defendant, Victor Manuel Alcala-Navarro, directed undercover officers based in Santa Fe Springs to deliver money directly to them in Mexico and the U.S, according to the plea agreement. Alcala-Navarro and Alvarez-Tostado also directed the undercover officials to deliver proceeds to their cocaine suppliers in Colombia.

The drug proceeds were used to pay expenses of the drug trafficking enterprise and finance large shipments of drugs to the U.S.

Alvarez-Tostado's sentencing is scheduled for March 28, according to the U.S. attorney's office. Prosecutors are seeking a sentence of 18 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine set by the court.

This is how much of the border wall has been built so far (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/19/2019 3:50 PM, Catherine E. Shoichet and Geneva Sands, CNN, 5847K]

Nearly two years into Donald Trump's presidency, the border wall that was a signature promise of his campaign hasn't been built.

And even if he gets all the money he wants from Congress this year, the wall won't be anywhere near finished.

Contractors have replaced miles of dilapidated fencing with more modern alternatives, but they haven't built barriers anywhere they didn't exist already.

That could soon change. Construction is scheduled to start in February on a project that will bring 14 miles of new border wall to the Rio Grande Valley.

Meanwhile, Trump and Congress are locked in a shutdown stalemate over funding for more wall construction. Officials say the \$5.7 billion the administration is asking for would cover the cost of more than 200 miles of new and replacement wall.

But that would still leave most of the border without a wall.

Here's a look at what's already at the border, what construction is planned and what the Trump administration wants to build:

Man-made barriers cover only about a third of the border.

The US-Mexico border stretches for 1,954 miles. Currently, physical barriers cover 654 of those miles, according to US Customs and Border Protection.

What's known as vehicle fencing covers 280 miles. This is fencing that's low to the ground. It would stop a car, but people can easily step over it.

What's known as pedestrian fencing covers some 374 miles. This is taller and designed to block people from crossing on foot.

Some border fencing is made from helicopter landing mats.

There are several pedestrian fence designs in place at different points along the border.

Some areas contain layers of barriers, referred to as primary, secondary and sometimes tertiary fences. Currently about 37 miles of the border have secondary pedestrian barriers, according to CBP.

Much of the older fencing is made from repurposed Vietnam War-era helicopter landing mats. Newer fencing generally consists of 18- to 30-foot-tall steel bollards.

Trump now says his 'big, beautiful wall' can be made of steel.

Yes, the President talked a lot about building a concrete wall on the campaign trail. But officials have said for a while that concrete is not the only option. When requesting bids for prototype designs back in March 2017, the focus was on making the wall "physically imposing."

In recent weeks, the President has expressed a greater interest in a barrier made of steel slats. It's not clear exactly what that means; some have pointed out it sounds a lot like the steel bollard fencing that's already in place at some points along the border -- which experts

have long said would be the better option.

The wall prototypes have gone by the wayside.

As you might recall, construction firms built eight wall prototypes at the border -- four designed to be 30-foot concrete walls, four made of other materials -- that were then subjected to testing.

Some reports have suggested they didn't do that well in tests conducted by breaching experts, though the results haven't been made public.

Customs and Border Protection officials have sidestepped questions about what exactly the tests revealed. But they've said they were helpful in informing plans for new and replacement fencing that's currently being installed.

The idea of border barriers didn't start with Trump.

It's true that Trump has placed the idea of a border wall front and center ever since he first set foot on the campaign trail, but the idea of building barriers along the US-Mexico border took root long before he took office.

Construction of the federally funded border fence as we know it began with a 14-mile stretch near San Diego. Construction started during George H.W. Bush's presidency and continued into Bill Clinton's first term. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act, which Clinton signed into law in 1996, authorized the fortification of that fencing.

And the Secure Fence Act, passed during President George W. Bush's administration, authorized the construction of hundreds of miles of additional fencing. Notably, that measure also passed with support from then-Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.

Since 2007, CBP says it's spent about \$2.3 billion on fencing and related infrastructure along the US-Mexico border.

Contractors are already working on hundreds of miles of construction.

A number of contracts have been awarded since Trump took office, funded by appropriations from Congress for the 2017 and 2018 fiscal years.

Among them: Nearly \$300 million to build 40 miles of replacement structures in multiple locations. These consist of both pedestrian walls and vehicle barriers. As of December 21, 35 of those 40 miles had been completed, according to Andrew Meehan, CBP's assistant commissioner for public affairs.

Appropriations last year provided \$1.375 billion in funding to build 82 miles of new and replacement barriers in multiple locations across the border, Meehan said. Of that funding, \$700 million has gone to contracts for construction of new and replacement wall systems, he said, and another \$300 million "is ready to award as soon as the government reopens." The rest of the money, Meehan said, "supports CBP project management to include real estate, environmental, legal and program management support and will be obligated over

the duration of the projects."

Soon we're actually going to see a wall built in a new section of the border.

Yes, that's the plan. Construction is expected to begin in February on 14 new miles in the Rio Grande Valley.

Called a levee wall system, the project includes the construction of a reinforced concrete levee wall, 18-foot-tall steel bollards installed on top of the concrete wall, and vegetation removal along a 150-foot enforcement zone. The price tag: \$312 million.

The administration wants \$5.7 billion to pay for 234 miles of construction.

Officials say the construction starting in February is only part of the picture. Funding from fiscal year 2018, they say, also covers the cost of building 70 more miles of barriers -- about 57 miles of which is replacement fencing.

And if the Trump administration's proposal for \$5.7 billion more for a border wall is approved, officials say they'll be able to build 234 miles of new and replacement barriers -- about 100 miles of which will cover parts of the border that didn't have a barrier before.

But given that a partial government shutdown over the wall is already in its fifth week, whether that work will happen -- and exactly what will happen next -- is anybody's guess.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Border wall won't stop migrants but will increase use of smugglers (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 8:00 AM, Kimberly Mehlman-Orozco, 3038K]

Earlier this month, President Donald Trump held a White House press briefing to make a case for his southern border wall with a statement from Brandon Judd, president of the National Border Patrol Council. As a border patrol agent for 21 years, Mr. Judd told the press, "I can personally tell you ... physical barriers ... walls actually work." In support of his assertion, he claimed that areas with physical barriers had exponential decreases in "illegal immigration."

What Mr. Judd neglected to mention is that Customs and Border Protection measures undocumented migration through the proxy of apprehensions. This is problematic because most immigration scholars regard border apprehensions as a highly imperfect statistical proxy for the volume of undocumented migration. Basically, it isn't a good measure.

Despite Mr. Judd's anecdotal beliefs, the reality is that the border wall will not stop undocumented migration. As an expert in human trafficking and smuggling, I know the evidence suggests it will simply increase the use and price of smugglers.

Prior to 2006, there were only 83 miles of existing fence or wall along the United States-Mexico border. By 2009, fencing and physical barriers increased to cover 580 miles of the southern border. That is an astounding 598 percent expansion in inanimate border barriers in a relatively short period of time. At present, there are 654 miles of border fencing.

Customs and Border Protection leaders such as Mr. Judd believe that the construction of

the border wall has been successful in deterring undocumented migration because while border apprehensions fairly steadily increased from 1990 to 2000, after the border wall was expanded, border apprehensions reached a 10-year low in 2011 with only 327,577 apprehensions along the Southwest border.

Although some attribute the substantial decrease in apprehensions to deterrence from the increased border security and construction of massive border barriers, others contend that this same evidence suggests that, in the wake of increased border security, undocumented migrants may be evading detection through the increased use of smugglers.

The process of undocumented migration to the United States has changed since the 1990s as border enforcement was heightened. Increased border enforcement has been linked to the rising use and cost of smugglers by undocumented migrants.

However, this increase is not mirrored by the reported use of smugglers among the apprehended undocumented migrant population. This is because smuggled undocumented migrants are evading detection more often than non-smuggled undocumented migrants. In addition, as Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) recently pointed out, since 2007 the majority of unauthorized immigrants enter the United States not through undocumented border crossings, but as visa overstays.

Along with the increase in demand for smugglers that has coincided with the contemporary tightening of our southern border, there has been an increase in cost. While smuggling costs in 1980-1981 ranged from \$150 to \$250 for a coyote, costs increased to \$700 in 1996 and ranged from between \$5,000 to \$10,000 in 2000. According to the Department of Homeland Security ENFORCE data, the average annual growth of real smuggling costs was 5.3 percent from 2000-2006. The cost is much lower for apprehended undocumented migrants when compared to data on smuggler cost for not apprehended undocumented migrants. This suggests that those who are smuggled successfully pay larger sums than those who are not.

Data from the Mexican Migration Project suggest that undocumented migrants from Mexico are less likely to use a smuggler (23.2 percent) than undocumented migrants from other countries and on average pay less (mean \$558). However, like other undocumented migrants, Mexican undocumented migrants who used a smuggler are less likely to be apprehended by Customs and Border Protection.

Constructing a border wall has not been empirically shown to deter undocumented migration; instead, it displaces crossing methods and increases the use and cost of smugglers. This is dangerous because smugglers have been known to physically and sexually abuse undocumented migrants and even engage in human trafficking.

Given the nexus between human smuggling and human trafficking, legislators should focus on reducing undocumented migrants' reliance on human smugglers. International migration experts suggest this is an opportune time to shift from a policy of immigration suppression to one of immigration management. Facilitating legal migration would decrease the reliance on smugglers, and granting undocumented migrants legal status likely would increase the rates of return migration.

Ultimately, it is important for Americans to understand that border walls keep undocumented

migrants in, not out, and increase the demand for smugglers and their associated criminal networks.

Some migrants say a wall wouldn't stop them from entering the US, but Customs and Border Protection says it's a key part of the solution (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/20/2019 10:21 AM, Quinn Scanlan, Freda Kahen-Kashi and Molly Nagle, 2413K] Video: [HERE](#)

Alisson Luna, 22, fled Honduras, after she said was raped, with her three children and grandmother, embarking on a nearly 3,000-mile journey to reach the United States in order to seek asylum. Waiting in Tijuana, Mexico until she and her family could make their claim, Luna told ABC News that this was her only option.

Luna and her family are waiting at El Barretal, a music venue turned migrant shelter about 30 miles south of the U.S. southern border in Tijuana. The cramped and crowded shelter had only 300 migrants when ABC News was there Wednesday, but at its peak, was the waiting place for some 3,000.

Raddatz asked Luna if a border wall would stop people attempting to cross illegally.

"No," she said.

A wall along the U.S.-Mexico border was a signature campaign promise for President Donald Trump, and the government has been partially shut down for a record 30 days because Trump and Congress can't agree on a funding deal.

On Saturday, Trump announced a new immigration and border security plan as an attempt to reach an agreement between Republicans and Democrats to end the shutdown. In addition to many funding propositions related to enhanced border security, at the crux of this proposal, Trump wants \$5.7 billion to build an additional 230 miles of a see-through steel barrier system, "or a wall," as Trump said Saturday.

"This is not a 2,000-mile concrete structure from sea to sea," Trump said from the White House. "These are steel barriers in high-priority locations."

In an attempt to entice Democrats to support the deal, he also proposed extending protections from deportation for three years for some 700,000 so-called "Dreamers," children brought to the U.S. illegally by their parents who were given a protected status under former President Barack Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) executive order, and for Temporary Protected Status recipients whose status is currently facing expiration.

Apprehensions at the border have been declining for nearly two decades, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). For the last year, those numbers have been rising, but that rise is not necessarily a trend.

After traveling back to the U.S. side of the border, Raddatz and her team toured 14 miles of the border with CBP San Diego Sector Chief Patrol Agent Rodney Scott. It didn't take long for them to witness migrants, including a 25-year-old woman fleeing El Salvador with her 2-year-old son, trying to sneak into California in an area where new walls were being built. The woman and her son were apprehended by CBP.

"Is there any part of you still where you look at that family and think I've got to help?" Raddatz asked Scott.

"On many, many levels I feel compassion for those people," Scott answered. "But I also feel compassion for the several thousand people that have been in line at the San Ysidro [San Diego] port of entry for several weeks, waiting to do it right, and those people literally just cut in line in front of them."

Scott said CBP needs more areas with a border wall, even if it's not a complete solution.

"We cannot effectively control the border without barriers to slow down illegal entries," he told Raddatz, adding that while a wall wouldn't necessarily stop the illegal flow of drugs, which mainly come through legal port of entries and tunnels, a wall would allow Scott "to free up personnel to focus on that threat."

In addition to border wall funding and temporary protections for some immigrants, Trump's border security proposal seeks nearly \$800 million for additional border agents, law enforcement officers and other staff, \$800 million in humanitarian assistance, including new temporary housing for migrants, and more than \$800 million for "technology, canines and personnel to help stop the flow of illegal drugs, weapons and other contraband."

Just on Thursday morning, CBP officers near San Diego had already arrested almost 100 people, including children. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of families crossing the border, and after backlash over a Trump administration "zero tolerance" policy which led to children being separated from adults once apprehended, families are now held together, but there's a limit to how long children can be detained.

"If you come with a child, you will be released within about 20 days," Scott said told Raddatz. "So that's created a pull factor and once people figured that out, they don't mind being arrested, incarcerated for a few days because they know they're going to be released into the U.S."

Many asylum seekers are tracked with an ankle bracelet, including some migrants Raddatz spoke to at the Safe Harbors Network in San Diego, a shelter that has helped more than 7,000 refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers over the past two and a half years.

An 18-year-old mother at the shelter, who asked to not be shown on camera, said she was fleeing gang violence. She said she had climbed a fence to enter the United States and that a wall wouldn't have stopped her.

Pastor Bill Jenkins, the executive director of Safe Harbors Network, said that he hasn't met any family that's entered the country "for any other reason than the fact that if they stayed where they were, they would've been killed, they would've been raped, they would've been exploited."

"I don't care how high you build your damn wall," the pastor said. "Immigration is going to continue."

Democrats ignore the wall wishes of the people who know the border best: Border agents (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/21/2019 3:23 PM, Staff, 629K]

Democrats show no interest in solving illegal immigration, and they downplay the drug and humanitarian problems it causes, yet liberals in the media never ask them to explain why.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., has so far said she's unwilling to do anything on immigration, so long as the White House refuses to sign a bill funding the small portion of the government that's been shut down for a month.

As agents here at the southernmost point of Texas will tell you, the way to deter smugglers from bringing in drugs and undocumented immigrants from Mexico is to install cameras, strategically place personnel, and build a physical barrier.

In the Rio Grande Valley Sector, where illegal crossing apprehensions are tens of thousands higher than anywhere else, they have pieces of all three of these. But what they're asking for first and foremost is more wall.

"This area used to be almost unmanageable, a lot worse," border agent Hermann Rivera told me Friday. I asked him what made the difference. "The wall," he said.

Division chief John Morris said the same thing. When they say "wall," they're referring to a 25-foot-high barrier that was first built around 2005. It acts as a reinforcement for levies that help prevent flooding from the Rio Grande.

There is about 12 feet of concrete that comes up, vertical with the levee. Atop that is another 13 feet of steel slats, placed side by side.

Agents at the border say they want more of it. The White House says they can have it. Democrats say they can't. Why?

When the border patrol took me on a tour of the area here Friday, we saw a riverbank where smugglers simply load up a small raft or boat with people or drugs, push it across the river, and dump them onto U.S. soil.

If the cargo is people, Morris told me that they're instructed by smugglers (who often rape the women they're carting) to simply walk up the path away from the river and an agent will greet them — as if the border patrol were a welcoming committee.

So far, this is what Democrats have indicated they support. Border agents want wall. Democrats want free daycare for immigrants here illegally.

On our tour, we came across a family unit of eight: one woman and seven children. They told Morris that a person on the other side of the river carried them across into the U.S.

"We walked to the river, and they put us on a raft and pushed us across and said just to walk this way and then that's how we got lost," the woman told Morris. "And we walked around the brush all night and we just decided to sit down because we're hungry and we're tired."

Morris called an agent who specializes in paramedics to care for the family, and then we kept moving to the riverbank.

Looking just across the Rio Grande, I saw yet another group of people who Morris was certain had been brought there by smugglers, ready to cross.

They looked back at us and then one of them, likely their smuggler, started cursing at us from across the river in Spanish. He made signs at us and then began slingshotting rocks at us, one of which hit a tree about 10 feet from me. We had to leave the spot.

Agents say more wall won't stop illegal immigration, but that it will make it easier for them to apprehend anyone trying to make their way into the country outside of a legal port of entry.

Democrats don't support a wall. They also don't support changing the asylum law, which Morris repeatedly referred to as a "loophole." They don't support anything that deters the influx of people making their way into the U.S. without anyone knowing who they are.

Border agents have told us what they want and why they want it. Why won't Democrats give it to them?

How the Border Patrol has changed over the years (Houston Chronicle)

[Houston Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 12:49 PM, Brian Rausch, 199K]

The agency once known as the U.S. Border Patrol is in its 95th year and in most ways looks nothing like it did when it was created May 28, 1924.

The first recruits received only a badge and a revolver from the federal government. They didn't receive uniforms until December 1924, and even furnished their own horse and saddle. Most of their work was guarding the expanse between border stations.

A year later, the government expanded the agency's duties to patrol the nation's coasts despite having only 450 inspectors. Still, the vast majority of agents patrolled the U.S. border with Canada, a particularly important job during Prohibition.

Meanwhile, the need for Mexican immigrants as laborers meant the U.S. paid relatively little attention to the southern border.

It wasn't until the early 1950s that the federal government turned the agency's attention to the nation's border with Mexico. As undocumented immigration from the south exploded in the 1970s and 1980s, the agency responded with increases in manpower and technology.

The booming U.S. economy in the mid- to late 1980s, along with an increase in drug and human smuggling, persuaded the U.S. to complete its first physical barrier in 1994, a 13-mile wall between San Diego and Tijuana.

Today, the nation's nearly 2,000-mile border with Mexico is guarded by several hundred miles of barriers, sensors, cameras, other surveillance equipment and agents of the Customs and Border Protection created in 2003.

[TX] The border agent who stops the most illegal crossings into the US doesn't care if you call it a 'wall' (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/21/2019 10:11 AM, Eddie Scarry, 629K]

The Rio Grande Valley on the southern border here in southernmost Texas sees more apprehensions of illegal immigrants than any other sector in the country. John Miller, the division's chief of law enforcement, knows what this part of the border needs, and he doesn't care if you want to call it a "wall" or anything else.

Miller on Friday took me on a tour of a portion of the border he oversees, of which only pieces here and there are enforced by 25-foot-high "wall"— a mix of concrete and rows of thick steel bollard that often prop up against levees to help with flooding from the Rio Grande.

"This is the busiest sector in the country for illegal alien apprehensions and the busiest place in the country for marijuana seizures," he said, adding that 97 percent of the illegal crossings are in the areas where there is no border wall.

In fiscal year 2018, the Rio Grande Valley saw more than 162,000 apprehensions of illegal immigrants making their way the short distance across the river and into southwest Texas, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The sector with the second highest number was Tucson, Ariz., with 52,000, less than a third as many.

The Valley covers roughly 320 miles of river. At the eastern end, towards the Gulf of Mexico, nearly all of it is covered by border barrier. But further west, right before the river turns north toward Laredo, a smorgasbord of private property, federal wildlife sanctuaries and high patches of thick bushes and shrubs is all that separates metropolitan McAllen or Mission from anyone in Mexico who swims or floats across the narrow river.

President Trump is demanding \$5.7 billion in funding for "wall" barrier that could potentially go to the Valley but even congressional Democrats who have indicated mild support for some form of physical barrier say they're caught up on the terminology.

"Well, first of all, I don't think [Trump] said some kind of new barrier; I think he said 'the wall,'" freshman Rep. Katie Hill, D-Calif., said Monday on CNN. "And I think that's a really important distinction because, again, the connotation around the wall has so much to do with the hateful rhetoric that he's been spewing for at this point years."

During my time with Miller, the Valley's division chief, he repeatedly referred to the pieces of "wall" that he says work in his sector. But he said it would make no difference if you were to call it something else.

"I'm talking about the physical barrier that stops and slows down people from illegal entry into the country," he told me. "And in this area of the border down here, it's steel bollard."

Trump has offered flexibility on his own definition of "wall." On Twitter last month, he referred to "artistically designed steel slats." He has also said a wall could be concrete or steel, materials that are were in use on the border well before he came into office.

Morris said agents all over the southwest refer to "walls" on their barriers but that there is no single type of wall.

"If you go to San Diego, theirs looks different than Yuma, whose looks different than El Paso," he said. "So, in general, do we all use the term wall? We do."

His main point: A structure of some form is necessary.

"When a lot of my friends or representatives or folks call me, 'John, do you guys really need a 30-foot concrete — because they're picturing a 30 foot concrete wall — I'm like, well, that would probably work but that's not what we have down here, and what we have is working," he said.

[AZ] 376 migrants arrested in Arizona after crossing border (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 6:51 PM, AP, 9763K]

376 migrants enter via holes under barrier

A group of 376 Central Americans was arrested in southwest Arizona, the vast majority of them families who used short, shallow holes dug under a barrier to cross the border, authorities said Friday.

The group dug under a steel barrier in seven spots about 10 miles east of a border crossing in San Luis and made no effort to elude immigration agents. Among them were 176 children.

The unusually large group was almost entirely from Guatemala. They were taken to Yuma after entering the country Monday.

The area became a major corridor for illegal crossings in the mid-2000s, prompting the Bush administration to weld steel plates to a barrier made of steel bollards that had been designed to stop people in vehicles, not on foot, Border Patrol spokesman Jose Garibay said. In those spots, there is no concrete footing to prevent digging.

The group used multiple holes in an apparent effort to get everyone across the border quickly, Garibay said.

[AZ] Largest group of asylum seekers to ever cross border used tunnels: report (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 10:04 AM, Aris Folley, 3038K]

Customs and Border Protection say the largest single group of asylum seekers to ever cross the border at one time did so on Monday by tunneling under barriers near San Luis, Ariz., according to a report by ABC News.

Smugglers dug multiple holes that were several feet long underneath the steel border fence for the group to enter, according to ABC.

CBP said a record 376 people crossed the border, including 179 who were children. Thirty of those children were unaccompanied minors.

"In my 30 years with the Border Patrol, I have not been part of arresting a group of 376 people," Anthony Porvaznik, the CBP sector chief in Yuman, told ABC. "That's really

unheard of."

Porvaznik told the news agency that his unit needs funding to provide for the families crossing and better barriers along the border.

"That's our No. 1 challenge that we have here in the Yuma sector, is the humanitarian problem," Porvaznik said.

The crossing comes as a partial government shutdown continues with no end in sight.

President Trump is demanding \$5.7 billion in funding for a wall on the Mexican border and additional security to deal with what he's described as a humanitarian crisis.

Democrats have demanded that Trump re-open the government and have rejected the calls for wall funding.

[AZ] Largest Migrant Group to Enter Arizona Burrowed Under Border Fence, Say Feds (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/18/2019 5:36 PM, Robert Arce, 2015K]

A group of 376 Central American migrants illegally crossed into the U.S. on Monday by crawling underneath a border fence in Yuma, Arizona, and immediately surrendered themselves to U.S. authorities.

Yuma Sector Border Patrol say they were "inundated" by the single largest group of migrant families and unaccompanied minors to cross in the area.

Almost all of the group was made up of families and unaccompanied minors primarily from Guatemala. The illegal crossing occurred approximately 4.5 miles east of San Luis, Arizona.

The migrants gave no resistance and formed an orderly line while waiting to be processed, according to videos released by the CBP Friday. A Yuma Border Patrol spokesperson said that smugglers dug seven holes under the border barrier in Arizona. Those responsible have not been arrested, according to CBP local reporting.

"The United States Border Patrol is constantly building intelligence in order to combat these trafficking organizations that are constantly targeting them and gaining intelligence in order to apprehend them in the future," said Jose Garibay, Yuma Sector Border Patrol public information officer. "They know that if you travel with a child, or there's a child with you when you cross, then you have to be released within 20 days."

Garibay further explained the reason the migrant groups are growing in numbers is they have figured out immigration system loopholes governing large groups with unaccompanied minors therein.

Due to the large size of the migrant group, CBP personnel from the surrounding locations were summoned to assist the local agents.

[AZ] Largest single group of migrants ever tunnels under border wall in Arizona, says Border Protection (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/18/2019 9:38 AM, Matt Gutman] The largest single group of asylum seekers ever to cross into the U.S. tunneled beneath the border wall near San Luis, Arizona, on Monday, voluntarily turning themselves into Customs and Border Protection, according to the agency.

Migrants can be seen marching toward Border Patrol agents by the hundreds, according to video obtained by ABC News. Smugglers dug a series of seven holes, only a few feet long beneath the steel border fence, with hundreds going beneath the wall and a smaller number clambering over it, according to CBP.

The fresh sand and scuff marks of shoes on the rusty steel were still there when ABC News visited the site on Thursday.

The agency says 179 of the record 376 people who crossed were children, including over 30 unaccompanied minors -- children under 18 traveling on their own.

The overall number of unauthorized crossings has plummeted since its peak in the 2001, when CBP logged about 1.6 million apprehensions, according to government statistics. However, the demography of those crossing has changed dramatically.

Parents with children now comprise over 80 percent of the total apprehensions of those crossing the 2,000-mile long border with Mexico. The vast majority of them, like the group near Yuma Monday, surrender immediately or seek out Border Patrol agents in order to begin the asylum process.

CBP Yuma Border Sector Chief Anthony Porvaznik said his unit needs better border barriers, but more urgently it needs funding to provide for these families.

"That's our No. 1 challenge that we have here in the Yuma sector, is the humanitarian problem," Porvaznik said. "As I mentioned, 87 percent of the apprehensions here are family units and unaccompanied alien children."

The mass crossing this week took place in a sparsely populated stretch of the border -- where an old model of border barrier rises about 12 feet from the sandy ground. The stretched agency only had three agents patrolling that 26-mile-long section of the border.

It took hours to process the families, most of which were sent to the area's chronically overcrowded central processing center in Yuma.

"In my 30 years with the Border Patrol, I have not been part of arresting a group of 376 people," Porvaznik said. "That's really unheard of."

On Thursday, hundreds of asylum seekers were being held in cinderblock cells with thick glass windows that overlooked a central bullpen where CBP agents worked to process them and provide humanitarian needs. The asylum seekers were separated into cells: fathers with sons, fathers with daughters, unaccompanied minors and mothers with children.

As in all such facilities, the CBP said it works to process them as quickly as possible, and provides basic medical care. Still, detainees eat, sleep and use the bathroom in the same room. Scraps of food mingled with silvery space blankets on the floor. In one cell, several

boys had balled up the blankets into a makeshift soccer ball they were kicking around.

One man in the group said he left Guatemala eight days ago and made most of the trip by bus along with his 12-year-old daughter. They were planning to leave the processing center destined for San Diego -- plane ticket in hand.

The father said he saved about \$5,000 to pay a coyote to quickly get them to the border. He left a wife and two younger daughters back in Guatemala. Next to them were a mother and two daughters on their way to Cincinnati, also from Guatemala. They too traveled by bus and the journey took about eight days.

Just two days after the group tunneled under the border wall in Yuma, the Border Patrol took in another huge group of migrants in New Mexico. The 247-person group, including unaccompanied minors, crossed near the Antelope Wells Port of Entry and immediately surrendered to authorities for processing.

The CBP said 24 large groups -- quantified as 100 or more -- have crossed the border near Lordsburg, New Mexico, just since Oct. 1, 2018.

[AZ] Hundreds of Central Americans arrested for tunneling under border barrier, Border Patrol says (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/18/2019 6:11 PM, Elizabeth Zwirz, 9216K]

A group of 376 Central Americans reportedly made their way into the U.S. at the Arizona border this week via holes that were dug beneath a barrier, the Border Patrol said.

Members of the group were arrested after they entered the country on Monday. They did not attempt to avoid law enforcement prior to their apprehension, the Border Patrol said, according to The Associated Press.

The crowd of migrants, which reportedly consisted of 176 children, dug under a steel barrier in multiple areas, located to the east of a border crossing in San Luis, according to the agency.

Customs and Border Protection Arizona tweeted a video of the group, adding that "almost all were families or unaccompanied juveniles."

Another video and photos from the agency showed Yuma Sector Border Patrol agents processing the group on Monday.

Nearly the entire unit was from Guatemala, according to The Associated Press.

There is no concrete under that stretch of the barrier, allowing people to dig short, cross-border holes, Border Patrol spokesman Jose Garibay said.

The group's apprehension comes amid the ongoing partial government shutdown, during which Democrats and Republicans have been at odds with each other over funding for a barrier at the southern U.S. border.

[AZ] 30 unaccompanied children were among 376 migrants who tunneled under border wall into Arizona (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/19/2019 8:41 AM, Lukas Mikelionis, 9216K]

Around 30 unaccompanied minors were smuggled into the U.S. after tunneling beneath the border wall near San Luis, Arizona on Monday together with a group of over 300 Central American migrants who then surrendered themselves to the Border Patrol.

The tunnels – a few feet long – were reportedly dug by smugglers under the steel border fence, letting hundreds of supposed asylum seekers enter the U.S, according to the Customs and Border Protection.

The migrants shortly surrendered to the authorities and requested asylum. The agency said that 179 of the record 376 people who crossed the border illegally were children, with over 30 of them being unaccompanied minors.

The group is believed to be the largest one yet to cross the border in a bid to get asylum in the U.S. The agency noted that smugglers often try to transport large groups of people and instruct them to cross the border and voluntarily surrender.

"In my 30 years with the Border Patrol, I have not been part of arresting a group of 376 people," CBP Yuma Border Sector Chief Anthony Porvaznik told ABC News. "That's really unheard of."

In the case of this particular group, since most of the migrants were with their parents, they are supposed to be released into the U.S. while they wait for the government to process their asylum applications – a law many say only encourages illegal immigration.

The Trump administration previously tried to implement a new rule that would ban migrants from requesting asylum if they illegally cross the border in a bid to encourage applying to asylum outside the U.S.

The policy was shot down by a federal judge in November following uproar from Democrats and civil rights organizations.

Porvaznik said that only "a change in the law" will help to solve the problem of illegal immigration. "The only reason they're trying to say that they're family units is that they know if they're a family unit, they're going to be released within 20 days."

The crossing comes amid a political showdown in Washington, D.C., where President Trump has been sparring with Congressional Democrats over funding for the border wall, leaving the government closed for 28 days now.

The White House wants over \$5 billion for the border wall, but Democrats have so far refused to cave in to the demands, President Trump's signature campaign issue.

President Trump on Friday wrote in a tweet that he'll make "a major announcement" Saturday afternoon concerning the ongoing partial government shutdown and the "humanitarian crisis" on the southern border.

But despite a recent surge in asylum-seeking families from Central America in recent

months, the data indicated that border arrests remain low by historical standards.

The Border Patrol made 396,579 arrests on the Mexican border in the 2018 fiscal year, up 30 percent from a 46-year low during the same period a year earlier but still well below a high of more than 1.6 million in 2000.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[AZ] Nearly 400 Migrants Tunnel Under Border Wall to Enter United States from Mexico (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [1/17/2019 3:30 PM, Alan Neuhauser, 2894K]

The migrants turned themselves into authorities and are believed to be the biggest group taken into U.S. custody at one time.

The largest single group of asylum-seekers to be taken into custody in the U.S. reportedly tunneled beneath a section of the border wall outside Yuma, Arizona.

Border Patrol and its parent agency, Customs and Border Protection, this week said that 376 people crossed beneath the barrier, most by traveling through seven tunnels – each only a few feet long – that were dug by smugglers.

"They dug under the fence," National Border Patrol Council President Brandon Judd told CNN. "Unlike most areas along the border, Yuma has some very sandy areas that is easy to dig in."

The group turned itself into Customs and Border Protection agents, according to ABC News, which first reported the incident. It included 30 so-called unaccompanied minors, or children traveling without their parents.

People seeking to cross into the U.S. illegally often travel in groups to avoid being preyed on by smugglers or others during the journey to the U.S.-Mexico border. Some 400 miles east in Lordsburg, New Mexico, for example, two-dozen large groups – consisting of at least 100 people – have crossed the border since Oct. 1, according to CBP.

The record-large group that entered the U.S. on Monday, meanwhile, made the crossing in a particularly rural area, a 26-mile stretch of an older section of barrier that Border Patrol said was being monitored by only three agents.

"In my 30 years with the Border Patrol, I have not been part of arresting a group of 376 people," Chief Patrol Agent Anthony Porvaznik, who oversees CBP's Yuma Sector, told ABC News. "That's really unheard of."

The number of people being taken into custody after illegally crossing the border has fluctuated in recent years between 400,000 and 570,000 people. In fiscal 2018, more than 521,000 people were apprehended according to CBP figures, up from 415,500 people taken into custody the previous year.

In the past, asylum-seekers taken into custody inside the U.S. have been processed and released pending further action. The Trump administration last month said that people

seeking asylum in the U.S. must apply for the protection while still in Mexico rather than in the U.S.

[AZ] Record-setting group of migrants tunneled under U.S. border wall (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/18/2019 1:43 PM, Staff, 6053K] Video: [HERE](#)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection process their largest single group of migrants who entered the U.S. by tunneling underneath the border wall. Veur's Kircher has more.

[AZ] Largest-ever group of migrant families tunnels under Yuma, Arizona, border fence (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/18/2019 6:22 PM, Rafael Carranza, Arizona Republic, 6053K]

The largest single group of migrant families and minors ever recorded in the Yuma area tunneled underneath a border fence and voluntarily turned themselves in to federal agents, according to Customs and Border Protection officials in Arizona.

A group of 376 migrants, composed almost overwhelmingly of Guatemalan families and children seeking asylum, breached the U.S.-Mexico border just before noon Monday, approximately 4½ miles east of the San Luis commercial port of entry.

Customs and Border Protection officials disclosed details of the incident Friday, releasing videos and photos showing the migrants walking along the U.S. side of the border fence and waiting in line for agents to process them.

Agent Jose Garibay, spokesman for the U.S. Border Patrol's Yuma Sector, said that migrants, with the help of smugglers, dug seven holes in the sandy soil underneath the bollard-style fence and the metal plates welded to the bottom of the barriers.

"The bollards, when they were put in, they didn't have concrete footers, because it wasn't designed to stop from digging under, it was designed to stop the vehicle traffic," Garibay said.

The group included 176 minors, Customs and Border Protection said. Thirty of the minors were unaccompanied.

Overall, it is the largest, single group of families and minors ever recorded since the agency began seeing a surge in the arrival of these migrants in the past two years, Garibay said.

One 15-second video that the Border Patrol released Friday shows the large group of migrants walking along the border enforcement road next to the bollard-style fence.

A second, 26-second video taken by helicopters shows the migrants queuing up in line. Some are sitting in the desert sand as a Border Patrol agent processed paperwork.

In all, the process took "several hours," Garibay said.

Since the group was so large, the Border Patrol had to pull agents from other assignments to help process and transport the migrants using any vehicles at their disposal, including patrol cars, vans and buses that "had to make several trips," he added.

Though this is the largest single group, border agents in the Yuma area have routinely encountered large numbers of migrants crossing en masse.

The numbers and frequency have only increased since the area emerged as one of the busiest routes for Central Americans to reach to the United States.

The number of families and minors crossing through Yuma began to rise at the start of 2018, breaking records month after month. The government began tracking the data in 2013. This trend is seen nationwide, with historic numbers of families reaching the U.S.-Mexico border.

In fiscal year 2018, which ended in September, nearly three-quarters of all migrants encountered by border agents along the Yuma sector were families or minors.

These two groups are single-handedly driving up the number of apprehensions in the area, which is now at the highest level since 2008.

Stakeholders and migrant advocates on the ground don't know why more and more Central American migrant families and minors are crossing through the Yuma area.

But border officials said they know what's behind the surge in their arrivals to the U.S.-Mexico border.

"They know that if you travel with a child, or there's a child with you when you cross, then you have to be released within 20 days," Garibay said. "That's what these smugglers are relying on. And that's what these individuals are relying on."

"Which is why you see such a large number – 176 of these individuals are children, because they know the loopholes in our immigration system and they know how to exploit it, and that's what they do," he said.

Even though the apprehension of 376 migrants took place Monday, Customs and Border Protection officials made the incident public Friday, likely because of the ongoing partial government shutdown that has entered its fifth week.

President Donald Trump and congressional Democrats are at odds over his demand for \$5.7 billion for border security, including a wall.

The border agency stopped sending regular updates about their enforcement activities at the start of the shutdown in December, publishing only a few releases.

Previously, the Border Patrol's Yuma Sector regularly sent updates about large groups of migrants crossing through the area.

Because of the shutdown, the Yuma Sector said it just received clearance Friday from Customs and Border Protection in Washington, D.C., to release information about Monday's group.

Customs and Border Protection has not responded to requests for comment.

In recent months, the Yuma area has struggled to cope with the increasing arrival of Central American families and minors due to the limited resources to house and care for them.

By law, the Border Patrol is allowed to keep only migrants in their custody for up to 72 hours before handing them over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The arrival of large groups of asylum seekers at the same time has strained manpower, with the Yuma Sector having the second-fewest number of agents among all nine sectors along the border, according to Border Patrol's most recent data.

Holding space has also been an issue.

"This group alone was 140 percent of capacity at the Yuma station," Garibay said. "So to start the day, we already had individuals in custody, and then to top it off, this group that crossed all at the same time, in and of itself was 140 percent over our capacity."

To cope with the situation, Border Patrol officials in Yuma said they transported some of the migrants to two other stations within their sector, one in Blythe and one in Wellton.

None of the 376 migrants in this group required medical attention, Garibay added. But the Yuma sector said they've seen an increase in the number of injuries, consistent with the surge in arrivals.

When this happens, such as when a 14-year-old girl was hospitalized in December after being dropped from the 18-foot-tall border fence, agents have to be pulled from their duties to remain with the migrants until they are released.

Areas close to where the migrants tunneled under the existing fence on Monday are slated to get replaced with newer, 30-foot-tall fencing starting in April.

Customs and Border Protection awarded a \$172 million contract last year to a Montana company to install 14 miles of bollard-style fence in the desert area east of the San Luis port of entry.

Garibay said he was unsure whether the site of Monday's breach is within the 14 miles slated for replacement.

Customs and Border Protection has previously said it plans to replace a total of 27 miles of fencing at the Yuma Sector.

About 25½ miles of that total is east of the San Luis border crossing, although so far Customs and Border Protection has announced plans to begin construction only on 14 miles at the sector's easternmost portion.

Tunneling will likely remain a concern, even with new physical barriers.

Garibay said digging under the fences is not uncommon, given the sandiness of the soil throughout most of the sector.

In August, Border Patrol officials also found a drug tunnel inside an abandoned fast-food restaurant in San Luis.

[AZ] 400 Migrants Overwhelmed US Border In Yuma Sector During Week-Long Period (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/18/2019 4:13 PM, Hanna Bogorowski, 867K] Video: [HERE](#)

Nearly 400 migrants traveled underground Monday through a series of tunnels built by smugglers before turning themselves in to Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in what appears to be the largest single group of migrants ever attempting to seek asylum.

Smugglers dug a series of seven holes just a few feet beneath the steel border near San Luis, Arizona, ABC News reported. Hundreds of asylum seekers went under with a few attempting to climb over the 12 foot wall.

Of the 179 minors in the group, Newsweek reported, 30 of them were unaccompanied.

Another 247 migrants crossed the border Wednesday by the Antelope Wells Port of Entry and entered New Mexico; Both groups voluntarily turned themselves in.

"In my 30 years with the Border Patrol, I have not been part of arresting a group of 376 people," CBP Yuma Border Sector Chief Anthony Porvaznik told ABC News. "That's really unheard of."

Porvaznik said that while his team needs stronger barriers, its foremost concern right now is having enough funding to take care of the families that crossed over.

"That's our No. 1 challenge that we have here in the Yuma sector, is the humanitarian problem," he told ABC News. "As I mentioned, 87 percent of the apprehensions here are family units and unaccompanied alien children."

[AZ] They left food and water for migrants in the desert. Now they might go to prison. (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/20/2019 2:52 PM, Kristine Phillips, 9763K]

During the summer of 2017, when temperatures reached triple digits in Arizona, four women drove to a vast desert wilderness along the southwestern border with Mexico. They brought water jugs and canned food — items they later said they were leaving for dehydrated migrants crossing the unfriendly terrain to get to the United States.

The women were later charged with misdemeanor crimes. Prosecutors said they violated federal law by entering Cabeza Prieta, a protected 860,000-acre refuge, without a permit and leaving water and food there. A judge convicted them on Friday in the latest example of growing tension between aid workers and the U.S. Border Patrol.

Aid workers say their humanitarian efforts, motivated by a deep sense of right and wrong, have been criminalized during the Trump administration's crackdown on illegal border crossings. Federal officials say they were simply enforcing the law.

The four women, all volunteers for the Arizona-based aid group No More Deaths, were convicted after a three-day bench trial at a federal court in Tucson. They could face up to

six months in federal prison.

Their trial coincided with a partial government shutdown that has now entered its 30th day, the longest in the country's history. Negotiations have stalled as President Trump stands firm on his demand for \$5.7 billion in border wall funding, citing a humanitarian and security crisis at the southern border.

In his verdict, U.S. Magistrate Judge Bernardo Velasco said the women's actions violated "the national decision to maintain the Refuge in its pristine nature." Velasco also said the women committed the crimes under the false belief that they would not be prosecuted and instead would simply be banned or fined.

Catherine Gaffney, a volunteer for No More Deaths, said the guilty verdict challenges all "people of conscience throughout the country."

"If giving water to someone dying of thirst is illegal, what humanity is left in the law of this country?" she said in a statement.

The criminal charges stem from an incident on Aug. 13, 2017, when a federal wildlife canine officer found the women's pickup truck near Charlie Bell Pass, a historic site at Cabeza Prieta. Inside were water jugs, canned beans and several similar items. The officer spotted the women a few hours later. They admitted leaving food and water at the site, according to court records.

Natalie Hoffman, Oona Holcomb, Madeline Huse and Zaachila Orozco-McCormick were charged in December 2017. They said their work for No More Deaths was motivated by their religious convictions and a belief that everyone should have access to basic survival needs, according to court records.

Federal prosecutors argued that the defendants should have been aware that leaving disposable items at the refuge is a punishable crime. During the trial last week, prosecutors said the women had admitted willingly violating federal law, the Arizona Republic reported.

In court documents, prosecutors pointed to a conversation between representatives of No More Deaths and a refuge manager who said officials prefer to use rescue beacons to help stranded migrants because they result in "actual rescues." Rescue beacons are scattered across the area for migrants to activate if they need help, officials said.

No More Deaths said rescue beacons result in only a small number of rescues. The group also points to the number of migrants who have died trying to cross the vast desert terrain in the region. More than 3,000 migrant deaths have been reported between October 1999 and April 2018, according to data gathered by Humane Borders and the medical examiner's office in Pima County, which covers part of Cabeza Prieta.

During the trial, one of the women, Orozco-McCormick, likened being on the refuge to being in a graveyard because of the number of migrants who have died there, the Arizona Republic reported.

The women are among several No More Deaths volunteers who are facing similar charges. Five others are scheduled for trial in February and March, the group said.

One of them, Scott Warren, is also accused of alien smuggling, a felony charge that No More Deaths claims was a retaliation for the group's activism. Last year, the group published footage showing Border Patrol agents kicking over water jugs left in the desert. One agent was seen emptying a gallon of water onto the ground. Warren was arrested shortly after the footage was published.

A Border Patrol spokesman told The Washington Post earlier that the agency is not targeting the group and is simply enforcing immigration laws. Court records say Warren met with two Mexican natives at a building known as "the Barn," in the town of Ajo, Ariz., near the Cabeza Prieta refuge, and gave them food and water.

Warren's attorney, Bill Walker, told the Arizona Republic last year that his client's intention was to give food and medical care, not to smuggle migrants into the country.

[AZ] Four women found guilty after leaving food and water for migrants in Arizona desert (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/19/2019 7:04 PM, Aris Folley, 3038K]

A federal judge on Friday reportedly found four women guilty of misdemeanors after they illegally entered a national wildlife refuge along the U.S.-Mexico border to leave water and food for migrants.

According to The Arizona Republic, the four women were aid volunteers for No More Deaths, an advocacy group dedicated to ending the deaths of migrants crossing desert regions near the southern border.

One of the volunteers with the group, Natalie Hoffman, was found guilty of three charges against her, including operating a vehicle inside the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, entering a federally protected wilderness area without a permit and leaving behind gallons on water and bean cans.

The charges reportedly stemmed from an August 2017 encounter with a U.S. Fish and Wildlife officer at the wildlife refuge.

The three other co-defendants — Oona Holcomb, Madeline Huse and Zaachila Orozco-McCormick — were reportedly passengers in Hoffman's truck at the time and were also charged with entering federally protected area without a permit and leaving behind personal property.

Each of the women face up to six months in prison for the charges and a \$500 fine after being found guilty.

In his three-page order, U.S. Magistrate Judge Bernardo Velasco reportedly wrote that the defendants did not "get an access permit, they did not remain on the designated roads, and they left water, food, and crates in the Refuge."

"All of this, in addition to violating the law, erodes the national decision to maintain the Refuge in its pristine nature," he continued.

He also criticized the No More Deaths group for failing to adequately warn the women of all

of the possible consequences they faced for violating the protected area's regulations, saying in his decision that "no one in charge of No More Deaths ever informed them that their conduct could be prosecuted as a criminal offense nor did any of the Defendants make any independent inquiry into the legality or consequences of their activities."

Another volunteer with No More Deaths, Catherine Gaffney, slammed Velasco's ruling in a statement to The Arizona Republic.

"This verdict challenges not only No More Deaths volunteers, but people of conscience throughout the country," Gaffney said.

"If giving water to someone dying of thirst is illegal, what humanity is left in the law of this country?" she continued.

According to The Associated Press, the ruling marks the first conviction brought against humanitarian aid volunteers in 10 years.

[AZ] Humanitarian volunteers convicted on charges related to leaving food, water for migrants at Arizona-Mexico border (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/21/2019 6:37 PM, Julia Jacobo, 2413K]

Four humanitarian aid volunteers have been found guilty in federal court on charges related to them leaving food and water in a protected wilderness for migrants crossing the border near Arizona.

Each of the women convicted are part of Tucson and Phoenix-based advocacy group No More Deaths, which seeks to end the deaths of undocumented immigrants crossing the desert regions near the U.S.-Mexico border, according to the group's website.

The charges stem from an incident on Aug. 14, 2017, when the helpers encountered a U.S. Fish and Wildlife officer at the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge in southwestern Arizona after they operated a vehicle there without a permit and left behind gallon jugs of water and cans of beans, the Arizona Republic reported.

The location was near where three migrants who crossed the border weeks earlier had gotten lost, according to the Phoenix newspaper. One of the migrants was never found.

Volunteer Natalie Hoffman was charged with operating a motor vehicle in a wilderness area, the verdict states. She and volunteers Oona Holcomb, Madeline Huse and Zaachila Orozco-McCormick were also charged with entering a national wildlife refuge without a permit and abandonment of property, according to the verdict, which was filed in the U.S. District of Arizona on Friday.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Bernardo Velasco wrote in his decision that a federal law requires people who access Cabeza Prieta to obtain a permit for entry, which would require the applicant to remain on designated roads and not leave anything within the refuge.

"In short: with authorized permits, pack it in/pack it out," Velasco wrote.

Not only did the women not get a permit for access, they also left water, food and crates on the protected land, the verdict states.

"All of this, in addition to violating the law, erodes the national decision to maintain the Refuge in its pristine nature," Velasco wrote.

In addition, the preserve is "littered with unexploded military ordinance" because it is surrounded by the U.S. Department of Defense's Barry Goldwater Bombing Range, according to the verdict. The Tohono O'Odham nation and U.S. Border Patrol are also nearby, Velasco wrote.

After the trial began last week, Orozco-McCormick testified that she considered the work to be "sacred" and compared the refuge to a graveyard due to all the migrants who have died there, the Arizona Republic reported.

The women did not seek a permit because they would have been required to sign an agreement, which is required of anyone seeking a permit, according to the Republic.

When Hoffman was asked why she didn't sign the document, she replied, "I was there to leave water," the newspaper reported.

Velasco wrote in his decision that the defendants claimed they were acting in accordance with a higher law, adding that one of the defendants claimed "her conduct is not civil disobedience, but rather civil initiative, which is somehow not a criminal offense."

The women did not know their conduct could be punishable for up to six months in prison, and each acted on "the mistaken belief that the worst that could happen was that they could be banned" or fined, according to the verdict. No More Deaths did not inform them their conduct could be prosecuted as a criminal offense, Velasco wrote.

The court will decide on an "agreeable date" for sentencing next week. In addition to six months in prison, the women may also face a \$500 fine each, the Tucson Sentinel reported.

After the decision was filed, protesters with No More Deaths held a "vibrant noise demonstration" outside of the Eloy Detention Center in Pinal County, Arizona, the group wrote on Instagram.

"We wanted those inside to know we see them, that we know they resist, that they are not forgotten," the group wrote. "We took this action because though our work is so often centered on the death and suffering in the desert, but we know the story doesn't end there."

Neither No More Deaths nor an attorney for the volunteers immediately returned ABC News' request for comment.

[AZ] Four aid volunteers found guilty of dropping off water, food for migrants in Arizona desert (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/20/2019 7:34 PM, Rafael Carranza, 6053K]

A federal judge found four humanitarian aid volunteers guilty on some of the charges against them for dropping off water and food for migrants at a protected wilderness area along the Arizona-Mexico border, notorious for the number of human remains recovered each year.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Bernardo Velasco found Natalie Hoffman, a volunteer with humanitarian aid group No More Deaths, guilty on all three charges against her. He also found three other volunteers — Oona Holcomb, Madeline Huse and Zaachila Orozco-McCormick — guilty of the two charges they each faced.

Hoffman had been charged with operating a vehicle inside the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge in southwestern Arizona, entering without a permit, and leaving behind 1-gallon water jugs and cans of beans. The charges stemmed from an encounter with a U.S. Fish and Wildlife officer at Cabeza Prieta on Aug. 13, 2017.

The court found her three co-defendants, all passengers in the truck Hoffman was driving inside the refuge, guilty of entering the area without a permit and abandoning personal property.

"The Defendants did not get an access permit, they did not remain on the designated roads, and they left water, food, and crates in the Refuge. All of this, in addition to violating the law, erodes the national decision to maintain the Refuge in its pristine nature," Velasco wrote in his three-page order posted online Friday afternoon.

In his decision, Velasco chastised No More Deaths for failing to warn the four volunteers about the full consequences of violating the refuge's regulations. He said all four had acted "in the mistaken belief" that a worst-case scenario for them would have been to get a citation or barred from the refuge.

"No one in charge of No More Deaths ever informed them that their conduct could be prosecuted as a criminal offense nor did any of the Defendants make any independent inquiry into the legality or consequences of their activities," he wrote in his decision.

"The Court can only speculate as to what the Defendants' decisions would have been had they known the actual risk of their undertaking," he added.

In a statement, Catherine Gaffney, a longtime volunteer with No More Deaths, criticized Friday's ruling.

"This verdict challenges not only No More Deaths volunteers, but people of conscience throughout the country," she said. "If giving water to someone dying of thirst is illegal, what humanity is left in the law of this country?"

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Arizona, which prosecuted the case, has not responded to requests for comment.

Having been found guilty, each of the four women face up to six months in federal prison and a \$500 fine. No date for sentencing has been set yet.

The trial at the U.S. District Court in Tucson began Tuesday and concluded after three days.

Prosecutors with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Arizona presented a factual approach, arguing the four women on trial admitted in court to having willingly violated the refuge's regulations for which they were charged.

The four volunteers testified in their defense that their activities that day were part of sincerely held beliefs to help people in need.

Orozco McCormick said she considered the work almost "sacred," and described being on the refuge as "like being a graveyard," because of the number of migrant deaths that had taken place there.

All four also explained that one reason none of them had obtained permits to enter Cabeza Prieta centered around language added to an agreement anyone seeking a permit is required to sign beforehand.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife added the paragraph in July 2017, a month before the incident for which they were cited. It specified that leaving behind food, water, medical supplies and other aid in the refuge was not permitted.

"I was there to leave water," Hoffman said, when asked why she didn't sign the document.

Defense attorneys also claimed that the federal government had singled out No More Deaths, arguing that the volunteers for the organization faced many hurdles that other members of the public didn't.

That included special instructions for all wildlife officers to refer any member of the organization seeking a permit to the refuge manager, and a "do not issue" list which contained the names of certain volunteers who were not allowed to get a permit.

Lawyers for the four women also cited a July 2017 meeting among members of No More Deaths, wildlife officials and an assistant U.S. attorney, at which the attorney had allegedly said that they were not interested in prosecuting volunteers for dropping off water and food.

Prosecutors dismissed those arguments countering that no written or oral agreement between the U.S. Attorney's Office to not prosecute these cases existed.

No one from the U.S. Border Patrol testified in court, but the agency's activities along Cabeza Prieta played a significant role in the trial.

Testimony from both sides highlighted the rising tensions between humanitarian aid groups like No More Deaths and the Border Patrol.

Although several areas of Cabeza Prieta are restricted to the public and aid volunteers, defense attorneys pointed out that Border Patrol agents regularly drive through the areas of the refuge.

Prosecutors argued that the 10 rescue beacons that the Border Patrol installed inside the refuge was the "preferred way to save lives," rather than dropping off water jugs with gave "false hope" to migrants, Assistant U.S. Attorney Nathaniel Walters said.

Defense attorneys responded that access to the beacons was key, and that migrants who were dehydrated might not be able to get to them.

What was not discussed during the trial were the accusations from No More Deaths that Border Patrol agents "systematically" destroy or empty water bottles they leave behind for migrants in the desert.

The guilty verdict is the first of its kind under the administration of President Donald Trump, who has advocated for stricter immigration and border enforcement.

Five other volunteers with No More Deaths face unrelated charges for similar activities on Cabeza Prieta. Their trials are scheduled to begin in the next two months in Tucson.

One of those volunteers is Scott Warren, who also faces a separate trial in connection to his felony arrest in February 2018 on charges of harboring undocumented immigrants.

Friday's verdict is the first conviction against humanitarian aid volunteers along the U.S.-Mexico border since 2009, when a federal judge found another No More Deaths volunteer guilty of littering for dropping off water jugs at the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, west of Nogales.

A year before, Dan Millis was found guilty of littering on the Buenos Aires refuge. However, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned his conviction.

Other charges brought against humanitarian aid groups and volunteers mostly had been dismissed.

[NM] The Latest: Another migrant group smuggled to New Mexico (Washington Post)
[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 8:11 PM, Associated Press, 9763K]

The Latest on groups of immigrants apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico border (all times local):

5:10 p.m.

U.S. authorities say 115 migrants smuggled to a border crossing in New Mexico are the second large group of Central Americans encountered by agents at the remote port of entry in as many days.

The U.S. Border Patrol said in a statement Friday that the latest group of migrants arrived at Antelope Wells on Thursday and were mostly families and unaccompanied children. Fifteen families requested medical attention soon after being taken into custody.

On Wednesday, nearly 250 immigrants were taken into custody at the same crossing after turning themselves in to authorities.

In December, 7-year-old Jakelin Caal and her father were among 160 migrants picked up by agents in the same stretch of desert. She became ill on a bus ride to the nearest Border Patrol station and died at a Texas hospital.

2:30 p.m.

The Border Patrol says it arrested a group of 376 Central Americans in southwest Arizona, the vast majority of them families who used short holes dug under a barrier to cross the border.

The agency said Friday that the group dug under a steel barrier in seven spots about 10 miles (16 kilometers) east of a border crossing in San Luis and made no effort to elude authorities before they were arrested.

The group included 176 children.

The unusually large group was almost entirely from Guatemala. They were taken to Yuma after entering the country on Monday.

Border Patrol spokesman Jose Garibay says there is no concrete under that section of barrier, allowing people to dig short cross-border holes.

[NM] Thousands of Migrants Crossing Remote Section of New Mexico Border (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/20/2019 1:23 PM, Bob Price, 2015K]

El Paso Sector Border Patrol officials report that at least 2,500 migrants illegally crossed the border along a small section of the New Mexico Border. The migrants crossed the border this fiscal year as part of large groups of Central American families and unaccompanied minors near the Antelope Wells Port of Entry.

In an area that normally only sees a few hundred illegal border crossings per year, El Paso Sector officials reported that 25 large groups of migrants crossed the border near the Antelope Wells Port of Entry in the first few months of Fiscal Year 2019. The Border Patrol defines a "large group" as more than 100 people, FOX14 reported.

This small section of the border is patrolled by agents assigned to the Lordsburg Station. Due to the remoteness of this area, agents are assigned to work from Camp Bounds Forward Operating Base at Antelope Wells, New Mexico. The Lordsburg Station falls under the supervision of the El Paso Sector.

During the entirety of Fiscal Year 2018, which ended on September 30, 2018, the El Paso Sector reported apprehending a total of 31,561 migrants. Those included 12,312 family units and 5,461 unaccompanied minors, according to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's 2018 Southwest Border Migration Report. Officials told Breitbart News in December that the Lordsburg station's apprehensions represent a small portion of those numbers. And, the Camp Bounds Forward Operating Base, located in the extreme southwestern part of the New Mexico boot heel, accounted for a small portion of that.

However, since the new fiscal year began on October 1, 2018, at least 25 groups of more than 100 migrants have been apprehended. Fox14 reported that Border Patrol agents apprehended nearly 300 migrants last week alone — one group of 247 and a second group of 115.

Officials told the local Fox affiliate that smugglers have started using the large groups of migrants as a distraction to tie up Border Patrol agents while they smuggle drugs across the border elsewhere.

Officials said that at about the same time the agents engaged with this very large group of migrants, drug smugglers reportedly moved a load of 265 pounds of marijuana across the border west of Antelope Wells.

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said the pressure on Border Patrol agents due to the unsecured border is pushing the system "to a breaking point."

Now it appears that drug smugglers are attempting to take advantage of the overwhelming nature of the crisis at our southern border by exploiting these families and children and pushing them to remote and desolate areas of the border to make their crossing.

[NM] Smugglers Use Migrant Families to Distract Border Agents, Move Drugs Across (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/19/2019 5:48 PM, Bob Price, 2015K]

El Paso Sector Border Patrol officials say smugglers are using large groups of family unit migrants and unaccompanied minors to distract agents so they can move drugs across the border in other locations.

Camp Bounds Forward Operating Base agents apprehended another large group of migrants who illegally crossed the border in a remote part of New Mexico-Mexico border. The agents apprehended a group of 247 migrants shortly after they crossed the border near Antelope Wells, New Mexico, KFOX14 reported.

Border Patrol Agent Denisse A. Licon told the local Fox affiliate that most of the group were families and unaccompanied minors from Central America.

Officials said that at about the same time the agents engaged with this very large group of migrants, drug smugglers reportedly moved a load of 265 pounds of marijuana across the border west of Antelope Wells.

To complicate processing, agents reported that fifteen migrant families requested medical attention shortly after being apprehended.

Antelope Wells is the same area where a young Guatemalan girl, Jakelin Caal, and her father crossed the border. The young girl became ill hours later and died after being taken to an El Paso hospital.

Processing these large groups of migrants from the remote forward operating base to the Lordsburg Border Patrol station is a time-consuming task. The station is a 94-mile drive from the operating base and can be up to a four-hour round trip for the transport bus.

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said the pressure on Border Patrol agents due to the unsecured border is pushing the system "to a breaking point."

Now it appears that drug smugglers are attempting to take advantage of the overwhelming nature of the crisis at our southern border by exploiting these families and children and pushing them to remote and desolate areas of the border to make their crossing.

[AK] A Small Alaska Town Reels as the Coast Guard Weathers On Without Pay (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/19/2019 12:23 AM, Thomas Gibbons-Neff, 20737K]

The morning after more than 40,000 Coast Guard members missed their first paycheck, and the federal government's shutdown stretched into its fourth week, Eleanor King placed an empty jar next to her diner's cash register.

In scribbled black marker, a sign on the jar, written in all capital letters, read: Donation Coast Guard. By 9 a.m. on Wednesday, nearly an hour before a rainy winter sunrise, the jar held \$120 — money with which patrons were effectively buying meals for members of the maritime force.

While the shutdown has affected hundreds of thousands of federal workers across the United States, halting paychecks and furloughing those who have been deemed nonessential personnel, it has brought a particular chill to Kodiak, a small town of 6,300 on an isolated island in the Gulf of Alaska.

Roughly a quarter of the island's population is either an employee or dependent family member of the Coast Guard, which has now had to scale back some of its operations in one of the world's most dangerous waterways.

A high cost of living is common to communities in the Alaskan wilderness, but the Coast Guard contingent in Kodiak makes the town especially vulnerable to the drought in federal cash. Local businesses like Ms. King's diner are losing money daily even while trying to help.

Kodiak's predicament is a result of President Trump's political fight with Congress over \$5.7 billion in funding for a border wall, forcing the government to shut down and leaving a series of agency budget bills unfinished. That included funding for the Department of Homeland Security, the parent agency of the Coast Guard.

"This impacts everyone," Ms. King said. Like some of the other businesses in Kodiak, her diner is giving a 10 percent discount to Coast Guard members; the donations from her jar help pay for meals.

The Coast Guard is the only branch of the military that is part of an otherwise completely civilian agency. It was created to enforce maritime laws and conduct rescue operations at sea, but it can be ordered to protect the United States from foreign threats during war or conflicts.

That the Coast Guard is going without pay during the shutdown is "the first time in our nation's history that service members in a U.S. armed force have not been paid during a lapse in government appropriations," Adm. Karl L. Schultz, the Coast Guard commandant, said in a statement on Tuesday.

If the shutdown continues, Coast Guard retirees will also not be paid at the end of the month.

Jed A. Bergstrom, who runs a food bank at a Baptist mission community center in Kodiak, said a Coast Guard family showed up at his door the day after service members were

supposed to be paid.

Residents are donating fish and game from their freezers to their neighbors. Big Al's Take and Bake, another restaurant in the area, sent more than 30 pizzas to a food bank on the Coast Guard base. They quickly disappeared.

Alexandra's Salon, a hair styling shop, is giving i.o.u.s to clients instead of making them pay, and the Alutiiq museum, focused on the community's native heritage, has waved its \$7 entry fee.

But eventually, said Mayor Patricia B. Branson, if the government does not reopen soon, the business owners and landlords will have to find a way to get paid.

"I think it's important that the people in the faraway land D.C. understand what's going on in a small town," she said. "And how people are affected by all this nonsense."

Legislation that was introduced earlier this month by a bipartisan group of lawmakers, known as the Pay Our Coast Guard Act, has gained support in Congress in recent days. But its fate, at least in the short term, remains unclear.

Other organizations have raised funds to help Coast Guard families, including a \$15 million donation from the USAA financial services company.

Flush with greenery and emerald water in the summer, while cold and wet in the winter, Kodiak is economically supported by the Coast Guard base, one of the largest in the United States. The town is also dependent on its fishing port, which often oscillates between being the second- and third-most prosperous in the country.

The fishing industry off Alaska's coast rakes in more than \$4 billion annually, according to the National Marine Fisheries Service. But with most of that service also closed, Kodiak's primary economic driver might soon be in jeopardy.

For now, though, little has changed. The fishing season for pollock opened this week in the northern Pacific, and the Coast Guard moved a MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter and its Kodiak-based crew hundreds of miles to a small base in the Aleutian Islands to help, if need be, with search-and-rescue missions.

Still, the Coast Guard has had to stop some of its law enforcement missions in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. Some routine patrols have been halted, as has the practice, in at least some cases, of boarding fishing boats to ensure that crews are following maritime laws.

"Generally, activities have been scaled back if it doesn't support life and property or the protection of national security," said Lt. Brian Dykens, a Coast Guard spokesman.

Besides search and rescue, and unlike air stations in the mainland United States, the Coast Guard missions in Alaska often include medically evacuating people from remote areas — as aircrews have done at least seven times since the shutdown began.

In the winter, the Bering Sea is known for its hurricanelike weather and 50-foot waves. It

has claimed the lives of dozens of fishermen in recent years.

Salt water, battering winds and constant strain ensure that Coast Guard aircraft need constant maintenance. The flights that are based in Kodiak are responsible for covering four million square miles of coastline and ocean.

But with hundreds of civilians on furlough, a backlog of repair requests are quickly accruing at the Coast Guard's primary maintenance hub in North Carolina. Already, active-duty Coast Guard mechanics are filling in for their furloughed civilian colleagues at the Kodiak Air Station.

If it drags on, the ability of the force to initiate the most rudimentary search-and-rescue missions are at risk of being hampered, said one Coast Guard official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the effects of the shutdown. Some of the smaller Coast Guard air stations across the country could close.

Lt. Cmdr. Zachary Koehler is among the Coast Guard helicopter pilots in Kodiak who are currently not being paid as they undertake missions over the volatile Bering Sea. He and his wife, Beth, have a son and daughter, both 11, and run Grand Slam, a toy store the family opened in 2017. The store has lost 30 percent in sales this month compared to last January.

"In the first couple days, I think everyone thought this wasn't going to continue," Ms. Koehler said. "So they kept spending like they usually do. And after that first weekend, it was amazing — it just stopped."

"It hurts," said Aimee Williams, who spent 12 years in the Coast Guard and is married to a C-130 pilot who is still in the service. "And it's just going to keep getting worse here until it's fixed."

Transportation Security Administration

Number of TSA checkpoint agents calling out during shutdown stresses major airports (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/20/2019 3:15 PM, Ashley Halsey III and Michael Laris, 9763K]

The number of airport security workers failing to show up for work hit an all-time high over the weekend, straining checkpoint lanes at several major hub airports.

The number of unscheduled absences was 8 percent nationally, compared with 3 percent a year ago, as the Transportation Security Administration conceded that many of its workers could no longer handle the financial hardship of working without pay during the government shutdown.

The agency said the stress was being felt at checkpoint lanes in New York, Atlanta, Chicago and Miami.

At Baltimore-Washington International Marshall Airport, one checkpoint was shut down at 5:35 p.m. Saturday because of a shortage of workers. Authorities said the checkpoint would be closed early again Sunday. At various points during the shutdown, airports in Atlanta,

Houston and Miami also have operated under contingency plans to address the shortage.

"There is an increasing percentage of the TSA workforce that is calling out, predominantly for financial reason," TSA spokesman Michael Bilello said. "This is isolated now to a number of our largest hub airports."

Bilello said the agency had sent special agents from its National Deployment Force (NDF) to supplement checkpoint agents. NDF members normally are dispatched when an event like the Super Bowl or a crisis like a major hurricane takes place.

"We have fully deployed our established NDF and [are] increasing its size substantially," Bilello said, "but TSA's capability is still limited and will ultimately lead to increased lane closures in order to maintain security effectiveness."

Bilello said NDF officers have been deployed at airports across the system, including Atlanta, Newark and New York's LaGuardia.

He reiterated that the TSA will not allow the staffing shortage to compromise airport security.

"Airports will continue to change daily as needs arise; TSA will continue to monitor volume fluctuations to schedule those changes and make decisions accordingly," Bilello said.

"While we are not releasing specific numbers, we can confirm that there are limited resources available and our ability to reinforce airports with National Deployment Officers is becoming more difficult."

TSA agents are among the estimated 800,000 federal employees who are furloughed or working without pay during the shutdown, which has entered its fifth week.

Brent D. Bowen, a professor of aviation at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's Arizona campus, said the demand for TSA workers to continue work without pay would have an inevitable impact.

"We can't expect any group of people to work indefinitely for no pay," Bowen said. "It affects morale. They're worried about their families. When that happens, you can't focus on your job as well as you would under normal circumstances."

Rolland Vincent, an industry expert and co-chair of an aviation group under the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, said TSA agents have a vital job to do, and their work, along with that of the Federal Aviation Administration, is being recklessly undercut by the shutdown.

The nation, he said, "is playing with guns."

"We're exposed," added Vincent, co-chair of the Transportation Research Board's subcommittee on commercial aviation. "Somebody is going to get hurt."

Despite the record number of no-shows among TSA checkpoint agents Saturday, the TSA said that virtually all of the 1.6 million passengers screened passed through within the agency's 30-minute standard, and that almost 94 percent were cleared in 15 minutes or less.

10 percent of TSA workers called out Sunday as shutdown continues (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/21/2019 11:01 AM, Ashley Halsey III and Michael Laris, 9763K] Video: [HERE](#)

The government shutdown continues to take a toll on the nation's air safety system as a growing number of workers decide they can't afford to keep working without pay.

The number of Transportation Security Administration agents who failed to show up for duty Sunday hit a record 10 percent, meaning long waits for travelers at checkpoints at several airports, including Minneapolis and New Orleans.

The union that represents the TSA workers, the American Federation of Government Employees, has warned since the federal shutdown began that its employees are among the lowest salaried on the federal pay scale and simply may be unable to afford to continue to work without pay.

At some airports, community groups have set up food banks for federal workers; at others, airport food vendors have donated meals.

In addition to a 35-minute wait at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and a 45-minute wait at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport (the city hosted a National Football League playoff game Sunday), the 40 busiest airports showed the strain of processing passengers with as many as 1 in 10 workers out. Fourteen airports had checkpoint waiting times of more than 20 minutes, with three of them pushing the maximum TSA acceptable wait time of 30 minutes. In Los Angeles (29 minutes), Tampa (28 minutes) and Chicago (27 minutes), the lines were extensive.

One of three TSA checkpoints at Baltimore-Washington International Marshall Airport was shut down twice over the weekend, but the TSA said Monday that it was operational again.

"The fact of asking, or in fact demanding, that people continue to come to work and not receive something and have no idea whether they even will receive back pay in many cases is an absolute killer for morale," said Erin E. Bowen, a psychology professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's Arizona campus. "Any time you have these situations where people feel like they have no control over their work environment and no control over whether their effort receives payment, you're going to see really wide-ranging consequences, and some of them are going to be bordering public safety concerns."

Rolland Vincent, an industry expert and co-chair of an aviation group under the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, said TSA agents have a vital job to do, and their work, along with that of the Federal Aviation Administration, is being recklessly undercut by the shutdown.

"We're exposed," added Vincent, co-chair of the Transportation Research Board's subcommittee on commercial aviation. "Somebody is going to get hurt."

The absentee rate one year ago — Jan. 20, 2018 — was 3.1 percent, the TSA said.

Overall, the TSA said that it screened 1.78 million passengers Sunday. They said that more than 93 percent of them waited for 15 minutes or less.

'Morale is at an all-time low': Unpaid Pittsburgh TSA workers demand end to shutdown (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 7:56 PM, Staff, 9763K] Video: [HERE](#)

Transportation Security Administration workers, who continue to work despite not getting paid, rallied against the government shutdown Jan. 18 at the Pittsburgh International Airport.

TSA says many employees not reporting to work because of 'financial limitations' (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/20/2019 4:54 PM, Justin Wise, 3038K]

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) said Sunday that many of its employees are not reporting to work because of "financial limitations," a statement that comes as the government shutdown persists into its fifth week.

"[Saturday's] complete figures show that TSA experienced a national rate of 8 percent of unscheduled absences compared to a 3 percent rate one year ago on the same day," TSA said in a statement released Sunday afternoon. "Many employees are reporting that they are not able to report to work due to financial limitations."

The statement added that "airports may exercise contingency plans due to call-outs and traveler volume in order to maintain effective security standards," noting that it took that step at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport due to "excessive callouts."

TSA closed a checkpoint at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport over a lack of staffing on Saturday.

The event occurred about a week after Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport closed one of its checkpoints.

The government shutdown, which was triggered on Dec. 22 after Democratic and Republican lawmakers failed to reach an agreement on a spending bill, has impacted thousands of federal workers, including TSA agents, across the nation.

TSA agents, as essential personnel, have been forced to work without pay.

A union president for the TSA said earlier this month that some agents have already walked off their jobs amid the shutdown, which is now the longest in U.S. history.

"Every day I'm getting calls from my members about their extreme financial hardships and need for a paycheck. Some of them have already quit and many are considering quitting the federal workforce because of this shutdown," said Hydrick Thomas, the TSA council president for the American Federation of Government Employees.

As government shutdown continues, more TSA agents calling out 'due to financial limitations' (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/21/2019 1:36 PM, Kaitlyn Schallhorn, 9216K]

With the partial government shutdown nearing the one-month mark, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has seen a rise in "unscheduled absences" among

employees – many for financial reasons.

TSA said Monday it has seen a rate of about 10 percent of unscheduled absences. In comparison, there was a rate of about 3 percent this time last year.

"Many employees are reporting that they are not able to report to work due to financial limitations," the TSA said in a statement.

The government partially shuttered on Dec. 22, affecting about one-quarter of the government, as President Trump and Democrats remain steadfastly at an impasse over funding for a border wall. Some 800,000 federal employees have been off the job or forced to work without pay as the government remains closed.

TSA screeners missed paychecks last week although some are able to get \$500 bonuses and received pay for working the first day of the shutdown, according to The Associated Press.

Despite the rise in employee absences, TSA stressed the national average wait times are within its normal range of about 30 minutes for standard lanes and 10 minutes for pre-check – although some airports had longer average times. Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport had an average wait time of 45 minutes and Daniel K. Inouye International Airport in Honolulu, Hawaii, had an average wait time of 12 minutes in pre-check, according to figures released by the TSA.

"In coordination with airport and airlines partners, TSA continues to carry out its mission by optimizing resources, managing consolidation efforts and ensuring screening lanes are properly staffed," it said. "Airports may exercise contingency plans due to call-outs and traveler volume in order to maintain effective security standards. Travelers should seek current airline and airport information and should allow enough time to get through the airport and board their flight."

One security checkpoint was closed at the Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI) Saturday due to staffing issues. However, an airport spokeswoman said there was "minimal if any" problems for customers and stressed it's not unusual for TSA and BWI to open and close security checkpoints based on projected travel levels, flight schedules and security staffing.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Government shutdown, TSA absenteeism spark travel industry fears (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/18/2019 7:04 PM, AP, 2890K]

America's busiest airport, Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International, is a blur of activity on the best of days. But an extra layer of anxiety gripped the airport Friday, the eve of a three-day holiday weekend. The partial government shutdown — the longest ever — has thinned the ranks of federal workers who staff airport security lines. And some travelers had braced for the worst.

"I have a 3 o'clock flight, and I arrived at 10:15 a.m.," Beth Lambert said while waiting to check in at a Delta Air Lines counter as her 5-year-old, Michael, rode around on his wheeled bag like a scooter. "We're going to be hanging out for a while."

The scene at most of the nation's airports has so far been marked more by concerned passengers showing up early than by missed flights. Longer lines are evident at some airports. But delays resulting from a rise in federal security screeners calling in sick have been slight.

Yet concern is quickly growing. President Donald Trump and Democrats in Congress remain far apart over Trump's insistence on funding for a wall along the Mexican border as the price of reopening the government. With the two sides trading taunts and avoiding talks, travel industry analysts and economists have been calculating the potential damage should the shutdown drag into February or beyond.

Airlines and hotels would suffer. So would parks and restaurants that cater to travelers. And, eventually, the broader U.S. economy, already absorbing a trade war with China and a global economic slowdown, would endure another blow.

The travel and tourism industries generate about \$1.6 trillion in U.S. economic activity — one-twelfth of the economy — and one in 20 jobs, according to the Commerce Department. Macroeconomic Advisers says it now expects the economy to expand at just a 1.4 percent annual rate in the first three months of this year, down from its previous forecast of 1.6 percent, because of reduced government spending during the shutdown.

America's air-travel system will face its sternest this weekend, which coincides with Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday, a federal holiday. The Transportation Security Administration predicts it will screen over 8 million passengers between Friday and Monday, up 10.8 percent from last year's MLK weekend. And it will do so with fewer screeners. On Thursday, the TSA said 6.4 percent of screeners missed work — nearly double the 3.8 percent rate on the same day in 2018.

A TSA spokesman said the agency was offering overtime to screeners for this weekend, though those workers wouldn't be paid — for their regular pay or for overtime— until the shutdown eventually ends.

On top of potentially longer airport security lines this weekend, a blast of winter weather could snarl travel this weekend in the Midwest and Northeast.

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International, home to Delta Air Lines, has likely been the hardest hit airport. Delta said this week that the shutdown will cost it \$25 million in January because fewer federal employees and contractors will be flying. By contrast, United Airlines, which has a substantial presence around Washington, D.C., said it hasn't felt much impact yet.

But the airlines fear that if the shutdown doesn't end soon, more TSA agents will call in sick or quit. A shortage of screeners would cause security lines to swell. Air traffic controllers, who are also working without pay, say they, too, are short-staffed. If the controller shortage became severe enough, the government could restrict the number of flights, though some analysts think that's unlikely.

"Luckily this is the low season — January is one of the weakest months of the year," said Savanthi Syth, an airline analyst for Raymond James. "This spilling into February is a real

concern. The risk is that the longer this drags out, it might cause some passengers to say, 'I don't want to deal with all the hassle, maybe I won't take that trip.'"

Consumers are, in fact, taking a dimmer view of the economy, in part because of the shutdown. A measure of consumer confidence fell this month by the most in more than six years, according to the University of Michigan, which conducts the survey. If Americans were to cut back on travel and other discretionary spending, it would weaken consumer spending, the U.S. company's primary fuel.

Laura Mandala, who runs a travel and tourism research firm, said the shutdown might discourage international travelers, too.

"These uncertainties will result in fewer conferences being booked," Mandala said, leading to "convention and hotel staff layoffs, reduced schedules, resulting in less income for workers to spend in the local economy."

Hotels are starting to feel the impact, particularly in the Washington, D.C., region but also in other cities with substantial federal workforces, such as San Diego, which has a large naval base.

In the Washington area, including its nearby suburbs in Maryland and Virginia, hotel revenue plunged 26 percent in the second week of January compared with the same period last year, according to STR, a travel research firm. That's much steeper than the 8 percent decline that occurred nationwide.

Michael Bellisario, an analyst for investment bank R.W. Baird, suggested that other factors accounted for the most of the nationwide drop but said the shutdown almost certainly played a role.

"In no way is the government shutdown a positive for hotel demand and travel," Bellisario said.

If the shutdown lingers and people see more reports of long TSA lines on television news, "they will say, 'Oh wow, traveling is hard,' and that impacts the hotel industry," said Jan Freitag, a senior vice president at STR.

For now, though, the most visible impact has been at airports. One of the seven checkpoints at Houston's main airport has been closed all week and will remain so indefinitely, a spokesman said. Miami closed one concourse during the afternoons and evenings last weekend. On the other hand, officials at airports in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Miami said they weren't experiencing any problems.

The problems would emerge if the shutdown persists, and the damage would extend to the private companies that operate airport shops and restaurants.

Mike Boyd, an airport consultant in Colorado, noted that a pullback in travel would be felt most in airports that are heavily dependent on government employees such as Reagan National Airport outside Washington, Manhattan Regional Airport in Kansas, near the Army's Fort Riley, and Watertown International Airport in upstate New York, near Fort Drum.

Federal employees going without pay — there are about 800,000 of them, including 420,000 who are still working — are already suffering, of course.

"We still have to make sure our kids eat, make sure to have a roof over their head," said Shalique Caraballo, whose wife is a TSA worker in Atlanta. "We sweat in private and don't let the kids see the struggle."

Some in the airline industry and even in Congress have suggested that longer TSA security lines could exert enough pressure on politicians to break the stalemate that is keeping the government shuttered.

Others have all but lost hope.

"I would love to think that politicians understand that travel and tourism is an incredibly important gear in the economy," said Ninan Chacko, CEO of Travel Leaders Group, which owns and manages travel agencies, "but I don't think that is really the rational discussion that is taking place in Washington."

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

What TSA is telling key officials to say about the shutdown (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/18/2019 9:50 PM, Rene Marsh, 5847K]

Top Transportation Security Administration management has instructed key agency officials at airports around the country to not make details public about how many officers are missing work due to the partial government shutdown, according to an internal email obtained exclusively by CNN.

The talking points sent Friday morning from TSA's deputy assistant administrator for public affairs, Jim Gregory, illustrate how the agency is working behind the scenes to control messaging on how the four-week government shutdown is impacting the agency and its security screening efforts.

"You can engage with media and address topics that touch your workforce such as how they are doing overall but there are some areas you can't address," the email states.

"Do not offer specific call out data at your airport," the email adds. "You can say you have experienced higher numbers of call outs but in partnership with the airport and airlines you are able to manage people and resources to ensure effective security is always maintained."

TSA has repeatedly said the shutdown will not impact security even as screeners, working without pay, continue to call out from work on a higher-than-average basis, as first reported by CNN.

Talking points from government department headquarters are commonplace, and on Friday, Gregory told CNN that a select group of TSA leaders had asked for the guidance.

"In short, they are suggested language to be used if the situation applies. Yesterday, our operations center asked if they could forward my talking points out to all (federal security

directors], and I thought it might be helpful, so I agreed," Gregory said of his email.

TSA this week has issued press releases with national percentages of what it calls "unscheduled absences." On Friday, TSA said 6.4% of its workforce had not showed up to work due to the shutdown compared with 3.8% last year.

However, because TSA is providing only nationwide averages, it is difficult for the flying public to know which airports are most impacted by the callouts.

While TSA has released nationwide call-out numbers, the agency denied a request for actual numbers of employees who have called out at specific airports since the shutdown began, citing security concerns.

"We consider callout numbers to be sensitive and are not releasing them publicly because we believe adversaries could use the information to exploit perceived vulnerabilities," Gregory told CNN. "Additionally, callout numbers don't tell the whole story since it's more about whether FSDs are able to properly staff checkpoints. Regardless, we want to ensure people know security will not be compromised at TSA and we will maintain security standards."

Gregory also tells TSA airport leadership in his email, "Don't discuss things that happened at other airports. Earlier in the week there were articles in the media about the gun missed at ATL on Jan 2. You can say that we take all security incidents seriously but I'd refer you to our headquarters to address that specific incident."

TSA, part of the Department of Homeland Security, has been under public scrutiny since the shutdown began and CNN reported that hundreds of screeners were calling out sick at major airports.

On Monday, wait times at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport reached a maximum of 88 minutes, according to TSA. Last weekend, Miami International Airport reported callouts at double the normal rate and at one point a concourse was shut down. And Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport has shut down one checkpoint for six days.

In a tweet Thursday the head of TSA David Pekoske acknowledged the increasing calls outs. "There is a rise in callouts from officers who say they are not able to report to work due to financial reasons. I understand this & where necessary, we will exercise contingency plans using the resources & staff available."

Talking points from the internal email and agency press releases say airports are "exercising our contingency plans to ensure and maintain effective security due to call outs and anticipated high volume."

The agency isn't revealing details of all the contingency plans for security reasons, but CNN has learned that part of the plan involves deploying backup TSA officers to bolster airport staffing levels.

The general manager of Atlanta's airport said Wednesday that 20 backup TSA officers were brought in. CNN has also learned at least six TSA officers were sent to Newark Liberty

International Airport.

Gregory's email notes that members of the flying public have expressed their gratitude to screeners working without pay.

He advises the TSA officials they can say: "Public support from passengers to airport personnel, and others making their way through terminals across the country, is greatly appreciated."

Another line: "TSA officers cannot accept gifts at the checkpoint, however they are grateful for everyone's gratitude. It makes a difference."

TSA officers open up about what the government shutdown is doing to their families (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/18/2019 10:22 AM, Melissa Yeager, 6053K]

Standing in the security line at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport in Arizona, passengers likely haven't felt the impact of the partial shutdown of the federal government.

Employees of the Transportation Security Administration are working without pay, but wait times have consistently been 5-10 minutes at most checkpoints. Passengers move through as normal. Agents say some people stop to thank them for showing up for work.

Like TSA officers elsewhere in the country, these officers missed their first paycheck on Jan. 11. They haven't officially earned pay since Dec. 22.

Airports in Atlanta and Miami have been hard hit by employees calling out from work at almost double the normal rate, but Sky Harbor's absentee rate has remained unchanged. Employees still get up, sometimes as early as 1:30 in the morning, and drive to Sky Harbor to report for their shifts.

Privately, the shutdown has made many of these workers worry about their own security as the longest shutdown in U.S. history threatens to leave them without a second paycheck.

They worry about how they will manage their family budgets and whether a continued shutdown might force some co-workers to leave for careers offering more stability.

TSA lead officer Bryan Bentley speaks three languages: English, Spanish and Portuguese. He left the private sector for TSA in 2010 because he wanted to serve his country.

"I believed in public service and I wanted to give back," Bentley said.

Bentley's no stranger to how politics can affect his job. He's weathered several shutdowns over the years but this one, he said, feels different. He's worried by the seemingly "unending nature of it."

He voiced frustration with both parties, Congress and the president. He and other TSA agents we spoke with expressed dismay at the Office of Management and Budget's suggestions for how to manage their finances — like recommending they negotiate with their lenders if they are in danger of missing a mortgage payment.

"My mortgage company is pretty unbending and I don't know where I would come up with the money other than to get a loan," Bentley said.

As the executive vice president of the local branch of the American Federation of Government Employees, the union representing TSA workers, Bentley said he has received a steady stream of texts and calls from worried co-workers. He's found it hard to ease their fears.

"I'm really worried about my co-workers and my family. We don't know when it is going to end. That not knowing is very stressful," Bentley said.

The stress also is hitting Tina Anderson, a mother of three who left teaching a couple of years ago to take a job with TSA. Anderson has a master's degree in education but switched jobs so she could have good insurance for her daughter, who she calls "medically fragile."

Anderson said her 11-year-old has undergone 16 surgeries, including five on her brain, and is dependent on a variety of medications. The family has income from her husband's job, but with her daughter's health issues, it takes two incomes to make ends meet. Her daughter can't go without her medications.

"If she doesn't take them, it's a big deal. You can't just stop those for a child," Anderson said.

At the beginning of the year, their health-insurance deductible reset. That has left the family scrambling to figure out how to pay doctor bills with no assurance that they'll soon have that second income back.

Anderson said she tried to use the OMB's tactics for negotiating leniency with her daughter's neurologist.

"If you do not pay the co-pay, you do not see the doctor," Anderson recalls the front desk clerk telling her.

Anderson plopped down her credit card.

On Monday, she was one of 300 employees who picked up food from the St. Mary's Food Bank mobile pantry, which came to the TSA offices.

"If you're working, you expect to be OK," Anderson said.

Both Anderson and Bentley said they have seen co-workers retire or quit and move on to more secure jobs. They both worry about the toll a continued shutdown could have on staffing.

On usajobs.gov, the federal government's job-application site, listings for an entry-level TSA officer show a starting salary of \$15.63 an hour. Union representatives said some of their members have take-home pay of about \$500 a week.

Anderson and other TSA workers say travelers, at least at Sky Harbor, have been unusually

polite and empathetic. Occasionally, a passenger tries to offer them a gift card but the workers have to decline. It's against the department's ethics policy.

But the thought behind the gesture is appreciated especially since Bentley feels like Washington is treating him like a "political pawn."

"If this was a private company that didn't pay employees there would be lawsuits," Bentley said.

"But this is the government."

TSA absences rise as shutdown continues (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/21/2019 10:22 AM, Staff]

The Transportation Security Administration said Monday that unscheduled absences among the more than 50,000 U.S. airport security officers rose to 10 percent on Sunday as the government shutdown continues.

The agency said the rate was more than three times the 3.1 percent absence rate on the same day last year. The agency said that, despite the absences, nearly all 1.78 million passengers screened Sunday faced normal security waits of 30 minutes or less.

The agency said many employees, who are not being paid because of the shutdown, are not reporting to work because of financial hardships.

Union warns of threat to air safety from the partial government shutdown (Michigan Public Radio)

[Michigan Public Radio](#) [1/21/2019 5:04 PM, Steve Carmody, AP, 31K]

The technicians who maintain the nation's air traffic system warn the ongoing partial federal government shutdown is affecting air safety.

A weekend offer that President Donald Trump says is a compromise with Democrats doesn't appear to be on track to ending the partial government shutdown, now in Day 31.

Members of the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists union spent time Monday picketing outside airports in Flint and Grand Rapids.

Spokesman Tim Mach says the month-long shutdown is forcing technicians to forego needed supplies.

"It's definitely getting to a point where, 'Well, do we really that? Do we really need that right now?'" says Mach. "So those kind[s] of decisions are being made. And those are the kind of decisions that could jeopardize aviation safety."

Mach says some younger aviation technicians are running short of money after a month since their last paycheck. He says those who can may soon retire, which will leave them shorthanded.

Meanwhile, the percentage of TSA airport screeners missing work has hit 10 percent as the partial government shutdown stretches into its fifth week.

The Transportation Security Administration said Monday that Sunday's absence rate compared to 3.1 percent on the comparable Sunday a year ago.

The workers who screen passengers and their bags face missing another paycheck if the shutdown doesn't end early this week. According to TSA, many of them say the financial hardship is preventing them from reporting to work.

TSA says the national average waiting time in airport checkpoint lines is within the normal limit of 30 minutes, but there are longer lines at some airports.

The agency has dispatched extra screeners to airports in Atlanta, Miami, and Newark, New Jersey.

Conservative leader: Shutdown would quickly end if TSA workers walked off job (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 3:21 PM, Scott Wong, 3038K]

A conservative leader said Friday that the longest shutdown in U.S. history would be resolved in "two days" if unpaid Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers all walked off the job at airports around the country or another cataclysmic event took place.

"TSA agents, if they walked off the job tomorrow, I think the shutdown would be done in two days," said Tim Chapman, the executive director of Heritage Action, the political arm of the Heritage Foundation, said in an interview on C-SPAN's "Newsmakers."

"The fact that so many TSA agents are showing up and really being patriotic in doing their job is a real credit to them," he said, "but an external event like that could put a lot of pressure on it, there's no doubt."

Long security lines have been reported at airports around the country — including in Miami, Atlanta and Seattle — due to a higher number of TSA employees calling out sick. But the majority of TSA employees, almost none of who are getting paid during the shutdown, have continued showing up for work.

Chapman wouldn't weigh in about whether Trump's shutdown strategy was effective but said "what he's trying to achieve is a completely worthy objective."

And he said Trump's decision to halt Speaker Nancy Pelosi's (D-Calif.) overseas congressional trip to Afghanistan and other countries this weekend "merits applause." Pelosi and other Democratic leaders should remain in Washington and keep negotiating with Trump, Chapman said.

"I think it's important for everyone to not just go about business as usual when we're a month into a shutdown," he said.

"What you need is to have some leader on the left to come out and say, 'OK let's just end this thing.' I'm pretty sure the president would agree to some sort of compromise ... south of what he's asked for. And it could be over tomorrow if that happened."

[PA] TSA agents protest government shutdown at Pittsburgh airport (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 4:37 PM, John Bowden, 3038K]

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) employees at Pittsburgh International Airport held a protest on Friday demanding an end to the government shutdown, which has forced TSA officials to work without pay.

Photos of the protest obtained by local news stations showed dozens of TSA employees with signs calling on Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) to hold votes on bills passed by the House to reopen parts of the government.

TSA agents and other government workers still reporting for duty amid the shutdown are set to miss a second paycheck this month on Jan. 25.

"They've already missed a paycheck on Jan. 11, and they're about to miss a paycheck on Jan. 25 and I wonder how secure is the government going to be or the airports going to be when these people can't come to work anymore, can't afford gas, can't afford to pay their bills?" Phil Glover, national vice president of the American Federation of Government Employees, told Pittsburgh Action News.

"It's time for the Senate to call a vote, and that's what we need them to do," he added.

Pennsylvania Rep. Conor Lamb (D) appeared at Friday's rally, where he urged Republicans in the Senate to have votes on the measures, which McConnell has refused to do until Democrats reach a deal with the White House for the president's approval.

"They deserve more than money. They deserve a country that has leadership that is actually working together doing its job," Lamb said.

The president of the area union of TSA agents, which organized Friday's protest, told a local CBS affiliate that "morale is at an all-time low" among his colleagues.

"The morale is starting to drop because we don't see an end in sight," he added, according to Pittsburgh Action News.

The partial government shutdown stretched into its 28th day on Friday, with no resolution in sight. The shutdown began Dec. 22 amid disagreements over Trump's demand for more than \$5 billion in funding to construct a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

[MD] TSA closes checkpoint at BWI airport, citing 'excessive callouts' (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/19/2019 6:59 PM, Martin Weil, 9763K]

The Transportation Security Authority said it had closed a security checkpoint at BWI Marshall Airport Saturday evening because of a shortages of screeners.

In a Twitter message sent Saturday evening, the agency said it "will be exercising a contingency plan" at BWI "due to excessive callouts."

TSA is responsible for security screening of airline passengers in the United States. TSA screeners are among the federal government employees required to work during the partial shutdown of the federal government. Reports have circulated about possible staffing

shortages since the shutdown began.

In its message, TSA said one of its checkpoints at BWI would close at 5:30 p.m.

It recommended that passengers arrive early.

In another news release, TSA said there were more than twice as many unscheduled absences nationally on Friday as last year on the same date.

It said the national rate of unscheduled absences was seven percent, compared with last year's three percent.

In the release TSA said many employees were saying they could not come to work because of financial limitations.

BWI is one of three airports serving the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. It is located between Baltimore and Washington.

[MD] TSA closes checkpoint at Baltimore-DC airport after 'excessive' employee callouts amid shutdown (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/20/2019 9:20 AM, Avery Anapol, 3038K]

The Transport Security Administration (TSA) on Saturday closed a security checkpoint at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport over a lack of staffing.

The TSA said that due to "excessive" employee callouts, it shut down BWI's Checkpoint A at 5:35 p.m., according to NBC Washington.

The absences come as the partial government shutdown approaches its fifth week. The TSA has reported a heightened rate of employees calling in sick across the nation amid the shutdown.

TSA agents are among the estimated 800,000 federal employees who are furloughed or working without pay during the funding lapse. They are set to miss a second paycheck at the end of this coming week.

Agents held a protest at Pittsburgh airport on Friday demanding an end to the shutdown, and a number of other airports have shut down security checkpoints.

[Canada] Fire aboard June WestJet flight caused by e-cigarette batteries, says TSB (BNN Bloomberg)

[BNN Bloomberg](#) [1/18/2019 4:51 PM, The Canadian Press, 158K]

The Transportation Safety Board says an onboard fire that forced a WestJet plane to return to the Calgary International Airport soon after takeoff last June was caused by spare e-cigarette lithium-ion batteries that a passenger failed to declare in his checked baggage.

The agency says in a report that a backpack caught fire and caused minor thermal damage to the cargo compartment's fire-resistant liner near the bag.

An investigation could not determine if the damage occurred before the batteries arrived at

the airport or during baggage handling.

The unidentified frequent business flyer was aware of airline policies requiring that e-cigarettes and lithium-ion batteries only be carried in the cabin and be removed from devices but inadvertently left two spare batteries in his checked bag.

The proliferation of personal electronic devices using these batteries has increased events involving smoke, fire or explosion because of the high temperatures they generate. The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration has recorded 206 incidents involving lithium-ion batteries between 1991 and May 2018.

The TSB report says it is a shared responsibility among passengers, air carriers and security screeners to ensure the contents of baggage comply with rules about restricted items.

"As portable electronics continue to gain popularity, it's essential that guests review baggage policies when prompted at the time of check-in and are aware of what they pack for the safety of our guests, crew and aircraft," the Calgary-based airline wrote in an email.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Shutdown should focus attention on common-sense flood insurance reform (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 2:30 PM, Liam Sigaud, 3038K]

As the partial federal government shutdown drags on, numerous agencies have closed shop or are operating with a skeleton crew. That includes the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the government-run insurer intended to help Americans recover from floods. With more than 5.1 million policies providing over \$1.3 trillion in coverage, the NFIP is by far the biggest flood insurer for both residential and commercial properties in the U.S.

Over the last few months, calls for overhauling the program have intensified, and for good reason. The NFIP has accumulated \$20.5 billion of debt to the U.S. Treasury while its operating expenses are estimated to outstrip its revenues from premiums by about \$1.4 billion annually — and that's assuming that no major disasters like Hurricane Katrina or Superstorm Sandy strike.

Despite these challenges, lawmakers continue to put off meaningful reforms to how the federal government approaches flood insurance.

When Congress voted last December to keep the NFIP afloat until May 31, 2019, it was the program's tenth short-term extension since September 2017. That's right, over a 14-month period, lawmakers kicked the can down the road ten times instead of passing a long-term fix to address the NFIP's fiscal challenges.

With NFIP operations at a stand-still due to the shutdown, it might be a good time for Congress to consider reforming this badly dysfunctional agency to ensure that it continues to serve the millions of Americans who count on it when disaster strikes.

There's no shortage of ideas. Earlier this month, Congressman Blaine Luetkemeyer of Missouri introduced several pieces of legislation that would set the NFIP on a more

sustainable fiscal path. The Taxpayer Exposure Mitigation Act, for example, would require FEMA, the NFIP's overseer, to purchase reinsurance to transfer the risk of flood losses to the private market instead of saddling taxpayers with the bill. The NFIP has already begun using reinsurance to mitigate some of its financial exposure, but it needs to go further, following the example of programs like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The program needs to push its risk to the private sector, and purchasing reinsurance will help accomplish that.

Rep. Luetkemeyer has also reintroduced a bill to require the NFIP to calculate premiums based on a property's replacement cost value, instead of using national averages that fail to account for significant disparities in property values across different regions. By relying on national averages to set rates instead of more detailed, property-specific information commonly used in the private sector, the NFIP tends to undercharge wealthy, coastal customers and overcharge lower-income homeowners.

As a result, policyholders in less expensive homes subsidize those in more expensive ones. Ending this unfair practice by charging homeowners accurate premiums would go a long way in rebalancing the NFIP's finances.

Another measure, the Community Mapping Act, would allow states and communities to develop their own flood maps, as long as they meet rigorous standards. At present, flood mapping is controlled by bureaucrats in Washington. Partly because of this centralization of power and lack of local input, the majority of the NFIP's flood maps are do not accurately reflect flood risk, according to a recent Inspector General report. Letting states and localities play an active role in developing flood maps would empower those who know their communities best and help the NFIP craft its policies on a foundation of factual information.

These reforms are a good start.

The new Congress should hold hearings to debate and discuss these proposals — and others — before the NFIP's extension expires this June. Postponing meaningful reform may be politically expedient, but it will only make the problem worse. American Consumers deserve better.

Project looks into how drones can predict spread of wildfire (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/20/2019 8:26 AM, Staff, 337K]

A University of Missouri researcher is teaming up with scholars in Kansas and Georgia to develop drone technology to monitor and potentially predict the spread of wildfires.

The \$1.2 million research project that began last month aims to use unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, to collect real-time data and send the information to firefighters to help contain wildfires, the Columbia Missourian reported.

"Currently, the (nation's) firefighting, or fire management system, is not very effective and efficient," said University of Missouri professor Ming Xin. "One of the main issues is we cannot predict where fires spread."

Xin is working with University of Kansas professor Haiyang Chao and Georgia State University professor Xiaolin Hu in the wake of nearly 56,000 wildfires burning across the country last year, including California's devastating Camp Fire in November that killed

nearly 90 people.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and National Science Foundation are sponsoring the project.

Xin said the project's drones follow a simulation that can precisely predict where a fire will spread for the next 10 to 30 minutes. The simulation is based on thermal imagery of an area and data on wind, terrain and vegetation. The drones collect the real-time data with thermal imaging cameras and sensors that help estimate the wind field.

The most significant factors affecting the spread of a wildfire are an area's terrain, vegetation and weather, Xin said. While information on an area's terrain and vegetation can be collected from a geological survey, the area's weather patterns are more difficult to determine, Xin said.

Xin hopes the technology will help firefighters with their decision-making because they'll be able to see the scene of a fire on a larger scale.

The researchers plan to launch test flights at the University of Kansas Field Station this summer.

[AL] 'Never Heard Nothing Like It': Southern Storm Wrecks Landmark Churches (NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/20/2019 8:01 AM, Kyle Gassiot, 4491K] Audio: [HERE](#)

While powerful winter storms hit parts of the Midwest on Saturday, heavy thunderstorms swept through the South. A tornado may have destroyed prominent buildings in a town north of Montgomery, Ala.

TRANSCRIPT

LULU GARCIA-NAVARRO, HOST:

It's shaping up to be a brutal winter, in part, because the polar vortex has splintered. Powerful storms are moving across the country, now hitting the East Coast. In the south, heavy thunderstorms spawned an apparent tornado that hit parts of a town in central Alabama. Troy Public Radio's Kyle Gassiot reports.

KYLE GASSIOTT, BYLINE: The Coosa River runs through the heart of Wetumpka, which is 20 miles north of Alabama's capital city, Montgomery. On the east side of the river is the business district, which has a casino that brings around 3 million people to the area each year. Jonathan Smithart manages a restaurant in the casino. He says he was at an intersection on his way to work on Saturday afternoon when the storm hit.

JONATHAN SMITHART: I look up and the light starts - traffic light starts shaking, jumping back and forth. And then just gray and just strong wind, and the car starts shaking. And...

GASSIOTT: Then, he says, a tree fell on the trunk of his car.

SMITHART: So three feet and it would've been on my head, maybe - pretty scary.

GASSIOTT: Some injuries were reported after the storm passed as citizens saw the damage to buildings and houses on the immediate west side of the river.

JERRY WILLIS: This church has probably been painted and captured on canvas more than any other place or structure, you know, in our area, in our county.

GASSIOTT: Mayor Jerry Willis is standing in front of what used to be the Presbyterian church and is now a pile of wood with a few standing walls. The church was over a century old. And its tall, white steeple was one of the most well-known landmarks in the area. Now that steeple is gone as is the one on the Baptist church across the street. Emma Hoppes has lived next door to both of the historic churches for 35 years. She's ready for things to be rebuilt. But first, she wants to put the memory of this storm out of her mind.

EMMA HOPPE: It sounded awful. I thought I was working in a steel mill or something. It was awful. I never heard nothing like it - don't want to hear it no more, either.

(SOUNDBITE OF MACHINERY RUNNING)

GASSIOTT: By nightfall, with a curfew for citizens in place, work on clearing the streets of debris and power lines has begun. At the Presbyterian church, someone has rescued a painting of the steeple and placed it on a post near the street. I ask Mayor Willis if the image of Christ smiling down on the building speaks to the strength of the community.

WILLIS: Well, it tells you that. And it tells you where we need to put our trust.

GASSIOTT: The National Weather Service in Birmingham has said that it will determine if a tornado did indeed hit the area and if so, what rating it should get. For NPR News, I'm Kyle Gassiot in Wetumpka, Ala.

(SOUNDBITE OF ROBERT RANDOLPH & THE FAMILY BAND'S "I STILL BELONG TO JESUS")

[AL] EF-2 Tornado damages homes, businesses in Alabama town (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/20/2019 2:17 PM, UPI, 2015K]

A EF-2 tornado damaged at least 25 homes, the police department, two churches and other buildings in a small town in Alabama.

The twister touched down in Wetumpka in Elmore County, about 12 miles north of Montgomery, on Saturday afternoon, the National Weather Service confirmed on Twitter.

On Sunday, the NWS in Birmingham tweeted that a preliminary survey indicates the area was hit by EF-2 — 111-135 mph — that was 300 yards wide. Also, an EF-1 tornado — 86-110 mph — occurred near Booth in Autauga County.

John De Block, NWS Warning Coordination meteorologist, told the Montgomery Advertiser a two-person team is finding evidence of 120 to 130 mph winds in downtown Wetumpka.

Wetumpka's population was 8,148, based on a 2017 U.S. Census Bureau estimate.

The injury, which was reported at 4:30 p.m., does not appear to be serious, the

Montgomery Advertiser reported.

The First Presbyterian and First Baptist churches had heavy damage. The main sanctuary of the First Presbyterian was built in 1856. The church's services Sunday morning were at the Wetumpka Depot Theater.

"If those churches were occupied, we'd be looking an entirely different situation," De Block said.

In addition, the police department lost five cars.

Downtown Wetumpka appears to have suffered the most damage, Mayor Jerry Willis told the newspaper.

"It's bad, when you love a place as much as we love Wetumpka, to see this devastation," he said. "We have worked so hard to get here and to see it destroyed like this.

"We don't know God's plan, but we know he is in control. If this had been during the week with schools in session. If it had been Sunday morning with churches at worship, it would have been absolutely devastating as far as injuries and even fatalities. We'll come back. We'll clean up and come back."

Electrical workers worked to restore power because of downed lines.

[AL] Tornado tears through Alabama town, destroying homes and trapping residents (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/19/2019 11:32 PM, Hollie Silverman, 5847K]

A tornado roared through central Alabama on Saturday, destroying several homes and leaving families trapped in their basements.

The National Weather Service confirmed Saturday afternoon that a tornado touched down in the town of Wetumpka in Elmore County -- about 12 miles north of Montgomery.

At least seven homes, the police department and a Presbyterian church that is more than 100 years old were destroyed when the tornado made its way through the town, said Lt. Phillip Hethcox with the Wetumpka Fire Department.

The daycare area of a Baptist church was heavily damaged, he said.

Several people had to be rescued from their basements and shelters following the tornado and were treated for minor injuries.

"Amazing that no one got hurt," Hethcox said.

Many people were able to take shelter when a warning siren went off before the tornado hit, Hethcox explained.

Most of the town, including the downtown area, was still without power late Saturday.

[AL] Tornado devastates Alabama city; mayor says 'God has a plan' (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/20/2019 9:45 AM, Travis Fedschun, 9216K]

Residents of a small Alabama city are picking up the pieces Sunday after a tornado caused significant damage to the downtown area and trapped some residents under debris.

The preliminary EF-2 tornado with winds between 120 and 130 mph touched down around 4 p.m. ET and slammed the city of Wetumpka, located about 15 miles northeast of Montgomery in the central part of the state, according to the National Weather Service.

Wetumpka Mayor Jerry Willis told WFSB that one injury was reported and four people had to be rescued after being trapped in a basement by debris.

A senior center, the police department, and the historic First Presbyterian Church were among the buildings damaged from the afternoon storm, he said.

"When you love a place like we do, and we've worked so hard to move this city forward, and to be devastated like this, you know, we just have to recharge our batteries and go back and redo and put it all back together again," Willis told WFSB.

"God has a plan. We don't always know what God's plan is always, but we'll come together as a community and we'll be better," he added. "I promise you we'll be better because of this and it hurts."

Video from the scene showed several collapsed buildings, overturned cars and toppled trees and power lines.

The NWS in Birmingham said that survey crews were headed to the area on Sunday to assess damage from the storms.

The Alabama Law Enforcement Agency said that troopers are on the ground to assist with the aftermath of the storm.

State emergency management officials estimate 35 homes throughout Elmore County, where Wetumpka is located, were damaged by the tornado.

Roberta Johnson, who received damage to her roof, told the Montgomery Advertiser the rain "hit harder than I ever seen before" as the storm rolled through.

"I ran to a bathroom and it hit, boom, the wind was howling," she told the newspaper. "I never prayed so hard in my life."

Authorities were conducting door-to-door searches before nightfall to look for anyone possibly trapped under debris, according to WSFA. Alabama Power said about 2,000 customers were without service Saturday in Wetumpka, and crews were evaluating the damage.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey said on Twitter she deployed state personnel to assist authorities in Elmore County.

Damage also was confirmed in nearby Autauga County.

A mobile home overturned near the Independence community, but no injuries were reported, Sheriff Joe Sedinger said.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[FL] Tornado damages Florida air base hit by hurricane (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/20/2019 9:46 AM, Associated Press, 527K]

Buildings on a Florida air base were damaged by an apparent tornado according to base officials.

Tyndall Air Force Base posted a message on its official Facebook page that said the tornado struck early Saturday evening.

The post said that no one was injured but that the tornado damaged structures and vehicles on the military installation. Officials added that assessments of the damage will continue through the weekend.

The air base located in Florida's Panhandle was hammered by Hurricane Michael when the storm ripped through the area in October.

Earlier this month base officials said that they had issued \$175 million in contracts to repair damage left by the powerful storm.

[TX] Harvey victims rebuffed by FEMA finally receive some financial relief (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/21/2019 3:14 PM, Madeleine Rivera, 9216K]

It's been nearly a year and half since Hurricane Harvey devastated this Texas city. Yet, many victims say they are nowhere close to full recovery.

"I'm in limbo. I'm in like a twilight zone right now," said Malbrth Moses.

Moses' home was destroyed by the storm. Mold and water stains mark the walls of the house he shares with his 95-year-old mother. The foundation, he says, shifted after it was flooded.

"Our backyard got so saturated that the house started sinking. You can see the house leaning forward," he said.

Moses said a FEMA inspector examined the damages, but because they were deemed as "pre-existing," they did not qualify for aid. They spent \$5,000 out of pocket to make some necessary repairs.

Still, it's far from what they need. Because Moses can't work due to mesothelioma, money is tight.

"We don't have any more funds trying to get anything done here. So, right now, I don't know what the next step would be," he said.

Many Harvey victims who were shut out of FEMA funding now could be eligible for federal dollars the state received through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. While FEMA is an immediate stopgap for hurricane victims, the agency has stringent restrictions that critics say leave many victims out to dry.

But almost two years later that state is doling out additional funding it received last February that will provide relief for some victims who felt left out of recovery funds.

Last week, the city opened four recovery centers to teach people about homeowner assistance programs, made possible through a \$1.17 billion federal package.

"What's happening now is the money has arrived," said Tom McCasland, director of Housing and Community Development.

The funds are part of a \$5 billion package that HUD allocated to Texas after Harvey hit. The state's General Land Office distributed more than \$1 billion to Houston and another \$1 billion to Harris County last February -- but it took a year for the application and approval process to take shape, locals officials said.

"FEMA's in charge of the short-term housing recovery. But, HUD has traditionally overseen the long-term housing recovery. And for Hurricane Harvey, this is the first funding from HUD for the long-term recovery," said McCasland.

Hundreds have stopped by the recovery centers since they opened.

Moses is one of those hoping to qualify for the programs, which include reimbursements for completed repairs, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and buyouts.

"To a certain point, it gives me some type of comfort because they're trying to do something for some," said Moses.

Moses said he had been losing hope.

"In the time period it's taking right now, you've got people on the street that have nowhere to go. Houses are still damaged, haven't been torn down, haven't even started to be repaired," he said.

McCasland noted, however, that while the wait seems long, it's actually shorter than the wait time for other recovery efforts.

"We are still waiting to get our money for disasters that occurred in 2016. Here, in perspective, this is a rapid timeline," McCasland said. "But for people who have been waiting, this is far too long."

He said the area is still hoping to get additional funding.

"We think that the real money is closer to \$3 billion for a full recovery. We're still working with federal officials and our elected officials to make sure they understand that," he said.

For now, Moses said the recovery programs are, at least, something. Before finding out

which program he qualifies for, however, he'll have to keep waiting.

"I'm just going to keep fighting and keep going back and forth to see what I can get [done]," he said.

[TX] Legislators look to help victims of future storms (Houston Chronicle)

[Houston Chronicle](#) [1/19/2019 10:13 PM, Mike Morris, 199K]

In Texas' first legislative session post Hurricane Harvey, lawmakers have filed bills aimed at better alerting homeowners to their flood risk, lessening the damage of future storms and lowering disaster victims' tax bills.

Whether these or similar proposals pass, a key question confronting lawmakers is whether to allocate cash for disaster recovery and prevention from Texas' so-called rainy day fund, which is projected to reach \$15 billion at the end of the coming biennium if not touched.

A routine Senate bill providing supplemental funding for the 2018-2019 biennium proposes to draw \$1.2 billion from the Economic Stabilization Fund to cover various state agencies' Harvey expenses. The bill also includes seven placeholder allocations to several agencies, with appropriations for Harvey costs to be filled in later.

The bill makes no mention of state support for flood mitigation projects along the Gulf Coast, but lawmakers from both parties and chambers said there is broad agreement that such an allocation will be made. A spokesman for Gov. Greg Abbott said he has made clear that money from the fund will be spent to aid recovery.

"Now is the time. This would be an excellent opportunity to harden our infrastructure, pull hundreds of Texans out of the floodplains," said Rep. Dade Phelan, R-Beaumont. "With the loss of life and the loss of business activity and loss of revenue from a flood, we could spend a few billion on the front end or \$20 billion to \$30 billion on the back end of the next flood."

Many lawmakers have filed bills with the next disaster in mind.

Phelan and Rep. Sarah Davis, R-Houston, have filed separate bills to create funds to lend or grant to local governments for flood mitigation projects.

Rep. Armando Walle and Sen. Borris Miles, both Houston Democrats, want to form a task force to study flood control needs in Harris County and prepare a report by 2021. Rep. Dan Huberty, R-Houston, wants to form a Lake Houston Watershed Commission to improve flood control communication and planning.

Sen. Eddie Lucio, D-Brownsville, hopes to let local governments, with state approval, adopt housing recovery plans that can be deployed immediately if a disaster occurs. Miles also has filed a bill that would have the state secure standing contracts for all the services necessary to build or repair housing and infrastructure after a disaster.

After the damage

Other bills target property taxes. Davis and Sen. Joan Huffman, R-Houston, have filed companion bills that would force damaged properties to be reappraised after a disaster so

homeowners aren't taxed as if their gutted homes are in mint condition.

A similar proposal from Rep. Victoria Neave, D-Dallas, would prevent homes made uninhabitable from paying a higher tax bill for five years. Rep. Hugh Shine, R-Temple, has filed a bill to give storm victims tax exemptions that vary depending on the severity of damage.

Huberty has filed several bills related to sand mining. Experts agree that sedimentation of the San Jacinto River and Lake Houston reduced the capacity of those waterways to hold floodwaters during Harvey; sand mining industry leaders dispute that the prevalence of sand mining along the river was to blame.

Regardless, Huberty wants the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to post best practices for sand mining on its website, and he proposes hiking the fines on unregistered sand mining operations as well as on registered ones that violate state rules.

Other bills seek to improve residents' awareness of their flood risk. Rep. Will Metcalf, R-Conroe, wants to create an alert system to notify residents if a release of water from a dam may put lives or property at risk. Rep. Mary Ann Perez, D-Houston, wants commercial and residential insurers to clearly state in their policies that flood damage is not covered.

With the devastation around west Houston's Addicks and Barker reservoirs in mind, Huffman filed a bill to require that homebuyers be given a written notice stating whether the seller knows if the property is partly or wholly in a 100-year or 500-year floodplain, flood pool, reservoir or within 5 miles downstream of a reservoir and has flooded or may flood in a catastrophic storm.

Unlike most reservoirs, which form lakes, Addicks and Barker are dry until heavy rains, when water builds up behind earthen dams. Government and private engineers knew for decades that the acreage at risk of inundation in a severe storm was larger than what the government owned, but officials repeatedly judged that a storm that big was unlikely to occur and took no action.

Of the roughly 30,000 homes in the reservoirs' "flood pools" when Harvey hit, at least 9,000 flooded; many are now suing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Many homeowners had no idea they were at risk, as there is no federal law, state law, flood insurance rule or mortgage lender requirement to alert them.

John Breen didn't know his home, which took on a few inches of water during Harvey, was in a flood pool when he purchased it nine years ago.

Fresh off having his roof punctured by a tree during Hurricane Ike, Breen said being notified that the Twin Lakes neighborhood was in the Addicks reservoir flood pool may have affected his decision.

"My assumption was that it was probably a safe zone because it had been approved for construction," he said. "Knowing what we went through with Ike, even though it was different type of storm, with Harvey, it would have been nice to know. Knowledge is always useful. In that case, we felt like we didn't have all the right information."

Allocating the money

Many homeowners did know they were downstream of the dams, Huffman said, but could not imagine government officials knowingly flooding their homes, as occurred during Harvey when the Army Corps of Engineers — fearing uncontrolled flows around the dams' back edges could erode them — opened the reservoirs' floodgates.

Even before many of these bills get a hearing, lawmakers said, they may hash out an issue of more impact: using the rainy day fund for flood projects.

"I don't have any doubt that we're going to put some money into flood mitigation," said Walle, the Houston Democrat. "At this point it's, No. 1, the amount, and No. 2, where are we going to put those resources?"

One idea Gulf Coast officials have pushed is for the state to provide the local match required to draw down Federal Emergency Management Agency funds, both the 10 percent match required with the program that helps replace flooded police cruisers and repair damaged community centers and the 25 percent match required when tackling flood mitigation projects.

In Houston alone, recovery czar Steve Costello estimated that the city's local match could total \$300 million. Mayor Sylvester Turner said Gulf Coast leaders would be seeking "a couple of billion dollars or more," not only for their matches but for projects federal assistance may not cover.

"If we didn't have to supply that (match) locally," said Harris County Flood Control District executive director Russ Poppe, "we have projects we could put that on right now and not miss a beat."

Another proposal, Poppe said, is for the state to set aside funds to enable a faster response after the next storm, with state coffers being reimbursed once federal disaster funds arrive. Local governments could buy out repeatedly flooded homes within weeks, for instance, rather than approaching homeowners after federal funds arrive, when many have already finished repairs.

One hurdle in these talks is that it is still unclear — and may remain so throughout the 140-day legislative session — what role federal aid will play in recovery.

Still waiting

Most cities' and counties' applications for \$1.1 billion in statewide FEMA mitigation funds are still pending; Houston has had no applications approved, and the only funds released to the Flood Control District have been for home buyouts. The Department of Housing and Urban Development also is months behind in publishing rules outlining how an additional \$4.7 billion in mitigation money headed to Texas can be used, let alone releasing those funds.

"There are a lot of unanswered questions," said Huffman, the Houston Republican. "As we await final numbers and final decisions at the federal level and a decision on which projects are going to be the top priorities, it will be difficult to make decisions in this short time frame

that we have on allocations of large sums of money. That's the challenge."

Rep. John Zerwas, R-Katy, who chaired the House Appropriations Committee last session, echoed that.

"We don't want to necessarily pay for things we know is ultimately a federal responsibility and then have them end up saying, 'You obviously don't need it, so we'll put the money elsewhere,'" Zerwas said. "But at the same time, you've got to weigh the fact that there's a several-month hurricane season, and it comes whether you like it or not."

[CA] Federal Judge Faults California Utility As 'Most Recurring Cause' Of Wildfires (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/19/2019 4:40 PM, Tim Pearce, 867K]

A federal court "tentatively" found equipment owned by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) is the "most recurring cause" of wildfires that scorched the state in the past two years, NBC News reports.

U.S. District Court Judge William Alsup issued the ruling Thursday. Power lines owned by PG&E, California's largest utility, have since 2017 sparked more wildfires throughout the state than any other singular cause. The finding was part of a larger ruling on a case related to a 2010 gas pipeline explosion.

"The Court tentatively finds that the single most recurring cause of the large 2017 and 2018 wildfires attributable to PG&E's equipment has been the susceptibility of PG&E's distribution lines to trees or limbs falling onto them during high-wind events," Alsup's ruling said, according to NBC.

"The power conductors are almost always uninsulated," Alsup continued. "When the conductors are pushed together by falling trees or limbs, electrical sparks drop into the vegetation below. During the wildfire season when the vegetation is dry, these electrical sparks pose an extreme danger of igniting a wildfire."

"We are aware of Judge Alsup's latest order and are currently reviewing," the utility said in a statement, according to NBC.

California officials faulted the utility for sparking 12 of 17 wildfires in 2017, but have not ruled on the source of any 2018 wildfires.

Alsup's ruling comes after the utility announced plans to declare bankruptcy around Jan. 29 in part due to the cost of liability for large wildfires. The company faces at least \$30 billion in liability charges over 2017 and 2018 wildfires.

The bill is likely to go up as damages are tallied from the Camp Fire, the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California history. The fire took the lives of 86 people and burned down thousands of homes, including all but destroying the town of Paradise. PG&E has not been officially blamed for the fire, but the utility has admitted some of its equipment located near the start of the fire malfunctioned around the time the fire began.

PG&E's CEO Geisha Williams announced she was leaving the company. The PG&E board

of directors is pushing Williams out over fallout from the company's liability in sparking deadly wildfires, according to Reuters, citing a source familiar with the plans.

[CA] Judge Blames California Wildfires On Negligence, Not Climate Change (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/19/2019 11:15 AM, David Krayden, 867K]

United States District Court Judge William Alsup is "tentatively" blaming poor maintenance of power lines as the cause of California's deadly wildfires, not climate change.

Alsup made the ruling Thursday in a San Francisco federal court, NBC News reports. He was ruling on the actions of the Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) utility company in relation to a 2010 San Bruno gas pipeline inferno that killed several people.

Many have claimed climate change is the culprit for the raging wildfires.

"The Court tentatively finds that the single most recurring cause of the large 2017 and 2018 wildfires attributable to PG&E's equipment has been the susceptibility of PG&E's distribution lines to trees or limbs falling onto them during high-wind events," the judge stated.

"The power conductors are almost always uninsulated," Alsup wrote. "When the conductors are pushed together by falling trees or limbs, electrical sparks drop into the vegetation below. During the wildfire season when the vegetation is dry, these electrical sparks pose an extreme danger of igniting a wildfire."

The wildfires have become a political phenomenon in the last two years, with climate change activists and California Gov. Jerry Brown blaming global warming for the blazes. PG&E itself has pointed to climate change as the cause of the wildfires.

The power company was quick to respond to the judge's ruling with a statement reported by NBC.

"PG&E's most important responsibility is the safety of our customers and the communities we serve," the utility said. "We are aware of Judge Alsup's latest order and are currently reviewing. We are committed to complying with all rules and regulations that apply to our work, while working together with our state and community partners and across all sectors and disciplines to develop comprehensive, long-term safety solutions for the future."

[CA] California Tower to close most of the year for earthquake upgrades (San Diego Union Tribune)

[San Diego Union Tribune](#) [1/19/2019 4:30 PM, Jennifer Van Grove, 214K]

Next month Balboa Park's California Tower will close to the public for an extended period as city and museum officials seek to better guard the structure against potential earthquake damage.

The tower, part of the Museum of Man, is expected to be closed for seven to 10 months starting on Feb. 18, when the city will start its seismic retrofit, which includes improvements based on the latest building codes. The upgrades will cost around \$5.7 million, with a bulk of the funding supplied by the city and \$1 million provided by a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant, a spokesperson for the city said.

A landmark attraction, the California Tower was originally built for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition and was closed to the public in 1935. Eighty years later, and after \$750,000 in improvements, the tower reopened on Jan. 1, 2015, with the museum allowing guided climbs up eight tower floors to a public viewing deck 357 feet above sea level.

Once construction starts, tours will be on hiatus. The Museum of Man will continue with its regular tour schedule — from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily — through Feb. 17. Visitors can purchase tickets, which cost \$23 a piece, at CaliforniaTower.org or at the museum.

Secret Service

George W. Bush delivers pizza to his unpaid Secret Service detail and calls for shutdown to end (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 10:15 PM, Eli Rosenberg, 9763K]

George W. Bush has been an unintentional beneficiary of the Trump administration, his reputation buoyed with the benefit of time and an unpopular president from his own party.

On Friday, he continued to embrace the role of good guy, with a photo of himself delivering pizzas to his Secret Service detail that he posted on Instagram.

"@LauraWBush and I are grateful to our Secret Service personnel and the thousands of Federal employees who are working hard for our country without a paycheck," he wrote. "And we thank our fellow citizens who are supporting them."

The message comes as the shutdown, already the longest in history, nears its 29th day, as Trump's demand for \$5 billion of funding for a border wall has met the harsh political realities of a divided government. Some furloughed workers have taken to accepting food handouts amid the weeks without a paycheck.

But Bush's staff is not going hungry. The president bought them at least six pizzas, according to the Instagram post. He punctuated the post with a call for officials to figure out a way to end the impasse, though he did not give specifics.

"It's time for leaders on both sides to put politics aside, come together, and end this shutdown," he said.

Some 6,000 Secret Service employees are among the 800,000 federal workers not receiving paychecks. Spokeswoman Catherine Milhoan said more than 85 percent of the agency is continuing to report to work every day but declined to comment on any operational details of Bush's protection team.

"He is buying meals for Secret Service agents on his detail as a small way, however insufficient, to show his gratitude for their hard work without pay during the shutdown," Bush spokesman Freddy Ford said in an email. Ford declined to answer how many pizzas Bush purchased or how many agents there were in his detail.

Bush did not face a single government shutdown during his eight years as president.

The Secret Service emerged as a sticking point in the funding debate between House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and President Trump, when Pelosi noted in a letter that the service was stretched thin in the absence of funding, and recommended that the President postpone the State of the Union because of security concerns.

Bush's favorability ratings have climbed in recent years, from about 33 percent when he left office in 2009 to 61 percent a year ago, according to CNN polls. The gain was powered in large part by significant shifts in opinion from self-identified Democrats.

"I never thought I would agree with Bush," one commenter on Bush's post remarked.

Bush calls for end to shutdown, delivers pizza to Secret Service (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 4:42 PM, Owen Daugherty, 3038K]

Former President George W. Bush and his wife, Laura Bush, delivered pizzas to Secret Service members on Friday, calling for lawmakers "on both sides" to end the ongoing partial government shutdown.

"@LauraWBush and I are grateful to our Secret Service personnel and the thousands of Federal employees who are working hard for our country without a paycheck," the former president wrote in an Instagram post Friday afternoon.

"And we thank our fellow citizens who are supporting them. It's time for leaders on both sides to put politics aside, come together, and end this shutdown," he added.

Former presidents and first ladies receive lifetime Secret Service protection.

Roughly 800,000 federal employees have been furloughed or forced to work without pay amid the shutdown, which began on Dec. 22.

President Trump signed a bill this week guaranteeing back pay to federal workers who were furloughed during the shutdown.

Bush's comments are his first public remarks on the shutdown.

The shutdown was triggered last month amid an impasse between the White House and lawmakers over Trump's demands for more billions of dollars in funding for a U.S.-Mexico border wall.

Democrats have refused to comply with the White House's request for wall funding, while Trump has said he would not sign a spending bill unless it included more than \$5 billion for his proposed border wall.

Coast Guard

Coast Guard calls out shutdown in video about upcoming deployment (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/21/2019 7:46 AM, Avery Anapol, 3038K]

The U.S. Coast Guard acknowledged the partial government shutdown and its impact on Coast Guard families as a cutter and crew departed for a multi-month deployment on Sunday.

The Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf and 170 crew members left Alameda, Calif. to support military operations in the Indo-Pacific region.

In a video about the deployment, Coast Guard officials noted that due to the lapse in funding, there has been increased "tension and anxiety" among crew members.

"Our [U.S. Coast Guard] members sail across the world to protect U.S. national interests while their loved ones cope w/ financial challenges & no pay at home," Coast Guard commandant Adm. Karl Schultz tweeted.

Vice Adm. Linda Fagan praised the "outpouring of support" for Coast Guard families.

"I know it is hard for these crews to be leaving behind their dependents and spouses – it's a thousand times more so when everyone is wondering when their next paycheck will be, and how they can support the family that they are leaving behind," she said.

Coast Guard members, who fall under the Department of Homeland Security, are among the federal workers that have not received paychecks since Dec. 31 due to the funding lapse. Service members in other military branches are covered by the Department of Defense, which is not affected by the shutdown.

Schultz told members in a letter earlier this month that he believes it is the first time U.S. armed forces service members have not been paid because of a shutdown.

Some Coast Guard members have turned to food pantries and other aid during the shutdown, which has now entered its fifth week.

'Pay held hostage': Coast Guard remains on duty but grows increasingly vocal over shutdown (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/21/2019 3:46 PM, Ben Wolfgang and Lauren Meier, 527K]

The partial government shutdown hit home for a Coast Guard crew that left port Monday on a monthslong foreign deployment — the latest example of how the stalemate in Washington is fueling financial and emotional distress for a military branch that is still on duty even as their paychecks remain held up by the 30-day-old budget standoff.

The 170-member crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf left California early Monday to support U.S. military operations in the Pacific. That crew, with the rest of the Coast Guard's active-duty force of more than 40,000, has been working without pay since Jan. 15.

Coast Guard officials increasingly have been speaking out about the shutdown's impact on the service and on its member families, many of whom are turning to food pantries and local donation drives to get by. At the Coast Guard's "boot camp" in Camp May, New Jersey, recent recruits are being held after their training is completed because there is no money in the travel budget to send them to their first assignments.

Internal Coast Guard memos released this month recommended that members consider holding garage sales or getting part-time jobs walking dogs to make ends meet — suggestions that sparked anger on Capitol Hill and across the country as political dysfunction takes a toll on the armed forces.

"It is unconscionable that the brave men and women deploying to protect our country today have to worry about how their families are going to pay rent or afford groceries because of the government shutdown," Rep. Joe Cunningham, South Carolina Democrat, said Monday.

Four retired Coast Guard master chief petty officers wrote a blistering op-ed over the weekend on the defense news site Military.com, saying the government breakdown left some 56,000 active-duty, reserve and civilian members of the service financially at sea.

[CT] As Shutdown Drags On, a 'Coast Guard City' Rallies (US News & World Report)
[US News & World Report](#) [1/17/2019 5:42 PM, Susan Haigh and Jennifer McDermott, AP, 2894K]

In New London, Connecticut, the community pulls together to help hundreds of unpaid Coast Guard employees as federal shutdown drags on.

If the uniformed cadets milling about the local movie theaters and pizza joints didn't make it obvious enough, a banner hanging from a downtown parking garage makes it crystal clear: New London is an official Coast Guard City.

The pride is on display everywhere in this former whaling town of 27,000 people that, among other things, is home to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and U.S. Coast Guard Station New London, which patrols the Long Island Sound.

Now, the town's residents are rallying around their own as the partial government shutdown has left the Coast Guard — the only branch of the armed services that is part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security rather than the Pentagon — out in the cold.

"The people have really just come together and said, 'hey, it's the Coast Guard's time. They need our help,'" said Troy Castineria as he pushed his shopping cart around a pop-up food pantry filled with donated, free goods. Both he and his wife Lauren are former active duty members of the Coast Guard who work at the academy. Both have been furloughed.

"A lot of people have lost faith in humanity. But this right here goes to show that we are appreciated and there are people to help when the time comes," he added, staring with amazement at the makeshift supermarket created by a coalition of local Coast Guard-related advocacy groups.

The free pantry is just one of several efforts big and small by area residents and businesses.

At the popular Slice Pizza Bar, a chalkboard sign proclaims "Proudly serving our USCG" and offers a 15 percent discount to Coast Guard families.

Castineria said the local utility in nearby Norwich has waived late fees for federal employees who are not being paid and can't cover their bills. Separately, nurses at New London's Lawrence and Memorial Hospital have been offering gift cards to needy families; a city activist plans to open her home on Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a drop-off location for donations; local restaurants and other businesses are offering discounts, and local banks are providing no-interest loans to supplement lost paychecks; and the city's police department and the U.S. Navy submarine base in nearby Groton have collected donations.

Waller Walker of nearby Mystic arrived in New London on Thursday afternoon with a friend, driving two vehicles packed with groceries. The pair had reached out to a network of 400 people to raise money and get food donations after hearing about the collection site on the news.

"We want to support the Coast Guard," she said. "They're in our neighborhood and they do so much good."

New London Mayor Michael Passero said the shutdown's impact has been personal for his city, where the Coast Guard is among the city's top employers, with a workforce approaching 1,000 people and a campus with more than 1,000 cadets.

It's also been an opportunity for New London to live up to the city's 2015 congressional designation as a Coast Guard City, a place where Coast Guard men, women and their families are made to feel welcome.

Besides the New London station and the academy, a top military college where the cadets are required to volunteer in New London's schools and social service agencies, the city is home to the U.S. Coast Guard Research and Development Center and the International Ice Patrol Operations Center.

The city is also awaiting construction of a Coast Guard museum, which is planned along the downtown waterfront and seen as a way to attract tourists to help revitalize a sleepy downtown that has struggled to keep storefronts filled.

Passero worries about what will happen to his city if this shutdown continues. He said New London is at the beginning of what he sees as an economic revitalization, given stepped-up hiring at Electric Boat and plans for off-shore wind generation development.

"The longer it drags on, the harder these impacts are going to be felt," he said. "It's going to start to drain public resources and it's going to start to take away from our economic base at some point."

Jessica Bello, whose husband has been in the Coast Guard for eight years, said her family is relying on the free food pantry and her extra shifts working as a bartender and cocktail waitress at nearby Foxwoods Resort Casino to help make ends meet.

"I was sent to the ER three days ago due to sciatica because of the extra hours and stress. I have no choice but to go back to work tomorrow injured or not because my bills don't care if I'm injured," the mother of two said.

In their quest to help, people have been sharing tips about restaurants offering free meals for federal employees, stores discounts and job postings, said Crystal Simmons, 35, who administers a Facebook group for New London Coast Guard families.

"It has been amazing to see people jumping into action," she said. "We're not sitting on our hands and saying, 'What are we going to do?' It's jumping in, posting to find out who needs something, what can we do, who can we contact? It's been really great to see people stepping up to fix what the government's not."

She said people have been cutting back on shopping and eating out, which she predicts will have a "huge trickle-down effect that people aren't thinking about."

Peter Farnan, manager of Mr. G's restaurant, a popular eatery and bar for the academy's cadets, enlisted personnel and instructors, estimated that business is down about 10 percent compared to this time last year.

"If this goes on for another two weeks ... we'll definitely be a little bit more anxious and concerned," said Farnan, who has been offering 10 percent discounts to all Coast Guard employees affected by the shutdown. "We'll start tightening our belts."

The irony of the Coast Guard's predicament wasn't lost on retired Admiral Thad Allen, who toured the pop-up pantry on Thursday during a visit to the academy. He expressed his frustration at how the shutdown has been impacting people who often rescue others from natural disasters.

"We have people under duress right now that are still expected to do their duty. But it's not mother nature that's inflicted the wound. It's our own government," he said, adding how the leaders in Washington need to "carry out their constitutional duties to provide for the general welfare and common defense" or else morale and readiness will suffer.

He added: "It's pretty rough to come in and do your job every day when you're not sure what's happening to your family."

[NY] The Latest: Man rescued from New York river island (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 12:05 PM, Associated Press, 337K]

The Latest on the winter storm hitting the East Coast (all times local):

2:55 p.m.

Coast Guard crew members in New York have rescued a 21-year-old man stranded on an island in the Navensink River in 34-degree weather (1 Celsius) after his small boat broke down.

The Coast Guard said crews arrived on the island just over half an hour after the call came in Monday morning. The air temperature was 7 degrees (minus-14 Celsius) with 30 mph wind.

The search and rescue coordinator for Coast Guard Sector New York says a bad situation can turn to worse very fast in such conditions.

Emergency works throughout the U.S. now say at least six people have died following the vicious winter storm that ravaged the northeastern U.S. over the weekend

A man in charge of transportation at a southwestern Michigan school district had a fatal heart attack while shoveling snow.

11:25 a.m.

Officials say at least five people have died following the vicious winter storm that ravaged the eastern U.S. over the weekend.

At least four people were killed Sunday due to the storm including a 12-year-old girl in suburban Chicago who died after a snow fort collapsed while she was playing outside a church. A utility worker in Connecticut was fatally struck by a falling tree as he was repairing a power line.

And in Wisconsin, the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office says a 59-year-old man and a 91-year-old man collapsed and died Sunday in two separate incidents after removing snow.

A snowplow driver in Kansas was killed Saturday when the plow he was driving rolled over on a highway.

9:15 a.m.

Frigid air and high winds are causing dangerous travel conditions throughout the eastern U.S. after a powerful winter storm pummeled the region over the weekend.

The National Weather Service forecasts Monday's temperatures will be more than 20 degrees (minus-7 Celsius) below normal across the Northeast, with gusty winds and wind chills approaching minus 40 degrees in northern New York and Vermont.

The bitter cold is expected to stymie travel once again with FlightAware reporting nearly 280 flights canceled as of Monday morning.

Another storm system is already developing over the Rockies that could blanket the same region with more snow by the end of the week.

[NJ] Coast Guard rescues duck hunter stranded on island off NJ (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 2:31 PM, Staff, 337K]

The Coast Guard has come to the rescue of a duck hunter who was stranded on a small island off the New Jersey coast.

The hunter was among a group of four men who entered the Navesink River on Monday morning in a small boat that authorities said wasn't suited for the bitter cold and blustery weather conditions.

Three of the men made it back to shore shortly after their boat broke down around 9 a.m. But the fourth man ended up on the island.

Rumson police contacted the Coast Guard, who dispatched a 29-foot rescue boat from their Sandy Hook station, while a helicopter came from the guard's Atlantic City station. The man was brought back to shore a short time later.

None of the hunters were injured.

[NJ] 'I see people panicking': In a Coast Guard town, hardship and resolve amid the shutdown (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 8:24 PM, Dan Lamothe, 9763K]

The Coast Guard's newest class of personnel completed boot camp here Friday with two graduation gifts from Washington: no paychecks and no money to send them all to their first assignments.

The 76 members of Company X-196 joined the service during a closed ceremony, the first since the partial government shutdown forced the Coast Guard to forgo pay.

Unlike the Defense Department's branches of the military, the Coast Guard is operating without a budget, marking the first time in more than a century that part of the armed forces has had paychecks withheld.

While Congress has approved funding for the Defense Department, the Coast Guard is part of the Department of Homeland Security, whose agencies are affected by the shutdown. Active-duty personnel are "essential workers," working for free with the promise of back pay when a spending deal is passed — but they have no idea when that money will come.

"I can see people panicking, and they have every right to," said Katelyn Leckemby, 35, whose husband, Stephen, is an electronics specialist who works on the vessels ported in Cape May. Leckemby is 7-1/2 months pregnant with the couple's fourth child. "It's scary," she added. "A lot of people have families, and we're all just trying to provide for them, and not knowing when the money is going to come in and whether you can provide for them especially, that's terrifying."

Hundreds of thousands of federal workers, including more than 6,000 civilian staffers who support the Coast Guard, have been furloughed since the shutdown began last month over President Trump's demand for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and Democrats' refusal to fund it.

Service members are prohibited from talking to the media during the shutdown, but several Coast Guard spouses said they are increasingly worrying about paying their bills, cutting spending where they can and visiting an ad hoc food pantry set up on base to feed their families. If the paychecks due at the end of January also are withheld, the consequences will be grave, they said.

Leckemby and her husband already have curtailed their spending on cellphones and gasoline, and they've started to use hallway fans to blow heat from a wood-burning stove around their house so they can shut off their heat. The high here Friday was 41 degrees. Monday's forecast calls for a low of 16.

"We're kind of tiptoeing around the situation that I'm very late in my pregnancy," Leckemby said, noting that she often drives an hour one way to meet with doctors. "Our kids are young, but they're not so young that they can't understand hurt feelings. So if I get really emotional and start to cry, I have to walk away."

Deanne Piersol, 27, the wife of another Coast Guardsman, works part time as a teacher's aide in Cape May while caring for their 4-year-old daughter. Initially, Piersol joked with her husband that she'd cover their bills during the shutdown, but as progress in Washington foundered, she started using the food pantry.

Piersol recently learned that she is pregnant with the couple's second child. Her husband, Blaine, works about 80 hours per week training recruits, and while she has tried to explain the difficulties they face to friends back home in Texas, such discussions have not been easy.

"A lot of the comments I'm getting is, 'Well, you'll get a paycheck eventually,'" she said. "Well, yeah. Now, why don't you take your paycheck and then don't use it, act like you don't have it and then still try to pay your bills?"

The situation for graduating recruits adds a new challenge for the Coast Guard amid the shutdown, which turned 28 days old Friday. A service spokesman, Lt. Cmdr. Scott McBride, said the Coast Guard has the ability to issue plane tickets to boot camp graduates who have been assigned to units that "have the capacity to support them during the shutdown." But not all units do, and the situation is more complicated in those cases.

Some graduates will be allowed to return to their hometowns for the leave typically granted to new service members after boot camp. After that, instead of sending them to their units, the Coast Guard will defer the costs associated with permanent transfers by temporarily placing the graduates on recruiting assignments while they're home with family, McBride said.

Others who do not have the means to go home and who have been assigned to units that can't afford to take them on will remain in Cape May.

"We are committed to the health, safety and security of our graduates as they begin their service to the American public," McBride said. "No recruits will depart the training center without an approved transfer plan which accounts for each of their individual circumstances and resources."

A mentor for the new graduates, Coast Guard Capt. Kevin M. Carroll, briefly referenced the shutdown during their graduation ceremony. He said it is "a very difficult time that you're entering the Coast Guard," but he reminded them of their duties as they join the service.

"I'll tell you right now that our core values — honor, respect and devotion to duty — are not funded with cash," he said in remarks streamed online. "They're funded with character. They're funded with commitment. With blood and sweat and tears. And during our visits I saw all of that from you, so you are absolutely ready to be able to join the fleet, and I welcome you here today."

The uncertainty has triggered fear and anger among some affiliated with the service. But even in this beach town that is now mostly deserted for the winter, it has also inspired generosity and resolve.

The food pantry was established at the beginning of the year after firefighters in Seaville, N.J., some 23 miles northeast, took up a collection of nonperishable items. A club for

military spouses at Cape May initially stocked the food in a closet but quickly realized that it would need more space, organizer Jessica Manfre said.

Within days, the base commanding officer, Capt. Owen Gibbons, found unused space in a warehouse. Four refrigerators from other parts of the base were rolled in, along with a freezer that a teacher in town supplied. With food donations arriving daily, organizers began using gift cards and lines of credit extended by local stores to buy and distribute produce, meat, cheese, laundry detergent, diapers and more.

Manfre, 33, whose husband, Scott, is a senior chief petty officer, said she is naturally optimistic. But she lost hope weeks ago that Washington would reach a quick resolution and decided she had better get to work. Manfre, who has a 7-year-old son and a 15-month-old daughter, now spends about 10 hours per day volunteering at the food pantry and has a growing army of volunteers.

"I think what we have done has given a lot of purpose, at least for me," she said. "Because I am not a patient person at all. I don't sit around and wait. So, when I'm doing this, I'm not as stressed."

The politicians responsible for the shutdown "need to figure it out, and they need to figure it out soon," she said. "These are our lives."

On Wednesday afternoon, the food pantry was humming, with dozens of people in and out during the three hours it was open. Some were in the Coast Guard's distinctive blue working uniform, and others carried children.

Manfre, Piersol and Leckemby were among the volunteers restocking shelves. Manfre sunnily asked visitors if they were there to "shop" and offered each of them bags.

Before the shift began, Piersol recalled crying the first time she visited the pantry. Then tears rolled down her cheeks again as she described volunteers bringing donated food to distribute.

"The people walking in and feeling guilty, I get how they're feeling," she said. "They say, 'Oh, we've only missed one paycheck.' But what if you miss three, and your money has gone to food when you could be saving that money for your future? I want them to realize that. I want to be like: 'Come on in! Take all you need!'"

[NJ] 'This is a true Coast Guard community' (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 7:50 PM, Staff, 9763K] Video: [HERE](#)

In Cape May, N.J., a food pantry has become a lifeline for Coast Guard families struggling through the shutdown.

[LA] Coast Guard ends search for 2 missing in Mississippi River (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/18/2019 7:22 AM, Staff, 337K]

The Coast Guard has suspended the search for two people missing in the Mississippi River after a workboat capsized.

The Coast Guard made the decision Thursday after a search that lasted 27 hours and covered 130 square miles (nearly 340 square kilometers).

The 32-foot (10-meter) boat was found Thursday. The Coast Guard said Katelyn Carlisle and Ruben Arellano were on board when it capsized late Wednesday morning near Boothville.

The Coast Guard, the Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's Office, Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries and Branch Pilot boat crews responded to the call for help.

Coast Guard Cmdr. Michael Wolfe said it's never easy to make the decision to stop a search.

What prompted the boat to capsize is still under investigation.

[IL] Weather conditions hinder search of Lake Michigan off Waukegan for missing teen (Chicago Tribune)

[Chicago Tribune](#) [1/20/2019 2:40 PM, Phil Rockrohr, 1740K]

The search for a teenager who reportedly jumped into Lake Michigan Friday to rescue another teen who slipped off a pier into the lake was delayed again Sunday by heavy waves, Fire Marshall Steven Lenzi said.

Waukegan fire personnel were unable to resume water-recovery operations on Saturday or Sunday, despite a drop in wind speeds since the water search was called off Saturday, Lenzi said.

"We're doing a ground search near the water," he said Sunday. "The waves are still too difficult to deal with. The water conditions are still pretty treacherous as you get out in the water. The wind might have died down, but the waves are still heavy."

Crews will continue to search the lakefront until they are able to resume the water search, hopefully Monday, Lenzi said. Illinois State Police Air Operations and the U.S. Coast Guard have also been called for help, he said.

The missing teen was one of two 16-year-old boys who fire personnel searched for on Friday after receiving a call that two youths were struggling to get out of a channel off Municipal Beach, fire officials said. The first teen was located and taken to a hospital late Friday afternoon, officials said.

Fire personnel responded to a call for help in an area near the main pier off the beach near the Stiner Pavilion "for a subject who slipped off the pier and into the water," according to a statement issued by the Fire Department Friday night.

"The caller also advised that a second subject jumped in to try and rescue the first subject and they were both struggling," the statement said. "While fire units were responding, we were advised that one subject was out of the water and in need of medical attention."

Rescuers searched for the second teen for 90 minutes but were unable to find him, the statement said. Worsening weather conditions hampered attempts to locate the teen, Lenzi said.

A witness led Waukegan police and fire personnel to a spot where the teen was last seen, the statement said. Divers immediately began search efforts and additional divers were called for help, it said.

"Scene conditions made operations extremely difficult and very hazardous for rescuers," the statement said.

After 90 minutes of water searching with "very limited visibility and treacherous wave conditions," the divers were unable to find the teen and search operations were shifted to side-scan sonar via boat, it said.

Saturday's conditions included "gale force winds" that created "extremely dangerous icy conditions," Lenzi said.

"After a thorough review and assessment of the current and expected conditions, it was determined that it would not be safe for any sort of water recovery operations to take place," he said.

The teen pulled from the water was transported to Vista Medical Center East in Waukegan, according to the statement Friday. The statement did not indicate the teen's medical condition.

Lenzi declined to provide the name or hometown of either teen and said he was not certain of the rescued teen's medical condition.

Waukegan police Cmdr. Joseph Florip could not be reached for comment Sunday.

[IL] 'We report regardless': Coast Guard protection among Lake County services pressing on during shutdown (Chicago Tribune)

[Chicago Tribune](#) [1/18/2019 11:25 AM, Frank Abderholden, News-Sun, 1740K]

Lake County townships are mobilizing to get the word out to workers either furloughed or working without pay during the federal government's shutdown that they might qualify for some benefits offered by township government, including use of food pantries.

If the shutdown extends into February, there are also possible shortfalls looming for people using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through a Link card or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

And members of the United States Coast Guard — whose mission includes servicing the Lake County end of Lake Michigan — experienced their first missed paycheck on Tuesday as they continue to work without pay during the impasse.

Some civilian noncritical employees with the Coast Guard have been furloughed, according to Master Chief Alan Haraf, public affairs officer for District 9, which includes the county shoreline and its base in Wilmette, with air support from Traverse City, Mich.

"We were funded through the end of December, so this was the first paycheck we missed," he said. The Coast Guard's mission includes everything from water rescues to icebreaking in the Lake Superior area.

Haraf added that communities have been very responsive in wanting to help out, and superior officers are checking on younger members who might not be as financially sound with young families to support.

"We're looking to see who needs help. The community outpouring has been impressive," he said, noting assistance is coming through organizations like the USO (United Service Organizations) Illinois, which is well known for supporting service members.

"We're here and still reporting for duty," he said. "We report regardless."

Coast Guard members are among the federal employees eligible for assistance through the township food pantry effort, which started when Anne Flanigan Bassi, Moraine Township supervisor, began contacting people and other townships with the idea of helping workers who are struggling financially because they are missing a paycheck or are still working without getting paid.

"Moraine Township residents employed by the Federal Government and not receiving paychecks are encouraged to visit our food pantry, and apply for rent, utility or other assistance for which they may qualify," Bassi said in a statement released Jan. 13.

"At the very least, (making the pantries available) would take the stress of providing food for the family off the table," she said this week.

To utilize the service, workers would need federal ID and proof of residency, like a utility bill. The township covers most of Highland Park, all of Highwood and small parts of Deerfield and Lake Forest.

"Government Workers unable to pay rent, mortgages and other necessities should not also have the stress of being unable to feed their families," added Township Trustee Amy Zisook.

Moraine Township's Food Pantry is located at 800 Central Avenue in Highland Park, and has fresh produce, eggs, dairy and meat, as well as shelf products that users can choose from on Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon, and on Wednesday from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. or by appointment.

Bassi sent a message to other townships encouraging them to do the same.

"We don't know who (the workers) are or where they live," she said, but she encouraged them to come in if they are having financial problems and speak with one of the township's caseworkers to see what they might qualify for. The pantry is open to them immediately.

"The message is, 'You may qualify,'" Bassi added.

Zion Township Supervisor Cheri Neal took notice and is also trying to get the word out. While the township doesn't have its own pantry, it does provide support to four others.

According to Neal, about 12 county townships have food pantries, but those that don't can refer them to one that does.

"We want to help as many families, just in case," she said. Food pantries are run by Christian Assembly of God, 2929 Bethel Blvd. in Zion; Christian Faith Fellowship, 1727 27th St. in Zion; North Point Community Christian Church, 900 Lewis Ave. in Winthrop Harbor; and Our Lady of Humility Parish, 10655 Wadsworth Road in Beach Park.

People who use either SNAP or WIC will find that they will receive their February payment at the end of this month, and authorities have urged members to be careful to budget.

Mark Pfister, executive director of the Lake County Health Department, said storm clouds are approaching on those services if the shutdown continues into next month.

"We have been telling everyone that they will receive at the end of January, but it has to last through February," Pfister said. He added people who receive these benefits spend them locally, and if funds run out, it will affect private businesses that cater to people using those programs.

"They will feel the pinch," he said.

Also this week, the Lake County Board approved \$247,621 in emergency funding for the county's "A Way Out" program for residents seeking treatment for substance abuse, because while it has been approved for a grant through the U.S. Department of Justice, no one is in that office because of the shutdown.

"We're one step away from completing the grant process," Pfister said. "It's been approved, but there is no one there to do it."

The program offers those with substance-abuse issues the option of seeking help at local police stations. Those who voluntarily do so will not face any charges, even if they are in possession of drugs when they come in for help, according to authorities.

Pfister said the health department is also working to keep everyone informed about the issue of ethylene oxide use by two plants in Waukegan and Gurnee. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency had been running a website for the latest information updates, but because of the shutdown, no one is keeping the site up to date.

For road projects headed by the Lake County Division of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Transportation currently provides funding to the Federal Highway Administration via the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, funding projects through 2020.

"Therefore, the current federal shutdown has not impacted any federally funded transportation projects in Lake County. Lake County DOT's 5-year highway improvement program totals around \$578 million, with approximately \$87 million coming from federal funds," county officials reported in a statement this week.

Both Naval Station Great Lakes and the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago are unaffected by the current shutdown, according to the agencies. Great Lakes spokesman John Sheppard said the U.S. Department of Defense is funded through September of this year.

[Bahamas] Coast Guard: 31 rescued from disabled boat off the Bahamas (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 5:19 PM, AP, 337K]

The U.S. Coast Guard has returned 31 people to dry land after their vessel became disabled in the waters off the Bahamas.

In a statement Monday, the Coast Guard said the pleasure craft Summer Art was reported disabled early Sunday in the waters about 10 miles (15 kilometers) north of Bimini.

A Coast Guard cutter was diverted to the scene. Officials said 31 Haitians aboard the vessel were transferred to Freeport, Bahamas.

Cmdr. Jason Aleksak said an approaching cold front, high seas and strong winds made the rescue "extremely challenging."

CISA/Cybersecurity

Shutdown's invisible costs: Cyberthreats, untrained firefighters, bug invasions (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 1:23 PM, Todd C. Frankel and Joel Achenbach, 9763K]

The emerald ash borer, *Agrilus planipennis*, is never furloughed. Native to Asia, this insect is an invasive species killing beloved ash trees across North America.

"It's sweeping like fire through timber," said Jeanne Romero-Severson, a plant geneticist at the University of Notre Dame, who has been working with the Forest Service on a breeding program to create an -insect-resistant ash tree.

She had been planning to meet with colleagues to discuss the bad beetle at an annual U.S. Agriculture Department invasive species conference scheduled to be held last week. But then came the partial government shutdown. The conference was canceled, even as nature marches — and hops, crawls, wriggles and oozes — onward.

"The invasion continues. The trees continue to die," Romero-Severson said. "We're losing time we cannot recover."

The most severe costs of the shutdown may be these invisible ones — the loss of relatively obscure activities by a massive federal bureaucracy with responsibilities that stretch into unexpected corners of society. The cost of not doing this work doesn't translate neatly into a dollar figure or a percentage of economic growth chipped off the gross domestic product. And it's hardly as tangible as long lines at the airport or long waits to get questions answered by the Internal Revenue Service. But it is the hard-to-fathom toll of telling hundreds of thousands of people with expertise to stay home.

That means canceling training for wildland firefighters, law enforcement and Border Patrol agents. Research grant proposals go unreviewed. Safety checks of sports stadiums are postponed. Efforts to improve election security are put on hold.

Much of the government work that is not considered essential during a shutdown, and thus not labeled "excepted" under agency plans, involves nonurgent but important activities. As

the Trump administration rushes to preserve vital functions, it's the type of work that attracts little attention. But those involved say that although it may be hard to measure, letting these efforts lapse will have a long-term cost.

One worrisome area, for example, is cybersecurity. The threats are mounting as the government tries to stave off digital attacks and secure election processes in advance of the 2020 races. But the Department of Homeland Security's shutdown plan called for furloughing more than 1,500 of the 3,500 employees in the newly formed Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).

"We're under attack every day from very sophisticated nation-states like Russia, China, North Korea and Iran," said Suzanne Spaulding, a Homeland Security undersecretary during the Obama administration in charge of cybersecurity and infrastructure protection. "They get better every day. And we're not. We're in a holding pattern."

"We are in a race with our adversaries, with the bad guys, on innovating in cyberspace," she said. "It is a challenge when you have a full team, when all hands are on deck. And all hands are not on deck."

The CISA issued a brief statement about staffing levels: "Due to the lapse of appropriations, CISA has ceased a variety of critical cybersecurity and infrastructure protection capabilities. However, we have maintained baseline operational capabilities supporting national security, including staff in the National Risk Management Center, in accordance with DHS and OMB guidance."

Medical science and pharmacology are also fields that evolve rapidly and require government regulation. At the Food and Drug Administration, the pipeline for drug approval has slowed, and staffing has diminished because of the shutdown.

The FDA review for a new drug to treat peanut allergies in children has been delayed by the shutdown. Drugmaker Aimmune Therapeutics said the timeline for its federal regulatory approval has been pushed to the end of the year.

Doctors nervously watch for signs of significant delays with new treatments.

"You have to worry," said Walter Curran Jr., executive director of the Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University.

Another concern is wildfires. They've been getting worse in the western United States, and particularly horrific fires have consumed hundreds of thousands of acres and killed scores of people over the past two years. About 200 federal workers who were set to begin training to fight forest fires last week in Colorado Springs were forced to drop out because of the shutdown. Many of them hoped to join fire hotshot crews.

Another training session in Tennessee also was canceled. The missed training means many workers will not be qualified to help fight forest fires or can't move on to become crew bosses or incident commanders.

There's already a shortage of wildland firefighters, said Wendy Fischer, executive director of the Colorado Wildland Fire and Incident Management Academy.

"This situation sets people back," she said. "And we're coming up on fire season."

The shutdown obviously doesn't help the economy. A top White House economist this week said that the economic impact from the shutdown will be twice as great as previously estimated. But the numbers, even if they involve multiple billions of dollars, remain fairly modest compared with the vast scale of the U.S. economy.

That said, the shutdown has the potential to deliver a psychological blow to the country that could send the economy reeling, economists have warned.

"Broadly it's more like an economic corrosive rather than a cliff event. It's wearing down the economy and sentiment, confidence, people's optimism," said Mark Zandi, chief economist for Moody's Analytics. "At some point the corrosive will eat through the foundations of the economy and the economy will break, but no telling when that will happen."

The broader business community likes predictability and reliable data, noted economist Robert Shapiro, who was an official in the Commerce Department during the Clinton administration. He said the Bureau of Economic Analysis — an agency with data so sensitive that it puts officials in a locked room to review numbers that could jolt the markets — is not putting out valuable monthly reports during the shutdown.

"What's happening in home construction? What's happening in manufacturing orders? What's happening in retail sales? What's happening in exports and imports? Do you know we don't know what the trade deficit is, in November? Trump can't even know if his trade tariffs are working!" Shapiro said.

And so the U.S. economy is "flying blind," as he put it on the Brookings Institution's website.

"The decisions proceed with a lot more guesswork than usual, because they don't have the data, and in those cases you're more likely to have bad decisions, and that impairs the efficiency of the economy," he said.

As for the bugs, the cancellation of the invasive species meeting in Annapolis was devastating to many researchers, including Andrew Liebhold, a forest service research entomologist who had been looking forward to hearing from a South African scientist studying the Sirex woodwasp. It inserts eggs into trees, killing them, and could become a major threat to U.S. pine trees.

And an entire morning was to be spent talking about the spotted lanternfly. The bug has exploded from a curiosity in 2014, when the insect native to Southeast Asia was first spotted in Pennsylvania. Now, it's an invasive threat seen in at least six Mid-Atlantic states. The U.S. Agriculture Department spent millions of dollars trying to contain the bug, which is a threat to grapes and hardwoods. The agency thought it had the lanternfly under control, but in recent months the situation turned dire and now the bug is everywhere, Liebhold said.

A government shutdown doesn't help.

"It sets us back a long way. It means the science slows down," he said. "We're already struggling to keep up with invasive species."

No private company is going to take on the research and management of the lanternfly, he said.

"That's what we do," he said.

Shutdown Makes Government Websites More Vulnerable To Hackers, Experts Say (Alabama Public Radio)

[Alabama Public Radio](#) [1/20/2019 10:53 AM, Laura Sydell, 3K]

Several parts of the federal government have been shut down for about a month now, and cybersecurity professionals say government websites are becoming more vulnerable to security breaches each day the shutdown lasts.

Visitors to [manufacturing.gov](#), for instance, are finding that the site has become unusable — its information about the manufacturing sector is no longer accessible. Instead, it features this message at the top of the homepage:

"NOTICE: Due to a lapse in appropriations, Manufacturing.gov and all associated online activities will be unavailable until further notice."

Security certificates help keep websites secure, but last week the British security firm Netcraft reported that more than 130 certificates used by U.S. government websites had expired.

These certificates make sure users know "this is really the government resource that I'm trying to access and not some bad guy," explains Dan Kaminsky, the chief scientist at the security firm White Ops.

The lack of a certificate makes it easier for a bad actor to trick you into going to a fake site. Even though there's a warning when you click on a site without an updated certificate, Kaminsky says, "people might get used to ignoring the browser warnings" because of the shutdown. "Then you think you're really walking into this site and you're really not."

He offers a worst-case scenario: Imagine if the security certificate was down for the Social Security Administration website and a bad actor set up a fake site. Someone could go to the bogus site, enter their password, and give the hackers access to personal information.

The shutdown also means there are fewer IT staff on hand. For instance, around 2,000 employees — down from the usual 3,500 — are working at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, one of the agencies leading the nation's cyberdefenses, according to the White House Office of Management and Budget's contingency plans.

Rob Ragan, a partner in the cybersecurity firm Bishop Fox, says that means a lot of important tasks may not be done, such as updating software with the latest security patches.

"You end up getting buried in a really big backlog of issues that you may never dig yourself out of," he says. "And, at that point, one of those issues may have been an indicator of a compromise or a breach that may go unnoticed for months or years to come."

Security researchers worry that the shutdown is like putting a red blanket in front of a bull. Nations like Russia, China and Iran could see it as a signal to charge ahead. Meanwhile, Ragan says, think about the amount of information on government websites that's personal and even classified.

And the likelihood of security lapses increases as the shutdown drags on, says Vikram Thakur, a technical director at the security firm Symantec.

"We're in the fourth week of a shutdown right now," he says. "But as time goes on and on, that risk is most definitely going to go up exponentially."

Ironically, Thakur says, having fewer personnel on the job lowers at least one kind of security risk: email phishing. That's when hackers send an email with a link that unleashes malware into the system.

"If nobody's opening e-mail and nobody's using the work network, the chances or the success rate for attackers who are using email as their primary mode of attack" drop, Thakur says.

NPR asked the Department of Homeland Security's Cyber Division for comment but did not hear back. House Democratic aides say they're also unable to get information about which federal IT workers are on the job.

But they want to see details when the shutdown ends. In the event of a future shutdown, Democrats might move to keep all IT workers on the job in the name of cybersecurity.

LULU GARCIA-NAVARRO, HOST:

Hackers love to try to breach U.S. computer systems. This now may be easier than ever before. With so many IT and cybersecurity workers furloughed by the shutdown, security professionals say government websites are more vulnerable. NPR's Laura Sydell reports.

LAURA SYDELL, BYLINE: The Trump administration may like to highlight American manufacturing, but try going to manufacturing.gov. The site has become unusable. You can't access any of the details offered about U.S. manufacturing. According to Netcraft, a British security firm, it's one of dozens of government sites that haven't renewed their security certificates. These certificates are a bit like a driver's license - they prove you are who you say you are. Dan Kaminsky, the chief scientist at the American security firm White Ops explains.

DAN KAMINSKY: You need to know you're really talking to your hospital or to something at the Air Force or wherever. And so there are certificates that make it so you know, OK, this is really the government resource that I'm trying to access and not some bad guy.

SYDELL: In some cases, the lack of a security certificate may just make a site unusable. But Kaminsky says the lack of a certificate also makes it easier for a bad actor to redirect you to a fake site.

KAMINSKY: People might get used to ignoring the browser warnings. Oh, well, you know, it's just the shutdown. And then you think, oh, you're really walking into this site. And you're

really not.

SYDELL: Kaminsky offers up a worst case kind of scenario. Imagine if the security certificate was down for the Social Security website, and a bad actor sets up a fake one. Someone could go to that site, enter their password and give the hackers access to personal information. The shutdown also means that there are fewer IT staff. For example, according to contingency plans on the White House Office of Management and Budget website, only around 2,000 employees out of more than 3,500 are working at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. That's one of the agencies leading the nation's cyber defenses. Rob Ragan, a partner in the cybersecurity firm Bishop Fox, says there may be a lot of important tasks that aren't getting done, such as updating software with the latest security patches.

ROB RAGAN: You end up getting buried in a really big backlog of issues that you may never dig yourself out of. And at that point, one of those issues may have been an indicator of a compromise or a breach that may go unnoticed for months or years to come.

SYDELL: Security researchers worry that the shutdown is like putting a red blanket in front of a bull. Nations like Russia, China and Iran could see it as a signal to charge ahead. Ragan says think about the amount of information on government websites that's personal and even classified. And as the shutdown drags on, the likelihood of security lapses increases, says Vikram Thakur, a technical director at the security firm Symantec.

VIKRAM THAKUR: That risk is most definitely going to go up exponentially.

SYDELL: Ironically, Thakur says fewer personnel lowers at least one kind of security risk. One of the most popular hacking schemes is email phishing. That's when hackers send an email to an employee with a link that unleashes malware into the system.

THAKUR: If nobody's opening email and nobody's using the work network, the chances of the success rate for attackers who are using email as their primary mode of attack kind of falls all the way through.

SYDELL: NPR reached out to the cyber division at the Department of Homeland Security for comment but didn't hear back. Democratic aides in the House say they, too, are unable to get information right now about which IT workers are on the job. However, when the shutdown ends, they want to see details. In the event of a future shutdown, Democrats might move to keep IT workers on the job in the name of cybersecurity.

[Editorial note: consult audio at source link]

Federal shutdown inviting major cyberattack in U.S., experts say (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/17/2019 10:37 PM, UPI, 2015K]

Experts are concerned that the ongoing partial government shutdown is leaving the United States wide open to risk of major cyberattacks, because those manning U.S. security systems aren't working.

Thousands of employees at two government agencies that monitor national cybersecurity haven't worked in nearly a month, risking hacks and data theft.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Technology Review said 45 percent of employees at the Homeland Security Department's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and 85 percent of staff at the National Institute of Standards and Technology have been furloughed.

A spokesman for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency told Business Insider officials have "ceased a variety of critical cybersecurity and infrastructure protection capabilities."

Employees considered essential are still required to work through the shutdown, but the reduced number of staff still creates situations where departments aren't operating at full strength to guard against threats.

"Monitoring is probably not happening at 100 percent of usual operations, which means that there is an increased chance that malicious activity may not be spotted," Bryson Bort, CEO of cyberdefense firm SCYTHE, told CBS News.

Mike O'Malley, VP of strategy at cloud defense firm Radware, said the U.S. government has basically "laid out the welcome mat to any and all nefarious actors."

"Unfortunately, we know all too well from experience that hackers, especially nation-state sponsored, have a high level of patience and are willing to lie in wait for the most opportune moment to strike," he said.

Bort noted the shortage makes the United States most vulnerable to nation states like China, Iran, Russia and North Korea.

"I don't think they will 'attack.' I do think this is a good opportunity to step up iterative campaigns to compromise, gather intelligence, and place something quiet for the future," he said.

O'Malley said DHS, the State Department and all U.S. intelligence services could be at the greatest risk.

"Any department that has sensitive information that can be used in espionage or fraud would be hit hardest by an attack."

In the immediate future, for-profit hackers could also look to sell data to nation states or access personal identity records for fraud and identity theft. Short term vulnerabilities at the IRS could prevent millions from receiving their tax refunds on time, Bort said.

Many government websites have also had their HTTPS encryption certificates expire, meaning they could be exposed to impersonator sites. A lack of IT staff means software patches and upgrades at government agencies aren't being updated regularly, leaving them susceptible to malware.

The increased vulnerability comes as researchers this week uncovered a new type of malware that can remove security features on Linux cloud servers without detection.

Rocke, a group of hackers who infiltrate servers and use them to mine cryptocurrency is

linked to the malware, which serves the purpose of gaining access to computing without being detected.

Damage to U.S. cybersecurity could also extend beyond the end of the shutdown.

When a shutdown occurred in 2013, workers began to seek corporate jobs with greater job security, and the drain on talent entering government jobs persisted for years.

The present shutdown has also resulted in the Department of Homeland Security's annual Cybersecurity and Innovation Showcase — an event where the government observes new advancements in critical next-generation security technologies — being postponed indefinitely.

The Technology 202: Sen. Schatz calls on technology industry to share cyber threats (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 8:26 AM, Cat Zakrzewski, 9763K]

The technology industry is all grown up, and Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) says it's time for Silicon Valley to start getting serious about cybersecurity threats.

Schatz is calling on the technology industry to create an Information Sharing and Analysis Center (ISAC) — an independent organization that acts as a clearinghouse where companies can share cybersecurity threats with each other. These organizations have been very popular in other established industries such as financial services, but there is no centralized hub for just technology companies.

"All mature industries that have a broad impact have an ISAC or an equivalent," Schatz said in an interview. "It's about time we have it in the tech industry."

Schatz — who has drafted a privacy bill targeting the technology industry — isn't planning to introduce legislation calling for this right now, because he thinks the companies can accomplish this without a mandate from Congress. He notes that successful ISACs are largely private-sector initiatives, but he wants to help: Schatz has been talking to one of the technology industry's leading trade groups, the Internet Association, about creating one.

Creating an ISAC, however, would not solve the technology industry's problems with lawmakers. Congress is eager for action -- and reluctant to trust Big Tech to regulate itself -- after high-profile data breaches, bugs and leaks exposed that companies aren't doing enough to safeguard vast troves of personal data they hold. Members have already introduced bills this year to rein in data tracking and how to empower the Federal Trade Commission.

So Schatz's proposal for a technology industry ISAC would likely come in addition to a national privacy law. However, as companies, privacy advocates and policymakers dig in for what is likely to be a heated and lengthy privacy debate, an ISAC could perhaps come together more quickly than a federal privacy law. Schatz said he wants to see the ISAC launch within the year.

The industry appears open to the proposal. Internet Association General Counsel Jon Berroya tells me in a statement that these organizations can be useful in helping protect privacy, "especially when these organizations prioritize fostering trust among the

participants."

The trade group is "engaged in preliminary conversations with its members" about whether such an organization would be useful, he said.

"[The Internet Association] members share Sen. Schatz's concerns about this important issue and will continue to prioritize exploring this approach — and other approaches — to address threats to their services," he said.

Creating an ISAC for the technology industry would not be without its challenges — and it's unclear at this stage how robust and effective such an initiative would be.

I've previously reported on hurdles social media companies face to share threat data about disinformation with each other. Priscilla Moriuchi, the director of strategic threat development at Recorded Future, said there's lots of hype about threat sharing. "It's one of those things that everyone thinks is a great idea," she told me last month. "But in practice, it's more complicated and not as effective as we think."

In fiercely competitive Silicon Valley, it's not going to be easy to convince the companies to share sensitive information about cyberthreats with each other — especially when data breaches can inflict serious brand damage on companies. The initiative would have to come up with serious incentives and tough guidelines to ensure companies don't use the threats as ammunition against one another.

Also, there's the issue of resources. Any industry initiative will have to take measures to ensure it's not a drain on already strapped security teams. Some companies within the technology industry participate in other industry ISACs. For example, some members of the Internet Association that build fintech already participate in an ISAC for financial services companies.

Many threats may also not apply across the board. The membership of the Internet Association — which ranges from ride-hailing companies like Uber to social networks like Facebook to dating websites like Match Group — highlights the diversity of the businesses that are considered technology companies. The cybersecurity threats facing Twitter could be pretty different from the potential cyberattacks Lyft worries about.

As the Internet Association talks with its member companies, there has been discussion about how to square this. One option: Creating "working groups" to share threat information between specific kinds of technology companies, according to a person familiar with the deliberations who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on the record. There could, for instance, be one threat-sharing group for marketplace businesses like Uber, Airbnb and Lyft, and another for social networks like Facebook and Twitter.

Sen. Schatz said he thinks the industry can sort out these challenges.

"We're confident they're moving expeditiously and will be able to establish an ISAC," he said.

Four cybersecurity priorities for Congress to confront active threats (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/20/2019 11:00 AM, David Hickton and Kiersten Todt, 3038K]

The 116th Congress may have difficulty finding common ground on most issues. But there is at least one area that presents the opportunity for bipartisan action: cybersecurity.

Cyber threats do not discriminate based on party affiliation.

There are four key issues within cybersecurity where this Congress has the potential to make progress with impactful legislation that would make all Americans — and our democracy — more secure.

Election security: The Department of Homeland Security has made considerable progress on election security over the past 18 months. But, with 10,000 local jurisdictions responsible not just for administering elections but now for protecting our democracy against nation-state threat actors, more must be done.

The answer does not lie in funding alone. Paper ballots paired with risk-limiting audits are critical; and Congress should take a hard look at the vendors who play an outsized role in our democracy. We also must share expertise and training across jurisdictions and ensure that jurisdictions are prepared to recover in the face of a cyberattack. The election security provisions in the House Democrats' first bill are an excellent start and should not fall way to partisan rancor.

Data privacy and security: Data breaches should not be the new normal. Yet, even after compromises of 3 billion Yahoo email addresses, the credit profiles of 150 million Americans at Equifax, and the personal information of up to 500 million Marriott guests, the U.S. government has yet to take action. Congress can do so now by legislating policies that help to move security away from the end-user.

Congress must incentivize companies to bake security and privacy protocols into the design of products and services. Individuals also must take responsibility by making security a component of consumption choices. This integrated approach — of both moving security away from the end-user and creating a culture where individuals take responsibility for their security — will ensure a more resilient nation.

Infrastructure protection: The United States must protect its critical infrastructure, including elections, power, transportation and financial, from cyber threats. The recent establishment of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency within the Department of Homeland Security is one necessary step in doing so. Yet, more is required.

Congress must push for a better understanding of the interdependencies of our critical infrastructure, as well as rapid reassessments based on the current and future threat environments. A new critical sector has emerged over the past several years, yet our government is failing to organize itself to respond to it. Social media now directly affect the national and economic security of our nation. Congress must work with the executive branch and industry to identify what appropriate measures must be instituted to manage it.

Workforce development: Any effective cybersecurity strategy will require the right people to do the job. Right now, we don't have them. There is a dangerous shortage of people to implement what needs to be done to make America safe in the digital age. Right now, there are an estimated 300,000 cybersecurity jobs going unfilled in this country, from top

managers and technicians to every kind of support personnel. It is a number that will only grow.

We also must reconsider who is responsible for cybersecurity and create a culture of cybersecurity. Every individual who uses a phone or laptop to perform a function of their job is now part of the cyber workforce. More education and training are needed. Congress should pass legislation prioritizing and incentivizing cyber education throughout the public school system, as well as throughout the workforce.

There are additional cybersecurity priorities Congress must address, especially protecting the defense supply chain and regulating the unsecured explosion of the internet of things. There is a reasonable path forward on these issues in groundwork laid in the 115th Congress.

As Americans increasingly are recognizing, cybersecurity is critical to the national and economic security of our nation. Congressional legislation that focuses on election security, data privacy and security, critical infrastructure protection, and workforce development is an important and necessary step in helping our nation confront these active threats.

Fighting AI With AI: Army Seeks Autonomous Cyber Defenses (Bloomberg Government)

[Bloomberg Government](#) [1/18/2019 11:15 AM, Chris Cornillie]

The U.S. Army is seeking information about "Autonomous Cyber" capabilities that use artificial intelligence and machine learning to defend its networks and protect its own intelligent systems against sophisticated cyberattacks. In other words, the Army wants to pit AI against AI in cyberspace.

A branch of the Army's research and development enterprise known as the Space and Terrestrial Communications Directorate, or S&TCD, is seeking cybersecurity tools able to make "automated network decisions and defend against adaptive autonomous cyber attackers at machine speed," according to a Jan. 14 solicitation.

The RFI reflects the Pentagon's growing interest in algorithmic cybersecurity tools. Public and private sector organizations around the world are investing in intelligence and automation, to a varying degree, to compensate for the global shortage of trained cybersecurity analysts.

The Army envisions acquiring technologies that use machine learning to autonomously detect and address software vulnerabilities and network misconfigurations – routine mistakes that could offer attackers an entry point onto its systems.

Another reason organizations are turning to AI-powered cyber defenses: to counter the threat posed by intelligent cyber weapons. In February 2018, a group of more than two dozen researchers representing the Washington-based Center for a New American Security, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and nonprofit organizations including the Electronic Frontier Foundation and OpenAI, issued a groundbreaking report warning that AI technologies could amplify the destructive power available to nation-states and criminal enterprises.

The report outlines dozens of ways attackers could use artificial intelligence to their

advantage, from generating automated spear-phishing attacks capable of reliably fooling their human targets, to triggering ransomware attacks using voice or facial recognition, to designing malware that mimics normal user behavior to evade detection.

Although there haven't yet been confirmed cases of AI-enabled cyberattacks, the researchers conclude that, "the pace of progress in AI suggests the likelihood of cyber attacks leveraging machine learning capabilities in the wild soon, if they have not done so already."

Combating 'Adversarial' AI

Pentagon officials appear to be taking the threat seriously. In Dec. 11 testimony before the House Subcommittee on Emerging Threats, Pentagon chief information officer Dana Deasy said that researchers at the new Joint Artificial Intelligence Center (JAIC) are already working on ways to develop technologies to "detect and deter advanced adversarial cyber actors."

The JAIC will play a key role alongside the Pentagon's Research & Engineering (R&E) enterprise to "deliver new AI-enabled capabilities to end users as well as to help incrementally develop the common foundation that is essential for scaling AI's impact across DoD," Deasy said.

One of the JAIC's first tasks is to organize the massive stockpiles of data that Pentagon agencies will use to train their machine learning algorithms and make the data more resilient to tampering, Pentagon Undersecretary for R&E Lisa Porter told lawmakers. Porter highlighted the risks posed by "adversarial AI" – attacks designed to trick intelligent systems into making mistakes – that could undermine trust in these systems.

"Adversaries have the ability to manipulate AI data and algorithms to the point where the AI system is defeated," wrote Celeste Fralick, chief data scientist and senior principal engineer at the cybersecurity giant McAfee, in a recent op-ed. For example, attackers could target the Pentagon's own intelligent cyber defenses with what's known as a "black box" attack – reverse-engineering the defender's algorithms in search of blind spots malware can slip through.

Similarly, said Fralick, machine learning systems are vulnerable to "poisoning" attacks, where a hacker injects false data into a training data set to bias the results of the algorithm. To use predictive maintenance as an example, the Air Force is investing heavily in machine learning tools to analyze flight records, maintenance logs, and sensor data in an effort to predict when parts will wear out or which aircraft will require maintenance on a given day. If adversaries are able to "poison" the predictive maintenance algorithm, the Air Force could, in theory, be forced to spend millions on redundant repairs. Worse, it might send unsafe aircraft out on duty.

Maintaining trust in these systems is central to the mission of the JAIC and the larger R&E enterprise, said Porter, noting that countering adversarial AI is a top priority for the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency's five-year, \$2 billion AI Next initiative.

The Army appears to be working toward the same objective in parallel. Its Autonomous Cyber solicitation calls for multiple tools and methodologies it can use to "red team" – or

pressure test – its current AI-based cyber defenses and improve resistance to manipulation.

Interested parties have until Feb. 13 to respond to the RFI.

Health-care sector is far too vulnerable to cybersecurity threats (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 1:00 PM, Mohammad Jalali, 3038K]

The digitization of health care promises to be transformative for patients and medical practitioners alike. New technologies and techniques — including big data, machine learning and artificial intelligence — are already helping to make health-care delivery more efficient, effective and less expensive.

In spite of this vast potential, though, there exists a serious challenge that hospitals and health-care organizations have not yet managed to overcome: keeping patients' personal data out of the hands of hackers.

Health care suffered more breaches last year than any other industry, according to the Verizon Data Breach Investigations Report. As a result, personally identifiable information was the most common type of data compromised. (Payment card and banking information were second and third, respectively.)

This has important implications. In the event of a financial hack, people can easily get a new credit card number or bank account — even a new Social Security number is possible. But if their health-care data has been compromised, they can't very well change their entire personal health histories.

The scope of the problem goes beyond data breaches. Cyber incidents can potentially impact the safety of patients through interrupting care operations, compromising the integrity of data and damaging medical devices.

So, what can health-care organizations do to protect the safety of their patients from cyber threats?

For starters, they need to devote more resources to safeguard their operations. When it comes to investing in technology, many health-care organizations opt to fund information technology (IT) infrastructure not cyber security.

On one level, this is understandable. The benefits of spending on IT infrastructure, such as making upgrades to server capacity or implementing a new HR system, are immediate and effective. They often result in cost reductions or improved productivity.

Investing in cyber security, on the other hand, is akin to buying an insurance policy. It's risk management for worst-case scenarios that may never happen. But at a time when cyber crime costs the world almost \$600 billion a year, health-care organizations cannot afford to ignore this threat.

Investing in cyber security starts with hiring people with deep expertise and knowledge of the issues. Hospitals and health-care organizations are exceedingly complex bodies. But many lack an information security officer.

This needs to change. Having a dedicated person — and team — to develop and

implement security standards, controls and procedures is a necessity.

Next, hospitals and health-care executives need to cultivate a culture of security. This means that every member of staff — from upper management and top physicians to on-call nurses and EMTs — needs to be in alignment that cyber security is a priority.

Creating a culture of security entails a shift in mindset. Nurses and doctors and other medical personnel are busy people with competing commitments. Protecting precious patient data must be ingrained in their every routine.

What's more, organizations must take a proactive approach to educating workers on cyber threats and counter-measures. After all, in any enterprise, employees are the greatest source of vulnerability to hackers.

Holding seminars that encourage employees to change their passwords every three months or remind them of email protocol is not enough. Not even close. Organizations must provide rigorous, ongoing training that helps employees understand how to create a more secure environment for their patients. Critically, organizations should also seek feedback to improve the effectiveness of the training.

Creating a culture of security also requires that organizations prepare for times of crisis. No matter how good an organization's prevention tactics are, chances are it will one day be hacked. Medical workers and health-care administrators need to have a clearly defined incident response strategy.

What will doctors do when they don't have access to patient data? How will nurses respond when the ER is being shut down due to a breach? Whose job is it to communicate with patients during a crisis? And who will communicate with the media?

Health-care organizations need a blueprint — similar to a disaster recovery plan — that lays out the steps they will take in the event of an emergency.

Finally, policymakers play a role here, too. Today, the bar for compliance for patient data safety is laughably low. The danger is that hospital administrators and health-care executives are too comfortable. "We comply with the law, therefore we are secure," they think.

This extremely low bar makes hospitals very attractive to cyber criminals. We need stricter state and federal policies and more stringent requirements. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, centers around privacy; we need a similar law that's better focused on security.

This is a crucial moment for cybersecurity in health care. If health-care organizations don't shore up cybersecurity, the next cyber incidents could directly compromise the safety of patients, and it will be too late to intervene.

The Cybersecurity 202: How does a country spy on its citizens? A cybersecurity company got an inside look (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 7:49 AM, Joseph Marks, 9763K]

A cybersecurity company will reveal this weekend the secretive details of how one government spies on its citizens and adversaries.

The company Lookout discovered a cache of digital messages between government officials in an unnamed nation with a relatively nascent surveillance program -- and more than a dozen companies eager to outfit it with bespoke spying tools.

The messages, which Lookout will detail at the ShmooCon cybersecurity conference, highlight how the barrier to entry for getting sophisticated spyware tools has dramatically lowered. The proliferating private market for hacking tools has allowed even poor and developing nations' governments to scoop up troves of private conversations from critics, activists and political opponents — often far outside their borders.

"Historically, these tools were the purview of a few nations that had people to develop them in house. Now there's another tier that don't have the technology but can pay for it, and there are fewer checks and an even greater potential for abuse," John Scott-Railton, a senior researcher at the University of Toronto's Citizen Lab, which has extensively investigated spyware, told me.

The nation that Lookout is profiling started with a \$23 million budget for spyware, researchers Michael Flossman and Andrew Blach told me. The government apparently negotiated with companies -- including major spyware players such as Italy's Hacking Team and Israel's NSO Group -- offering complex hacking tools that cost as little as \$50,000 and as much as \$7 million.

The government was mainly focused on exposing the contents of smartphones and tablets, the researchers say. Ultimately, the nation couldn't afford what it really wanted within its price range, so it opted to build its own more moderate tool in house, the researchers said.

Lookout isn't naming the country or providing details on its spying targets because researchers are still studying the operations, Flossman and Blach said. The researchers discovered the messages between the government and spyware companies, along with internal communications after they were exposed by an error in a computer server the officials used.

Lookout has experience studying government spyware campaigns. The company previously uncovered what appeared to be a Pakistani military spying operation targeting the mobile phones of diplomats, military personnel, and activists in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Iraq, and elsewhere.

But the troves of messages shed new insight into this highly opaque form of government contracting. One big takeaway for researchers was how easy it was for the government to get pitches and compare prices from numerous spyware companies, almost as if they were contracting for construction or janitorial work rather than invasive spying tools.

"This shows the low barrier to entry when it comes to building a mobile surveillance program," Flossman told me.

The spyware companies also mirrored more conventional businesses, offering slick sales brochures and tiered pricing options, Flossman and Blach said.

In one case, a company trying to sell the government one hacking tool offered to throw in a second tool if the first one was discovered and patched by the software company within 40 days. The deal was off, though, if the government did something stupid that might draw the software company's attention to the hack, the spyware company said.

The messages also provide an unusual inside look at the practices of spyware companies under frequent criticism for selling their tools to autocratic regimes that use them to spy on political opponents, journalists and human rights activists.

The spyware products sold by Hacking Team and NSO Group, for instance, are often purchased and used for legitimate law enforcement investigations -- and also to clamp down on dissent within their borders. A 2018 Citizen Lab investigation found instances of NSO Group malware in 45 nations frequently targeting civil society actors rather than criminals.

"We know that once these are in the possession of a security service there's an incredible temptation to abuse them," Scott-Railton told me.

America avoided election hacking in 2018. But are we ready for 2020? (ABC News)
[ABC News](#) [1/18/2019 12:28 PM, Chris Good, 2413K] Video: [HERE](#)

After red flags were raised about vote hacking in 2018, the midterms came and went without much cybersecurity fanfare.

Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats had cautioned that "the warning lights are blinking red again," and experts warned that voting systems, in particular, could be at risk. Russia had likely targeted them in all 50 states in 2016 and had gained access to voter-registration files in Illinois and Arizona.

But despite myriad concerns about vulnerabilities—from voting machines to tabulation systems to phishing attacks on campaigns—election hacking, by and large, did not factor in the 2018 elections. A recent report from Coats' office to the White House confirmed as much: U.S. intelligence officials had no evidence that voting systems had been compromised, although social-media disinformation aimed at American voters had continued apace.

"The Russians didn't need to do much in 2018. They enjoy all the turmoil in the U.S. and probably take credit for 2016 outcomes," said James Lewis, senior vice president and director of the Technology Policy Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "Midterms are confusing and the Russians probably couldn't figure out the pressure points to swing voters. If they have new tricks, they are saving them for 2020."

If Russia (and other foreign powers) are biding their time for the next election year, is America ready for a fresh round of attempted interference? And as the 2020 elections approach, what have officials and experts learned?

One benefit of 2016's meddling was that it brought a slew of recommendations from election and cybersecurity experts on how to guard against vote hacking. Before the 2018 midterms, experts had recommended a handful of equipment and policy changes—like new voting machines, anti-phishing training, and two-factor authentication for employees logging

into voter databases.

States took \$380 million in election-upgrade funding from Congress, but spending it in a timely manner proved difficult, as legislative and procurement calendars slowed the process down. The bulk of that money will have been spent by 2020, however, according to a senior government official familiar with the matter.

Of major concern to experts were the five states that use paperless voting systems statewide and could not examine a paper trail if the vote was compromised. All of those states are now taking steps toward using voting machines with auditable paper trails. Delaware and South Carolina expect to have them in place by 2020; Georgia, where a lawsuit failed to force the state to buy new machines before November 2018, after sensitive election-related files were left unguarded on a server, has set buying new machines by 2020 as a goal; and New Jersey has begun a pilot program, with two counties already having bought new machines.

Louisiana had planned to make the switch by 2020, but that is now in doubt, after the losing bidder challenged Louisiana's decision to award a contract for new voting machines to a competitor, and the state ultimately issued a new request for bids, starting the process over.

One federal effort, in particular, seems to be working: across the board, state election officials said coordination with the Department of Homeland Security improved drastically between 2016 and 2018 -- even as fewer than half of U.S. states took DHS up on its offer of in-person reviews of vulnerabilities in their election systems. The cyber-threat-sharing forum established for the states by DHS drew positive reviews.

"There were a few [malicious] scans that were certainly passed on from that," said Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman, who also said DHS and FBI staff were in Washington State to help out on election night. "They shared lots of info. We had many lists of bad IPs to block. They shared info about spear-phishing attempts to look out for."

But apart from actual vote-hacking, campaign cybersecurity, most notably a dreaded hack-and-leak campaign, remains a concern, as does disinformation on social media.

Surprisingly few campaigns contracted with cybersecurity firms to provide protection in 2018; CrowdStrike, one of the more prominent firms in the field, worked for both political parties but was signed on by only one campaign. Campaigns, and particularly House campaigns, operate on tight budgets and may not have the resources to spare for cybersecurity services, when that money could go to extra advertising or canvassing. The Democratic Party, for its part, guided its House campaigns to a set of best practices that included things like multi-step logins and encrypted messaging.

But two notable spear-phishing attacks were attempted on national party committees in 2018: a spear-phishing campaign against the National Republican Congressional Committee before the midterms, and a similar, recently revealed attack on the Democratic National Committee after Americans voted.

Meanwhile, disinformation continues to evolve and, some say, grow more aggressive.

"I would expect to see a more aggressive effort in 2020, for two reasons," said Bret Schafer,

who tracks Russian-affiliated disinformation accounts for the German Marshall Fund's Alliance for Securing Democracy. "One, there were a lot of races this time, and there wasn't a way to significantly alter one race ... and two, I think there's just going to be a far more divisive, highly political campaign in 2020 than the midterms were."

The FBI launched a task force to address foreign political influence and indicted a Russian woman in October for allegedly interfering in 2018. But the Justice Department has acknowledged limits in the government's ability to counter foreign political messaging publicly: public announcements "must be conducted with particular sensitivity in the context of elections, to avoid even the appearance of partiality," Deputy Assistant Attorney General Adam Hickey told the Senate Judiciary Committee in June.

And foreign actors have not been the only source of interference. For example, The New York Times reported that Democratically-aligned operatives created a false Facebook page and may have used bots in the Alabama special Senate election.

Disinformation has been geared toward exacerbating existing divisions, and we can expect to see "more of it happening on fringier platforms ... places that are not going to have to set up war rooms because they're not under the same kind of congressional scrutiny," Schafer said.

Still, Congress has grilled tech executives about foreign meddling, and while the social media firms have taken some steps to address the issue -- Facebook, for instance, removed more than 2.1 billion fake accounts in 2018, some of which were linked to foreign political activity -- not everyone has been pleased with the response or the state of play moving forward.

"A couple of the big companies were denying that anything was wrong until a few months ago," CSIS's Lewis said. "It gave [Russia] an unobstructed path. Maybe we'll figure out what to do by 2020."

D.N.C. Says It Was Targeted Again by Russian Hackers After '18 Election (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/18/2019 10:23 PM, Nicole Perlroth, 20737K]

The Democratic National Committee believes it was targeted in a hacking attempt by a Russian group in the weeks after the midterm elections last year, according to court documents filed late Thursday.

On Nov. 14, the documents say, dozens of D.N.C. email addresses were on the receiving end of a so-called spear phishing campaign by one of two Russian organizations believed to be responsible for hacking into the committee's computers during the 2016 presidential race. There is no evidence that the most recent attack was successful.

The documents, filed in federal court in New York, were part of an amended complaint in a lawsuit filed in April that claimed the committee was the victim of a conspiracy by Russian intelligence agents, President Trump's 2016 campaign and WikiLeaks to damage Hillary Clinton's presidential run.

The new court filings say the time stamps and contents of the spear phishing emails received in November were consistent with separate cyberattacks around the same time

tioned to the Russian hacking group known as Cozy Bear, one of the two Russian groups suspected of breaching D.N.C. computers in 2016.

Security researchers believe the hacking attempt against the D.N.C. in November was part of a broader campaign that used decoy emails that appeared to come from the State Department.

That campaign had more than a dozen targets, including government agencies, think tanks, law enforcement officials, journalists, military personnel, defense contractors, pharmaceutical companies and transportation officials, according to a report by the cybersecurity firm FireEye. Researchers believe the goal was to ferret out American foreign policy, particularly related to Africa; Democratic policy positions; and the platforms of 2020 Democratic presidential hopefuls.

FireEye said the attempted hacking of the D.N.C. in November resembled other recent attacks attributed to Cozy Bear, including in its "deliberate reuse" of old phishing tactics and reliance on a similar list of victims. But there were a few new wrinkles, including new decoy email addresses and different obfuscation techniques.

The hackers sent some targets of the broader campaign three phishing emails at most. In other instances, they were more aggressive, sending as many as 136 emails to a single organization. In some cases, the malware-laced emails were successful. And once they gained access to a computer network, it was only a matter of hours before they were deploying stealthier hacking tools.

The attackers in November compromised a hospital email server to launch their phishing emails, a common tactic of the Cozy Bear group, said Nick Carr, a senior manager at FireEye.

Cozy Bear hackers are skilled at rummaging through a network without drawing attention, said Matthew Dunwoody, a FireEye security researcher. Once in, they often swap out their phishing tools for malware that can be hard to detect, he said.

FireEye said that although Cozy Bear was the likeliest culprit, the firm could not firmly establish who was responsible for the 2018 campaign against the D.N.C. and other targets. CrowdStrike, another cybersecurity firm, also noted an uptick in hacking activity in November, but it could not say definitively that Cozy Bear was to blame.

Cozy Bear, also known by security firms as APT 29 or the Dukes, was one of two Russian groups involved in the 2016 hacking of the D.N.C. It has not attracted the same scrutiny as the other group, Fancy Bear, or APT 28, which has been linked to a string of cyberattacks against the D.N.C., the International Olympic Committee and other international organizations.

Cozy Bear has been active since 2016, security researchers say, and has been linked to a coordinated wave of hacking attacks on Democratic Party officials.

The D.N.C. says in the amended complaint that the November campaign was consistent with a continuing push by Russian hackers to target Democratic candidates and party leaders. In 2017, Russian hackers are believed to have attempted a hack of the computer

network of former Senator Claire McCaskill of Missouri and the networks of at least two other candidates in the midterm elections.

Mr. Trump has long denied any collusion with Russia, and in December several defendants named in the D.N.C.'s lawsuit argued that it should be dismissed because the committee was using it to try to "explain away" the Democratic "candidate's defeat in the 2016 presidential campaign."

On Friday, Geoffrey A. Graber, a D.N.C. lawyer, said the committee expected defendants named in the case to file another motion for dismissal soon.

The Russian government has consistently denied hacking the D.N.C. In a "statement of immunity" from Russia's Ministry of Justice, Russian authorities argued that even if it were responsible for the hacking, such a "sovereign act" would be considered a "military action" protected by a 1976 law that offers some immunity from lawsuits regarding foreign governments' actions in the United States.

DNC says it was target of Russia cyberattack after 2018 midterms (Politico)

[Politico](#) [1/18/2019 11:20 AM, Rebecca Morin and Eric Geller, 2577K]

The Democratic National Committee filed a legal complaint Thursday night alleging that it was the target of a cyberattack by Russia one week after the 2018 midterm elections.

"In November 2018, dozens of DNC email addresses were targeted in a spear-phishing campaign, although there is no evidence that the attack was successful," the DNC alleged, according to court documents filed to the District Court of the Southern District of New York. "The content of these emails and their timestamps were consistent with a spear-phishing campaign that leading cybersecurity experts have tied to Russian intelligence."

The complaint is part of an ongoing lawsuit against Russia, WikiLeaks, Donald Trump's presidential campaign and other key individuals.

According to the complaint, the timing as well as the content of the spearphishing emails match the practices of Russian hacking group Cozy Bear, one of two Kremlin-tied groups that hacked the DNC in 2016, according to the complaint. Spear-phishing is a cyberattack tactic in which hackers send emails that appear to come from a trusted sender to try to get the targeted individuals to reveal confidential information.

"Therefore, it is probable that Russian intelligence again attempted to unlawfully infiltrate DNC computers in November 2018," the DNC said in its filing.

The malicious emails targeted a wide range of party officials, from junior staff to some of the party's most senior ranks including people at the "director" level, according to a Democratic official who requested anonymity to discuss a security incident. DNC directors oversee portfolios such as grassroots mobilization, data science, African-American media outreach and state operations.

The emails were almost identical to the ones attributed to Cozy Bear sent to a wide range of targets last year, the Democratic official told POLITICO. In a report on those attacks, the security firm FireEye said that it discovered them on Nov. 14, the same day that the DNC said it received the new emails.

Attached to the emails was the same fake State Department internship application form shown in FireEye's report, the Democratic official said. Other aspects of the emails, including the description of the attachment, also matched the campaign detailed by FireEye.

Once the DNC learned about the messages, it looked for evidence of the infected email attachments dropping malware on party computers and found nothing. It then worked with security consultants to verify its internal assessment. The Democratic official told POLITICO that the party was confident that no one opened the attachments and unleashed the malware.

The DNC has not said how or when it discovered the new spearphishing messages, but the Democratic official said the committee had formal and informal partnerships with a variety of security firms and tech companies. A third party may have alerted the DNC to the emails, possibly after receiving some itself.

The DNC has not received any more Russian spearphishing emails since the mid-November campaign, according to the Democratic official.

In the complaint, the DNC also suggested that the president's denial of Russia's interference in the 2016 election, his continued criticism of special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia probe and some of his policies that the committee characterized as favoring Russia, are part of the alleged collusion between Trump's presidential campaign and the Russian government.

Democrats claim alleged Russian hackers posed as State Department official in attempted DNC hack (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/18/2019 1:08 PM, Donie O'Sullivan, CNN, 5847K]

The Democratic National Committee claims that in the days after the 2018 midterm elections it was likely targeted by a group of Russian intelligence hackers, according to court documents filed overnight.

The hackers posed as a State Department official in the attempted hack, a senior Democratic Party source with direct knowledge of the attempt told CNN.

Dozens of DNC email addresses received spear-phishing emails that were ostensibly sent from a State Department official, the source said. The emails contained a PDF attachment that, if opened, was designed to gain access to systems through the recipient's computer, the source explained.

The DNC said it did not believe the attempt was successful.

In a court filing that is part of an ongoing civil lawsuit against the Russian government, President Donald Trump, WikiLeaks and others, the DNC explained it believed the spear-phishing campaign was likely orchestrated by a Russian hacking group known as "Cozy Bear." The DNC said the timing and contents of the emails shared characteristics with a suspected Cozy Bear campaign that had been identified by the cybersecurity firm FireEye.

The DNC added, "it is probable that Russian intelligence again attempted to unlawfully infiltrate DNC computers in November 2018."

FireEye said the campaign targeted multiple organizations, including think tanks, defense contractors, government and media.

Cozy Bear is one of two hacking groups linked to Russian intelligence that is believed to have accessed the DNC's internal systems in the lead-up to the 2016 election.

Spear-phishing attempts normally involve hackers sending emails designed to look like they came from trusted sources in an attempt to induce potential victims to hand over confidential information. In 2016, the email account of Hillary Clinton's campaign chair John Podesta was hacked after a successful spear-phishing attempt by another Russian hacking group.

Special counsel Robert Mueller indicted members of Russia's military intelligence in July for the 2016 hacking of the DNC, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and Podesta.

The alleged Russian military intelligence hacking group that targeted the Democratic National Committee (DNC) after November's midterms elections did so by posing as a State Department official, a senior Democratic Party official with direct knowledge of the hacking attempt tells CNN.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Terrorism Investigations

[NY] Man charged in alleged drugs-for-weapons deal with al-Qaeda-linked group (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/18/2019 1:39 PM, Aaron Katersky, 2413K]

A Colombian described by federal drug agents as the country's most significant drug trafficker in Africa has been arrested and brought to the United States to face charges of narcoterrorism conspiracy, according to a criminal complaint unsealed Friday.

David Cardona-Cardona arrived Thursday in New York where he was charged with arranging to trade cocaine for surface-to-air missiles and other advanced weaponry.

He is due to appear in federal court on Friday afternoon.

Cardona allegedly needed to move the drugs into Europe and agreed to give the weapons to a terrorist group linked to al-Qaeda in exchange for use of the group's smuggling routes through the Sahara Desert, the DEA said in the complaint.

"In particular, Cardona expressed a desire to provide the weapons to the organization Ansar al-Dine, and specifically indicated that the purpose of the weapons was to shoot down manned and unmanned aircraft belonging to the United States and other allied nations operating in West Africa," the complaint states.

Cardona has been charged in the Southern District of New York with narcotics conspiracy, narcoterrorism conspiracy, firearms conspiracy and conspiracy to violate maritime drug

enforcement laws.

The case was brought by the DEA and an agent from Homeland Security Investigations.

The United States designated Ansar al-Dine a foreign terrorist organization in 2013.

It operates mainly in Mali and cooperates with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb, according to the State Department.

According to the criminal complaint, Cardona arranged the alleged drugs-for-weapons trade with two confidential DEA sources in Madrid, where he described years of drug trafficking through the Sahara Desert and working with Islamic extremists.

He also mentioned access to a Gulfstream jet that could fly from Africa to southern Europe, according to the complaint.

"Cardona explained that he worked with a friend in Africa who has an aviation company using aircraft brought from the United States," the complaint said.

"Cardona agreed with the confidential sources that 'our plan is to try to do an operation with this plane.'".

Allegedly needing access to desert runways controlled by the al-Qaeda-linked extremists, whom he referred to as "Barbudos," or "Bearded ones," Cardona allegedly plotted with the confidential sources, a cooperating witness and an undercover Croatian law enforcement officer to ship them tens of thousands of dollars' worth of surface-to-air missiles,.

50 caliber rifles and night vision goggles using the same aircraft that delivered his cocaine to southern Europe, according to the complaint.

National Security News

The government shutdown is shutting down our national security: OPINION (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/20/2019 6:16 PM, Donald J. Mihalek, 2413K]

Right now, border patrol agents are trying to keep our nation's borders secure. But when they detain those who cross the border illegally, there is no court to hear their cases, so some are summarily released. Secret Service agents are working to protect our nation's leaders, but when they travel, they do so at their own expense. FBI and ICE agents are trying to track criminals and terrorists, but can't pay informants, pay for travel or even cover investigative expenses.

Why? America's government is shutdown, allegedly over border security concerns, with no end in sight.

While the majority of federal law enforcement officers would agree that border security is important, and that barriers, technology and a better immigration system are necessary to make our border safe, the backbone of that security is the individuals protecting the border and America. Their vigilance becomes hard to maintain, though, when they are preoccupied

with thoughts of potentially losing a home or not being able to feed their family.

To make matters worse, and rub salt into already-festering wounds, this shutdown has now become America's longest, and federal law enforcement officers must come to work without any idea of when they will be paid next. While they show up and their professional support staffs -- analysts, forensic examiners -- sit home on furlough, bills mount, mortgages become overdue and their families get nervous.

Federal law enforcement agencies have taken it upon themselves to try to help their employees. The FBI has released a list of food banks and unemployment resources. The TSA has received food and goods donations in various communities. All amounting to a sad state, as our nation's protectors are faced with accepting charity while working.

But many in federal law enforcement are also handcuffed from helping themselves. Secret Service Agents protecting the president and other DHS agents are being told by the Department of Homeland Security that it is unethical to take on another job without receiving approval, or to accept gifts due to their public position.

Yet as the over 800,000 federal employees maintain a stiff upper lip, their frustration is mounting.

Especially when they see members of Congress taking a trip to sunny Puerto Rico. This trip was allegedly to assess what else the Congress can do to help the Island recover from damage caused by Hurricane Maria. But a photo of recently-acquitted Sen. Bob Menendez of New Jersey on a beach clearly sent the wrong message. Perhaps the best thing members of Congress could have done was stay home and work on ending the shutdown.

A government shutdown doesn't affect the paychecks of sitting Congressmen, though. They have to choose not to be paid. Lucky them.

Amazingly, as the shutdown drags on, instead of a sense of urgency to reopen the government, we see more posturing and politicking. This includes calls from Nancy Pelosi to cancel the State of the Union due to "security concerns," and President Trump's revoking the use of government planes for members of Congress.

In law enforcement there is a common thread of selflessness, teamwork and shared sacrifice which is being showcased right now as federal law enforcement officers continue to try and keep America safe with no resources, no support and no pay.

It appears our elected officials could learn a lesson or two from our nation's finest, and come to terms with the fact that despite everything else, it takes people, not politics to make America safe.

A national security reset is in serious order (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 3:35 PM, Terron Sims II, 3038K]

Hope and Change: These words were chanted over and over again during the 2008 Obama campaign. I should know, as I was a surrogate for the campaign on the veterans and defense policy teams.

Hope and Change, however, meant different things to different people. As a national

security expert, I understood Hope and Change as killing Osama bin Laden and withdrawing forces from Iraq and Afghanistan. Under the Bush administration, we Democrats rightfully admonished the president's national security decisions and use of force; yet, when President Obama took office and implemented what many of us refer to as Bush 2.0, most of my Democratic colleagues began singing a different tune. President Obama was in a perfect position to do a full on national security reset—but instead his administration pressed forward with "old" policy in the Middle East and made matters worse in the region through our actions in Libya, Egypt, Syria, and Yemen.

Our current state of affairs in the Middle East and Afghanistan are much worse than they were in 2009. Libya is a wreck. Syria and Yemen are battlefields. Russia is aggressively acting militarily. Saudi Arabia is dictating our actions in Yemen and Syria. Turkey is poised to invade Kurdistan. Kurdistan is threatening to secede from Iraq. The Taliban is poised to reclaim government control of Afghanistan.

Amid all the chaos, it is apparent that at the senior leader level where civilian leadership of the military lies, after action reviews (AARs) have not occurred. AARs are a method leaders use to assess a unit's proficiency after an operation and determine how to craft future operations, if needed. Given that military operations in the Middle East have yet to meet any of the original objectives, it is evident that either AARs have not occurred at the senior leader level or said leaders have chosen not to action the AAR results. The joke amongst honest combat vets and policy wonks about Afghanistan is that everyone knows that the Taliban is going to reclaim control of the government. It is simply a matter of when; U.S. military presence is merely delaying the inevitable.

A thorough review of U.S. military posture and goals is desperately needed. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton understood this need very well: In June 2016, I spoke alongside her on a national security panel, where she said, "We've got to be very honest about how challenging it is to do this. But, I think you're right. It's time for us to take a strategic look at where we were and how we responded in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and now with what's happening with some of the anti-terrorism operations." Once we have assessed our military operations, we then must establish clear steps necessary to withdraw all U.S. conventional forces from ground operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan. We have been in 16 years of perpetual war with no end in sight. Our absence will create additional chaos, but that is the nature of war. When only 1 percent of our nation serves in uniform and only 13 percent of our service members serve in combat, it is clear that our country's elected leaders are not truly supportive—for if they were, every resource would be applied to win ... however winning is defined.

The United States withdrawing from the Middle East is a strategic move that can have long-term positive effects. Essentially, the United States currently stands in the way of Middle Eastern countries determining their own path forward. We are standing in the way of the Middle East undoing the unforeseen chaos that was spawned with the passing of the Sykes-Picot Agreement just after WWI.

To properly reset our national security agenda, the United States needs to: cease all direct and indirect military action in Syria and Yemen; permit military advisors only at the Iraqi army division level in Iraq; and withdraw all forces from Kuwait and shutdown our installations. Iraq is an ally country, so it is imperative that we not abandon them, especially since our invasion in 2003 sparked the flame that we are fighting today; therefore, we will

maintain our naval presence and installation in Qatar. The United States must also pull all conventional forces out of Afghanistan and return the mission to SOCOM, so they can continue the al Qaeda disruption mission. Yes, the Taliban will probably regain control of the government, but we never entered Afghanistan to topple the Taliban regime. We only fought the Taliban because they would not turn Osama bin Laden over to us in 2003; if they had done so, the Taliban would still run Afghanistan.

An overall national security reset is in serious order, especially in the regions where we are losing American lives. The Founders wrote the Constitution to make it difficult for the United States to go to war. President Washington set the precedent of keeping the U.S. out of foreign entanglements. We need to be more like President Washington, not Woodrow Wilson, and return to our roots as a country and ask ourselves if our military actions in the Middle East and Afghanistan make us a stronger and better nation.

Pentagon report says bases face climate risks, but critics say it's short on details (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 5:47 PM, Brady Dennis, Chris Mooney, Missy Ryan, 9763K] Report listed 53 bases exposed to current flooding risk but it's so thin it "carries about as much value as a phone book."

Dozens of military installations around the country already are experiencing the impacts of climate change, and rising seas, wildfires and other climate-fueled disasters are likely to cause increasing problems for the armed forces, the Defense Department said Thursday in a report to lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

The 22-page document comes in response to a request from Congress in an annual funding bill, which required defense officials to provide a list of the 10 most vulnerable sites that each military branch faces over the next two decades, and an analysis of what could be done to protect them.

The document affirms a longstanding sense that the U.S. military, with massive energy needs and bases flung around the globe -- including some on low-lying islands -- is well attuned to how the planet is changing due to the burning of fossil fuels.

But while the report calls climate change "a national security issue" and highlights individual bases that face potential impacts, it did not include such a list of the most at-risk installations -- an omission that drew quick criticism on Friday.

"It seems like they have not made it past anecdote to analysis," said John Conger, director of the Center for Climate and Security and former acting assistant secretary of defense for energy, installations and the environment. "It's concerning to me because Congress was looking for the department's best judgment on how to prioritize the risks."

Department of Defense spokeswoman Heather Babb said Friday that the report "represents a high-level assessment" of the vulnerabilities that military installations face from floods, droughts, wildfires and other climate- and weather-related threats, as well as an overview of efforts to increase resiliency.

"DoD will focus on ensuring it remains ready and able to adapt to a wide variety of threats - regardless of the source - to fulfill our mission to deter war and ensure our nation's

security," Babb said.

Examining 79 military installations, the report finds that 53 already suffer from "recurrent flooding," 43 have been exposed to drought, and 36 to risk from wildfires. And it finds that risks like these could extend to more installations in the coming years.

Rhode Island Democratic Senator Jack Reed, ranking member of the Armed Service Committee, blasted the document, charging that the Defense Department failed to answer the key questions that lawmakers were seeking, and instead produced an "alphabetical" list of selected installations facing climate risks.

"While those 79 installations are no doubt important for mission assurance, without any prioritization for resources and installation-specific resilience plans, the report is incomplete," Reed said in a statement on Friday. "Instead, the report reads like a introductory primer and carries about as much value as a phone book."

Congressman Jim Langevin (D-R.I.), a member of the House Armed Service Committee, sponsored the amendment to the defense spending bill in late 2017 that required the report. He said Friday he was deeply disappointed.

"While the Pentagon does rightly acknowledge that a changing climate will affect military readiness and installations, the report does not reflect the urgency of the challenge," Langevin said in a statement, noting that recent hurricanes caused billions of dollars in damage to Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida and Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

But the Pentagon's Babb countered that "the report highlights the climate vulnerabilities of the top 79 mission assurance priority installations. By using this alternative approach, we are able to highlight where there are operational risks."

This week's report differs from another study backed by the military and published last year, which showed that more than a thousand low-lying tropical islands risk becoming "uninhabitable" in coming decades, upending the population of some island nations and endangering key U.S. defense assets.

The research has ramifications for the U.S. military, whose massive Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site sits, in part, on the atoll island of Roi-Namur — a part of the Marshall Islands and the focus of the research. The U.S. military supported the research in part to learn about the vulnerability of its tropical-island installations. The Pentagon base on Roi-Namur and surrounding islands supports about 1,250 American civilians, contractors and military personnel.

Last year the Pentagon also released a survey of a much larger number of military installations and the risks they were facing, but that document appeared to have been watered down somewhat in comparison with a draft version composed during the Obama administration.

By contrast, this week's report only examined a smaller subset of installations, their current risks, and whether those are expected to increase over the next 20 years.

The document does point out that individual bases are experiencing serious problems -- for

instance, from flooding and wildfires.

"Joint Base Langley-Eustis (JBLE-Langley AFB), Virginia, has experienced 14 inches in sea level rise since 1930 due to localized land subsidence and sea level rise," the document notes. "Flooding at JBLELangley, with a mean sea level elevation of three feet, has become more frequent and severe."

Meanwhile, Vandenberg Air Force Base in California saw 380 acres burned in a wildfire last year and required evacuations, the report said.

On a global scale, climate change can make the military's job harder by creating regional instabilities through worsening disasters, the report said. And it notes that with more maritime activity in the melting Arctic, the Navy's job is getting tougher.

And, the document notes, since it only looks out 20 years, military installations could face far greater challenges beyond that timeframe.

"Analyses to mid- and late-century would likely reveal an uptick in vulnerabilities (if adaptation strategies are not implemented)," the report noted.

Pentagon warns Congress that climate change is a 'national security' risk to military bases (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/18/2019 11:49 AM, Josh Siegel, 629K]

The Defense Department issued a report to Congress Thursday finding that climate change is a "national security" issue that could leave military bases vulnerable to coastal flooding and wildfires fueled by drought.

"The effects of a changing climate are a national security issue with potential impacts to Department of Defense missions, operational plans, and installations," the 22-page report said.

Congress mandated the report in the fiscal year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act, asking DOD to report on "vulnerabilities to military installations and combatant commander requirements resulting from climate change over the next 20 years."

The NDAA also required the Pentagon to report on the top 10 at-risk bases and what should be done to protect them. But the new DOD report to Congress does not provide a list.

Rather, it reviewed 79 "mission-essential" military installations in the U.S. that could face climate change-related risks within the next 20 years.

DOD found that 53 of those bases face a current risk of repeated flooding because of storm surge fueled by sea level rise, with seven more vulnerable to being inundated in the future. Most of these are located on the East Coast.

It notes that Joint Base Langley-Eustis in Virginia has already experienced 14 inches of sea level rise since 1930.

The report also says 36 military bases are vulnerable to damage from wildfires, with an additional seven facing a future risk of blazes. More than half of the bases could be harmed

by drought, which can hamper water supply.

Democrats of the House Armed Services Committee criticized the DOD's report, saying it lacks specific plans on how the military intends to respond to climate change.

"While this climate report acknowledges that nearly all the military installations it studied are vulnerable to major climate change impacts, it fails to even minimally discuss a mitigation plan to address the vulnerabilities." said Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., the committee's chairman.

DOD says the results of the study have emphasized its ongoing push to incorporate climate change resilience as part of its planning and decision-making process for operating current bases and building new ones.

The latest NDAA for fiscal year 2019, signed by President Trump in August, directs the military to include in every installation's master plan an examination of "energy and climate resilience."

It defines climate resilience as "anticipation, preparation for, and adaptation to utility disruptions and changing environmental conditions and the ability to withstand, respond to, and recover rapidly from utility disruptions while ensuring the sustainment of mission-critical operations."

The push by Congress, and the Pentagon, to consider the risks of climate change to the military contradicts the actions of Trump.

Trump, shortly after taking office, revoked a memo that former President Barack Obama signed in 2016, directing the Defense Department to consider climate change in its decisions about where to build new installations and prepare for future threats.

Trump faces conservative backlash over push for new tariff powers (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/18/2019 2:53 PM, Fred Lucas, 9216K]

An "America First" proposal to make it easier for President Trump to impose tariffs without congressional approval is meeting opposition from some Republicans and conservative groups.

The "United States Reciprocal Trade Act" was reportedly drafted by White House trade adviser Peter Navarro, who is seeking support among congressional Republicans. Trump could push the idea in his State of the Union address, though the date for the speech remains up in the air amid the shutdown standoff between him and congressional Democrats.

The bill itself would expand the executive branch's authority to levy tariffs if the president determines the target country has negative barriers against U.S. exports.

But underscoring the lingering GOP divide on trade, free-market organizations like the Competitive Enterprise Institute and Americans for Tax Reform have called on Congress to fight the policy.

Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, who previously sponsored legislation to curb executive branch

authority on trade, opposes the plan.

"Congress has already given the executive branch far too much power over far too many things," Lee told Fox News. "We should be looking to take authority away from the executive branch on trade, not giving it more abilities to act unilaterally."

Bloomberg News reported the draft bill says, "The lack of reciprocity in tariff levels and disproportionate use of non-tariff barriers by United States trading partners facilitates foreign imports, discourages United States exports, and puts United States producers, farmers, and workers at a competitive disadvantage." The draft continues that the trade imbalance "contributes to the large and growing United States trade deficit in goods, which is a drag on economic growth and undermines economic prosperity."

Speaking Monday at the American Farm Bureau Convention, Trump said his administration is digging the United States out of unfair trade deals, noting the recent accord on the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement—still pending congressional approval—and continued negotiations with China.

"We are replacing one-sided, unfair trade deals," Trump said at the New Orleans gathering. "We have so many nations — it's a one-sided deal. With China, every year, for many years, we're losing \$375 billion — not million, billion dollars. We're working on that very strongly. ... We're turning all of that around with fair trade deals that put American farmers, ranchers, and, in fact, put America first."

Under Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress has the authority to negotiate international trade deals, or, "To regulate Commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states."

Still, Trump used what statutory authority he had last year to unilaterally impose 25 percent levies on steel, 10 percent tariffs on aluminum, and tariffs of billions of dollars in Chinese imports.

Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 gave the president power to impose some tariffs without Congress for national security reasons. Sections 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 had similar loopholes to expand the president's tariff power.

Last year, a bipartisan group of 88 senators supported giving Congress a greater role in tariffs—which might indicate a tough sell for the reciprocal bill.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, whose committee would vet the reciprocal trade bill, issued a statement upon becoming chairman saying he intends to review the president's tariffs thus far.

"While I strongly agree with President Trump that we must have fair trade deals that benefit Americans, I do not believe that we should alienate our allies with tariffs disguised as national security protections," Grassley said. "And certainly not when it comes to trade in automobiles and auto parts. For this reason, I intend to review the president's use of power under Section 232 of the Trade Act of 1962, which grants the president broad legal authority to impose tariffs in the name of national security. I'm not fond of the Section 301 tariffs on products from China, but I agree with the reasons they've been applied."

If Grassley is not on board, it would give the tariff bill little chance of passing the GOP-controlled Senate. That's a relief for Ryan Young, a fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

"This bill gives [Trump] more reasons legally to impose tariffs," Young told Fox News. "He doesn't have to offer a national security rationale. He just has to decide another country has more trade barriers than the United States."

Because the administration is not only looking at tariffs in other countries, Young added that the determination could be subjective and arbitrary if trade barriers aren't strictly defined in the legislation.

While the economy has been strong under Trump's policies of lower taxes and slashing regulations, Young cites a report by ImpactEcon that projected Trump's tariff policies would reduce economic growth by 1.78 percent in 2019. So, Young said, without tariffs, gross domestic product could exceed an astounding 5 percent.

"This proposal is more symbolic from the administration, but it's important that we send the right symbols," Young continued. "This legislation grossly expands executive power."

[Russia] Russia warns US missile defense plans will fuel arms race (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 2:20 PM, Vladimir Isachenkov, AP, 9763K]

Russia said Friday the Pentagon's new missile defense strategy will trigger an arms race in space and further undermine global stability.

The tough Russian statement came in response to the U.S. administration's Missile Defense Review released Thursday during President Donald Trump's visit to the Pentagon.

The Pentagon's new strategy calls for a new array of space-based sensors and other high-tech systems to more quickly detect and shoot down incoming missiles. It makes clear that the new defense technologies are needed to counter advanced weapons being developed by Russia and China along with threats from North Korea and Iran.

The Russian Foreign Ministry described the new U.S. strategy as a proof of "Washington's desire to ensure uncontested military domination in the world."

It warned that the expansion of the U.S. missile defense system "will inevitably start an arms race in space with the most negative consequences for international security and stability."

"Contrary to what the Review's authors say, the implementation of its plans and approaches will not strengthen security of the U.S. and its allies," the ministry said in a statement. "Attempts to take that path will have the opposite effect and deal another heavy blow to international stability."

Trump, in a speech at the Pentagon, declared that space is the new war-fighting domain and vowed that the U.S. will develop an unrivaled missile defense system to protect against advanced hypersonic and other threats.

The Russian Foreign Ministry described the Pentagon's review as an attempt to reproduce President Ronald Reagan's 'Star Wars' missile defense plans on a new technological level and urged the Trump administration to "come to its senses" and engage in arms control talks with Russia.

Earlier Friday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov again rejected the U.S. claim of Russian violations of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, charging that Washington hasn't offered any proof.

The U.S. has accused Russia of testing and deploying a missile that violated provisions of the INF Treaty that bans production, testing and deployment of land-based cruise and ballistic missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers (310 to 3,400 miles). Washington said it will suspend its treaty obligations if Russian does not come into compliance by Feb. 2.

Lavrov insisted the Russian missile has only been launched at the range allowed by the treaty.

"If they think the range was excessive, they must have satellite images or something else, but they haven't shown anything to us," he said after the talks with visiting German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas.

Maas called on Russia to destroy the type of missile that the U.S. alleges is in violation of the treaty, saying he doesn't think "anyone in Europe would like to see the beginning of a new arms race."

Lavrov charged that the U.S. made it clear during diplomatic contacts back in October that Trump's decision to abandon the pact isn't subject to talks.

"Our American counterparts told us during official contacts ... that the decision is final and irreversible and statement on the U.S. intention to exit the INF Treaty isn't 'an invitation to dialogue,'" he said.

[North Korea] U.S. Missile Defense Review Says North Korea Remains 'Extraordinary Threat' (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/18/2019 8:52 PM, John Hayward, 2015K]

The new version of the U.S. missile defense strategy released by the Pentagon and introduced by President Donald Trump on Thursday states that North Korea remains an "extraordinary threat" along with Iran, Russia, and China.

This seems at odds with Trump's assurances that North Korea is "no longer a nuclear threat" and potentially disruptive to Trump's diplomacy with Pyongyang, which continued with a visit from the chief North Korean negotiator to the White House on Friday.

"While a possible new avenue to peace now exists with North Korea, it continues to pose an extraordinary threat and the United States must remain vigilant," the 2019 Missile Defense Review stated.

Reuters pointed out that Trump did not mention North Korea when introducing the report, but Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan did say Pyongyang's missiles are still a

"significant concern."

This is not entirely a difference of opinion between the White House and Pentagon. Anyone who reads the sections on North Korea will see that Pyongyang's arsenal of short- and medium-range missiles will remain a concern even if complete and verifiable denuclearization is achieved and North Korea abandons its quest for weapons that can hit the continental United States:

Over the past decade, North Korea accelerated its efforts to field missiles capable of threatening deployed U.S. forces, allies, and partners in the region. Since 2015, North Korea test-launched, from numerous locations throughout North Korea, over two dozen regional missiles. It has fielded more regional missiles and diversified its already large regional ballistic missile force, including delivery systems with road-mobile and submarine launching platforms.

These wide-ranging North Korean offensive missile systems have given North Korea the capability to strike U.S. territories, including Guam, U.S. forces abroad, and allies in the Pacific Ocean. They are the tools North Korea has used to issue coercive nuclear preemptive threats, and potentially could use to employ nuclear weapons in the event of conflict in Asia.

Reuters was generally sour on the report, criticizing it for abandoning the Obama administration's subdued approach – which ostensibly prioritized keeping a low profile to "tamp down concerns by major nuclear powers about expanding U.S. missile defenses" – in favor of a bold commitment to missile defense derisively described as "a throwback to former President Ronald Reagan's 1980s 'Star Wars' initiative."

This effort to dismiss the Missile Defense Review was considerably undercut by the rest of the Reuters piece, which quoted boasts from China and Russia that American missile defenses have been made obsolete by the hypersonic weapons and satellite-killers they were eagerly developing during those quiet Obama years:

The U.S. missile defense system is just a "face-saving project" that does not scare China and Russia, the Global Times, a nationalist state-backed Chinese tabloid, wrote on Friday.

"Russia and China's progress in developing super-fast hypersonic missiles has in particular made the U.S. missile defense system less capable than desired," the newspaper said in an editorial.

The U.S. document also pointed to projects by U.S. defense industry giants including Raytheon Co, Lockheed Martin and Boeing Co.

"We are committed to establishing a missile-defense program that can shield every city in the United States. And we will never negotiate away our right to do this," Trump said.

A senior Russian legislator, Viktor Bondarev, said after Trump's announcement that the new U.S. strategy would ramp up global tensions, according to Interfax news agency.

The Pentagon review makes it quite clear that revisions to American defense strategy are necessary because the threat environment has "evolved" and become "more complex and

volatile than any we have experienced in recent memory."

This is partly due to lesser bad actors gaining possession of mobile, highly accurate Russian and Chinese missiles, which are difficult to take out with preemptive strikes or even target with retaliatory actions after they launch an attack, and are covered by increasingly sophisticated air defenses that jeopardize American pilots. Furthermore, aggressors have more targets than ever to shoot, since they are developing the capability to target and destroy satellites and ground-based electronic infrastructure.

The Pentagon, therefore, sees missile defense as vital to restoring deterrence because it can "undermine potential adversaries' confidence in their ability to achieve their intended political or military objectives through missile threats or attacks."

In other words, a low-key strategy would be dangerous because it reduces the perceived cost of attacks in the minds of aggressors. It is important for them to be worried about evolving American capabilities. The technology derided by Reuters as a "Star Wars" fantasy is valuable as a deterrent precisely because potential aggressors do not understand it, cannot train their forces to deal with it, and are uncertain of its capabilities.

This strategy is also meant to reduce the threat of new and more unpredictable adversaries getting their hands on Chinese and Russian technology, as well as making American allies less anxious about the need to develop their own doomsday arsenals. The Pentagon review noted that missile defense tends to reduce the perceived value of aggressive weapons, which makes potential adversaries less eager to take risks and invest exorbitant resources in developing them.

Democrats immediately slammed President Trump's speech and the Missile Defense Review for being too expensive and too provocative to enemy states. Top Senate Armed Services Committee Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) even threw in a snide remark about how Trump's remarks indicate "an effective high-tech missile defense system is a higher national security priority than building a wall across the southern border," right after Reed made it clear he is no more eager to fund missile defense than border security.

Criticizing the report from the other direction, Defense One quoted experts who found the specific proposals made by the Pentagon were not equal to its grand strategic vision:

"They deferred all of the hard things," said Thomas Karako, a missile defense expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "They could still do something pretty substantial, but the significance of the pivot here is kind of at the level of theory and declaratory policy," he said. "The department could go do some more things, but there has to be some active decision to do that and they haven't done that yet."

Most of the initiatives touted in the report are already in the works — and some have been for years. The Obama administration boosted the number of missile interceptors in Alaska from 36 to 40. (There are also four Ground Based Interceptors in California). Congress approved an additional 20 interceptors in Alaska in 2017, bringing the total number of US interceptors to 64.

The Missile Defense Review notes that the Alaska missile field at Fort Greely "has the potential for up to an additional 40 interceptors," but it stops short of calling to install them. It

also alludes to creating a third base of missile interceptors in the continental United States to fight off future Iranian ICBMs, but said a "decision to do so, and site selection, will be informed by pertinent factors at the time, particularly emerging threat conditions."

Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, whose home state houses these interceptors and a radars that would detect and track missiles, said he was surprised the administration did not move ahead with a third missile interceptor site.

"To be honest, I thought they were going to announce it today," he said. "I don't think that that means they're not interested. I think that that work is ongoing."

Defense One mentioned that American defense planners are increasingly concerned about the prospect of major adversaries attacking Washington, DC, with cruise missiles, which are more difficult to detect or counter than intercontinental ballistic missiles that must rise to the edge of outer space before descending on their targets. One of the major initiatives for cruise missile defense has been equipping American fighter jets with systems that can track and engage incoming short- and medium-range weapons.

[China] Senators urge Metro to guard against Chinese spying in new subway cars (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/19/2019 6:00 PM, Robert McCartney, 9763K]

U.S. senators representing the Washington region want Metro to take stronger steps to guard against the risk that buying subway cars from China would allow Beijing to use the vehicles to conduct electronic spying on the nation's capital.

In a letter to Metro General Manager Paul J. Wiedefeld, the lawmakers say the transit agency should get approval from the Defense Department, Department of Homeland Security and Transportation Department before awarding the contract for its next-generation rail cars to a foreign adversary.

The letter adds pressure on Metro to take more extensive precautions than it has done so far in light of the possibility that the state-owned China Railway Rolling Stock Corp. (CRRC) could win the deal to build up to 800 of Metro's 8000-series rail cars.

CRRC has used low bids to win four of five large U.S. transit rail car contracts awarded since 2014. The company — which critics say benefits from state subsidies — is expected to be a strong contender for the Metro contract, which is likely to be worth more than \$1 billion.

Some analysts say resistance to CRRC in Congress, the Pentagon and the U.S. rail-car industry may force Metro to award the contract to a different company. Doing so would probably lead to legal challenges and cost Metro hundreds of millions of dollars, given CRRC's bargain prices. No U.S. company makes subway cars, so China competes in that market against companies from Asia, Europe and Canada.

The letter, delivered Friday, was signed by Sens. Mark R. Warner (D) and Tim Kaine (D) of Virginia, and Ben Cardin (D) and Chris Van Hollen (D) of Maryland. Warner is vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Metro's response was mixed. Wiedefeld issued a brief statement saying the agency was

strengthening its protections against cyberespionage, while Metro Board Chairman Jack Evans criticized the senators.

"If indeed the federal government wants us to buy from other vendors at a higher cost, then they need to subsidize the difference," Evans said. He faulted the federal government for failing to pay part of Metro's operating costs, when federal workers make up an estimated 40 percent of Metro's rush-hour ridership.

"I note that the federal government still pays zero, nothing, for Metro on the operating side," Evans said. "I would instruct the four senators to focus their efforts on getting federal funding for Metro."

The senators' letter did not mention China by name, but it was unmistakably aimed at Beijing. The draft of an accompanying news release said the missive aired "safety and security concerns" regarding the possibility that the contract would go "to a Chinese manufacturing company."

The news release also referred to a Jan. 7 front-page story in The Washington Post reporting concerns that China could install malware in the subway cars' electronic systems to conduct video surveillance, monitor conversations or cause a crash.

The Washington region's senators aren't the only ones uneasy about the Metro contract. On Jan. 11, Sens. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) wrote Wiedefeld expressing "deep concerns" about CRRC's efforts "to displace rail manufacturers in the United States." Crapo and Brown are, respectively, the chairman and ranking Democrat on the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, which oversees public transportation.

The apprehensions arise partly from broader disquiet over charges of Chinese, state-sponsored cybertheft of business secrets and hacking of critical U.S. infrastructure such as telecommunications networks.

The local senators' letter said technologies in the rail cars that are vulnerable to "hacking or other forms of interference" include "automatic train control; network and trainline control; video surveillance; monitoring and diagnostics; and data interface with [Metro]."

It asked several questions aimed at pressing Metro to take precautionary measures, including: "Will Metro consult with the Department of Defense prior to awarding a contract to confirm whether the Department would permit railcars built by certain foreign governments to operate through the Pentagon?" and "Will Metro . . . seek the concurrence of USDOT and DHS in its cybersecurity evaluations before making any final contract award?"

Wiedefeld said Metro would respond directly to the senators as soon as possible.

"We recognize the important national security concerns being raised, and we are working to strengthen this procurement and others with new cybersecurity requirements," Wiedefeld said. "While we have a fiduciary responsibility with all procurements, safety and security is always our first priority."

In picking the winner of the 8000-series contract, Metro is legally required to follow

guidelines it set in a lengthy request for proposals (RFP) it issued in September. The agency said in December that it would revise the specifications in the RFP in light of worries about CRRC. Bids are due April 4.

Metro acted to strengthen its cybersecurity program in the fall by hiring Kyle Malo, a former head of information security at the FBI, as its chief information security officer.

A Japanese company, Kawasaki, is building Metro's latest series rail car, the 7000 series. But Evans and others said Kawasaki is so busy with a new contract with the New York transit system that it is unlikely to compete aggressively, if at all, for the 8000-series cars.

"It is my understanding that Kawasaki might not be able to bid, leaving us with fewer options," Evans said.

Other Metro board members had differing reactions to the senators' letter.

David Horner, who represents the federal government, said he hoped Metro would go further than the senators asked by reviewing whether bidders received financial subsidies "from a non-allied government." Horner has been airing concerns about CRRC since the fall.

"When procuring critical infrastructure, it is necessary for authorities to understand the extent to which proposers act as the alter egos of our country's rivals," Horner said.

Board member Michael Goldman was concerned that Metro was being unfairly singled out given that CRRC already has contracts with transit agencies in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and Philadelphia. He noted that CRRC has built manufacturing plants in the United States to assemble subway cars, although many of the components are made in China.

"This is a broader national issue," said Goldman, who represents Maryland. "What's needed is some broad guidance from the federal government as to what the nature of the problem is, and how transport properties can take steps to protect their infrastructure against cybersecurity intrusions."

CRRC has not responded to emails requesting comment. However, a Jan. 13 article in the Chinese publication Global Times, which reflects the views of the Beijing government, quoted "a Chinese railway expert" as saying concerns about espionage "are groundless and could delay progress in US rail transportation."

Presidential Tweets

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet1](#) [1/18/2019 8:22 AM] Border rancher: "We've found prayer rugs out here. It's unreal." Washington Examiner People coming across the Southern Border from many countries, some of which would be a big surprise.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet2](#) [1/18/2019 9:00 AM] Why would Nancy Pelosi leave the Country with other Democrats on a seven day excursion when 800,000 great people are not getting paid. Also,

could somebody please explain to Nancy & her "big donors" in wine country that people working on farms (grapes) will have easy access in!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet3](#) [1/18/2019 9:08 AM] "It's the Democrats keeping everything closed." @JimInhofe So true!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet4](#) [1/18/2019 9:13 AM] Another big Caravan heading our way. Very hard to stop without a Wall!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet5](#) [1/18/2019 10:02 AM] Kevin Corke, @FoxNews "Don't forget, Michael Cohen has already been convicted of perjury and fraud, and as recently as this week, the Wall Street Journal has suggested that he may have stolen tens of thousands of dollars...." Lying to reduce his jail time! Watch father-in-law!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet6](#) [1/18/2019 10:58 AM] Never seen the Republican Party so unified. No "Cave" on the issue of Border and National Security. A beautiful thing to see, especially when you hear the new rhetoric spewing from the mouths of the Democrats who talk Open Border, High Taxes and Crime. Stop Criminals & Drugs now!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet7](#) [1/18/2019 10:59 AM] MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet8](#) [1/18/2019 11:00 AM] AMERICA FIRST!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet9](#) [1/18/2019 11:58 AM] Thank you to our law enforcement! [Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet10](#) [1/18/2019 5:51 PM] I will be making a major announcement concerning the Humanitarian Crisis on our Southern Border, and the Shutdown, tomorrow afternoon at 3 P.M., live from the @WhiteHouse.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet11](#) [1/18/2019 8:12 PM] Just a son who loves his Dad. Nice! [Editorial note: consult retweet of @DonaldJTrumpJr at source link]

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet12](#) [1/18/2019 10:02 PM] Remember it was Buzzfeed that released the totally discredited "Dossier," paid for by Crooked Hillary Clinton and the Democrats (as opposition research), on which the entire Russian probe is based! A very sad day for journalism, but a great day for our Country!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet13](#) [1/18/2019 10:24 PM] Fake News is truly the ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet14](#) [1/19/2019 6:29 AM] Will be leaving for Dover to be with the families of 4 very special people who lost their lives in service to our Country!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet15](#) [1/19/2019 7:11 AM] .@newtgingrich just stated that there has been no president since Abraham Lincoln who has been treated worse or more unfairly by the media than your favorite President, me! At the same time there has been no president who has accomplished more in his first two years in office!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet16](#) [1/19/2019 7:51 AM] The Economy is one of the best in our history, with unemployment at a 50 year low, and the Stock Market ready to again break a record (set by us many times) - & all you heard yesterday, based on a phony story, was Impeachment. You want to see a Stock Market Crash, Impeach Trump!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet17](#) [1/19/2019 8:50 AM] Many people are saying that the Mainstream Media will have a very hard time restoring credibility because of the way they have treated me over the past 3 years (including the election lead-up), as highlighted by the disgraceful Buzzfeed story & the even more disgraceful coverage!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet18](#) [1/19/2019 9:09 AM] Mexico is doing NOTHING to stop the Caravan which is now fully formed and heading to the United States. We stopped the last two - many are still in Mexico but can't get through our Wall, but it takes a lot of Border Agents if there is no Wall. Not easy!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet19](#) [1/19/2019 2:08 PM] I will be live from the White House at 4:00 P.M.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet20](#) [1/19/2019 4:24 PM] President Trump Delivers Remarks on the Humanitarian Crisis on Our Southern Border and the Shutdown [Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet21](#) [1/20/2019 7:40 AM] Always heard that as President, "it's all about the economy!" Well, we have one of the best economies in the history of our Country. Big GDP, lowest unemployment, companies coming back to the U.S. in BIG numbers, great new trade deals happening, & more. But LITTLE media mention!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet22](#) [1/20/2019 7:59 AM] Be careful and try staying in your house. Large parts of the Country are suffering from tremendous amounts of snow and near record setting cold. Amazing how big this system is. Wouldn't be bad to have a little of that good old fashioned Global Warming right now!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet23](#) [1/20/2019 8:11 AM] Nancy Pelosi and some of the Democrats turned down my offer yesterday before I even got up to speak. They don't see crime & drugs, they only see 2020 - which they are not going to win. Best economy! They should do the right thing for the Country & allow people to go back to work.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet24](#) [1/20/2019 8:23 AM] No, Amnesty is not a part of my offer. It is a 3 year extension of DACA. Amnesty will be used only on a much bigger deal, whether on immigration or something else. Likewise there will be no big push to remove the 11,000,000 plus people who are here illegally-but be careful Nancy!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet25](#) [1/20/2019 8:35 AM] Nancy Pelosi has behaved so irrationally & has gone so far to the left that she has now officially become a Radical Democrat. She is so petrified of the "lefties" in her party that she has lost control...And by the way, clean up the streets in San Francisco, they are disgusting!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet26](#) [1/20/2019 8:51 AM] Nancy, I am still thinking about the State of the Union speech, there are so many options - including doing it as per your written offer (made during the Shutdown, security is no problem), and my written acceptance. While a contract is a contract, I'll get back to you soon!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet27](#) [1/20/2019 9:03 AM] Wow, just heard that my poll numbers with Hispanics has gone up 19%, to 50%. That is because they know the Border issue better than anyone, and they want Security, which can only be gotten with a Wall.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet28](#) [1/20/2019 9:20 AM] Don't forget, we are building and renovating big sections of Wall right now. Moving quickly, and will cost far less than previous politicians thought possible. Building, after all, is what I do best, even when money is not readily available!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet29](#) [1/20/2019 1:16 PM] The Media is not giving us credit for the tremendous progress we have made with North Korea. Think of where we were at the end of the Obama Administration compared to now. Great meeting this week with top Reps. Looking forward to meeting with Chairman Kim at end of February!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet30](#) [1/20/2019 10:43 PM] Congratulations to Bob Kraft, Bill Belichick, Tom Brady and the entire New England Patriots team on a great game and season. Will be a fantastic Super Bowl!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet31](#) [1/20/2019 11:08 PM] Curt Schilling deserves to be in the Baseball Hall of Fame. Great record, especially when under pressure and when it mattered most. Do what everyone in Baseball knows is right! @marklevinshow

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet32](#) [1/21/2019 12:03 AM] "No President in modern times has kept more promises than Donald Trump!" Thank you Bill Bennett @SteveHiltonx

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet33](#) [1/21/2019 10:22 AM] Last year was the best year for American Manufacturing job growth since 1997, or 21 years. The previous administration said manufacturing will not come back to the U.S., "you would need a magic wand." I guess I found the MAGIC WAND - and it is only getting better!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet34](#) [1/21/2019 10:39 AM] Today we celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for standing up for the self-evident truth Americans hold so dear, that no matter what the color of our skin or the place of our birth, we are all created equal by God. #MLKDay [Editorial note: consult article at source link]

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet35](#) [1/21/2019 10:40 AM] Democrats campaigned on working within Washington and "getting things done!" How is that working out? #2020TAKEBACKTHEHOUSE

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet36](#) [1/20/2019 8:25 PM] To all of the great people who are working so hard for your Country and not getting paid I say, THANK YOU - YOU ARE GREAT PATRIOTS! We must now work together, after decades of abuse, to finally fix the Humanitarian, Criminal & Drug Crisis at our Border. WE WILL WIN BIG!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet37](#) [1/21/2019 12:46 PM] Today, it was my great honor to visit the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial with @VP Mike Pence, in honor of #MLKDay [Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet38](#) [1/21/2019 4:57 PM] China posts slowest economic numbers since 1990 due to U.S. trade tensions and new policies. Makes so much sense for China to finally do a Real Deal, and stop playing around!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet39](#) [1/21/2019 5:08 PM] If Nancy Pelosi thinks that Walls are "immoral," why isn't she requesting that we take down all of the existing Walls between the U.S. and Mexico, even the new ones just built in San Diego at their very strong urging. Let millions of unchecked "strangers" just flow into the U.S.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet40](#) [1/21/2019 6:37 PM] Four people in Nevada viciously robbed and killed by an illegal immigrant who should not have been in our Country. 26 people killed on the Border in a drug and gang related fight. Two large Caravans from Honduras broke into Mexico and are headed our way. We need a powerful Wall!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet41](#) [1/21/2019 6:45 PM] Democrats are kidding themselves (they don't really believe it!) if they say you can stop Crime, Drugs, Human Trafficking and Caravans without a Wall or Steel Barrier. Stop playing games and give America the Security it deserves. A Humanitarian Crisis!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet42](#) [1/21/2019 9:46 PM] Looking like Nick Sandman & Covington Catholic students were treated unfairly with early judgements proving out to be false - smeared by media. Not good, but making big comeback! "New footage shows that media was wrong about teen's encounter with Native American" @TuckerCarlson

{End of Report}

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

From: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
Sent: Tuesday, January 22, 2019 7:07 AM
To: OPS EAST SECTOR
Subject: FW: DHS Morning Briefing (1-22-19)
Attachments: DHS Morning Briefing (1-22-19).pdf

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Sent: Tuesday, January 22, 2019 6:42:09 AM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: (b) (7)(E)
Subject: DHS Morning Briefing (1-22-19)



DHS MORNING BRIEFING

Prepared for the Office of Public Affairs (OPA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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TO: Homeland Security Secretary & Staff
DATE: Tuesday, January 22, 2019 7:00 AM ET

Top News

[Congress to pursue divergent paths to reopening government, but stalemate no closer to resolution \(Washington Post\)](#)

[Senate immigration bill includes border wall money, 52,000 detention beds, 750 border agents \(Washington Times\)](#)

[House Dems add \\$1 billion in border spending to reopen government \(The Hill\)](#)

[Senate GOP blocks bill to reopen Homeland Security \(The Hill\)](#)

[Trump says he's 'still thinking' about Pelosi's request to postpone State of the Union \(The Hill\)](#)

[Trump To Pelosi: 'I'll Get Back To You Soon' On State Of The Union \(Daily Caller\)](#)

[Homeland Security says it will provide security assistance to Super Bowl despite shutdown \(CNN\)](#)

[Will government shutdown impact security at Super Bowl LIII? \(USA Today\)](#)

[Trump Offers Deportation Protections in Exchange for Wall Funding \(New York Times\)](#)

[Republicans Push Trump Immigration Plan, Seeking to Corner Democrats on Shutdown \(New York Times\)](#)

[Trump's full address on new proposal for border wall, security and DACA as shutdown continues \(Washington Post\)](#)

[Trump offers to temporarily protect 'Dreamers' if Democrats fund his wall \(Los Angeles Times\)](#)

[Trump Offers Democrats A New Plan In Hopes Of Opening The Government \(NPR\)](#)

[Trump Extends Offer To End Shutdown, Extend DACA; Democrats Say 'No Deal' \(NPR\)](#)

[Trump offers trade of Dreamers-for-wall that Democrats quickly reject \(Roll Call\)](#)

[Donald Trump Offers Democrats Temporary DACA Amnesty for 230 Miles of Wall \(Breitbart\)](#)

[Trump offers immigration compromise to end partial shutdown; Dems cool to offer \(FOX News\)](#)

[Trump proposes wall-for-DACA in bid to end U.S. government shutdown \(Reuters\)](#)

[Trump says no amnesty for 'Dreamers,' signals support in broader deal \(Reuters\)](#)

[Trump offers immigration compromise to Democrats for wall funding in bid to end shutdown \(Washington Times\)](#)

[Trump yields on 3 immigration policies in effort to reach compromise on wall \(Washington Times\)](#)

[Trump pitches deal: Protection of immigrants here with DACA, TPS for \\$5.7B in border security \(Washington Examiner\)](#)

[Reformers Worry DACA Work Permit Amnesty-for-Wall Funding will Encourage More Caravans \(Breitbart\)](#)

[For DACA Recipients, President's Temporary Offer Feels Like More Chaos \(NPR\)](#)

[In Trump's Immigration Announcement, a Compromise Snubbed All Around \(New York Times\)](#)

[A temporary DACA fix for a permanent wall? Trump proposal gathers more Dem resistance \(Politico\)](#)

[Democrats Reject Trump Border Wall Proposal, Calling It A 'Non-Starter' \(News: NPR\)](#)

[Podcast: Shutdown Drags On As Democrats Reject Latest Trump Proposal \(NPR\)](#)

[Pelosi: Trump proposals to reopen government a 'non-starter' \(The Hill\)](#)

[No deal: Nancy Pelosi rejects Trump's offer to legalize Dreamers for wall money \(Washington Examiner\)](#)

[Trump attacks top Democrat for rejecting Mexico wall deal \(Breitbart\)](#)

[In shutdown fight with Trump, Dems reject immigration deal they once sponsored \(FOX News\)](#)

[Romney backs Trump on partial shutdown, says 'I don't understand' Pelosi's position \(FOX News\)](#)

['It's anyone's guess what happens next': Democrats shoot down Trump's plan to end shutdown \(USA Today\)](#)

['Save The Dreamers': WaPo Implores Democrats To Take Trump's Wall Deal \(Daily Caller\)](#)

[Liz Cheney: Pelosi 'Commandeered' The House On The DACA Issue She's Now Voting Against \(Daily Caller\)](#)

[Homeland Security Committee chairman: 'I would not rule out a wall in certain instances' \(The Hill\)](#)

[Top Homeland Security Dem breaks with party: 'I would not rule out a wall in certain instances' \(FOX News\)](#)

[Democratic Homeland Security Chair: I 'Would Not Rule Out a Wall in Certain Instances' \(Free Beacon\)](#)

[Pelosi cancels effort to continue Afghanistan trip after Trump revealing travel plans 'significantly increased danger,' official says \(ABC News\)](#)

[Pelosi cancels Afghanistan trip, cites Trump 'leak' \(Breitbart\)](#)

[Pelosi says Trump 'outing' war zone trip made it more dangerous \(CNN\)](#)

[Pelosi spokesman says White House leaked commercial travel plans to Afghanistan \(Roll Call Online\)](#)

[Democratic Senator Seeks Perjury Investigation of Kirstjen Nielsen \(New York Times\)](#)

[Dem senator requests FBI investigate Nielsen for potential perjury \(The Hill\)](#)

[Senate Dem on call for Nielsen investigation: I am 'sick and tired of this administration lying' \(The Hill\)](#)

[Jeff Merkley Requests FBI Perjury Investigation into Kirstjen Nielsen \(Roll Call\)](#)

[Leaked memo shows Trump administration weighed separating families at border, Sen. Merkley wants Nielsen investigated for perjury \(ABC News\)](#)

[Sen. Merkley Asks FBI to Investigate DHS Secretary \(US News & World Report\)](#)

[U.S. Senator Merkley seeks FBI probe of DHS chief for possible perjury \(Reuters\)](#)

[What the 2017 draft memo reveals about the administration's family separations policy \(CNN\)](#)

[Nearly 300 families may have been separated before 'zero tolerance' took effect, admin says \(CNN\)](#)

['Depth of the horror of family separation is unknown,' says congresswoman in border district \(ABC News\)](#)

[Oversight of child separations is both parties' responsibility \(Washington Examiner\)](#)

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[Trump points to a migrant caravan and unverified claim about Muslim prayer rugs as he continues push for wall \(Washington Post\)](#)

[Trump touts story about finding 'prayer rugs' along border \(Politico\)](#)

[Case of terror suspect caught sneaking into U.S. roils immigration debate \(Washington Times\)](#)

[Trump offers to limit his border wall to strategic locations \(The Hill\)](#)

['Not a 2,000-mile concrete structure from sea to sea': Is Trump scaling back border wall plan? \(USA Today\)](#)

[While Democrats dither over the border wall, deadly fentanyl floods our communities \(Washington Examiner\)](#)

[Trump insists that a 'border crisis' is ravaging America – Here's what numbers tell us \(FOX News\)](#)

[Schumer wants answers from Trump on eminent domain at border \(The Hill\)](#)

[Despite shutdown, DOJ moves forward with land-grab cases for border fence \(CNN\)](#)

[Justice Department Is Hiring Lawyers To Take On Property Seizures For Trump Border Wall \(Daily Caller\)](#)

[Finding a way through the border fence was easy. Winning the right to remain won't be. \(Washington Post\)](#)

[Immigration Courts Have A Huge Backlog. The Shutdown's Making It Worse \(NPR\)](#)

[As More Migrants Are Denied Asylum, An Abuse Survivor Is Turned Away \(Northern Public Radio\)](#)

[ACLU Sues Government Agencies For Supposedly Using Big Tech To Snoop On Black People \(Daily Caller\)](#)

[\[TX\] Texas lawmakers push legislation on three key immigration issues \(Houston Chronicle\)](#)

[\[CA\] Governor earmarks funds for migrant shelter in proposed budget \(San Diego Union Tribune\)](#)
[\[Mexico\] Mexico sets up new process for Central American migrants headed toward U.S. \(CBS News\)](#)
[\[Mexico\] Thousands of caravan migrants request temporary asylum in Mexico; some try returning to US \(FOX News\)](#)
[\[Mexico\] Another Caravan Crosses Mexican-Guatemalan Border \(The Wall Street Journal\)](#)
[\[Mexico\] 800 New Caravan Migrants Break Border Gate into Mexico \(Breitbart\)](#)
[\[Mexico\] New migrant caravan enters Mexico, legally or not \(Breitbart\)](#)
[\[Mexico\] Migrant caravan freely crosses Mexican border after gates were left open, authorities avoided 'confrontation' \(FOX News\)](#)
[\[Mexico\] Hundreds of Central American migrants enter Mexico with few checks \(Reuters\)](#)
[\[Mexico\] Fuel pipeline blaze in Mexico kills at least 67 \(Breitbart\)](#)
[\[Mexico\] Pipeline explosion witnesses describe scene where 73 died: 'People's skin came off' \(FOX News\)](#)
[\[Central America\] MS-13 and the violence driving migration from Central America \(CBS News\)](#)

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[Houston case reveals extortion, death threats among brutal tactics employed by human traffickers \(Houston Chronicle\)](#)
[Afghan military interpreter freed after week in ICE detention \(Houston Chronicle\)](#)
[Detained immigrants paid \\$1 a day, with toothpaste costing \\$11: report \(The Hill\)](#)
[\[NY\] It Was a Sanctuary for Immigrants in the Bronx. Then One of Its Owners Was Arrested \(New York Times\)](#)
[\[MD\] ICE confirms why it ended contract with Maryland county \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)
[\[MI\] Marine vet with PTSD held by ICE for 3 days before agency realized he was citizen \(FOX News\)](#)
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[\[MI\] Michigan sheriff: Warrant needed if ICE wants jail inmates \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)
[\[MI\] Deported after 30 years in US, father still stuck in Mexico one year later, without wife and kids \(USA Today\)](#)
[\[NV\] Man in custody for 4 'brutal' killings that shook Reno communities: Officials \(ABC News\)](#)
[\[NV\] Man linked to 4 killings suspected of being in US illegally \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)
[\[Central America\] These Central Americans have a second chance at asylum after being "unlawfully" deported. First ICE needs to bring them back \(CBS News\)](#)
[\[Central America\] Federal Judge orders 12 immigrants to be given a second chance at asylum \(CBS News\)](#)

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[300 DHS employees to return to work Tuesday \(Breitbart\)](#)
[Nearly 300 federal workers recalled from furlough to perform different jobs \(CNN\)](#)
[E-Verify employees can return to work despite partial government shutdown, DHS says \(FOX News\)](#)
[DHS reinstating 300 furloughed employees to carry out critical tasks \(Washington Examiner\)](#)

[Homeland Security citizenship office to bring back workers, with pay, during shutdown \(Washington Times\)](#)

[Trump again endorses immigration changes for seasonal migrant farm workers \(Roll Call\)](#)

[Democrats propose legal status for undocumented immigrant farmworkers \(Roll Call\)](#)

[H-2B visas need fixing, employers and immigration attorneys say \(Northern Public Radio\)](#)

[Supreme Court Hints It Won't Hear Trump's DACA Appeal This Term \(Bloomberg\)](#)

[Supreme Court Inaction Suggests DACA Safe for Another Year \(US News & World Report\)](#)

[Supreme Court silent on 'Dreamers' appeal, other big cases \(Reuters\)](#)

[Court inaction implies 'Dreamers' safe for another year \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)

[\[Philippines\] Philippines May Appeal Trump's Ban on Temporary U.S. Work Visas \(Bloomberg\)](#)

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[Sending troops to border is legal \(The Hill\)](#)

[Border Patrol official on apprehensions spike... \(CBS News\)](#)

[Mexican drug cartel leader indicted two decades ago admits transporting drugs to the U.S. \(Los Angeles Times\)](#)

[This is how much of the border wall has been built so far \(CNN\)](#)

[Border wall won't stop migrants but will increase use of smugglers \(The Hill\)](#)

[Some migrants say a wall wouldn't stop them from entering the US, but Customs and Border Protection says it's a key part of the solution \(ABC News\)](#)

[Democrats ignore the wall wishes of the people who know the border best: Border agents \(Washington Examiner\)](#)

[How the Border Patrol has changed over the years \(Houston Chronicle\)](#)

[\[TX\] The border agent who stops the most illegal crossings into the US doesn't care if you call it a 'wall' \(Washington Examiner\)](#)

[\[AZ\] 376 migrants arrested in Arizona after crossing border \(Washington Post\)](#)

[\[AZ\] Largest group of asylum seekers to ever cross border used tunnels: report \(The Hill\)](#)

[\[AZ\] Largest Migrant Group to Enter Arizona Burrowed Under Border Fence, Say Feds \(Breitbart\)](#)

[\[AZ\] Largest single group of migrants ever tunnels under border wall in Arizona, says Border Protection \(ABC News\)](#)

[\[AZ\] Hundreds of Central Americans arrested for tunneling under border barrier, Border Patrol says \(FOX News\)](#)

[\[AZ\] 30 unaccompanied children were among 376 migrants who tunneled under border wall into Arizona \(FOX News\)](#)

[\[AZ\] Nearly 400 Migrants Tunnel Under Border Wall to Enter United States from Mexico \(US News & World Report\)](#)

[\[AZ\] Record-setting group of migrants tunneled under U.S. border wall \(USA Today\)](#)

[\[AZ\] Largest-ever group of migrant families tunnels under Yuma, Arizona, border fence \(USA Today\)](#)

[\[AZ\] 400 Migrants Overwhelmed US Border In Yuma Sector During Week-Long Period \(Daily Caller\)](#)

[\[AZ\] They left food and water for migrants in the desert. Now they might go to prison. \(Washington Post\)](#)

[\[AZ\] Four women found guilty after leaving food and water for migrants in Arizona desert \(The Hill\)](#)

[\[AZ\] Humanitarian volunteers convicted on charges related to leaving food, water for migrants at Arizona-Mexico border \(ABC News\)](#)

[\[AZ\] Four aid volunteers found guilty of dropping off water, food for migrants in Arizona desert \(USA Today\)](#)

[\[NM\] The Latest: Another migrant group smuggled to New Mexico \(Washington Post\)](#)

[\[NM\] Thousands of Migrants Crossing Remote Section of New Mexico Border \(Breitbart\)](#)

[\[NM\] Smugglers Use Migrant Families to Distract Border Agents, Move Drugs Across \(Breitbart\)](#)

[\[AK\] A Small Alaska Town Reels as the Coast Guard Weathers On Without Pay \(New York Times\)](#)

Transportation Security Administration

[Number of TSA checkpoint agents calling out during shutdown stresses major airports \(Washington Post\)](#)

[10 percent of TSA workers called out Sunday as shutdown continues \(Washington Post\)](#)

['Morale is at an all-time low': Unpaid Pittsburgh TSA workers demand end to shutdown \(Washington Post\)](#)

[TSA says many employees not reporting to work because of 'financial limitations' \(The Hill\)](#)

[As government shutdown continues, more TSA agents calling out 'due to financial limitations' \(FOX News\)](#)

[Government shutdown, TSA absenteeism spark travel industry fears \(CBS News\)](#)

[What TSA is telling key officials to say about the shutdown \(CNN\)](#)

[TSA officers open up about what the government shutdown is doing to their families \(USA Today\)](#)

[TSA absences rise as shutdown continues \(Reuters\)](#)

[Union warns of threat to air safety from the partial government shutdown \(Michigan Public Radio\)](#)

[Conservative leader: Shutdown would quickly end if TSA workers walked off job \(The Hill\)](#)

[\[PA\] TSA agents protest government shutdown at Pittsburgh airport \(The Hill\)](#)

[\[MD\] TSA closes checkpoint at BWI airport, citing 'excessive callouts' \(Washington Post\)](#)

[\[MD\] TSA closes checkpoint at Baltimore-DC airport after 'excessive' employee callouts amid shutdown \(The Hill\)](#)

[\[Canada\] Fire aboard June WestJet flight caused by e-cigarette batteries, says TSB \(BNN Bloomberg\)](#)

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[Project looks into how drones can predict spread of wildfire \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)

[\[AL\] 'Never Heard Nothing Like It': Southern Storm Wrecks Landmark Churches \(NPR\)](#)

[\[AL\] EF-2 Tornado damages homes, businesses in Alabama town \(Breitbart\)](#)

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[\[FL\] Tornado damages Florida air base hit by hurricane \(Washington Times\)](#)

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[\[TX\] Legislators look to help victims of future storms \(Houston Chronicle\)](#)

[\[CA\] Federal Judge Faults California Utility As 'Most Recurring Cause' Of Wildfires \(Daily Caller\)](#)

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[\[CA\] California Tower to close most of the year for earthquake upgrades \(San Diego Union Tribune\)](#)

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[George W. Bush delivers pizza to his unpaid Secret Service detail and calls for shutdown to end \(Washington Post\)](#)

[Bush calls for end to shutdown, delivers pizza to Secret Service \(The Hill\)](#)

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[Coast Guard calls out shutdown in video about upcoming deployment \(The Hill\)](#)

['Pay held hostage': Coast Guard remains on duty but grows increasingly vocal over shutdown \(Washington Times\)](#)

[\[CT\] As Shutdown Drags On, a 'Coast Guard City' Rallies \(US News & World Report\)](#)

[\[NY\] The Latest: Man rescued from New York river island \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)

[\[NJ\] Coast Guard rescues duck hunter stranded on island off NJ \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)

[\[NJ\] 'I see people panicking': In a Coast Guard town, hardship and resolve amid the shutdown \(Washington Post\)](#)

[\[NJ\] 'This is a true Coast Guard community' \(Washington Post\)](#)

[\[LA\] Coast Guard ends search for 2 missing in Mississippi River \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)

[\[IL\] Weather conditions hinder search of Lake Michigan off Waukegan for missing teen \(Chicago Tribune\)](#)

[\[IL\] 'We report regardless': Coast Guard protection among Lake County services pressing on during shutdown \(Chicago Tribune\)](#)

[\[Bahamas\] Coast Guard: 31 rescued from disabled boat off the Bahamas \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)

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[Shutdown's invisible costs: Cyberthreats, untrained firefighters, bug invasions \(Washington Post\)](#)

[Shutdown Makes Government Websites More Vulnerable To Hackers, Experts Say \(Alabama Public Radio\)](#)

[Federal shutdown inviting major cyberattack in U.S., experts say \(Breitbart\)](#)

[The Technology 202: Sen. Schatz calls on technology industry to share cyber threats \(Washington Post\)](#)

[Four cybersecurity priorities for Congress to confront active threats \(The Hill\)](#)

[Fighting AI With AI: Army Seeks Autonomous Cyber Defenses \(Bloomberg Government\)](#)

[Health-care sector is far too vulnerable to cybersecurity threats \(The Hill\)](#)

[The Cybersecurity 202: How does a country spy on its citizens? A cybersecurity company got an inside look \(Washington Post\)](#)

[America avoided election hacking in 2018. But are we ready for 2020? \(ABC News\)](#)

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[Democrats claim alleged Russian hackers posed as State Department official in attempted DNC hack \(CNN\)](#)

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[The government shutdown is shutting down our national security: OPINION \(ABC News\)](#)

[A national security reset is in serious order \(The Hill\)](#)

[Pentagon report says bases face climate risks, but critics say it's short on details \(Washington Post\)](#)

[Pentagon warns Congress that climate change is a 'national security' risk to military bases \(Washington Examiner\)](#)

[Trump faces conservative backlash over push for new tariff powers \(FOX News\)](#)

[\[Russia\] Russia warns US missile defense plans will fuel arms race \(Washington Post\)](#)

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Presidential Tweets

Editorial Note: The DHS Daily Briefing is a collection of news articles related to Department's mission. The inclusion of particular stories is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse the political viewpoints or affiliations included in news coverage.

Top News

Congress to pursue divergent paths to reopening government, but stalemate no closer to resolution (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/21/2019 2:59 PM, Jeff Stein and Erica Werner, 9763K]

Congress takes up legislation in coming days to reopen the federal government after a new offer from President Trump, but divergent efforts in the House and Senate look destined to go nowhere, leaving hundreds of thousands of federal workers facing a second missed paycheck at week's end with the impasse no closer to resolution.

The Senate, led by Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), will take up a proposal announced by Trump on Saturday to trade temporary protections for young undocumented immigrants and others for \$5.7 billion the president is seeking for his border wall. The legislation, released late Monday, would reopen the government through Sept. 30 while funding a variety of other immigration security measures and spending \$12.7 billion on hurricane and wildfire disaster relief. But Democrats have rejected the plan, so it appears unlikely to garner the 60 votes necessary to advance.

The House, led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), will pass a series of spending bills that would reopen portions of the government that have nothing to do with the wall. The legislation will include some security priorities supported by both parties, including a total of about \$1 billion for immigration judges and ports of entry along the border. But the House legislation is dead on arrival in the Senate, where McConnell has made clear he will not advance any spending bills Trump won't sign.

The bill being voted on in the Senate also contains significant changes to asylum procedures for Central American minors, a fact that came to light only when the legislation was released late Monday night and sparked an angry reaction from immigrant rights activists. The legislation would require these minors to apply for asylum in their home countries, not at the U.S. border, as now occurs, and they would be returned home if they sought to apply for asylum at the U.S. border. It would also put new caps on asylum claims from Central American minors.

These changes, along with some others in the bill, appeared certain to harden Democratic opposition to the legislation.

The partial government shutdown, already the longest in U.S. history, entered its 31st day Monday.

Even if Trump's proposal fails in the Senate, Republicans hope to use the development to put the onus on Democrats and cast them as the ones who are standing in the way of solving the shutdown, after a series of public polls have shown Trump blamed more than Democrats for the impasse.

"Democrats are kidding themselves (they don't really believe it!) if they say you can stop Crime, Drugs, Human Trafficking and Caravans without a Wall or Steel Barrier. Stop playing games and give America the Security it deserves. A Humanitarian Crisis!" Trump wrote Monday on Twitter.

"Nothing has changed with the latest Republican offer; President Trump and Senate Republicans are still saying, 'Support my plan or the government stays shut.' That isn't a compromise or a negotiation — it's simply more hostage-taking," said Justin Goodman, a spokesman for Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.). "Democrats are staying firm with our position: Open the government first, and then we can have a serious discussion about the issues at hand."

Trump also planned to meet with conservative leaders on Tuesday to sell them on his plan, according to an official familiar with the meeting, following criticism coming from some on the right who have characterized it as "amnesty" for unauthorized immigrants.

For their part, House Democrats have been discussing the need to set out in greater detail their own priorities for border security, to show what they support and not just what they oppose, an effort that is expected to be fleshed out this week and could take the shape of a public announcement or legislation to fund the Homeland Security Department, which has been shut down along with dozens of other agencies since Dec. 22. The Democratic priorities could include funding for things such as sensors, drones and more customs officers — but no money for Trump's wall, aides said.

The shutdown is beginning to hurt the American economy amid a number of emerging threats to the nation's economic health, from Trump's ongoing trade war to slowing expansions in China and Germany. JPMorgan projected that the economy is losing at least \$1.5 billion a week from the shutdown, and financial elites gathered this week in Davos, Switzerland, have expressed alarm that another recession may be on the horizon.

The Trump administration has taken certain steps to blunt the impact of the shutdown, effects of which will nevertheless multiply over time, including at airports, where Transportation Security Administration employees are increasingly calling out sick. The TSA says that as of Sunday, 10 percent of employees are taking unscheduled absences, compared with 3.1 percent a year ago. "Many employees are reporting that they are not able to report to work due to financial limitations," the agency said.

Without action by Congress and Trump, hundreds of thousands of federal employees are also set to miss their second paycheck Friday. On Sunday, the National Governors Association sent a letter to congressional leaders saying some states are beginning to run out of money to pay federal welfare benefits used by 1 million adults and 2.5 million children, with North Carolina expected to exhaust its

funding in early February.

The Trump administration also provided money for states to administer food stamps through February but has said it cannot guarantee that benefits would continue should the shutdown stretch into March.

It is also not clear if the Internal Revenue Service, working with only 60 percent of its overall staff, is prepared for tax filing season to begin this month.

Schumer released legislation Sunday to prohibit landlords from evicting federal workers or contractors hurt by the shutdown, although that bill was not expected to pass.

Trump's proposal Saturday represented his first attempt since the shutdown began to offer a broader deal that would involve both border security and other parts of the immigration system. The president offered three years of deportation protections for immigrants who were brought to the United States illegally as children and had qualified for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which the president terminated earlier in his tenure. (A federal court has delayed the end of the program.)

Democrats rejected the proposal from the start, saying that the government cannot be held hostage and must be reopened before negotiations on immigration policy can begin. They added they would not trade a temporary measure for a permanent wall and pointed out that Trump was offering only to temporarily prolong a program he tried to kill. Trump also offered to back off plans to end a program, known as temporary protected status, that has allowed hundreds of thousands of people to come to the United States after fleeing natural disasters and violent conflict at home. All told, about 1 million immigrants covered under DACA and TPS would be eligible for temporary relief, the administration said.

Even as his proposal was rejected by Democrats, Trump also faced fire from some conservatives who derided his immigration overtures as "amnesty," although the opposition did not appear as widespread as last year's when similar complaints torpedoed an even bigger deal that would have created a path to citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants while fully funding Trump's border wall.

Trump's offer, followed by its swift rejection by Democrats and the hard right, left the shutdown looking as intractable as ever — even while serving as evidence that Republicans are growing uneasy about allowing the shutdown to continue indefinitely. Democrats have maintained a united front throughout the standoff, and after Pelosi released a letter last week suggesting Trump delay his Jan. 29 State of the Union address unless the shutdown has been resolved, McConnell encouraged Trump to shift the debate by making his new offer, which McConnell promised to bring to a vote — even though McConnell had previously said that only a bipartisan agreement would break the impasse.

The shutdown is affecting about a quarter of federal agencies but is limited in scope because Congress passed legislation funding the Pentagon and some other major agencies, including the Health and Human Services Department. Medicare and Social Security benefits are not affected because they flow independently of congressional appropriations.

Trump long claimed that the border wall would be paid for by Mexico before he started demanding billions from U.S. taxpayers to build it. The \$5.7 billion he is asking for now would pay for about 230 miles of new wall.

Senate immigration bill includes border wall money, 52,000 detention beds, 750 border agents (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/21/2019 4:39 PM, Stephen Dinan, 527K]

Senate Republicans on Monday released the text of their bill to carry out President Trump's new immigration plan to end the government shutdown, saying they're intent on holding an initial vote later this week.

The bill, dubbed "End the Shutdown and Secure the Border Act," includes Mr. Trump's \$5.7 billion request for border fencing and a new \$12.7 billion disaster relief package, combined with bills to reopen nine government departments that have been without money for a month.

It would also grant a three-year amnesty from deportation to about 1 million migrants who are currently here under executive actions, but whose legal status beyond that is highly questionable. That includes some 700,000 illegal immigrant "Dreamers" who are protected by the Obama-era DACA program, and another 325,000 migrants who are under a tentative humanitarian protected status.

The bill also includes funding for a daily average of 52,000 detention beds to hold immigrants awaiting deportation. That's in line with Mr. Trump's request, but far more than Democrats have said they are willing to accept. A new contingent of 750 Border Patrol agents is also part of the plan — which Democrats have also been cool to.

And the legislation includes changes to the law to allow for children from key Central American countries to apply for asylum from outside the U.S. — but in exchange, it allows the government to speed up deportations for illegal immigrant children from Central American who sneak into the U.S., putting them on par with children from Mexico who are already subject to expedited removals.

The bill, introduced by Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby, runs to 1,301 pages.

"The president has proposed a serious compromise to end this shutdown," Mr. Shelby said. "It would not only fund the government and secure the border, but also provide immigration reforms the Democrats have long supported."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell could bring it to the chamber floor Tuesday and force an initial vote to head off a Democratic filibuster Thursday.

But Democratic leaders have already signaled resistance to the plan even before seeing the details, based on the outline Mr. Trump announced over the weekend.

Prodded by left-wing activists and immigrant-rights advocates, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has called the concept of a border wall "an immorality" and has said she won't approve any new money for the project.

Democrats also object to changes to speed up deportations from within the U.S., arguing the children and families attempting to jump the border aren't illegal immigrants as much as they are refugees from a rough life back home, who deserve a chance to make a claim for protection here.

Instead Democrats say they want to focus on drug trafficking at the border, and they have proposed more customs officers and scanning technology to man the land border crossings where they say most of those hard drugs transit.

A bill to reopen the government's shuttered departments, combined with those more limited border measures, is slated for a vote in the House this week.

House Dems add \$1 billion in border spending to reopen government (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/19/2019 11:12 AM, John Bowden, 3038K]

House Democrats will offer \$1 billion in funding for border security measures in a bill to reopen the government next week, a Democratic source told CNN on Saturday.

CNN reports that none of the money will be eligible for use in construction of President Trump's signature

border wall as Democrats view other border security measures as more effective.

News of the Democrats' plan comes hours before Trump is scheduled to give a live address at the White House on border security and the ongoing partial government shutdown, which entered its 29th day on Saturday.

The bill would be the 10th Democratic bill to reopen the government since Democrats took control of the House this month, though none of the plans have made headway in the Senate due to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's (R-Ky.) refusal to bring up any bill for a vote without the support of Trump.

Speculation has swirled around the planned announcement over whether Trump will offer his own compromise package to Democrats, or whether he will instead declare a national emergency over illegal border crossings and seek to circumvent Congress to acquire funds for the border wall.

Trump appeared to back away from the latter plan earlier this month, lamenting that such an option would likely face court battles from Democrats.

"It's the easy way out, but Congress should do this," Trump told reporters at the time.

The fight over the shutdown ramped up this week after Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) wrote a letter to Trump urging him to reschedule or submit in writing his annual State of the Union speech.

Trump later countered by preventing congressional delegations from traveling overseas on military flights during the shutdown. Trump's move canceled plans for Democrats to visit troops in Afghanistan over the weekend.

Polls have suggested that more Americans view Trump as at fault for the shutdown, while smaller percentages blame House Democrats.

Senate GOP blocks bill to reopen Homeland Security (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 11:18 AM, Jordain Carney] Senate Republicans blocked legislation on Friday that would have temporarily reopened the Department of Homeland Security.

Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) asked to take up a House-passed bill that would fund the department through Feb. 8. It's the third time Democrats have tried to bring up the stopgap measure.

But Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) objected to the request "on behalf of the majority leader," referring to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.).

It's the third time McConnell has blocked the bill to temporarily reopen DHS, which is at the center of the shutdown fight. He's also blocked a bill that would reopen the rest of impacted department and agencies three times, most recently on Thursday.

McConnell warned for weeks that he will not let the Senate take up any government funding bill that isn't the product of a deal between congressional Democrats and Trump, arguing they would amount to "show votes."

"There's no way around it. Having show votes in the Senate doesn't solve the problem," McConnell told reporters on Tuesday.

But Democrats are trying to build pressure on the Senate GOP leader, who has remained publicly on the sidelines amid the stalemate between Trump and Democrats.

"Senate Republicans again in a few minutes, at the request of President Trump, who does not yet want this to happen, will object to that request," Kaine said on Friday before he tried to pass the DHS bill.

"If the issue in dispute is border security ... then why punish the very people who are providing that safety and security? How does it help promote safety and security to not pay the very border patrol agents charged with protecting the border?" Kaine asked.

Kaine is expected to come back to the floor multiple times next week to try to get the House bills passed. He's also forcing the Senate to hold a rare Saturday session.

Under the Senate rules any one senator can ask for consent to vote on or pass a bill. A single senator can also block that request.

The back-and-forth on the Senate floor comes as the shutdown is expected to enter its 30th day on Sunday with no clear path forward.

Roughly a quarter of the government has been shut down since Dec. 22 over an entrenched fight on funding for Trump's proposed wall on the U.S.-Mexico border wall.

Trump is demanding more than \$5 billion for his signature wall. Democratic leadership has pointed to \$1.3 billion as their cap and argued that it must go to fencing.

Trump says he's 'still thinking' about Pelosi's request to postpone State of the Union (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/20/2019 9:06 AM, Brett Samuels, 3038K]

President Trump said early Sunday that he will respond "soon" to Speaker Nancy Pelosi's (D-Calif.) request to postpone the State of the Union address amid an escalating clash between the two leaders.

"Nancy, I am still thinking about the State of the Union speech, there are so many options - including doing it as per your written offer (made during the Shutdown, security is no problem), and my written acceptance," Trump tweeted.

"While a contract is a contract, I'll get back to you soon!"

Pelosi's spokesman, Drew Hammill, responded on Twitter that the Speaker's office "never received a 'written acceptance' from the President."

Trump had not previously addressed Pelosi's call to reschedule the State of the Union directly, though multiple reports indicated the White House was weighing alternative options, including delivering the speech in the Senate chamber.

Pelosi said last week that the address scheduled for Jan. 29 should be postponed due to the ongoing partial government shutdown, which has lasted 30 days and counting. She suggested the two sides "work together to determine another suitable date after government has re-opened."

The Democratic leader has cited security concerns associated with the shuttering of several government agencies, which has left Secret Service members without pay.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), however, said the agency would be able to guarantee the safety of the event, despite the shutdown.

The president indirectly responded to Pelosi's postponement by refusing to provide U.S. military transportation for her planned congressional delegation trip to Afghanistan and Belgium.

Trump on Sunday lashed out at Pelosi in a series of tweets, targeting her over her opposition to his immigration proposal that would reopen the government.

The president decried her as a "radical Democrat" and accused her and other party members of acting with the 2020 election in mind.

"Nancy Pelosi has behaved so irrationally & has gone so far to the left that she has now officially become a Radical Democrat," Trump wrote in a tweet. "She is so petrified of the 'lefties' in her party that she has lost control."

"And by the way, clean up the streets in San Francisco, they are disgusting!" the president added in a barb at Pelosi's district.

Trump on Saturday proposed a deal that would include more than \$5 billion in funding for a wall along the southern border; a three-year extension of protections for "Dreamers," immigrants who benefit from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, and Temporary Protected Status holders; and funding for additional immigration judges.

Pelosi called Trump's proposal a "non-starter" shortly before the president unveiled the details. Other Democrats joined her in opposition a short time later, calling it "non-serious" and "more hostage taking."

Some hard-line conservatives panned the proposal, likening it to amnesty.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said he would bring Trump's proposal up for a vote this week.

Trump To Pelosi: 'I'll Get Back To You Soon' On State Of The Union (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/20/2019 10:14 AM, Evie Fordham, 867K]

President Donald Trump said he had "so many options" for delivering the State of the Union address after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi asked him to delay it because of the partial government shutdown.

"Nancy, I am still thinking about the State of the Union speech, there are so many options – including doing it as per your written offer (made during the Shutdown, security is no problem), and my written acceptance," Trump wrote on Twitter Sunday. "While a contract is a contract, I'll get back to you soon!"

Pelosi sent Trump a letter Wednesday seeking to delay the State of the Union address or have the president deliver a written address. Pelosi cited the Department of Homeland Security's partial funding and said the Secret Service would not be able to provide adequate security. Trump's address is scheduled for Jan. 29.

Many congressional Republicans have floated plans to allow Trump to bypass Pelosi's invitation to deliver the address. Republican Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul suggested Trump bypass the House of Representatives entirely and deliver the speech from the Senate floor Thursday. Republican Kentucky Rep. Thomas Massie echoed Paul's suggestion in a tweet Saturday.

"Could [Donald Trump] deliver the State of the Union Address in the Senate? The Senate floor is smaller than the House floor, but as you can see in this photograph, there are enough seats if some of us sit in the gallery," Massie wrote on Twitter Saturday.

Pelosi and Trump's standoff stems from the parties' disagreement over border wall funding that led to the partial government shutdown in the first place. Sunday marked day 30 of the partial government shutdown triggered by the inability of Congress and the White House to agree on funding the southern border wall Trump wants. Pelosi has said a border wall would be "immoral."

Trump also accused the Democrats of being only focused on 2020 after Pelosi rejected Trump's offer to bring Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) extensions into a compromise to reopen the government Saturday.

"Nancy Pelosi and some of the Democrats turned down my offer yesterday before I even got up to speak," Trump wrote on Twitter Sunday morning. "They don't see crime [and] drugs, they only see 2020 – which they are not going to win. Best economy! They should do the right thing for the Country [and] allow people to go back to work."

Homeland Security says it will provide security assistance to Super Bowl despite shutdown (CNN)
[CNN](#) [1/18/2019 11:57 PM, Noah Gray, 5847K]

The Department of Homeland Security says it will still provide federal support to the Super Bowl this year, despite the partial government shutdown.

Super Bowl LIII -- an event that requires the support of more than 40 federal, local and state agencies -- takes significant federal support in order to be played, according to federal and local officials. The Atlanta Police Department and Department of Homeland Security will take the lead on security plans, officials say.

DHS press secretary Tyler Q. Houlton told CNN that, regardless of the shutdown, DHS and other federal agencies will be able to continue with plans for the Super Bowl.

"The Department takes the security of special events like the Super Bowl extremely seriously, and we continue executing our protection responsibility and supporting our local public safety partners for this event. The current lapse in government funding will have no effect on our commitment to assuring a safe and secure event," Houlton said in a statement to CNN.

This year's Super Bowl is scheduled to be played on February 3 in Atlanta. CNN has reached out to the National Football League about any security concerns related to the shutdown.

Any federal officials working on plans for the Super Bowl have been deemed essential and will not be paid until congressional Democrats and President Donald Trump come to a deal to reopen the government.

Other key agencies involved in security for the event include the FBI, the Secret Service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency on the federal side, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Georgia State Patrol, Georgia World Congress Center Authority Police and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency on the state side and the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, Atlanta Fire Rescue and Grady EMS on the local side.

"We are not disclosing numbers, except to say every Atlanta police officer will be on duty, working 12-hour shifts from January 26 to February 5," Atlanta police spokesman Carlos Campos told CNN.

Campos said the Atlanta Police Department is the lead agency and all other agencies are assisting it, "for which we are obviously very grateful," he added.

A DHS official told CNN that "an ICE official is the federal coordinating officer for this year's Super Bowl. All of DHS is involved."

The Super Bowl is different from an event such as the State of the Union or a major political event that could be the target of terrorism, but it still receives an extremely high security rating from the federal government. It is known as a "SEAR 1" event, one that "may require the full support of the United States Government," according to Coast Guard guidance. The event received the same designation last year, an

official told CNN.

Each year, DHS rates large-scale events in the United States to determine a threat level and determine how much federal support each event receives, former DHS official Ed Cash tells CNN. Such events could include the State of the Union address, a Super Bowl, NASCAR races, the United Nations General Assembly or a papal visit.

An official said the State of the Union is a national special security event, with the US Secret Service taking the lead in conjunction with US Capitol Police and many other federal and local agencies.

Will government shutdown impact security at Super Bowl LIII? (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/21/2019 2:21 PM, A.J. Perez and Nancy Armour, 6053K]

Super Bowl LIII could be the first major sporting event in more than two decades held during a government shutdown, although federal officials told USA TODAY Sports that those attending the game or the events surrounding it shouldn't worry any more than the first 52 games that were played with a fully employed government.

"Nothing has been curtailed," FBI spokesman Kevin Rowson told USA TODAY Sports. "We are fully operational."

This year's Super Bowl, scheduled for Feb. 3 between the Los Angeles Rams and New England Patriots, is a SEAR 1 event, the federal government's second-highest security classification. The State of the Union address, categorized at the highest level (NSSE), is scheduled for Jan. 29, although House Speaker Nancy Pelosi suggested to President Trump last week that it be postponed because of security concerns surrounding the shutdown.

While not necessarily a terrorism target, a SEAR 1 event is of enough national or international importance to require federal support and equipment, as well as cooperation and coordination between federal, state and local authorities.

"The Department (of Homeland Security) takes the security of special events like the Super Bowl extremely seriously, and we continue executing our protection responsibility and supporting our local public safety partners for this event," DHS spokesperson Tyler Q. Houlton said in a statement last week. "The current lapse in government funding will have no effect on our commitment to assuring a safe and secure event."

More than 1,500 public safety personnel are involved in Super Bowl security, Rowson said, though it's not clear how many of those are federal agents and officials. (None of the FBI agents are currently being paid.) Or how many will be working the Super Bowl without pay if the shutdown has not been resolved.

The Secret Service, FBI, TSA, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Customs and Border Protection are among the federal agencies charged with working with local law enforcement and private security to secure the Super Bowl and many of the surrounding events/

"The federal agencies involved – HSI (Homeland Security Investigations) , FBI, ICE and CPB – are essential and will be working as usual, but many aren't going to be getting paid," said John Torres, CEO of the security consulting company Guidepost Solutions and a former HSI agent. "They'll still do their jobs whether they are paid or not."

Security consultant Alope S. Chakravarty told USA TODAY Sports that federal law enforcement officials who have't gotten paid as the shutdown drags on "are professionals who don't do their jobs for money, but their families are impacted like anyone else's would be."

"You could ... see a drop off in efficiency," said Chakravarty, a former federal prosecutor who worked the Boston Marathon bombing case and is currently a partner at Snell & Wilmer. "While agents at the FBI, Secret Service and other agencies will be working because (Super Bowl security) was already budgeted, the people who support them, like analysts, could be furloughed. Analysts may not be at their terminals because of the shutdown."

Rowson and Atlanta Police Department spokesman Carlos Campos said the shutdown will not impact security. Federal, state and local officials have been planning for the Super Bowl for two years, and are fully prepared.

"An event like (the) Super Bowl is all about planning, preparation and partnerships," Rowson said in an email.

"We want to assure the public that we have planned for this to ensure that nothing happens," Rowson added. "But if something does happen, we are ready, and prepared to transition into crisis response and investigation."

That means most of the federal employees working the Super Bowl will be doing it without pay if the shutdown is ongoing. DHS is one of the nine departments that is unfunded but workers who are considered "essential" are still expected to do their jobs.

The Fiesta Bowl on Jan. 2, 1996 was the last major sporting event held during a shutdown. The federal government was closed for 21 days as President Bill Clinton and Congress sparred over the budget. Nebraska won the game to claim the national title.

While four World Series (1977, 1978, 1979 and 1986) overlapped with prior shutdowns, the 1978 World Series (Los Angeles Dodgers vs. New York Yankees) was the only one that came during a lengthy standoff (18 days).

Trump Offers Deportation Protections in Exchange for Wall Funding (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/19/2019 7:27 PM, Annie Karni and Sheryl Gay Stolberg, 20737K]

President Trump, facing a growing public backlash over the partial government shutdown, shifted course on Saturday and offered Democrats a deal: temporary protections for roughly 700,000 young undocumented immigrants in exchange for \$5.7 billion in funding for a wall along the southern border.

But the proposal, which Mr. Trump unveiled in a 13-minute address from the White House, appeared dead on arrival in the Capitol. Speaker Nancy Pelosi rejected it even before Mr. Trump spoke, and Senator Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leader, denounced the offer as "not a compromise but more hostage taking."

With the shutdown entering its fifth week and polls showing a majority of the public blaming Mr. Trump, the president's advisers have been searching for an exit strategy. Saturday's speech grew out of talks that Vice President Mike Pence and the president's son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner, have had in recent days with lawmakers including Senator Mitch McConnell, the majority leader.

The proposal was Mr. Trump's first public offer to Democrats since the partial shutdown began nearly a month ago. It came after an acrimonious week of tit-for-tat politics, in which Ms. Pelosi told the president he could not deliver his State of the Union address in the Capitol until the shutdown was over, and the president retaliated by grounding a plane that was supposed to take Ms. Pelosi on a fact-finding mission to Afghanistan.

In casting the plan as a compromise, the president sought to shift pressure to Democrats — who have repeatedly refused to give Mr. Trump any money for his border wall — to end the shutdown. But

Democrats continued to insist they will not negotiate with Mr. Trump over border security until the government reopens.

Over the course of his administration, Mr. Trump has repeatedly sought to curb both legal and illegal immigration. He has revoked Temporary Protected Status, or T.P.S., which offers crucial protections for immigrants, for people from some Latin American and African countries. And he has moved to rescind Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, an Obama-era program that shielded the young undocumented immigrants known as Dreamers from deportation.

In the deal he outlined on Saturday, Mr. Trump offered to restore T.P.S. protection for 300,000 people, and said he would allow 700,000 Dreamers to keep their protections for three more years in exchange for \$5.7 billion for a border barrier.

"That is our plan," Mr. Trump said. "Border security, DACA, T.P.S. Many other things. Straightforward, fair, reasonable and common sense with lots of compromise." The proposal, Mr. Trump added, was intended to "break the logjam and provide Congress with a path forward."

The speech was the second time during the shutdown that the president addressed the nation about the immigration crisis. But unlike his first address, a prime-time broadcast from the Oval Office that leaned heavily on dark messaging about the dangers of crime and illegal drugs flowing across the border, Mr. Trump seemed on Saturday to soften his tone.

He paired the address with his first naturalization ceremony at the White House, a move intended to underscore the idea that he supports legal immigration. And his language was markedly different; instead of insisting on the "big beautiful wall" he promised during his 2016 campaign, Mr. Trump took care to use the word "barrier" as well — and seemed to pare back his vision for it.

Calling the wall "a powerful and beautifully designed see-through steel barrier on our southern border," Mr. Trump said: "This is not a 2,000-mile concrete structure from sea to sea. These are steel barriers in high priority locations. Much of the border is already protected by natural barriers such as mountains and water."

Mr. Trump noted that he had adopted some Democratic proposals on border security. The president proposed \$800 million for humanitarian assistance and \$805 million for drug detection technology, in addition to funding for 2,750 more border agents and law enforcement officials and 75 new immigration judge teams.

In her talking points, issued to Democrats, Ms. Pelosi said her party favored "new drug, weapons and contraband scanning technology at official ports of entry," and "filling the more than 3,000 vacancies for customs officers." Ms. Pelosi also intends to bring up legislation in the coming days that includes an additional \$1 billion for border security, including \$563 million for 75 new immigration judges and support staff.

Even so, Democrats roundly criticized the president's plan. They were particularly incensed that Mr. Trump's offer extended protections to Dreamers and T.P.S. recipients that he himself revoked. And they said the deal was a nonstarter because it did not offer any permanent protections for Dreamers.

"I think it's simply more fake promises raising false hopes," Senator Richard Blumenthal, Democrat of Connecticut, said. "It will fool few Americans because it's neither serious nor credible as a real remedy for Dreamers."

Some on the right also pushed back, describing the proposal as amnesty. James Carafano, a national security expert at the Heritage Foundation who worked on Mr. Trump's transition, was among the critics. "Amnesty encourages further illegal immigration, incentivizes the tragedy of human trafficking and

undermines our citizens' confidence in the rule of law," he said.

Mr. Pence, briefing reporters after Mr. Trump's remarks, said the speech reflected a painstaking process of listening to lawmakers, including rank-and-file Democrats who made it clear they believed that protections for DACA and T.P.S. recipients must be included in a border security deal.

And he pushed back forcefully against critics like Mr. Carafano who said the measure amounted to an unacceptable amnesty for undocumented immigrants.

"There is no pathway to citizenship in this proposal," Mr. Pence said.

But that was one reason many Democrats considered it unacceptable. Other senior administration officials made it clear that part of Mr. Trump's strategy was to try to drive a wedge within the party between those who want to hold out for a much more generous solution and those who may feel enough political pressure to end the shutdown that they will feel obliged to support it.

Noting that Tuesday is the deadline for the government to reopen in time to prevent federal employees from going a second consecutive pay period without a check, Mick Mulvaney, the acting chief of staff, said Senate Democrats had a tricky decision to make. He also noted that the president's ability to declare a national emergency was "absolutely" still a tool available to Mr. Trump to find funds to build the wall if a legislative agreement could not be reached.

Now it will be up to Mr. McConnell to put legislation incorporating Mr. Trump's proposal on the Senate floor.

Mr. McConnell — who has insisted he will not put any legislation on the floor unless the president will sign it — spoke to Mr. Trump, Mr. Kushner and Mr. Pence on Thursday night about finding a way forward.

Mr. McConnell told the president that before he could bring up legislation on the Senate floor, he needed a "public reassurance" that Mr. Trump would sign it, one person close to the talks said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to describe sensitive discussions.

The president's proposal "strikes a fair compromise by incorporating priorities from both sides of the aisle," Mr. McConnell said in a statement after Mr. Trump's speech.

If Mr. McConnell does indeed put a bill on the floor, as the president said he would, Senate Democrats will have to decide whether to block it or let it come up for a vote. Despite Democrats' vow to reject the measure, it could create an opening for negotiations between the two sides.

The shutdown stalemate is creating increasing nervousness on Capitol Hill, especially among Republicans seeking re-election in Democratic-leaning states. One of them, Senator Susan Collins of Maine, is among only a handful of Republicans who have broken with the president and called for the government to reopen without a border security deal.

On Saturday, she praised the president, saying she hoped that Mr. Trump's offer would "lead to constructive debate that will end this impasse."

White House aides and allies of Mr. Trump said Saturday that Mr. Trump succeeded in ratcheting up the political pressure on Ms. Pelosi, especially if the Senate succeeded in passing a bill.

"The Democrats' talking points have been that the president is solely responsible for shutting down the government," Marc Short, the former White House legislative director, said. "This puts more onus on them to come back and say why this proposal is insufficient."

But one reason Democrats are so leery of the deal is that they have been down this road with the president before. Last year, Mr. Trump and Mr. Schumer negotiated \$25 billion in wall money for a pathway to citizenship for the Dreamers. But that deal fell apart when hard-line White House advisers persuaded the president to back away.

The standoff over the shutdown, some former aides noted, was the first time Mr. Trump has had to engage in meaningful, high-stakes negotiations. But even that has come as a last resort, in what some have likened to negotiating out of desperation after failing to score political points.

Republicans Push Trump Immigration Plan, Seeking to Corner Democrats on Shutdown (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/20/2019 5:29 PM, Sheryl Gay Stolberg, 20737K]

President Trump attacked Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Sunday for rejecting his proposal to end the partial government shutdown, as he and Republican leaders in Congress sought to put Democrats on defense, a place they have rarely been during the shutdown stalemate.

In a series of morning tweets, Mr. Trump said Ms. Pelosi had behaved "so irrationally" in spurning his offer to restore the temporary protections he took away from some undocumented immigrants in exchange for \$5.7 billion for a border wall. He also pushed back against conservative critics who called the plan amnesty for immigrants who came to the United States illegally.

Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader, plans to bring up legislation as early as Tuesday that would wrap Mr. Trump's proposal into a broader package that would include billions of dollars in disaster relief and immediately reopen the government, an aide said. The move is intended to ratchet up pressure on Democrats, who have insisted they will not negotiate with Mr. Trump until the shutdown is over.

"President Trump has put forward a serious and reasonable offer to reform parts of our broken immigration system and reopen government," Representative Kevin McCarthy, the Republican leader, said on Twitter. "The moment now turns to Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer. The country is watching."

But there was little indication from Democrats, who have denounced Mr. Trump's plan as "hostage taking," that they would abandon that position.

"If he opens up the government, we'll discuss whatever he offers, but hostage taking should not work," Senator Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leader, told reporters in New York on Sunday, adding, "It's very hard to negotiate when a gun is held to your head."

With the shutdown now in its fifth week, and 800,000 federal employees still furloughed or working without pay, pressure is rising on both Republicans and Democrats to end it. If it lasts until Friday, Congress will be forced to reckon with another grim milestone: Affected workers will miss their second paycheck. As Republicans go on offense in the Senate, Democrats will stay on offense in the House, where they have already passed a string of government funding bills that Mr. McConnell — who has largely remained on the sidelines during the shutdown debate — has refused to take up. On Wednesday, Ms. Pelosi plans to bring up a package of six bills to fund shuttered government agencies, ignoring Mr. Trump's requests.

The measures gained approval last year from Republicans on the House and Senate Appropriations Committees; in effect, Ms. Pelosi will be daring Republicans to vote against their own legislation. Democrats will also begin talking more about their own vision for border security — a shift in strategy for a party that has focused mostly on the economic and personal toll of the shutdown.

Amid the posturing, however, there were some hints that Mr. Trump's proposal, which he unveiled in a 13-

minute White House address on Saturday, might open the door to talks that could result in a deal. Vice President Mike Pence, in an appearance on "Fox News Sunday," suggested that Mr. Trump's proposal might be amended on the Senate floor.

"Well, of course," Mr. Pence said, when the host, Chris Wallace, asked if he was open to negotiation. "The legislative process is a negotiation."

And Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, a centrist Democrat, described Mr. Trump's plan as "a starting point" on NBC's "Meet the Press," though he added, "You've got to start by reopening the government."

Polls show the public largely blames Mr. Trump for the shutdown, and his advisers have been searching for an exit strategy. Last week, Mr. McConnell told Mr. Trump, Mr. Pence and White House advisers that he needed the president to put forth a public offer so he could bring legislation to the floor.

"McConnell's view of shutdowns is when you're in one, it's a great opportunity for both sides to get things," said Scott Jennings, a Republican strategist and former McConnell aide who remains close to him. "And what I think is dumbfounding everyone here is: Why aren't the Democrats treating it as a situation where they could get something? The president has opened the door for them to get something, so let's talk."

Throughout his administration, Mr. Trump has sought to limit both legal and illegal immigration. Last year, he moved to rescind Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, which shielded from deportation hundreds of thousands of young unauthorized immigrants known as Dreamers. He also revoked Temporary Protected Status, or T.P.S., for some undocumented immigrants from Latin American and African countries.

In the plan he unveiled on Saturday, Mr. Trump offered to restore the DACA and T.P.S. protections for three years. But Democrats say that is a nonstarter, because it does not offer a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, and because Mr. Trump is simply giving back protections that he himself took away.

The McConnell aide, Don Stewart, said the Republican legislative package would include seven appropriations bills that would fund government agencies that have been partially closed for a month.

"The legislation that the majority leader will bring to the floor this week would both reopen the remaining portions of the government, fund disaster relief, fund border security and address immigration issues that both Republicans and Democrats would like to address — all in one bill," Mr. Stewart said.

Mr. McConnell would need votes from all Republicans and seven Democrats for the package to pass. But only a handful of Democrats in Republican-leaning states might feel pressured enough to cross the aisle. A spokesman for one of them, Senator Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, said Mr. Manchin — who just won re-election — would remain undecided on the Republican proposal until he saw it.

In broadening the package beyond Mr. Trump's plan, Mr. McConnell may be trying to pick up additional Democrats — especially those who are eager to vote for disaster relief.

"He's starting to move the pieces around to see what's going to fly and what's not going to make it," said Jim Manley, who was a top aide to Harry Reid, the former Democratic leader from Nevada. "He's trying to put the pressure back on Democrats, and he's trying to see what the possibilities of a deal are by putting a larger package there. He's trying to see how large the package has to be to bring Democrats on board."

But Mr. Trump seemed to be holding fast. He retweeted a series of endorsements of his proposal from Republican lawmakers on Sunday evening, and earlier in the day, he took aim at Ms. Pelosi and pushed back against conservative critics who have described the plan as amnesty for undocumented immigrants.

"Nancy Pelosi and some of the Democrats turned down my offer yesterday before I even got up to speak,"

Mr. Trump wrote. "They don't see crime & drugs, they only see 2020 — which they are not going to win. Best economy! They should do the right thing for the Country & allow people to go back to work."

Mr. Trump went on: "Nancy Pelosi has behaved so irrationally & has gone so far to the left that she has now officially become a Radical Democrat. She is so petrified of the 'lefties' in her party that she has lost control...And by the way, clean up the streets in San Francisco, they are disgusting!"

And to his conservative critics, Mr. Trump wrote: "No, Amnesty is not a part of my offer. It is a 3 year extension of DACA. Amnesty will be used only on a much bigger deal, whether on immigration or something else. Likewise there will be no big push to remove the 11,000,000 plus people who are here illegally — but be careful Nancy!"

Ms. Pelosi took to Twitter to strike back. "@realdonaldtrump, 800,000 Americans are going without pay. Re-open the government, let workers get their paychecks and then we can discuss how we can come together to protect the border," she wrote, using the hashtag #EndTheShutdown.

Trump's full address on new proposal for border wall, security and DACA as shutdown continues (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/19/2019 5:00 PM, Staff, 9763K] Video: [HERE](#)

President Trump spoke from the White House Jan. 19 in a rare Saturday address that outlined a new proposal for border security, immigration reform and ending the shutdown.

Trump offers to temporarily protect 'Dreamers' if Democrats fund his wall (Los Angeles Times)

[Los Angeles Times](#) [1/19/2019 4:40 PM, Eli Stokols, 3575K]

President Trump on Saturday suggested a compromise for fully reopening the government that would temporarily protect certain refugees and immigrants who came to the U.S. illegally years ago as children if Democrats back a scaled-down version of his proposed border wall.

The proposal, which Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) plans to bring up for a vote within days, almost certainly won't be enough to end the standoff that has closed government agencies for more than four weeks, depriving some 800,000 workers of paychecks. Even before Trump spoke, Democrats rejected his offer as inadequate.

But, along with steps by Democrats in the House to provide additional money for border security, it marked the first moves toward compromise after days in which the tension between Trump and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ratcheted up significantly and no negotiations took place between them.

In notable contrast with his statements over past weeks, Trump's televised address from the White House Diplomatic Reception Room included no jabs at Democratic leaders. Instead, he called repeatedly for "compromise," saying that "both sides" should "put down their armor."

He also, more explicitly than ever, acknowledged the reality that his current plans are a far cry from his campaign pledge of a wall along the entire southern border. The current proposal would provide a \$5.7-billion installment to build steel fencing along 230 miles of the frontier, he said. As recently as December, Trump emphatically denied that he'd abandoned his idea of a concrete wall, after his former chief of staff, John F. Kelly, said otherwise in an interview with The Times.

It's "not a 2,000-mile concrete structure from sea to sea," the president said, but "steel barriers in high-priority locations."

With polls showing that most Americans blame him for the unpopular shutdown, Trump said, "I am here to break the logjam."

So far, his plan doesn't appear likely to meet that goal.

In a statement released before Trump spoke, Pelosi called the proposal "a compilation of several previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable and in total, do not represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives. It is unlikely that any one of these provisions alone would pass the House, and taken together, they are a nonstarter."

In particular, she noted, the protections for the immigrants known as Dreamers, as well as for certain refugees, would be temporary, lasting only three years. Democrats have insisted that those immigrants who arrived so long ago as children — and who were protected by President Obama's program called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA — should receive permanent legal status and an opportunity to achieve citizenship.

Trump ordered an end to the program in 2017, but federal courts have mostly blocked him. With current DACA beneficiaries protected by the courts likely into at least 2020, pending a Supreme Court review, the president's temporary proposal is even less enticing to the Democrats and immigrant advocates.

Sen. Richard J. Durbin of Illinois, the second-ranking Senate Democratic leader, echoed Pelosi, and both leaders reiterated the party's insistence that the president and McConnell must fund and reopen the government before any negotiations on border security funding take place.

In addition to offering limited protection for the roughly 700,000 DACA beneficiaries, Trump also offered a three-year extension of the three-decades-old Temporary Protected Status program that covers more than 300,000 people in the United States, mostly from Central America. The president moved to end that protection soon after taking office, putting those people, many of whom have lived legally in the U.S. for decades and have children born here, at risk of deportation. In October, a federal judge blocked the administration from ending the protections for many of those people.

Sen. Charles E. Schumer, the Democratic minority leader from New York, in a tweet noted the president's contested efforts to end both programs as he dismissed Trump's offer: "It was the President who singled-handedly took away DACA and TPS protections in the first place – offering some protections back in exchange for the wall is not a compromise but more hostage taking."

The president touted a third program he'd tried to kill. He proposed "a new system" that would "protect migrant children from exploitation and abuse" by allowing Central American minors to apply for asylum in their home country rather than at the U.S.-Mexico border. In 2017 he abruptly ended Obama-era programs to do just that.

While Democrats consider the president's overall proposal inadequate, Trump also risks attack from immigration hard-liners who have derailed several previous efforts at compromise. They consider both the DACA program and extension of the Temporary Protected Status program as forms of amnesty.

Ann Coulter, the conservative commentator, tweeted: "Trump proposes amnesty. We voted for Trump and got Jeb" — a reference to former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, an immigration moderate whom Trump defeated for the 2016 Republican nomination. Coulter was among the conservative critics who last month prompted Trump to reverse his support for Senate Republicans' Senate bill funding the government, but not the wall — precipitating the partial shutdown on Dec. 22.

"This is not an amnesty bill," Vice President Mike Pence told White House reporters, adding, "There is no pathway to citizenship in this proposal."

As for Democrats, when Pence was asked why they should see the DACA extension as a concession given that federal courts currently are preserving the program, he replied by echoing Trump, "I think most

legal experts believe the Supreme Court will strike down DACA."

Trump's DACA overture only added to the frustration of people reliant the protections available since 2012.

Bryan Pena, a 19-year old beneficiary in Los Angeles' Lincoln Heights neighborhood, said he thinks Democrats should hold out for comprehensive immigration reform.

"Three years is nothing," he said. "If we take that compromise, then someone else is going to suffer. I think there should be a new pathway to citizenship for everybody, not just DACA people."

Pena, who studies nursing at Cal State Los Angeles, said he has worried about losing the only home he's ever known and being deported since Trump's election.

"I wear running shoes every day, because I feel like I always have to be ready to sprint," he said.

Karla Estrada, another DACA recipient in Los Angeles, called Trump's proposal unacceptable and a "classic divide and conquer" strategy.

"Instead of finding real solutions for immigrants, they want a temporary fix," she said. "We need real solutions, not alleviation tactics that play with the lives of undocumented immigrants. The exchange of real lives for a wall is immoral."

Trump began the day standing his ground on a border wall. "Everybody knows that walls work," he said earlier Saturday, emphasizing the main sticking point on the nearly month-old stalemate. Democrats are dead-set against it, but he has refused to sign funding for about a quarter of the government unless they acquiesce. His demand for an installment of \$5.7 billion is several times more than he sought during the two years that Republicans controlled both houses of Congress.

Democrats, now a majority in the House, to date had refused to agree to more than \$1.3 billion for border security measures, and not for a wall. House Democrats are planning to hold votes next week on funding bills for the closed agencies that would include roughly \$1 billion more for additional border security improvements, Pelosi confirmed.

That additional money, which would amount to an increase of \$328 million over last year's funding, would be allocated not for a wall but to improve infrastructure at ports of entry and to pay for additional immigration judges to process asylum cases at the border. Most drugs and many asylum-seekers come through the official entry points, according to the government, and not across the border expanse where the president wants to have a wall.

The latest developments follow days of escalating skirmishes.

After the Speaker informed the president Wednesday that he would need to postpone or cancel his scheduled Jan. 29 State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress because of security concerns, given limited resources during the shutdown at the Secret Service and Homeland Security Department, Trump responded Thursday by canceling Pelosi's secret weekend trip to visit troops in Afghanistan.

"It's not personal for me," Trump said Saturday morning. Pelosi, he told reporters, is "being controlled by the radical left."

"I think that's a very bad thing for her. It's a very bad thing for the Democrats," he said during brief remarks to reporters on the South Lawn before departing for Dover Air Force Base to meet with the families of four

Americans, including two service members, killed last week in an attack in Syria.

Continuing to depict the situation along the border as a crisis that demands a federal response, though illegal entries continue their two-decade decline, Trump pointed to another caravan of Central American migrants heading north through Mexico.

"Caravans are coming up. They have a big one coming up," he said. "I'm disappointed Mexico is not stopping them."

He continued: "If we had a wall, we wouldn't have a problem. But we don't. We have too many open areas."

Yet migrants in past so-called caravans have sought to enter legally at check points, to seek asylum. Inexplicably, Trump pointed to the city of San Antonio, which is not surrounded by a wall and is about 150 miles from the border at its closest point, as proof of his argument.

"You look at San Antonio, you look at so many different places," he said. "They go from one of the most unsafe cities in the country to one of the safest cities, immediately."

Trump Offers Democrats A New Plan In Hopes Of Opening The Government (NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/21/2019 5:07 AM, Staff, 4491K] Audio: [HERE](#)

As the partial government shutdown drags on, Rachel Martin talks to GOP strategist Scott Jennings about the options his party has to move forward and break the stalemate.

Trump Extends Offer To End Shutdown, Extend DACA; Democrats Say 'No Deal' (NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/20/2019 8:01 AM, Ayesha Rascoe, 4491K] Audio: [HERE](#)

They oppose President Trump's proposal, which temporarily would protect some young people who immigrated illegally and provide \$5.7 billion for a border wall.

TRANSCRIPT

LULU GARCIA-NAVARRO, HOST:

A sign of some movement or another stalemate as the government shutdown enters its fifth week depends, as always, on who you ask. NPR's White House reporter Ayesha Rascoe breaks down the latest calculations being made here in Washington.

AYESHA RASCOE, BYLINE: President Trump says it's time to make a deal to reopen the federal government.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: Both sides in Washington must simply come together, listen to each other, put down their armor, build trust, reach across the aisle and find solutions.

RASCOE: After weeks of a political stalemate, Trump said he would back a three-year extension of the Obama-era DACA program, a program he's tried to end. DACA blocks the deportation of people brought to the country illegally as children. Trump says he will also allow immigrants with temporary protected status - or TPS - to remain in the country for three more years. These extensions will be tied to \$5.7 billion in funding for a wall on the southern border.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

TRUMP: This is not a 2,000-mile concrete structure from sea to sea. These are steel barriers in high-priority locations.

RASCOE: In addition, the White House is asking for more money to hire border agents and immigration judges. Trump argues his proposals should be able to get support from Republicans and Democrats.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

TRUMP: That is our plan - border security, DACA, TPS and many other things - straightforward, fair, reasonable and common sense with lots of compromise.

RASCOE: But top Democrats in Congress have already come out against the plan. They say Trump must first agree to end the shutdown before any negotiations over border security can begin. And they contend a wall would be ineffective at stopping people from entering the country illegally. Trump acknowledged his deal doesn't address all concerns but says it would allow time for lawmakers to work toward a more comprehensive update of immigration laws.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

TRUMP: The good news is these problems can all be solved but only if we have the political courage to do what is just and what is right.

RASCOE: The Senate plans to vote on Trump's proposal in the coming week. Ayesha Rascoe, NPR News, the White House.

Trump offers trade of Dreamers-for-wall that Democrats quickly reject (Roll Call)

[Roll Call](#) [1/19/2019 4:32 PM, John T. Bennett and Niels Lesniewski, 90K]

President Donald Trump on Saturday pitched what he described as a plan that could end a partial government shutdown — but Democrats made their opposition clear before he uttered a single word about it.

His new offer amounted to a somewhat surprising and sudden reversal for Trump and senior White House officials. That is because earlier this week, a senior White House official indicated the president was opposed to making a new offer unless House and Senate Democrats made the next move. It also appeared insufficient for Democrats as furloughed federal workers begin lining up at food banks and came amid worries about the shutdown's effect on an already slowing U.S. economy.

Democrats rejected Trump's proposal as a "nonstarter," saying that the offer amounted to nothing more than cleaning up a mess of his own making and that a discussion of immigration policy could come after the shutdown was ended.

Trump called the country's immigration system "badly broken," saying "decades of political stalemate" and "partisan gridlock" are to blame. He again described the situation at the southern border is a humanitarian and security "crisis."

He said the southern border is too "porous" as he ticked off what he said are anecdotes and statistics that show lethal narcotics and crime-creating migrants are moving too freely into the country.

"The good news is all these problems can be solved, but only if we have the political courage to do what is right," the president said, calling on both political parties to "put down their armor ... and come together." But Democrats say he has done little, if any, actual negotiating toward a plan that can pass both chambers of Congress.

"The radical left can never control our borders. I will never let it happen," he said, referring to the far-left wing of the Democratic Party. "Walls are not immoral," he said, rebutting a top Democratic anti-wall talking point. By pitching the plan, Trump again contradicted a stance espoused just a few days earlier by one of his senior aides.

"That's the worst negotiating. Why keep making an offer against yourself?" the official told Roll Call on Wednesday, joking that a young child would know such a tactic was unwise. "We've made multiple moves."

Yet, three days later, the president stood in the Diplomatic Reception Room and did just that.

The president told the country in a late-afternoon address that he would sign into law any bill the House and Senate pass that would extend protections to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients and individuals with temporary protected status. In exchange for what essentially is his first offer to Democrats in weeks, Trump made clear he still is insisting on \$5.7 billion he contends are needed to build a physical barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border.

The proposal floated by Trump is built around a version of the the so-called Bridge Act, which protects undocumented migrants brought to the U.S. as children, also known as "Dreamers." The stalemate over funding for the border wall has resulted in a partial government shutdown that is now in its 29th day.

The president described himself as trying to break a "logjam" with a plan that is a "compassionate response to the tragedy at our southern border" that is based on needs identified by "homeland security professionals."

He noted Democrats have supported the notion of a "physical barrier or wall in the past." But, to the opposition party, Trump's massive barrier has become a sign of racism and anti-migrant feelings that are present among the far right wing of the GOP.

The president spoke shortly after overseeing a naturalization ceremony for five new American citizens in the Oval Office for individuals from the United Kingdom, Iraq, Jamaica, Bolivia, and South Korea.

"We're all equal," Trump said during his immigration remarks. "We're one team, and proudly saluting on American flag."

The Bridge Act, first proposed in 2016 by Minority Whip Richard J. Durbin, D-Ill., and Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., now the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, would grant three years of temporary legal status and work authorization for "Dreamers" enrolled in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program as well as those currently qualified but not enrolled. The bill does not address Temporary Protected Status recipients, though Democrats have authored similar legislation addressing that population.

The 2016 legislation, introduced just a month after Trump's election, won bipartisan support from Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer of New York, Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, the top Democrat on Judiciary, as well as Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and former Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz. A House version of the bill introduced in early 2017 by former Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Colo., won bipartisan support but was never called up for a vote by Republican leaders.

But despite its bipartisan roots, key Democratic lawmakers voiced their opposition to the president's proposal even before he was back at the White House after an unannounced trip to a military base in Dover, Del., where the bodies of four U.S. troopers who were killed in Syria were returned earlier in the day.

Democrats on Capitol Hill panned the Trump proposal, with a senior House Democratic aide saying that it could not pass in either chamber.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., called the proposal a "non-starter" and a "compilation of several previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable and in total, do not represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives."

"It is unlikely that any one of these provisions alone would pass the House," she said in a statement after spending much of the week in an extraordinary tit-for-tat with the president.

"Democrats were not consulted on this proposal. Similar inadequate offers from the Administration were already rejected by Democrats. The BRIDGE Act does not fully protect Dreamers and is not a permanent solution," the aide said in a statement. "This is not a compromise as it includes the same wasteful, ineffective \$5.7 billion wall demand that shut down the government in the first place."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has confirmed he intends to try to bring the president's proposal to the floor.

"This bill takes a bipartisan approach to re-opening the closed portions of the federal government. It pairs the border security investment that our nation needs with additional immigration measures that both Democrat and Republican members of Congress believe are necessary. Unlike the bills that have come from the House over the past few weeks, this proposal could actually resolve this impasse. It has the full support of the President and could be signed into law to quickly reopen the government," McConnell said in a statement.

"Everyone has made their point—now it's time to make a law. I intend to move to this legislation this week," the Kentucky Republican said. "With bipartisan cooperation, the Senate can send a bill to the House quickly so that they can take action as well."

Trump said that vote would come next week. Should it pass both chambers and become law, the president said he would use weekly bipartisan meetings at the White House to try to cobble together a comprehensive immigration reform package.

But it appears that is a long way off.

Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer called for the reopening of the government first before the two sides could have "a civil discussion and come up with bipartisan solutions."

"It was the President who singled-handedly took away DACA and TPS protections in the first place — offering some protections back in exchange for the wall is not a compromise but more hostage taking," the New York Democrat said in a statement.

Even Bridge Act author Durbin was quick to signal his opposition as the White House must convince at least a handful of Senate Democrats to support the Trump proposal.

"First, President Trump and Senate Majority Leader McConnell must open the government today," he said in a statement. "Second, I cannot support the proposed offer as reported and do not believe it can pass the Senate. Third, I am ready to sit down at any time after the government is opened and work to resolve all outstanding issues."

Jim Manley, a former senior aide to then-Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, agreed with Durbin. "So as far as I can tell this so called deal trump is going to unveil this afternoon won't

get 60 votes in the senate," he tweeted. "The question is whether it sets the stage for additional negotiations."

The now-Democratic strategist called the president's plan "seemingly somewhere between the end of the beginning of the shutdown and the beginning of the end. Or something like that."

But GOP lawmakers and former Trump aides already are pressing Democrats to endorse the White House's latest proposal. Thomas Bossert, a former Homeland Security adviser to Trump, tweeted a message for Pelosi: "Will [LRI:@SpeakerPelosiPDI] deal or demagogue? President [LRI:@realDonaldTrumpPDI] to offer DACA for border security."

Amid the posturing are bipartisan and experts' concerns about what the shutdown stalemate and its many ripple waves means for what was an already slowing U.S. economy. The White House, for instance, this week said the impact is expected to be worse than even it initially calculated.

The White House initially forecast a 0.1 percentage point hit to growth every two weeks that a quarter of the federal apparatus remains shuttered. Reports surfaced Tuesday, however, citing administration officials saying that has been updated to show a 0.1 percentage-point dip every week. But senior White House officials are downplaying that new estimate.

Lawrence Kudlow, the chief White House economic adviser, said Friday the economy is "strong" enough to withstand any "temporary" hit spawned by the partial government shutdown.

"The switch will turn" when the nine Cabinet agencies and smaller offices are again funded and functional and "you won't even know it happened," Kudlow told reporters outside the West Wing Friday evening. Though he said the "hardship" some furloughed federal workers who aren't getting paid are experiencing is "bad," the wealthy Kudlow insisted that soon everyone "can go back to watching Netflix ... and college basketball."

Democrats have criticized Trump and his aides for, in their view, appearing blind to some furloughed workers' situation. Kudlow appeared aware of such criticism, adding, "I know I shouldn't have just said that."

Donald Trump Offers Democrats Temporary DACA Amnesty for 230 Miles of Wall (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/19/2019 4:49 PM, Charlie Spiering, 2015K]

President Donald Trump proposed a compromise plan to reopen the government and get funding for his promised border wall on Saturday.

The president offered to give Democrats a three-year extension of work permits for 700,000 DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients and 300,000 Temporary Protected Status immigrants in exchange for \$5.7 billion for 230 miles of physical barriers on the Southern border.

"This is not a 2000 mile concrete structure from sea-to-sea," Trump said. "These are steel barriers in high priority locations. It will be done quickly."

Trump also promised \$800 million in humanitarian aid, \$805 million in port and border screening security, 2,000 new border agents, and 75 new immigration judge teams to handle cases at the border.

The president delivered his remarks in the Diplomatic room at the White House, restating the problems that the country faces with the current broken immigration system.

Trump presented his plan as a way to "break the logjam" by building a compromise with Democrats, address the immediate crisis at the border and reopen the federal government. The federal government

has been partially shut down for 29 days.

He again highlighted the difficulties that migrants face as they try to take advantage of a broken immigration system, highlighting the dangers of the journey to the Southern border.

"I want this to end, it's got to end now," he said. "These are not talking points, these are the heartbreaking realities."

Trump said that McConnell was in support of the proposed compromise and would hold a vote in the Senate later next week.

He described his plan as "straightforward, fair, reasonable, and common sense with lots of compromise" and said that it was only the beginning of larger immigration reform in his second term.

Trump also promised to hold weekly bi-partisan meetings at the White House to work on a larger immigration reform effort with Democrats, if an immediate deal could be made.

"We can do a finished product, a great product, a product that we can all be proud of having to do with that elusive immigration problem," Trump said.

Trump offers immigration compromise to end partial shutdown; Dems cool to offer (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/19/2019 4:18 PM, Adam Shaw, 9216K]

President Trump, in a televised White House address Saturday, offered Democrats a compromise package on immigration in an effort to end the nearly monthlong partial government shutdown -- although some prominent Democrats were dismissing the olive branch as a "non-starter" before Trump even spoke.

Trump announced that he was prepared to back a three-year extension of protections for 700,000 immigrants who came to the country illegally as children and were shielded from deportation under the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. This, in exchange for the \$5.7 billion he has requested for a barrier on the southern border with Mexico.

"Walls are not immoral," he said, adding that a wall "will save many lives and stop drugs from pouring into our country."

"This is not a concrete structure from sea to sea," he said, addressing some previously expressed concerns about the so-called "wall." "These are steel barriers in high-priority locations."

The offered deal would also extend protections for 300,000 recipients of the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program -- which protects immigrants from designated countries with conditions that prevent nationals from returning safely.

"Our immigration system should be a source of pride, not a source of shame as it is all over the world," Trump said, before urging politicians to "take off their armor" and find solutions.

It would allocate \$800 million for drug detection technology to secure ports of entry, 2,750 new border agents and law enforcement professionals, and 75 new immigration judges to reduce an immense backlog of asylum requests.

He said that all his proposals have been supported by Democrats before.

He spent much of the address talking about the dangers that an open border presented, describing a "very wide and open gateway for criminals and gang members to enter the United States." However, he also teased the possibility of future, broader immigration reform if his proposals were accepted by

Congress.

"If we are successful in this effort, we will have the best chance in a long time at real, bipartisan immigration reform, and it won't stop here, it will keep going until we do it all," he said.

Government sources told Fox News before the announcement that the speech would form the basis for new legislation he hopes to get before the Senate next week. The proposal is similar to a compromise put forward by Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., that would include three year work permits for DACA recipients and extension of legal status for TPS holders, in exchange for the wall funding. Graham called the proposal "fantastic" in a tweet after the announcement.

"Let's get it done," he tweeted. House Republicans were scheduled to be briefed about the proposal in a conference call at 5 p.m. ET.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., praised Trump for his "bold solution" to re-open the government.

"Compromise in divided government means that everyone can't get everything they want every time," McConnell said in a statement. "The President's proposal reflects that. It strikes a fair compromise by incorporating priorities from both sides of the aisle."

"@POTUS has put forth a reasonable, good faith proposal that will reopen the government and help secure the border. I look forward to voting for it and will work to encourage my Republican and Democratic colleagues to do the same," Romney wrote.

But Trump's proposal was quickly swatted down by Democrats. Indeed, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi came out ahead of the announcement to say the anticipated proposal comprised a "compilation of several previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable and in total, do not represent a good-faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives."

"It is unlikely that any one of these provisions alone would pass the House, and taken together, they are a non-starter," she said in a statement. "For one thing, this proposal does not include the permanent solution for the Dreamers and TPS recipients that our country needs and supports."

Striking a similar tone, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said it was unfortunate that in an effort to resolve the shutdown, Trump "keeps putting forward one-sided and ineffective remedies."

He urged the president to open up the government as a prelude to productive and bipartisan solutions on immigration and the southern border.

"It was the president who singlehandedly took away DACA and TOS protections in the first place," Schumer's statement read. "Offering some protections back in exchange for the wall is not a compromise, but more hostage taking."

The partial government shutdown, which has dragged on for 29 days and led to hundreds of thousands of federal workers being furloughed or working without pay, is the result of Republicans and Democrats being unable to come to an agreement over Trump's demand for wall funding. Trump has said he will not sign a bill to open the government unless it includes that funding, while Democrats have refused to consider the \$5.7 billion figure, instead offering \$1.3 billion for general border security.

Trump's move marks a rare outreach in a week where both sides appear to have hardened in their positions, with Trump canceling a Democratic delegation's military flight to Afghanistan after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called on him to delay his State of the Union address earlier in the week. On

Saturday before the speech, Trump described Pelosi as being "controlled by the radical left."

Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin, D-Ill., also rejected the proposal ahead of the announcement.

"First, President Trump and Senate Majority Leader [Mitch] McConnell must open the government today. Second, I cannot support the proposed offer as reported and do not believe it can pass the Senate. Third, I am ready to sit down at any time after the government is opened and work to resolve all outstanding issues," he said in a statement.

Pelosi said that Democrats intended to pass six bills next week and other legislation to open the government, "so that we can fully negotiate on border security proposals."

"The president must sign these bills to re-open government immediately and stop holding the American people hostage with this senseless shutdown. Each day he prolongs this needless crisis, Coast Guardsmen, FBI agents, border patrol officers, TSA agents, and hundreds of thousands more workers are forced to live without knowing how they can feed their families or pay their bills," she said in her statement.

Trump proposes wall-for-DACA in bid to end U.S. government shutdown (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/19/2019 11:09 AM, Steve Holland and Jan Wolfe]

U.S. President Donald Trump proposed an immigration deal on Saturday in a bid to end a 29-day partial government shutdown, including temporary protections for "Dreamers" and other immigrants, but Democrats immediately dismissed it.

Insisting on his demand for \$5.7 billion to fund a U.S.-Mexico border barrier as part of any bill to fully reopen the government, Trump sought to pile pressure on Democrats by appealing to immigrants they have tried to help.

In a speech from the White House, Trump offered three years of protections for young undocumented immigrants known as "Dreamers," as well as for holders of temporary protected status (TPS), another class of immigrants.

Decrying what he called a "badly broken" U.S. immigration system, Trump said, "I am here today to break the logjam and provide Congress with a path forward to end the government shutdown and solve the crisis along the southern border."

But the protections he proposed fell far short of the path to citizenship for Dreamers that Democrats and some Republicans in Congress have been urging for years.

In a statement after Trump's speech, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell called the plan a "bold solution to reopen the government, secure the border, and take bipartisan steps toward addressing current immigration issues."

A spokesman for McConnell said he would seek Senate passage of the proposal next week.

Democrats insisted talks on border security occur only after the government is reopened. Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said, "It was the president who singled-handedly took away DACA and TPS protections in the first place. Offering some protections back in exchange for the wall is not a compromise but more hostage taking."

Even before Trump spoke, House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi said his offer as reported in advance was "unacceptable," did not "represent a good-faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives," and was unlikely to gain the votes needed to pass the House or the Senate.

About a quarter of the U.S. government has been partially shut down since Dec. 22, as funding has expired for reasons mostly unrelated to the border or immigration.

Some 800,000 federal workers have been staying home on furlough or working without pay.

Trump has refused to consider legislation needed to fully reopen the government unless it includes \$5.7 billion to help pay for a border wall or other barrier, which he says is needed to keep out illegal immigrants and drugs.

The full cost of such a barrier could eventually top \$24 billion, according to some government estimates.

Trump also asked Congress for \$782 million to hire an additional 2,750 border agents, law enforcement officers and staff, and another \$563 million to hire 75 new immigration judge teams to reduce a backlog in immigration courts.

The Dreamers, mostly young Latinos, are protected from deportation under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which protects certain people who illegally entered the United States as children. It provides about 700,000 immigrants with work permits, but no path to citizenship.

Vice President Mike Pence told reporters Trump's proposal for the Dreamers and border humanitarian assistance was based on conversations with rank-and-file Democrats.

He said Trump hopes millions of Americans will pressure Democrats to go along with the deal. Pence said conservatives should not worry that Trump is providing amnesty to Dreamers, saying, "This is not an amnesty."

"We hope once people get past the initial statements and initial reaction, when they really look at this legislation, when it comes to the floor of the Senate, they'll see it as an effort by the president to take ideas from both parties," said Pence.

White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney said declaring a national emergency on the border to fund a wall without congressional approval remained an option but was not Trump's preferred solution.

"Can the Democrats separate themselves from the extreme left and work out a compromise on border security? I think a lot of members want to do that," Mulvaney said.

Former President Barack Obama put DACA in place in 2012 through an executive order. Most of his fellow Democrats since then have sought more lasting protection for the Dreamers. The Trump administration said in September 2017 it would rescind DACA, but it remains in effect under court order.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is given to nationals from designated countries affected by armed conflict, natural disaster, or other strife. TPS holders are permitted to work and live in the United States for limited times.

The Trump administration has shown a deep skepticism toward the TPS program and has moved to revoke the special status for immigrants from El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras and other nations.

Polls showed Americans increasingly blame Trump for the shutdown, the 19th since the mid-1970s. Most past shutdowns have been brief. The current one has had no impact on three-quarters of the government, including the Department of Defense, which has secure funding.

Trump says no amnesty for 'Dreamers,' signals support in broader deal (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/20/2019 10:40 AM, David Morgan]

President Donald Trump said on Sunday his proposed immigration deal to end a 30-day partial government shutdown would not lead to amnesty for "Dreamers," but he appeared to signal support for amnesty as part of a broader immigration agreement.

In a morning Twitter storm, Trump also said he would not seek the removal of millions of illegal immigrants living in the United States, while bashing House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her fellow Democrats for turning down an offer he made on Saturday, including for Dreamers, the immigrants brought to the United States illegally as children.

"No, Amnesty is not a part of my offer. It is a 3-year extension of DACA. Amnesty will be used only on a much bigger deal, whether on immigration or something else," Trump said on Twitter.

"Likewise there will be no big push to remove the 11,000,000 plus people who are here illegally-but be careful Nancy!"

The Dreamers are protected from deportation under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

DACA was put in place under former President Barack Obama. The Trump administration said in September 2017 it would rescind DACA, but it remains in effect under court order.

Trump did not make clear what he was referring to regarding the 11 million people mentioned in his tweet. About 12 million people are living in the United States illegally, according to U.S. Department of Homeland Security estimates.

In a Saturday speech from the White House, Trump offered three years of protections for Dreamers and for holders of temporary protected status (TPS), another class of immigrants from designated countries affected by armed conflict, natural disaster or other strife.

Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell welcomed the plan as a "bold solution," while a spokesman said McConnell would seek Senate passage of the proposal this week.

The legislation will include bills to fund government departments that have been closed during the shutdown, as well as some disaster aid and the president's immigration proposal, a McConnell aide said. The plan will contain \$12.7 billion in disaster aid, said another Senate source who asked not to be named.

But Trump's amnesty tweet caught some Republicans off guard.

"I don't know what the president's calling amnesty," Senator James Lankford, an Oklahoma Republican, told ABC's "This Week" program. "That's a longer debate and obviously not something we can solve quickly."

Trump appeared to be responding to conservative critics who accused him of proposing amnesty and reneging on a campaign promise, which could alienate his right-wing base.

About one-quarter of the U.S. government shut down on Dec. 22 over Trump's demand for \$5.7 billion to fund a wall along the border with Mexico, which Democrats have refused to consider. Some 800,000 federal workers have been ordered to stay home or work without pay during the shutdown.

The promise of a border wall was a mainstay of Trump's 2016 presidential election campaign. As a candidate, he said Mexico would pay for the barrier, but the Mexican government has refused.

The shutdown has caused widespread disruptions.

The Transportation Security Administration on Sunday reported an 8 percent national rate of unscheduled absences on Saturday, compared with 3 percent a year ago. More than 50,000 TSA officers are working without pay.

Some airports experienced longer wait times at security checkpoints, and Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport closed one of its checkpoints because of excessive absences.

On Sunday, a day after Trump's DACA proposal, there appeared to be signs of movement, even as Democrats insisted the government should reopen before proceeding with talks over border security.

"What the president proposed yesterday - increasing border security, looking at TPS, looking at the Dreamers - I'll use that as a starting point. But you've got to start by reopening the government," U.S. Senator Mark Warner said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Warner, a Virginia Democrat, also said Congress should approve pay for federal workers affected by the shutdown before they miss another paycheck this week.

Bennie Thompson, the Democratic chair of the House Homeland Security Committee, said Democrats were not opposed to physical barriers on the southern border but that Trump's changing position posed a problem for resolving the border security issue.

"I would not rule out a wall in certain instances," Thompson said on ABC's "This Week" on Sunday.

Trump offers immigration compromise to Democrats for wall funding in bid to end shutdown (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/19/2019 5:40 PM, Dave Boyer, 527K]

President Trump offered Democrats a deal to end the 29-day-old government shutdown Saturday by extending protections for hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants in return for \$5.7 billion in border wall funding.

"I am here today to break the logjam and provide Congress with a path forward to end the government shutdown and solve the crisis on our southern border," Mr. Trump said in an address from the White House. "This is a common-sense compromise both parties should embrace."

Top Democrats quickly rejected the offer, saying the president must agree to reopen the government before they'll negotiate on immigration or border security.

"I cannot support the proposed offer as reported and do not believe it can pass the Senate," said Senate assistant Democratic leader Richard Durbin of Illinois in a statement. "First, President Trump and Senate Majority Leader McConnell must open the government today. Second, I cannot support the proposed offer as reported and do not believe it can pass the Senate. Third, I am ready to sit down at any time after the government is opened and work to resolve all outstanding issues."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called the president's plan "a compilation of previously rejected initiatives."

Rep. Ted Lieu, California Democrat and a member of House leadership, tweeted: "We will never allow a shutdown as a negotiating tactic. Need to reopen government first."

The proposal capped a week of escalating clashes between the president and Mrs. Pelosi, who has refused to consider money for a border wall. After she withdrew her invitation for Mr. Trump's State of the Union address, the president blocked Mrs. Pelosi and a congressional delegation from traveling on a

military plane to visit U.S. troops Afghanistan.

White House aides said the proposal shows that Mr. Trump is willing to negotiate while Democratic leaders continue to stonewall on a solution to reopen government.

Just before his announcement, Mr. Trump hosted a naturalization ceremony in the Oval Office for five new citizens. Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen administered the oath of citizenship, with the president and Vice President Mike Pence applauding.

"You have just earned the most prized possession anywhere in the world," the president told them. "Each of you worked hard for this moment. You followed the rules ... By taking this oath, you have forged a sacred bond with this nation."

As an olive branch to Democrats, Mr. Trump is supporting the BRIDGE Act, a bipartisan bill that grants protections from deportation for about 700,000 illegal immigrants who qualified for the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

He also is backing legislation that would extend for three years reprieves from deportation for about 300,000 others with temporary protected status.

The president said once the government reopens and "we have made a down-payment on border security," he plans to convene weekly bipartisan meetings at the White House "so we can do a finished product" on immigration reform.

"That is our plan," Mr. Trump said. "Straightforward, fair, reasonable and common-sense, with lots of compromise."

He said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Kentucky Republican, has pledged to bring the proposal for a vote this coming week.

The BRIDGE Act would allow those immigrants to remain in the country and receive work authorization for three years after the deal is approved. It would not grant a pathway to citizenship, unlike the Dream Act.

The proposal was a departure from Mr. Trump's position against including DACA in a border-wall deal. He has stated he prefers the courts to sort out the program's fate; in 2017, Mr. Trump announced plans to phase out DACA.

The Supreme Court took no action Friday on Mr. Trump's bid to end deportation protections under DACA, suggesting the program may stay in place at least until the end of this year.

Sens. Lindsey Graham, South Carolina Republican, Mr. Durbin, and others introduced the BRIDGE Act in 2017 to allow people who are eligible for or who have received work authorization and temporary relief from deportation under DACA to remain in the U.S.

Mr. McConnell called the plan "a bold solution to reopen the government, secure the border, and take bipartisan steps toward addressing current immigration issues." He said he intends to vote on the proposal in the coming week and send the package to the Democrat-controlled House.

"Everyone has made their point—now it's time to make a law," Mr. McConnell said. "With bipartisan cooperation, the Senate can send a bill to the House quickly so that they can take action as well. The situation for furloughed employees isn't getting any brighter and the crisis at the border isn't improved by show votes. But the president's plan is a path toward addressing both issues quickly."

But a prominent group that advocates for reductions in legal immigration quickly came out against the plan. Roy Beck, president of NumbersUSA, said the president's offer "is a loser for the forgotten American workers who were central to his campaign promises."

"An amnesty-for-wall trade would once again reward previous immigration lawbreakers without preventing future immigration lawbreakers," Mr. Beck said in a statement. "This kind of amnesty deal will incentivize more caravans, more illegal border crossers and more visa overstayers at the expense of the most vulnerable American workers who have to compete with the illegal labor force."

Influential conservative activist Ann Coulter tweeted her opposition as well: "Trump proposes amnesty. We voted for Trump and got Jeb!"

Mr. Trump cited the suffering of illegal migrants and their children, the damage done to Americans by drug smuggling, and the crimes committed in the U.S. by illegal immigrants.

"As a candidate for president, I promised I would fix this crisis," he said. "And I intend to keep that promise one way or the other. The good news is these problems can all be solved, but only if we have the political courage to do what is just and what is right."

The president noted that he and other administration officials have met with Democratic lawmakers in recent days, although not with Democratic leaders.

"Both sides in Washington must simply come together, listen to each other, put down their armor, build trust, reach across the aisle and find solutions," Mr. Trump said. "It is time to reclaim our future from the extreme voices who fear compromise and demand open borders."

Trump yields on 3 immigration policies in effort to reach compromise on wall (Washington Times) [Washington Times](#) [1/20/2019 4:39 PM, Stephen Dinan, 527K]

President Trump's latest immigration proposal marks a retreat on three areas of policy in what the White House said was a "good faith" effort to try to break the gridlock that for more than a decade has thwarted every effort to strike a compromise on the thorny issue.

In each of those areas — the Obama-era DACA program, Temporary Protected Status and a new path for asylum for children in Central America — Mr. Trump had canceled the Obama administration's initiatives.

On Saturday, he did an about-face and proposed to restore each of those programs. Going further, he offered approval to write them into law, giving them a permanence Mr. Obama could never win from Congress during his tenure.

In exchange, he is asking for \$5.7 billion for his plans to build a border wall as well as changes to make it easier to deport illegal immigrant families and cut down on abuses of the asylum system.

He also proposed items both sides generally agree on, such as more technology to scan for drugs in vehicles at legal border crossings and a boost in the number of immigration judges to cut into the backlog of cases.

"Today represents a compromise offer," Vice President Mike Pence told reporters in a briefing after the president's announcement.

The embrace of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals is a major change. Just days ago, Mr. Trump said he didn't want to do anything until the Supreme Court had a chance to decide on his 2017 attempt to phase out the deportation amnesty that is protecting about 700,000 "Dreamers." Lower courts have split on that phaseout, leaving its future unclear. Mr. Trump proposed writing the DACA program into law for

those already using it, giving them a guaranteed three years of protections.

Mr. Pence said Mr. Trump has been "persuaded this is the right thing to do, now."

On Temporary Protected Status, the Homeland Security Department has signaled an end to the protection for as many as 300,000 people, some who have been protected for two decades by a program that, as its name suggests, was supposed to be temporary.

The White House in immigration negotiations last year resisted adding protected status holders into any deal, but that resistance has dissipated. Indeed, Temporary Protected Status was the issue that sparked Mr. Trump's harsh comments about those countries last year when Democrats say he called Haiti and Central American nations "s-hole" countries.

Mr. Pence on Saturday said Mr. Trump readily embraced adding the protected status deal into his proposal this time.

The Trump administration in 2017 also canceled the Obama administration's Central American Minor program, which was designed to give children looking to get asylum in the U.S. a chance to apply from their home countries rather than make the dangerous trek north.

The program drew slim participation and was nixed — drawing serious criticism from Democrats, who said the president was forcing people to take the dangerous journey.

Mr. Trump is proposing to restart the Central American Minor program, this time with the full protections of law rather than an executive action.

Democrats would prefer to look at a full pathway to citizenship for the 1.5 million people who could qualify for DACA and the hundreds of thousands under Temporary Protected Status.

They also said Mr. Trump's offer is disingenuous because he put Dreamers and TPS recipients in danger.

"It was effectively saying, 'Look, I created a problem by taking away protections for Dreamers. I created another problem by taking away protections for refugees. I'm willing to undo part of the damage temporarily that I have inflicted to get my wall,'" Rep. Adam B. Schiff, California Democrat, said on CBS's "Face the Nation" program. "Well, that's really not much of an offer. And it wasn't intended to be."

Mr. Trump has moderated his own request from an original plan for \$18 billion to construct 700 miles of border barriers to the current proposals of \$5.7 billion to build 230 miles.

He also wants to make it easier to deport illegal immigrant families by cutting down on abuses of the asylum system — items he has sought for two years. He has been stymied by Democrats who say illegal immigrants deserve a chance to make claims in the U.S.

Mr. Trump's deal also includes items that both sides generally agree on, such as more technology to scan for drugs in vehicles at legal border crossings and a boost in the number of immigration judges to cut into the backlog of cases.

The Senate, led by Republicans, is slated to vote on Mr. Trump's plans next week.

But House Democrats are unlikely to go along. Speaker Nancy Pelosi, California Democrat, rejected the president's proposal. She said she will have her chamber vote instead on those few areas of overall agreement such as the immigration judges and scanning technology.

Trump pitches deal: Protection of immigrants here with DACA, TPS for \$5.7B in border security (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/19/2019 5:15 PM, Anna Giaritelli, 629K]

President Trump offered a deal to Democrats Saturday that includes extensions of protections for recipients of the Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals programs in return for \$5.7 billion for an additional barrier at the southern border.

Trump reiterated he still wants \$5.7 billion for a physical barrier at the U.S.-Mexico border, but he said it would be a "strategic deployment" of resources, "not a 2,000 mile concrete structure from sea to sea."

"Much of the border is already protected by natural barriers, such as mountains and water. We already have many miles of barrier including 115 miles that we are currently building or under contract," he said. "Our request will add another 230 miles this year in the areas our border agents most urgently need."

As part of his "negotiation," he said he will give legal status, different from a pathway to citizenship, to DACA recipients, as well as continued protections for those in the U.S. under TPS. DACA recipients were brought to the country illegally as children, while people with TPS status are from certain countries that have been affected by conflict or natural disasters.

"Number one is three years of legislative relief for 700,000 DACA recipients brought here unlawfully by their parents at a young age many years ago. This extension will give them access to work permits, social security numbers, and protection from deportation, most importantly," Trump said during a speech at the White House Saturday afternoon.

"Secondly, our proposal provides a three-year extension of Temporary Protected Status or TPS. This means that 300,000 immigrants whose protected status is facing expiration will now have three more years of certainty so that Congress can work on a larger immigration deal, which everybody wants, Republicans and Democrats."

The Republican leader said those two steps have the potential to "build the trust and goodwill" that would be required to move on additional immigration reforms with lawmakers.

Trump's pitch to House and Senate leaders comes 29 days into the partial government shutdown. Both the White House and congressional Democrats have refused to cave or negotiate, forcing the administration to make its move Saturday.

Trump said he's also willing to give \$800 million of his ask for humanitarian assistance. Half of all people apprehended for illegally entering the country in November and December were families fleeing Central America.

Another \$805 million would go toward drug detection technology at border crossings.

Trump also asked for an additional 2,750 U.S. Border Patrol agents and other law enforcement officers, as well as 75 new immigration judges.

Two years ago — in his first week as president — Trump signed an executive order that included a request for 5,000 additional Border Patrol agents and 10,000 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers. Neither of those demands were fulfilled.

More judges would allow the number of asylum cases of those who are taken into custody and seeking asylum to get decided on quicker. Cases in 2018 took one to two years, sometimes longer. Because of ICE's inability to hold people for more than 20 days, families seeking asylum were released into the country.

The backlog of cases now sits at nearly 900,000 cases, Trump said.

Trump also shared plans for a system that would allow those under the age of 18 to apply for asylum in the U.S. from their home country.

Under TPS, those from certain countries who were in the U.S. illegally at the time of a natural disaster, war, famine, or similar situation, were allowed to legally remain and work in the country for two-year terms until their home country said they could be repatriated.

Many of these countries had had their programs renewed many times, some for up to 15 years. Those using the program were now long-term residents in the U.S. who did not want to return.

Since Trump came into office, DHS has announced plans to conclude temporary protected status programs for Nepal, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Sudan, Liberia, Haiti, Somalia, Syria, and Honduras.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen has extended protections 18 months for recipients from Syria, South Sudan, and Yemen.

The administration has struggled with how to deal with DACA for nearly a year and a half since it tried to terminate the program.

On Sept. 5, 2017, former Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the program, created through a 2012 memorandum by former President Barack Obama's Homeland Security secretary, Janet Napolitano, was unconstitutional because the Immigration and Nationality Act mandated Congress, not the executive branch, to set immigration levels.

The order had given children of illegal immigrants the chance to apply for a two-year permit that provided legal protections and work permits.

DACA was to be halted over the next six months and ended March 5.

However, after the program wound down, multiple states sued the Trump administration. Two of those lawsuits have resulted in judges issuing temporary injunctions mandating the program continue while legal challenges to Trump's decision are decided by the courts.

Current recipients are able to apply for renewal while the cases are pending, but no new applicants who would otherwise be covered by the program can apply.

Two cases — one in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in California and another in the Eastern District of New York — have both received preliminary injunctions.

Judges in those lawsuits imposed preliminary injunctions that prevented the program from ending on March 5 and allow the more than 535,000 DACA recipients whose protections expire between now and September to apply for renewal.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services was also mandated by the courts to continue accepting renewal applications from 689,000 DACA recipients while the issue is decided by the courts. It is not accepting new requests.

Last January, the White House proposed a four-point immigration plan as a way of starting negotiations with Democrats. Trump's proposal included a pathway to citizenship to the nearly 700,000 DACA recipients, as well as 1 million others who were eligible for the program since it was rolled out in 2012,

but did not enroll.

Trump's proposal also called for \$25 billion in border wall funding, rescinding of the diversity visa lottery and replacing it with a merit-based system, and ending "chain migration," or visa sponsorships to family members. That deal died in the Senate.

The conservative House Freedom Caucus initially was not supportive of the idea of continuing protections for that group. However, in May, Chairman Mark Meadows, R-N.C., said even some of the most conservative immigration bills include a pathway to citizenship for the so-called "Dreamers."

"I think even in some of the more conservative bills that have been talked about there is the ability to become citizens. And so that's the narrative that's not really out there," Meadows said. "Making sure that those DACA recipients do not have to face deportation and that ultimately they can become citizens."

Meadows said the issue was whether DACA recipients would go to the back of the citizenship line or be put at the front.

Reformers Worry DACA Work Permit Amnesty-for-Wall Funding will Encourage More Caravans (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/19/2019 7:26 PM, John Binder, 2015K]

Pro-American immigration reformers say President Trump's plan to offer a work permit amnesty to about a million illegal aliens and foreign nationals could encourage more caravans of Central Americans to come to the United States at the U.S.-Mexico border.

In a weekend announcement, Trump offered Republicans and Democrats a plan to give amnesty in the form of three-year work permits to a little more than 700,000 illegal aliens who are enrolled in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

The deal gives the roughly 325,000 foreign nationals living in the U.S. on Temporary Protected Status (TPS) amnesty to remain in the country. In return, about a fifth of border wall funding — \$5.7 billion — would be secured to build a barrier at the U.S.-Mexico border.

"Enacting an amnesty for young people right at the time that yet another caravan is en route to the United States and planning to enter illegally is exactly the wrong thing to do as a matter of policy," Center for Immigration Studies Director of Policy Jessica Vaughan told Breitbart News. "It's also the wrong thing to do as a matter of politics, because this would be an embarrassingly huge win for the Democrats and more-migration Republicans. It's not a deal, actually; the President would be getting rolled."

Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ) said he supports the deal, challenging the idea that the plan is "amnesty" for illegal aliens, noting that it is a mere extension of the current DACA program and does not include a pathway to U.S. citizenship for illegal aliens.

"The President is showing great resolve to fix a problem that has festered for decades into a current national crisis," Gosar said. "The priority the nation faces is securing the border. The President's proposal to extend provisional status to DACA illegals is generous and the Democrats should accept. The President's proposal does not include amnesty. We support the President's offer."

Roy Beck, the president of NumbersUSA — which represents the interests of American workers in the immigration debate — told Breitbart News in a statement that the plan outlined by Trump will incentivize more illegal immigration.

"The offer the President announced today is a loser for the forgotten American workers who were central to his campaign promises," Beck said in a statement to Breitbart News.

"An amnesty-for-wall trade would once again reward previous immigration lawbreakers without preventing future immigration lawbreakers," Beck continued. "This kind of amnesty deal will incentivize more caravans, more illegal border crossers, and more visa overstayers at the expense of the most vulnerable American workers who have to compete with the illegal labor force."

Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) spokesman RJ Hauman told Breitbart News of the plan:

Why are we trying to exchange just a quarter of what we want [on immigration] for an amnesty?

There is a chance that the wall will never be built but the amnesty happens immediately and is irreversible. It is 1986 all over again – when the amnesty happened immediately and the reforms never happened.

NumbersUSA's Rosemary Jenks blamed previous amnesties for the current skyrocketing levels of illegal immigration at the southern border, saying such a deal is not the answer to securing wall funding.

"Amnesty — President Obama's unconstitutional DACA program — is why we have a crisis on the border in the first place," Jenks said in a statement to Breitbart News. "More amnesty will only encourage more illegal immigration and abuse of our laws."

Hauman said the same.

"There's one thing that will cause another crisis — another amnesty. this whole thing started with the DACA magnet," he told Breitbart News. "The notion that we're about to solve the problem with more of what caused the problems in the first place is ridiculous."

The deal is already being turned down by House and Senate Democrats, aides tell the news media. Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) said the deal is a "non-starter" for her caucus. Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) said he will also oppose the offer.

For DACA Recipients, President's Temporary Offer Feels Like More Chaos (NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/20/2019 8:01 AM, Lulu Garcia-Navarro, 4491K] Audio: [HERE](#)

NPR's Lulu Garcia-Navarro gets the reaction of immigration activist Greisa Martinez Rosas, a DACA recipient herself, to President Trump's latest offer to reopen the government.

TRANSCRIPT

LULU GARCIA-NAVARRO, HOST:

For more reaction, we are joined now by Greisa Martinez Rosas. She's with United We Dream, a DACA advocacy organization. And she's a DACA recipient herself.

Good morning.

GREISA MARTINEZ ROSAS: Buenas Dias. Good morning.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: Good morning. To remind our listeners, DACA is the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, aimed at giving legal immigration status to those brought to the U.S. without documents as kids. And that includes the so-called DREAMers. So what is your reaction to the president's offer?

MARTINEZ ROSAS: Yeah. So DACA is a program that - I'm someone that is lucky enough to be able to

be protected by. And what Donald Trump said yesterday was officially, you know, just another trick and another cruel game to try to trick the American public that he wants to open the government. If he could and if he wanted to, he could protect me and the TPS holders. He could ensure that the 800,000 federal workers would go back to work tomorrow. But he doesn't. He wants to keep our country in chaos.

And, honestly, I'm very concerned. This is - continues to be a tactic of his. And it doesn't just impact immigrants like myself or those immigrants that are in detention centers. It means that there's one person in this country that feels so strongly that he's the one in the right that he is willing to hold all of us hostage. And all of the advancements and all of the changes that we need do not move unless he wants it to. And so, you know, I'm disappointed. I am - but I am - I'm committed to continue to fight until we're able to retake our democracy from this man.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: So President Trump says that he is very interested in border security. He now talks about the wall in a completely different way, saying it's only going to be in certain sections. So far in the wrangling over this barrier, there's been no mention of DACA, unlike the last time. The Democrats say they want that to be a separate issue. Do you think permanent protections for DACA should be part of these negotiations?

MARTINEZ ROSAS: Look. What's important for me when I think about the current conversation around borders and the detention and more deportation agents that Trump is also demanding with border money is that this is part of his white nationalist agenda, that he wants to use me, the federal workers and TPS people to have an exchange conversation. And what is clear to me is that these are definitely different conversations. There's one about protecting people that he himself...

GARCIA-NAVARRO: But are you asking the Democrats? This is about the Democrats. Are you asking them to solve this issue and put it on the table in the negotiations with President Trump?

MARTINEZ ROSAS: Look. What we need is permanent protection. And what he is offering is not that. And what I think that the Democrats should pass - permanent protection for immigrating people that do not come at the cost of more enforcement, more money for the wall, more agents, more detention centers.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: So it shouldn't be part of these negotiations then.

MARTINEZ ROSAS: That's right.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: OK. The Supreme Court hasn't yet taken up DACA. The court is likely to do so, though. And there's no guarantee how it would rule. That seems to portend a ticking clock. Does that make you nervous without a deal?

MARTINEZ ROSAS: (Laughter) I think that life under Trump has been really nerve-wracking, I will say. So yes, it's something that we're keeping our eye on. I think that there is a possibility that they decide to not grant the ability for the Supreme Court to hear the case. And so I am looking at the optimistic side but preparing for all cases. And I do know that people are - we're asking people to apply for DACA renewals, which means that more people get more protection for a longer time. So we're keeping our eye on it while at the same time, calling for Congress to defund money for these agencies that are the ones responsible for deporting us and detaining us.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: That's Greisa Martinez Rosas, deputy executive director of the immigrant advocacy organization United We Dream. Thank you so much for speaking with us.

MARTINEZ ROSAS: Thank you.

In Trump's Immigration Announcement, a Compromise Snubbed All Around (New York Times)

Immigrant advocates denounced it as cruel. The conservative right howled that it was amnesty.

What President Trump billed on Saturday as a compromise to end the country's longest government shutdown pleased neither the Democratic congressional leaders whose buy-in he needs to strike a deal nor the core supporters whose backing has always been at the heart of his insistence on a border wall.

Instead, in offering temporary protections for about one million immigrants at risk of deportation in exchange for funding for a wall, Mr. Trump did something rarely seen during his presidency. He tried to reach beyond his base of supporters — which polls have begun to show is losing patience with him as the partial shutdown drags into its fifth week — and speak to a broader swath of Americans.

The Saturday afternoon speech from the West Wing was an attempt by Mr. Trump to, at the very least, shift the narrative of the past several weeks and show that rather than spoiling for a longer shutdown fight or making unreasonable demands, he was looking for a broadly acceptable way out of a morass he once boasted he was proud to wade into.

"I think you could tell by the president's remarks today," Vice President Mike Pence said, "that we're reaching out."

Yet in seeking to inch toward the center, Mr. Trump alienated portions of his hard-right base, the core supporters he most depends on and the group he and his closest aides have most feared losing. That raised the possibility that, in his zeal to get out of an intractable situation, he may have landed himself in the worst of all worlds, without a clear solution or the support of his most ardent followers.

The tensions and anger over the policy have been quietly playing out in the West Wing as well, as Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law and senior adviser, fended off Stephen Miller, the architect of much of Mr. Trump's immigration agenda. Mr. Kushner has long been a proponent of protections for undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children, while Mr. Miller has pressed for aggressive measures to crack down on both legal and illegal immigration.

In recent days, as White House officials had been working out the details of the compromise, Mr. Miller intervened to narrow the universe of immigrants who would receive protection, according to people familiar with the internal discussions who described them on the condition of anonymity.

While the original idea had been to include protections for as many as 1.8 million undocumented immigrants eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, the Obama-era program known as DACA that protected those illegally brought to the United States as children, Mr. Trump ultimately proposed shielding only the 700,000 who are enrolled.

Mr. Kushner conceded in a briefing after the president's speech that he did not see the proposal as a solution for the DACA program, which Mr. Trump moved to rescind in 2017.

"At this moment in time," Mr. Kushner said, "this is a good path forward."

Many conservatives did not share that view.

"Trump proposes amnesty," the conservative commentator Ann Coulter said on Twitter. "We voted for Trump and got Jeb!" she added, referring to Jeb Bush, who challenged Mr. Trump for the Republican nomination in 2016 and supported a broad immigration overhaul that would have given undocumented immigrants a path to legal status.

Still, in the eyes of many White House officials, the prospect that Mr. Trump could use the proposal to shift

blame for the shutdown and pressure Democrats to end the impasse was worth trying. Mr. Pence argued on Saturday that the speech was a "sincere effort" by Mr. Trump to break the logjam, and he and other White House officials suggested that the measure could attract enough support to succeed from centrist Democrats fed up with the shutdown and willing to side with Republicans.

But such a coalition did not appear to be forming, and courting one bears considerable risk for a president who is most comfortable when he is defying convention, eschewing compromise and being hailed as a hero by supporters who often equate bipartisan deal making with weak-kneed capitulation.

The vast majority of Democrats knocked the approach. While many of them have pressed for measures to protect DACA recipients and immigrants living in the United States under Temporary Protected Status enacted when their countries were destabilized by war or catastrophe, most regard the proposal he put forth on Saturday as woefully inadequate. It offers only three years of protections for the DACA recipients and those who hold T.P.S., which the Trump administration has also moved to end for several countries.

"This is not an amnesty bill," Mr. Pence said. "There is no pathway to citizenship in this proposal."

That was high on Speaker Nancy Pelosi's list of reasons to call the plan "unacceptable."

That is unlikely to matter to the president. Despite saying publicly last month that he would be proud to own a shutdown over the wall, and privately displaying confidence that his base would stick with him through the fight, Mr. Trump has been dismayed to find otherwise in recent days.

An NPR poll released last week showed Mr. Trump's approval ratings down and the first cracks in backing among critical supporters, including whites without a college education and white evangelicals.

Such pressure from what he has called the forgotten men and women who elected him and chant "Build! The! Wall!" at his arena rallies has swayed Mr. Trump before, including last year, when the conservative news site Breitbart branded him "Amnesty Don" for considering a similar deal that would have provided \$25 billion in wall funding for a path to legal status for those the DACA program was created to help. The president ultimately abandoned that agreement, concerned about angering his base and after Mr. Miller and others advised him he should insist on additional immigration restrictions.

On Saturday night, Breitbart panned Mr. Trump's latest idea with the headline "Three-Year Amnesty, Most of Border Remains Open."

A temporary DACA fix for a permanent wall? Trump proposal gathers more Dem resistance (Politico)

[Politico](#) [1/20/2019 3:33 PM, Caitlin Oprysko, 2577K]

'The president is offering a solution and what we have from Democrats so far is just soundbites,' Vice President Mike Pence says.

A day after President Donald Trump's proposal to reopen the government put the ball back in Democrats' court, some Republicans on Sunday said the offer should be viewed as a jumping off point for negotiations. But, Democrats continued to reject some of the deal's key provisions, making it unclear what the next step will be.

Vice President Mike Pence said Sunday that Democrats' rejection of the deal the White House offered this weekend aimed at ending the partial government shutdown was disappointing but hinted there was still room for negotiating.

"There's a legislative process that is going to begin on Tuesday in the United States Senate," Pence said on "Fox News Sunday" of Trump's offer.

The proposal that Trump laid out Saturday would include his \$5.7 billion demand for a barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border and funding for immigration judges, border personnel and other technology in exchange for a three year deportation reprieve for immigrants who came to the U.S. illegally as minors as well as immigrants with temporary protected status.

In addition, Senate Republicans plan to include \$12.7 billion in disaster aid and government funding through the end of the fiscal year in their bill to advance Trump's immigration proposal.

The president's plan will test Democrats' solidarity, pitting border security funding against protections for young immigrants and refugees. Now, it will also force Democrats to vote against bipartisan funding levels, aid for disaster-hit communities and an extension of the Violence Against Women Act, according to a summary of the Senate plan, obtained by POLITICO.

Trump said Saturday that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) plans to put the president's deal up for a vote this week. Democrats dismissed the offer — despite it containing legislation crafted in part by members of their caucus — demanding that the president reopen the government before they negotiate border security.

Asked why the White House had not taken that route, Pence cited the insistence of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) at a meeting weeks ago that she would not provide the president with funding for a border wall even if he agreed to open the government for another 30 days to allow for talks.

"It was disappointing to see Speaker Pelosi reject the offer before the president gave his speech," Pence said. "The president is offering a solution and what we have from Democrats so far is just soundbites."

Democrats have rejected the deal's temporary TPS and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals protections, seeking a permanent fix for both programs. At the same time, Democrats refuse to fund a border wall they have maintained is expensive and inefficient.

The No. 3 House Democrat reiterated his party's demands, while also offering a path out of the shutdown, contending that Trump's proposal contained only half-hearted concessions.

"We would love to have a permanent fix for DACA and TPS just as he wants a permanent wall," House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-S.C.) said on CBS' "Face the Nation." "I think it's a non-starter for him to ask for a permanent wall and for us to have a temporary fix."

He noted that Democrats would be open to investments in detection technology like drones that could amount to a "smart wall" and that Trump has recently shifted his rhetoric away from asking for a concrete wall, which he applauded. But he continued to insist that Trump reopen the government before any of those issues could be broached.

Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.) made that demand as well.

"Let me just also make clear that what the president proposed yesterday, increasing border security, looking at TPS, looking at, at the Dreamers, I'll use that as a starting point," he said on NBC's "Meet the Press." "But you've got to start by opening the government."

Pence said Sunday that the White House had met with rank-and-file Democrats in order to lay out a "balanced, good faith compromise" and "set the table for a deal" with Democratic leadership and appeared to suggest that Democrats could offer changes in the Senate. The vice president also said that "of course" Trump is willing to negotiate further on the offer.

"What the president directed us to do, our negotiation team, was to reach out with rank and file Democrats in the House and in the Senate," he said on "Face the Nation." "What the president presented yesterday really is an effort to bring together ideas from both political parties."

But while Pence suggested that Trump's offer isn't final, in addressing criticism of the proposal levied by immigration hardliners on the right he seemed to dismiss the possibility of granting Democrats' demands.

"This is not amnesty, there's no pathway to citizenship, there is no permanent status here at all, which is what amnesty contemplates," Pence said of the DACA and TPS provisions in Trump's offer, emphasizing that the president supports "temporary" relief.

Even as Democrats continued to stand their ground, congressional Republicans on Sunday applauded the president for putting forth the deal he did, criticizing their colleagues across the aisle for rejecting it while also shutting down the proposals some have countered with.

Trump's offer "represents progress, not perfection," Sen. John N. Kennedy (R-La.) said on "Face the Nation."

But while Democrats have promised not to provide any funding for a border wall, he warned that "if you bring a plan to him that doesn't include a wall, it's dead as four o'clock."

GOP Conference Chairwoman Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.) echoed Pence's insistence that the White House offer does not amount to amnesty for Dreamers or those with TPS, but would not commit to including such a proposal in negotiations to reopen the government.

"The president really wants to come to an agreement here," she said on NBC's "Meet the Press." "He has put offers on the table. The responsible thing for the Democrats to do is put a counteroffer on the table if you don't like this one."

Trump took to Twitter on Sunday to clarify his stance on amnesty: "No, Amnesty is not a part of my offer. It is a 3 year extension of DACA. Amnesty will be used only on a much bigger deal, whether on immigration or something else. Likewise there will be no big push to remove the 11,000,000 plus people who are here illegally-but be careful Nancy!"

The president also spent a chunk of the afternoon retweeting Pence and others supportive of his proposal,

While lawmakers debated the specifics of Trump's proposition, one GOP senator broadly categorized the proposal as "a straw man proposal" that is not intended to become law.

"What I encouraged the White House to do and multiple others encouraged the White House to do is put out a proposal," Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) said during an interview with host Martha Raddatz on ABC's "This Week."

"They've listened to a lot of Democrat and Republican members for the last month. They've heard all the demands, they know all the background on it," said Lankford, a member of the Senate's Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

"Put out a straw man proposal. Get something out there the president can say, 'I can support this' — and has elements from both sides. Put it on the table, then open it up for debate."

He continued: "The vote this week in the Senate is not to pass the bill, it is to open up and say: 'Can we debate this? Can we amend it? Can we make changes?'"

When challenged about the lack of public Democratic support for the offer, the vice president blamed party leadership for tamping down dissent.

"We've had good conversations with Democrat members of the Senate but look, their leadership has discouraged them in the House and the Senate from engaging the administration so I want to respect those conversations," he said.

On "Fox News Sunday," Pence pushed back on host Chris Wallace's suggestion that Democrats would ultimately vote down the compromise.

"I'm not sure that's true, Chris," he said. "I'm not sure that's true. We've had a lot of dialogue."

Pence played coy on whether he thought the package could garner the seven Democratic votes needed to pass in the Senate, telling Wallace, "We'll see."

Democrats Reject Trump Border Wall Proposal, Calling It A 'Non-Starter' (News: NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/19/2019 5:28 PM, Ayesha Rascoe and Domenico Montanaro]

With negotiations over reopening the government at a standstill, President Trump offered to back temporary protections for some immigrants brought to the country illegally as children, many of whom are now adults, in exchange for funding for a wall on the Southern border.

In a White House speech on Saturday, Trump also offered to extend the Temporary Protected Status program that blocks deportation of certain immigrants fleeing civil unrest or natural disasters.

The proposal had multiple components, including requests for:

\$800 million for urgent humanitarian assistance;

\$805 million for drug-detection technology to secure ports of entry;

2,750 additional border agents;

75 new immigration judge teams for a court backlog of nearly 900,000 cases;

Allowing Central American minors to apply for asylum in their home countries;

\$5.7 billion for strategic deployment of physical barriers, or a wall, but not, Trump said, a 2,000-mile concrete structure. The president said he wants to add 230 miles this year and claimed the crime rate and drug problem "would be quickly and greatly reduced" and that "some say it would be cut in half."

In exchange for:

Three years of legislative relief for some 700,000 recipients of the Obama-era initiative known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, which protects some immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally as children from deportation. The Trump administration had moved to end DACA, but the decision was challenged in court and is currently held up in legal proceedings. Trump's proposal would give an extension of legal status;

A three-year extension of Temporary Protected Status for some 300,000 facing expiration;

The president said these measures would allow three more years of certainty to work on a larger immigration deal.

However, even before he spoke, the deal appeared to be dead on arrival with Democratic leaders. They insisted Trump needs to open the government before beginning any negotiations over border security or barrier funding.

Before the speech, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., responded to initial reports of the president's offer by calling it "a compilation of several previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable." She added that Trump's proposal does not "represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives."

Some 800,000 federal workers throughout the country have either been furloughed or made to work without pay. Workers have now missed one paycheck and will miss another if the shutdown is not resolved in the next week. Trump has signed legislation to give back pay to federal workers once the government is reopened.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., pledged to put Trump's proposal up for a vote this week.

"Everyone has made their point — now it's time to make a law," McConnell said in a statement shortly after the speech. "I intend to move to this legislation this week. With bipartisan cooperation, the Senate can send a bill to the House quickly so that they can take action as well. The situation for furloughed employees isn't getting any brighter and the crisis at the border isn't improved by show votes. But the president's plan is a path toward addressing both issues quickly."

Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., head of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, praised Trump's move and put the ball in Democrats' court.

But not everyone in the conservative base was happy with Trump's proposal. Conservative commentator Ann Coulter called Trump's move "amnestying millions of illegals."

During this, the longest partial government shutdown in U.S. history, Trump has suffered in the polls, which have found more people blame the president than congressional Democrats. And that number is on the rise. An NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist poll also found Trump's approval rating down to 39 percent and slipping with his base.

Coming out Saturday and making this speech was an attempt by the president to reclaim the narrative and appear conciliatory. Democrats indicate the president did not reach out to them before the speech and don't see what he's doing, as Pelosi noted, as a good faith effort at compromise.

Trump's offer is based, in part, on bipartisan legislation proposed by Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Dick Durbin, D-Ill., known as the Bridge Act. The bill would give three years of protections to the so-called "DREAMers" — immigrants who came to the U.S. illegally as children. But before Trump's speech, Durbin, a member of the Democratic leadership in the Senate, rejected Trump's use of the bill in this way and called for the government first to be reopened before any negotiations on a border barrier could take place.

"First, President Trump and Senate Majority Leader McConnell must open the government today," said Durbin, the minority whip in the Senate. "Second, I cannot support the proposed offer as reported and do not believe it can pass the Senate. Third, I am ready to sit down at any time after the government is opened and work to resolve all outstanding issues."

This is the latest move by the White House in the midst of its showdown with Democrats, who have balked at providing the money for construction of a border wall. Democrats contend that Trump's push for the wall is immoral and that it is an ineffective way to stop illegal crossings.

Trump argues a wall is necessary for national security. He has refused to sign any spending bill without funding for it. Back in December, the president indicated that he would sign temporary funding measures to keep the government open but then faced a backlash in conservative media over it. He reversed course, which led to the shutdown.

Until now, the White House had said it would be open to negotiating on the amount of money it will accept for a wall but has been noncommittal about offering other concessions to Democrats.

Almost a year ago, Democrats offered some \$25 billion in exchange for a path to citizenship for those almost 700,000 DACA recipients. Democrats say Trump balked at the offer, demanding more after Democrats thought they had a deal.

Democrats have passed several bills out of the House to fund and reopen agencies that are currently shut down. McConnell has not brought them to the floor of the Senate, deferring instead to the need for negotiations between Trump and Democrats.

Podcast: Shutdown Drags On As Democrats Reject Latest Trump Proposal (NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/21/2019 6:00 AM, Staff, 4491K] Audio: [HERE](#)

President Trump offered an extension of temporary protections for DACA recipients in exchange for funding for the border wall. Democrats called it a "non-starter". What comes next? And a viral video captures a tense scene at the Lincoln Memorial between white high school students and a Native American demonstrator.

Pelosi: Trump proposals to reopen government a 'non-starter' (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/19/2019 3:44 PM, Tal Axelrod, 3038K]

Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) on Saturday called reports of a deal to be proposed by President Trump to end a record-long partial government shutdown a "non-starter."

"Democrats were hopeful that the President was finally willing to re-open government and proceed with a much-needed discussion to protect the border. Unfortunately, initial reports make clear that his proposal is a compilation of several previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable and in total, do not represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives," she said in a statement.

"It is unlikely that any one of these provisions alone would pass the House, and taken together, they are a non-starter."

Reports surfaced Saturday that Trump would propose a deal that would temporarily extend protections for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program recipients and introduce legislation extending the legal status of Temporary Protected Status holders in exchange for his requested \$5.7 billion for a border wall.

Pelosi slammed the deal for not including "the permanent solution for the Dreamers and TPS recipients that our country needs and supports."

The White House and congressional Democrats are at an impasse in negotiations to end a partial government shutdown that entered its 29th day Saturday, extending its record as the longest shutdown in U.S. history.

Trump has not changed his demand for border wall money despite multiple declarations from Democrats that such funds should be separated from discussions on a spending bill.

The House speaker included several border security measures her party would support, including increased infrastructure investments at ports of entry, advanced technology to detect drugs and other contraband and increased customs personnel and immigration judges.

"Next week, Democrats will pass a package of six bills agreed to by House and Senate negotiators and other legislation to re-open government so that we can fully negotiate on border security proposals. The President must sign these bills to re-open government immediately and stop holding the American people hostage with this senseless shutdown," Pelosi said.

While negotiations have remained tense between the two ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, the feud between Pelosi and Trump has become increasingly personal.

The California Democrat sent a request to the White House this week to postpone the State of the Union address, scheduled for Jan. 29, until a time when the government was open and suggested border wall funding could be an issue of "manhood" for the president. Trump responded by cancelling a congressional delegation trip to Afghanistan and excoriating Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) on social media.

No deal: Nancy Pelosi rejects Trump's offer to legalize Dreamers for wall money (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/19/2019 4:35 PM, Susan Ferrechio, 629K]

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Saturday she will not take up President Trump's offer to trade off \$5.7 billion in wall funding for a three-year extension of a program providing legal status for "Dreamers."

Pelosi, D-Calif., issued a statement just before Trump's announcement, calling the plan "a compilation of several previously rejected initiatives, each of which is unacceptable and in total, do not represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives."

Pelosi said the proposal does not achieve what Democrats have long sought for the "Dreamers," which is a pathway to citizenship or permanent legal status.

"It is unlikely that any one of these provisions alone would pass the House, and taken together, they are a non-starter."

Pelosi rejected the wall and repeated Democratic offers to increase other border security at ports of entry and to boost technology along the border. Some overlapped with the president's offer, such as money for additional immigration judges and bolstering security at the nation's ports of entry, where most illegal drugs enter.

Trump attacks top Democrat for rejecting Mexico wall deal (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/20/2019 2:17 AM, AFP, 2015K]

US President Donald Trump bitterly attacked top Democrat Nancy Pelosi on Sunday after she rejected a deal on immigration and the Mexico border wall that would end a 30-day-old government shutdown.

Pelosi, speaker of the House of Representatives, on Saturday called Trump's offer of temporary protections for about a million immigrants in return for \$5.7 billion to fund the wall a "non-starter."

"Nancy Pelosi has behaved so irrationally & has gone so far to the left that she has now officially become a Radical Democrat," Trump tweeted. "She is so petrified of the 'lefties' in her party that she has lost control."

"...And by the way, clean up the streets in San Francisco, they are disgusting!" he added, in a seemingly gratuitous aside. Pelosi is from San Francisco.

The offer also was assailed by prominent anti-immigrant voices, which denounced it as tantamount to amnesty.

"No, Amnesty is not a part of my offer. It is a 3 year extension of DACA," Trump said in another tweet, referring to former president Barack Obama's program to shield undocumented immigrants who entered the country as children.

Besides the 700,000 immigrants already enrolled in the so-called DACA or "Dreamers" program, Trump's proposal would also extend to another 300,000 people who had been protected from deportation under another program.

He said that while there would be "no big push" to remove the 11 million people in the country illegally, he warned: "but be careful, Nancy!"

Vice President Mike Pence, who has been leading the administration's contacts with members of Congress, said a bill with the president's proposal would be introduced in the Republican-controlled Senate as early as Tuesday.

In shutdown fight with Trump, Dems reject immigration deal they once sponsored (FOX News)
[FOX News](#) [1/21/2019 10:32 AM, Alex Pappas, 9216K]

Democrats once said the so-called BRIDGE Act was urgently needed to protect young immigrants brought to the country illegally as children.

But now that President Trump has offered to essentially include it as part of a compromise to re-open shuttered government agencies, those same Democrats are rejecting it -- unwilling to trade border wall funding for the immigrant protections they have long sought.

"We must move on the Bridge Act quickly to protect DREAMers," Illinois Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin said back in December 2016.

Durbin, along with South Carolina Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, unveiled the bill before Trump took office; others who signed on as sponsors included California Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein. The president would eventually try to end the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that shielded the 700,000 immigrants illegally brought to the United States as children from deportation, leaving the program in legal limbo ever since.

On Saturday, though, Trump announced he was prepared to back a three-year extension of protections for DACA recipients, and extend protections for 300,000 recipients of the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program -- which protects immigrants from designated countries with conditions that prevent nationals from returning safely. The BRIDGE Act, likewise, included a three-year DACA extension.

But Durbin, like virtually every other congressional Democrat, said he would oppose Trump's offer considering it's attached to \$5.7 billion for a barrier on the southern border with Mexico.

"I cannot support the proposed offer as reported and do not believe it can pass the Senate," Durbin said, adding he is "ready to sit down at any time after the government is opened and work to resolve all outstanding issues."

Durbin, speaking to reporters in Illinois over the weekend, argued there are some differences between what the president is proposing and what's in his version of the BRIDGE Act, saying he wants to extend protections to more people than Trump does.

"He talked about protecting those already in the program," Durbin said. "Our bill talked about those eligible for the program."

But Republicans accused Democrats of turning their back on a deal they once supported.

"@POTUS offers to support 2 bills sponsored by Dems (TPS & DACA extensions) in exchange for Border Security (something Democrats claim to support) & the immediate response from Dem leaders is No?" Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., tweeted.

The president, in a televised White House address Saturday, offered Democrats the compromise package in exchange for the \$5.7 billion in wall funding -- a request that is at the heart of the deadlock that triggered the longest government shutdown in history.

"Walls are not immoral," he said, adding that a wall "will save many lives and stop drugs from pouring into our country."

While the Democratic leadership in Congress has come out against the compromise, they are facing some pressure to deal. The editorial board of the Washington Post over the weekend called on Democrats to come back to the table. In an editorial titled "Make a deal. Save the dreamers," the paper argued Trump "should not be rewarded for having taken the government hostage" but said Trump's offer to compromise "should be welcomed."

Meanwhile, some in Trump's conservative base are coming out against the deal -- signaling significant concessions were put forward over the weekend -- with commentator Ann Coulter and others accusing the president of offering "amnesty."

The plan would also allocate \$800 million for drug detection technology to secure ports of entry, 2,750 new border agents and law enforcement professionals, and 75 new immigration judges to reduce an immense backlog of asylum requests.

The partial government shutdown has dragged on for a month now and led to hundreds of thousands of federal workers being furloughed or working without pay.

Trump has said he will not sign a bill to open the government unless it includes that wall funding, while Democrats have refused to consider the \$5.7 billion figure, instead offering \$1.3 billion for general border security.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Romney backs Trump on partial shutdown, says 'I don't understand' Pelosi's position (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/19/2019 12:24 PM, Adam Shaw, 9216K]

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, on Friday backed President Trump's stance on the partial government shutdown, backing his call for a wall on the southern border and saying he doesn't understand Democrats' positioning on the issue.

"You (Pelosi) and your fellow Democrats have voted for over 600 miles of border fence in the past, why won't you vote for another few miles now?" said Romney, speaking in Ogden, Utah after visiting with officials about the shutdown's impact on the community. "I don't understand their position, I really don't."

The stalemate was sparked by Republicans and Democrats unable to come to an agreement on Trump's call for \$5.7 billion for funding for a wall or barrier on the border. Democrats have said they won't go close to that number, and have instead offered less than \$2 billion for more general "border security."

According to The Associated Press, Romney backed Trump and said that the U.S. deserves border security -- including a barrier on the southern border.

While Romney is a fellow Republican, he has been a frequent critic of Trump, particularly Trump's conduct in office. Earlier this month, he made headlines with an op-ed in The Washington Post where he said Trump's behavior "is evidence that the president has not risen to the mantle of the office."

Romney, who ran for president in 2012, said Trump should be bringing the country together, and demonstrate "the essential qualities of honesty and integrity, and elevate the national discourse with comity and mutual respect."

Trump responded to the Post op-ed a day later: "I wish Mitt could be more of a team player. I am surprised he did it this quickly. If he fought really hard against President Obama like he does against me, he would've won the election."

On Friday, he called on both sides to "make a deal" and end the situation by which federal workers are not being paid.

"On policy, it strikes me like there's not a big gap but the politics have drawn people into different corners," Romney said.

He also said he planned to keep working other senators to find temporary solutions -- such as making sure essential government employees working still get paid.

And on Saturday, after Trump rolled out a proposal to end the shutdown -- essentially offering some relief for so-called Dreamers brought to the U.S. illegally by their parents as children, in exchange for the border barrier funding -- Romney sounded a note of approval for the proposal via Twitter.

"@POTUS has put forth a reasonable, good faith proposal that will reopen the government and help secure the border. I look forward to voting for it and will work to encourage my Republican and Democratic colleagues to do the same," Romney wrote.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

'It's anyone's guess what happens next': Democrats shoot down Trump's plan to end shutdown (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/19/2019 2:33 PM, Michael Collins and Christal Hayes, 6053K]

Apparently, it didn't work.

President Donald Trump's offer to extend protections for some young immigrants in exchange for border wall funding and possibly bring an end to the partial government shutdown was immediately shot down by congressional Democrats who called the proposal "inadequate" and predicted it wouldn't pass either the House or the Senate.

Even before Trump officially made his speech and put protections for young immigrants in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program on the bargaining table, Democrats denounced the offer, saying it wasn't enough to end the historic 28-day shutdown.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., called Trump's proposal "unacceptable" and said it was a "non-starter" that wouldn't pass in Congress.

She said the offer did not "represent a good faith effort to restore certainty to people's lives," especially since the president's proposal only offered temporary solutions for DREAMers, undocumented immigrants brought to the country before their 18th birthday.

"It is unlikely that any one of these provisions alone would pass the House, and taken together, they are a

non-starter," Pelosi said.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., dismissed Trump's offer as "not a compromise but more hostage taking."

"It's clear the president realizes that by closing the government and hurting so many American workers and their families, he has put himself and the country in an untenable position," Schumer said.

"Unfortunately, he keeps putting forward one-sided and ineffective remedies. There's only way out: open up the government, Mr. President, and then Democrats and Republicans can have a civil discussion and come up with bipartisan solutions."

Sen. Dick Durbin, one of the co-sponsors of the Bridge Act, legislation that extends protections DREAMers for three years, said he wasn't ready to support the measure and cast doubt over whether Republicans would agree to such terms.

"First, President Trump and Senate Majority Leader McConnell must open the government today," said Durbin, D-Ill., "Second, I cannot support the proposed offer as reported and do not believe it can pass the Senate. Third, I am ready to sit down at any time after the government is opened and work to resolve all outstanding issues."

Other Democrats echoed Durbin's thoughts and added the House would not pass a bill that includes \$5.7 billion in "wasteful" spending for a border wall.

"It's clearly a non-serious product of negotiations amongst White House staff to try to clean up messes the president created in the first place," said one Democratic aide, speaking on condition of anonymity to await the president's speech. "He's holding more people hostage for his wall."

A senior House Democratic aide said the proposal would not pass the House or Senate, in part because "it includes the same wasteful, ineffective \$5.7 billion wall demand that shut down the government in the first place."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., called Trump's offer "a bold solution" to reopen the government, secure the border and take bipartisan steps toward addressing immigration issues.

"Compromise in divided government means that everyone can't get everything they want every time," he said. "The president's proposal reflects that. It strikes a fair compromise by incorporating priorities from both sides of the aisle."

Unlike previous bills, McConnell said, Trump's proposal could break the impasse that led to the government shutdown and said he plans to put the proposal on the floor for a vote this week.

While Democrats seemed resistant to Trump's plan, experts say his move shifts pressure from the White House and Republicans to Democrats, who for years have been advocating for boosted protections for immigrant children.

"This forces the Democrats to decide whether they hate Trump more than they love the DREAMers," said Scott Jennings, a conservative political commentator who worked in the White House under President George W. Bush and is a former McConnell aide.

Jennings said Trump "appears to be putting a legitimate offer on the table, and Democrats appear to have no interest in negotiating an end to the shutdown."

"Why reject this offer out of hand?" he asked. "Pelosi said Trump's offer is not in good faith. If that's her

position, how does the shutdown ever end? I think Trump made a wise move today that gives everyone something—border security, DREAMer protections, humanitarian aid. Most reasonable people think stalemates end when negotiations lead to solutions in which everyone wins, But what is the win for Pelosi? To solve a problem, or to please her base?"

Jacob Neiheisel, an associate professor of political science at the University of Buffalo, said what happens next will revolve around how the public perceives Trump's announcement and the Democratic response.

"I think it was a publicity stunt but it does aim to put Democrats in a bad position that they're not budging at all," Neiheisel said. "This is all a blame game, so it all will depend on whose blame game is better."

But, he added, Trump is unlike normal presidents and politicians and could hold out even if he continues to get heat for the shutdown.

"It's anyone's guess what happens next," he said.

'Save The Dreamers': WaPo Implores Democrats To Take Trump's Wall Deal (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/20/2019 4:03 PM, Chris White, 867K]

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and congressional Democrats are losing one big voice in their opposition to President Donald Trump's push for a border wall: The Washington Post's editorial board.

WaPo noted in a Sunday editorial reasons why Pelosi should rebuke the president's most recent offer to temporarily extend protections for the so-called Dreamers. But the paper eventually explained that taking the deal would ultimately help those who came here through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

"He should not be rewarded for having taken the government hostage. Any piece of a wall would reinforce his hateful, anti-immigrant rhetoric," WaPo noted. "He's unreliable, having made and withdrawn similar offers in the past."

WaPo's editorial board has criticized Trump in the past for what its writers call pushing immigration policies that would "cripple the economy." It's taking a different approach now. Sunday's editorial explains why young people who came to the U.S. through the Obama-era program are in peril of being deported.

If nothing happens soon, then the Dreamers could get the short end of the stick, WaPo noted.

"If no deal is reached, the Supreme Court is likely at some point to end that dispensation, as Mr. Trump has demanded, and they will be sent back into the shadows, or to countries of which they have no memory."

Trump offered Pelosi and congressional Democrats a deal Saturday.

His deal included \$800 million in urgent humanitarian assistance, \$805 million in new drug detection technology and three years of legal relief from deportation for DACA recipients in exchange for the \$5.7 billion for "strategic deployment of physical barriers"

Pelosi was not impressed. She preemptively shot down the proposal in a statement before the president's announcement.

Liz Cheney: Pelosi 'Commandeered' The House On The DACA Issue She's Now Voting Against (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/20/2019 2:41 PM, Molly Prince, 867K]

The third-ranking House Republican, Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney, criticized House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Sunday for opposing proposals she recently supported as a way to resist negotiating with President

Donald Trump.

"It's very difficult to understand when you've got the president's proposal that obviously includes money for the border wall, also includes an extension for the DACA folks, also includes an extension for TPS. Those are issues, DACA in particular, that Speaker Pelosi, she commandeered the floor of the House of Representatives for eight hours less than a year ago on particularly this issue of helping to ensure that people that are here, the so-called dreamers, are not deported," Cheney told Chuck Todd while on "Meet the Press."

"For [Pelosi] now to simply reject out of hand when the president actually has said, 'Okay, let's look at ways we can come closer,' it shows you they're just not interested in negotiating," Cheney continued.

The Republican-led House passed a stopgap funding bill Dec. 20 that included appropriations to construct a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. However, with a 51-seat majority, Senate Republicans fell short of the necessary 60 votes needed to send it to Trump's desk for signature.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer vowed to kill any legislation in the Senate that includes border wall funding, and consequently, a partial government shutdown has been in effect since Dec. 22.

Both sides of the aisle have been locked in a political stalemate over an appropriations bill, and as a way to come to the negotiating table, Trump introduced a plan Saturday that included a three-year extension of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and those in Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Democrats have been avid proponents of both issues.

Pelosi rejected Trump's proposal before it was even formally announced, calling it a "non-starter."

"Speaker Pelosi has said she will be a champion of the dreamers," Cheney said. "When she's willing to play games, when she's willing to pull political stunts, but she's not actually willing to come up with solutions, it makes it very difficult to come to an agreement here."

Homeland Security Committee chairman: 'I would not rule out a wall in certain instances' (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/20/2019 10:15 AM, Michael Burke, 3038K]

Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.), the new chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, said Sunday that he wouldn't rule out supporting a border wall "in certain instances."

"I would not rule out a wall in certain instances. The notion that we can't have barriers is just something that's not true," Thompson said on ABC's "This Week" when asked if Democrats were willing to negotiate on President Trump's demand for a wall along the southern border.

But Thompson also called on Trump to "have a plan" and said the president has shifted his position on the issue.

"You have to have a plan and the plan that the president initially started with is not where he is now, and so we don't know where he will be tomorrow," he said.

"But clearly, Democrats are for border security. But we are not for this constantly moving the ball just for a talking point," Thompson added.

Trump's long-promised wall sparked the ongoing partial government shutdown, which began on Dec. 22 and is now in its 30th day. The shutdown was triggered when Trump refused to sign a bill to fund the government that didn't include funding for the wall, a key element of his presidential campaign.

The president on Saturday proposed a deal to end the shutdown that would include temporary protections

for young undocumented immigrants and more than \$5 billion in funding for the wall.

Democratic leadership has so far dismissed the proposal, with Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) calling it a "non-starter."

Top Homeland Security Dem breaks with party: 'I would not rule out a wall in certain instances' (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/20/2019 12:38 PM, Gregg Re, 9216K]

House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., broke with some of his fellow congressional Democrats on Sunday by acknowledging in an interview that he "would not rule out a wall in certain instances," although he cautioned that the White House needs a better "plan" than simply using a wall as a "talking point."

However, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who preemptively rejected Trump's proposed border wall compromise on Saturday as a "nonstarter," has pledged not to fund the president's border wall under any circumstances -- and, Thompson suggested in an interview with ABC News' "This Week," Trump is stuck with her.

"Mr. President, Democrats will work with you," Thompson said. "But you can't pick what Democrats you work with. We have picked our leaders, and you have to work with our leaders."

Thompson continued, "The notion that we can't have barriers is just something that's not true."

Thompson maintained that Democratic leaders remain open to negotiation, one day after President Trump unveiled a plan to offer several immigration-related concessions to Democrats in order to obtain \$5.7 billion in funding for a wall on the southern border and end the ongoing partial federal government shutdown, now in its 30th day.

"I'm saying that we will sit with the chief, the president, whomever, and we will work through it," Thompson told anchor Martha Raddatz. Vice President Pence, speaking to "Fox News Sunday," said that the White House "of course remained open to negotiations."

Pelosi said earlier this month that "a wall, in my view, is an immorality" and "the least effective way to protect the border and the most costly."

That view has the support of the party's progressive wing. In an interview last week, for example, Democratic Texas Rep. Veronica Escobar told CNN that "we know walls don't work, that they don't stop drugs, that they don't stop migration."

Escobar also suggested she was open to destroying existing walls, remarking that they are "really ugly" and "monuments to division."

However, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., appeared to side with Thompson's position Wednesday on Fox News' "Special Report with Bret Baier," arguing that border walls "obviously" work in some areas and rejecting suggestions that barriers should be removed where they already exist.

The No. 2 House Democrat additionally asserted that the question of whether to fund President Trump's proposed border wall -- a dispute at the center of the unprecedented partial federal government shutdown -- is "not an issue of morality."

But Hoyer, pressed by Baier, distanced himself from those comments.

"Obviously, they work some places," Hoyer responded, when asked if he favored removing border walls.

"But the president wanted to first build a wall apparently 1,954 miles of -- and he changed that very substantially. "

He added: "A wall is -- that protects people is not immoral. I think the issue is whether it works. ... And the debate ought to be not on morality or racism, I will -- I will say that we're not pleased with some rhetoric that has come about dealing with those -- coming across the border, and we think some of the rhetoric was in fact racist. We think some of that rhetoric was to inflame and was not based upon facts."

Similarly, Thompson on Sunday questioned whether Trump's funding would go toward an effective wall.

"The president initially started with is not where he is now, and so we don't know where he will be tomorrow. ... Clearly, Democrats are for border security," he said. "But we are not for this constantly moving the ball just for a talking point."

Democratic leaders have previously supported building border walls. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and other Democrats, including then-Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, supported the Secure Fence Act of 2006, which authorized the construction of some 700 miles of fencing at the border. As of 2015, virtually all of that fencing had been completed, according to government figures.

Border Patrol officials have also said that walls are effective. ("We certainly do need a wall. Talk to any border agent and they will tell you that," Border Patrol Chief Carla Provost said on Fox News' "Your World" last month.)

Public pressure to resolve the shutdown one way or the other has mounted in recent weeks, as increasing numbers of airport security officials call out sick and worries grow as to how tax returns and food stamps will be processed.

Trump last week signed a bill guaranteeing back pay for federal workers who have been furloughed or forced to work without pay during the shutdown, which started Dec. 22. The workers are set to miss their next full paycheck on Friday.

Meanwhile, Fox News has learned that Senate Republicans scrambled on Saturday evening to put together legislation tracking President Trump's compromise proposal to end the ongoing partial federal government shutdown, and the text of a bill should be ready on Monday.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., indicated to Republican senators on Saturday that he would try to move to start debate on the bill Tuesday.

Tacked onto the legislation will be supplemental money for disaster relief and extensions on the Violence Against Women Act, Fox News has also learned.

In a televised White House address on Saturday afternoon, Trump offered Democrats a three-year extension of protections for 700,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, in exchange for the \$5.7 billion he has been seeking for a barrier along the nation's southern border with Mexico.

The offered deal would also extend protections for 300,000 recipients of the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program -- which protects immigrants from designated countries with conditions that prevent nationals from returning safely.

Procedural hurdles would likely prevent the Senate from taking immediate action on legislation that implements Trump's proposal, however. The motion to proceed to start debate on the bill would require 60

yeas. If Democrats don't cooperate, McConnell will need to file a cloture motion on Tuesday to cut off debate on the motion to proceed, which would not ripen for a vote until Thursday. Republicans hold a 53-47 majority in the Senate.

In his interview with "Fox News Sunday," Pence, asked whether Republicans have the 60 votes to break a potential filibuster, responded: "As the president often says, 'We'll see.'"

Democratic Homeland Security Chair: I 'Would Not Rule Out a Wall in Certain Instances' (Free Beacon)

[Free Beacon](#) [1/20/2019 12:27 PM, Andrew Kugle, 105K]

Rep. Bennie Thompson (D., Miss.), chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, said on Sunday that he does not deny the effectiveness of border walls in certain instances.

ABC's "This Week" host Martha Raddatz asked Thompson if he would rule out a wall in any negotiations with President Donald Trump.

"I would not rule out a wall in certain instances," Thompson said. "Now the notion that we can't have barriers is just something that's not true, but again, Martha, you have to have a plan and the plan that the president initially started with is where he is now. We don't know where he will be tomorrow."

Trump and Congress remain at an impasse over funding for Trump's proposed wall along the southern border. The standoff has resulted in a partial government shutdown that is now in its 30th day.

Over 800,000 furloughed federal government workers have gone without a paycheck, with some of them still having to work. Trump is adamant Congress approve wall funding while Democratic leaders like Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D., Calif.) remain adamant no funding will go towards a border wall. Pelosi has gone as far as saying a border wall is "immoral."

Some Democrats have distanced themselves from Pelosi's view by saying some physical barriers are necessary along the border.

"You just heard the chief of border protection for the San Diego sector tell me barriers are an essential part of effectively controlling the border because it allows for agents to focus on specific threats like smuggling drugs and he was showing me exactly the kind of barriers that President Trump was talking about ... so why are Democrats opposed to any physical wall in addition to updated technology?" Raddatz asked.

"Well, I don't think Democrats are opposed to any physical barriers. It's just the president constantly involves his description of the wall just as he indicated Mexico was going to pay for whatever was there. So what we have to do is sit down, work through this and let the public know exactly what we're talking about and what they can expect. We're not there yet. Democrats historically have supported certain barriers, certain other things to protect this country," Thompson said.

Pelosi cancels effort to continue Afghanistan trip after Trump revealing travel plans 'significantly increased danger,' official says (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/18/2019 12:55 PM, John Parkinson, 2413K]

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Friday accused President Donald Trump and his administration of endangering the lives of Americans, including her own, by publicly revealing a congressional delegation's plans to travel by commercial aircraft to Afghanistan.

"We had the prerogative to travel commercial and we made plans to do that until the administration leaked we were traveling commercially and that endangers us," Pelosi told reporters in the U.S. Capitol at midday Friday. They were her first public comments since Trump blocked her and the delegation from using a

military aircraft on Thursday, saying in a letter she could fly commercially instead. "We weren't going to go because we had a report from Afghanistan that the president outing our trip had made the scene on the ground much more dangerous because it's just a signal to the bad actors that we're coming."

Pelosi had tried to salvage aspects of a congressional delegation to Afghanistan blocked by Trump, but was unable to continue the trip on commercial aircraft due to "increased" danger to officials on the trip, her spokesman said Friday.

In what was becoming an increasingly personal feud in their political standoff over Trump's demand that congressional Democrats agree to pay for his proposed border wall, the president on Thursday torpedoed plans at the last minute for the delegation to utilize a military aircraft to make the trip, citing the government shutdown as the reason. The day before, Pelosi had called for a delay in Trump's State of the Union address, scheduled for Jan. 29, until after the government shutdown ends.

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders made Trump's letter to Pelosi public in a tweet.

Pelosi, who said the trip would have been her ninth to Afghanistan, admonished the president, cautioning that "you never give advance notice of going into a battle area."

"You just never do. Perhaps the president's inexperience didn't have him understand that protocol. The people around him, though, should have known that. That's very dangerous," she said. "But the more important thing is the people who we would be meeting with, our civilians there. Our own troops first and foremost, again, they take so many risks for us. We didn't want to heighten the risk for them."

Pelosi said that by publicly releasing the letter, the president "heightened the danger on the ground." As the lawmakers considered whether to fly commercially, Pelosi said the State Department "doubles down and says we don't think you should come because the president's statement has made it dangerous."

"The fact that they would leak that we were flying commercial is a danger not only to us but to other people flying commercially. It's very irresponsible on the part of the president," Pelosi said. "We'll go again. We'll go another time."

Pelosi declined to explain why she believes the White House leaked word of her commercial travel plans, telling reporters "I rest my case."

Asked if she believes the move was in retaliation of her letter to Trump asking the president to schedule a new date for the State of the Union after the shutdown ends, Pelosi laid on thick sarcasm.

"I would hope not," Pelosi quipped. "I don't think the president would be that petty, do you?"

Pressed on her accusations that Trump endangered the lives of Americans and U.S. troops, Pelosi answered: "That's what the State Department reported to us."

"This is a fact, this isn't even an opinion. Anyone in the presence of a high level or any level of a congressional delegation in a region, you heighten the danger," Pelosi said.

Overnight, before the rescheduled commercial flight, the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service provided an updated threat assessment, "detailing that the President announcing this sensitive travel had significantly increased the danger to the delegation and to the troops, security, and other officials supporting the trip," according to a statement from Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill.

A U.S. official familiar with the trip's logistics told ABC News that security planners voiced concerns about the idea of the speaker and her delegation flying to Afghanistan outside of typical military-travel

arrangements.

Hammill said that the White House also leaked plans for the delegation to continue on commercial travel.

"This morning, we learned that the Administration had leaked the commercial travel plans as well," Hammill noted. "In light of the grave threats caused by the President's action, the delegation has decided to postpone the trip so as not to further endanger our troops and security personnel, or the other travelers on the flights."

A senior Pelosi aide pointed to "multiple administration" sources telling reporters Friday morning that the delegation would continue on commercial aircraft. ABC News was among those contacted.

The White House denied that the administration leaked word of the commercial travel plans.

"When the Speaker of the House and about 20 others from Capitol Hill decide to book their own commercial flights to Afghanistan, the world is going to find out," an administration official who refused to go on the record told ABC News. "The idea we would leak anything that would put the safety and security of any American at risk is a flat out lie."

Pelosi was still in her office in the U.S. Capitol when she received a letter from the president Thursday afternoon, where Trump announced he was postponing the excursion due to the shutdown. Trump suggested Pelosi fly commercially if she wished to continue her travel.

The delegation had loaded onto a bus operated by the U.S. Air Force for the drive out to Joint Base Andrews. Instead, the bus drove lawmakers to the East Plaza of the Capitol, where members disembarked from the bus and walked into Pelosi's office.

After huddling with Pelosi for hours behind closed doors, Reps. Adam Schiff, Eliot Engel, Stephen Lynch and Mark Takano -- who all had planned to join the trip - quietly left the Capitol, declining to comment as they rolled suitcases through the basement of the Capitol. Reps. Susan Davis and Elaina Luria were also members of the delegation.

Friday morning, Trump continued to criticize Pelosi for scheduling the trip during the shutdown.

Later Friday morning, the White House released a memo from the Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Russell Vought, to the "heads of all executive Departments and agencies, blocking any congressional delegation from using military aircraft.

"In light of the current partial government shutdown, the President has asked me to direct the heads of all executive departments and agencies of the Administration on new policies in support of Legislative Branch travel," the memo reads. "Under no circumstances during a government shutdown will any government owned, rented, leased, or chartered aircraft support any Congressional delegation, without the express written approval of the White House Chief of Staff."

The partial government shutdown is now in its 28th day. The House of Representatives returns to session next Tuesday, likely ensuring the shutdown will continue through the long Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday weekend.

Pelosi cancels Afghanistan trip, cites Trump 'leak' (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/18/2019 6:37 AM, Associated Press, 2015K]

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Friday canceled her plans to travel by commercial plane to visit U.S. troops in Afghanistan, saying President Donald Trump had caused a security risk by talking about the trip.

It was the latest twist in what has become a Washington game of brinkmanship between Pelosi and

Trump, playing out against the stalled negotiations over how to end the partial government shutdown.

Earlier in the week, Pelosi had asked Trump to reschedule his Jan. 29 State of the Union address, citing security issues at a time when the Homeland Security Department and other agencies remain unfunded.

Trump responded by canceling the military plane that was to have carried Pelosi and a congressional delegation to Afghanistan on the previously undisclosed troop visit. Trump suggested she travel by commercial plane instead.

Trump had belittled the trip as a "public relations event" — even though he had just made a similar warzone stop — and said it would be best if Pelosi remained in Washington to negotiate to reopen the government.

"Obviously, if you would like to make your journey by flying commercial, that would certainly be your prerogative," wrote Trump, who had been smarting since Pelosi, the day before, called on him to postpone State of the Union address.

On Friday, Pelosi announced that her plan to travel by commercial plane had been "leaked" by the White House.

Spokesman Drew Hammill said Pelosi and accompanying lawmakers were prepared to take a commercial flight but canceled after the State Department warned that publicity over the visit had "significantly increased the danger to the delegation and to the troops, security, and other officials supporting the trip."

The White House said it had leaked nothing that would cause a security risk.

The political tit-for-tat between Trump and Pelosi laid bare how the government-wide crisis has devolved into an intensely pointed clash between two leaders determined to prevail. It took place as hundreds of thousands of federal workers go without pay and Washington's routine protocols — a president's speech to Congress, a lawmaker's official trip — become collateral damage.

Denying military aircraft to a senior lawmaker — let alone the speaker, who is second in line to the presidency after the vice president, traveling to a combat region — is very rare.

Hammill said the speaker planned to travel to Afghanistan and Brussels to thank service members and obtain briefings on national security and intelligence "from those on the front lines." He noted Trump had traveled to Iraq during the shutdown, which began Dec. 22, and said a Republican-led congressional trip also had taken place.

Trump's trip to Iraq after Christmas was not disclosed in advance for security reasons.

Rep. Adam Schiff of California slammed Trump for revealing the closely held travel plans.

"I think the president's decision to disclose a trip the speaker's making to a war zone was completely and utterly irresponsible in every way," Schiff said.

Some Republicans expressed frustration. Sen. Lindsey Graham tweeted, "One sophomoric response does not deserve another." He called Pelosi's State of the Union move "very irresponsible and blatantly political" but said Trump's reaction was "also inappropriate."

There have been few signs of progress in shutdown negotiations. On Thursday, Vice President Mike Pence and senior adviser Jared Kushner dashed to the Capitol late in the day for a meeting with Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. And the State Department instructed all U.S.

diplomats in Washington and elsewhere to return to work next week with pay, saying it had found money for their salaries at least temporarily.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump wanted Pelosi to stay in Washington before Tuesday, a deadline to prepare the next round of paychecks for federal workers.

The White House also canceled plans for a presidential delegation to travel to an economic forum in Switzerland next week, citing the shutdown. And they said future congressional trips would be postponed until the shutdown is resolved, though it was not immediately clear if any such travel — which often is not disclosed in advance — was coming up.

Trump has still not said how he will handle Pelosi's attempt to have him postpone his State of the Union address until the government is reopened so workers can be paid for providing security for the grand Washington tradition.

Pelosi told reporters earlier Thursday: "Let's get a date when government is open. Let's pay the employees. Maybe he thinks it's OK not to pay people who do work. I don't."

Pelosi reiterated she is willing to negotiate money for border security once the government is reopened, but she said Democrats remain opposed to Trump's long-promised wall.

The shutdown, the longest ever, entered its 28th day on Friday. The previous longest was 21 days in 1995-96, under President Bill Clinton.

In a notice to staff, the State Department said it can pay most of its employees beginning Sunday or Monday for their next pay period. They will not be paid for time worked since the shutdown began until the situation is resolved, said the notice.

The new White House travel ban did not extend to the first family.

About two hours after Trump grounded Pelosi and her delegation, an Air Force-modified Boeing 757 took off from Joint Base Andrews outside Washington with the call sign "Executive One Foxtrot," reserved for the first family when the president is not traveling with them. It landed just before 7 p.m. at Palm Beach International Airport, less than 2 miles (3 kilometers) from the president's private club.

The White House did not answer questions about the flight.

Pelosi says Trump 'outing' war zone trip made it more dangerous (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/18/2019 10:18 AM, Lauren Fox, 5847K]

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Friday she was forced to nix her Afghanistan trip after President Donald Trump barred her from using a military aircraft and she was told by the State Department diplomatic security that it was too dangerous to fly there commercially.

"We weren't going to go because we had a report from Afghanistan that the President outing our trip had made the scene on the ground much more dangerous because it's just a signal to the bad actors," Pelosi told reporters at the Capitol.

"You never give advance notice of going into a battle area. You just never do. Perhaps the President's inexperience didn't help him understand that protocol. The people around him, though, should have known that, because that's very dangerous," she said.

The speaker also said the President's announcement of the trip had endangered members of Congress and American troops, and that she was just relaying what the State Department told her office.

"This is a fact. It's not even an opinion," she said.

Asked how Pelosi knew that the leaks were coming from the White House when the White House denied it, she paused and said: "I rest my case."

Pelosi added she and the members will "go again" at a different time.

The canceled Afghanistan trip marked an escalation in a weeks-long standoff between Pelosi and the President over the government shutdown.

On Wednesday, Pelosi sent a letter to the President asking him to consider moving his State of the Union address or to deliver it in writing -- citing security concerns because some of the agencies tasked with protecting the event are affected by the ongoing shutdown.

On Thursday, Trump retaliated, blocking Pelosi and members of Congress from using a military jet for a trip they had planned to take to Afghanistan to visit American troops.

Pelosi said she hoped that the President wouldn't be canceling a trip to visit the troops out of spite.

"I don't think the President would be that petty do you?" she said.

Earlier Friday, her spokesman released a statement saying that while Pelosi and the congressional delegation set to travel with her were prepared to use commercial travel for their trip, the risks associated with the trip only grew after details of those plans to a war zone leaked.

"In the middle of the night, the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service provided an updated threat assessment detailing that the President announcing this sensitive travel had significantly increased the danger to the delegation and to the troops, security, and other officials supporting the trip," Drew Hammill, her spokesman, said. "This morning, we learned that the administration had leaked the commercial travel plans as well."

Pelosi spokesman says White House leaked commercial travel plans to Afghanistan (Roll Call Online)

[Roll Call Online](#) [1/18/2019 10:08 AM, Lindsey McPherson, 90K]

The shutdown feud between Speaker Nancy Pelosi and President Donald Trump escalated Friday after the California Democrat's office revealed it had made commercial travel arrangements to continue an Afghanistan trip the president tried to cancel — but the administration leaked their plans.

There was already a security risk with the speaker and her congressional delegation continuing the overseas troop visit after Trump announced Thursday where they'd be going. But the heightened threat from Trump leaking the commercial travel plans led the delegation to call off the trip for now, a Pelosi spokesman said.

"After President Trump revoked the use of military aircraft to travel to Afghanistan, the delegation was prepared to fly commercially to proceed with this vital trip to meet with our commanders and troops on the front lines," Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill said in a statement.

"In the middle of the night, the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service provided an updated threat assessment detailing that the president announcing this sensitive travel had significantly increased the danger to the delegation and to the troops, security, and other officials supporting the trip," Hammill added. "This morning, we learned that the administration had leaked the commercial travel plans as well."

The delegation has decided to postpone the trip "in light of the grave threats caused by the president's action," Hammill said.

Multiple administration sources told Hill reporters early Friday morning that the Pelosi delegation was flying commercially, Hammill said later in a tweet.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders pushed back at Pelosi's office, telling Roll Call "Absolutely," when asked if she thinks Speaker Pelosi and her staff are lying when they claimed the administration leaked her efforts to use commercial flights.

The White House had issued a statement accusing Pelosi and her office of lying, but it had no name attached. Sanders had denied multiple times earlier in the day when Roll Call and others requested it be made on the record.

"Frankly, that's unbecoming of the speaker to make that type of accusation," Sanders said. "It's outrageous that she would accuse the president of the United States in jeopardy. In fact, the reason he didn't want her to go is he's trying to protect American citizens. He wants to secure our border. He wants a solution. He wants her to stay here to help him find it."

Sanders did not respond to a Roll Call reporter's shouted follow-up question on why Trump released a Thursday letter to Pelosi that mentioned her Afghanistan plan.

On Friday, a twitter account linked to the Taliban mocked Pelosi in a tweet that included this threat: "Taliban is waiting" followed by emojis of silverware.

The decision is not just about the safety of the lawmakers.

Hammill said they did not want "to further endanger our troops and security personnel, or the other travelers on the flights."

"Whether here or abroad, the speaker always thanks our troops, diplomats and intelligence community for their heroism and service," Hammill said. "The speaker commends her colleagues on the delegation, who personally and officially have dedicated their lives to protect and defend the American people."

Democratic Senator Seeks Perjury Investigation of Kirstjen Nielsen (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/19/2019 12:48 AM, Glenn Thrush, 20737K]

A Democratic senator asked the F.B.I. on Friday to open a perjury investigation into the homeland security secretary, Kirstjen Nielsen, over her congressional testimony about the Trump administration's policy of separating migrant families at the southern border.

The senator, Jeff Merkley of Oregon, cited a previously unreleased document from December 2017 that showed that Ms. Nielsen's staff considered a range of options for dealing with the influx of families seeking asylum, including a policy that would "separate family units."

But testifying before the House Judiciary Committee last month, Ms. Nielsen said that "we've never had a policy for family separation." She also denied in subsequent interviews and statements on social media that she had pursued such a policy.

"In light of these conflicting facts," Mr. Merkley wrote in a letter to the F.B.I. director, Christopher A. Wray, "the F.B.I. should immediately investigate whether Secretary Nielsen's statements" violate "federal statutes that prohibit perjury and false statements to Congress."

In an internal Department of Homeland Security draft released by Mr. Merkley on Thursday, department

officials wrote that "D.H.S. is considering separating family units, placing the adults in adult detention, and placing the minors under the age of 18 in the custody" of the Department of Health and Human Services "as unaccompanied alien children."

That prompted Mr. Merkley to tell Mr. Wray, "Compelling new evidence has emerged revealing that high-level Department of Homeland Security officials were secretly and actively developing a new policy and legal framework for separating families as far back as December 2017."

A spokeswoman for the department denied that the agency ever had such a policy.

"What this predecisional, predeliberative memo — as well as previously leaked predecisional, predeliberative documents — shows is that the secretary was provided a menu of options to prevent the humanitarian crisis we predicted at that time and which has manifested itself today," the spokeswoman, Katie Waldman, said in an email. "Secretary Nielsen specifically rejected a policy proposal to separate all family units in D.H.S. custody."

The federal government has reported that nearly 3,000 children have been separated from their parents under the zero-tolerance policy put in place by the Department of Homeland Security last year. But the policy could have affected thousands more, according to a report by government inspectors released this week.

Dem senator requests FBI investigate Nielsen for potential perjury (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 2:13 PM, Tal Axelrod, 3038K]

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) on Friday requested that the FBI investigate Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen for possible perjury regarding comments she made about the administration's zero-tolerance immigration policy.

"The FBI has previously indicated that the Department of Justice requires a formal criminal referral from Congress to initiate an investigation concerning Congressional testimony," Merkley said in a letter to FBI Director Christopher Wray. "I write today to execute such a criminal referral."

"Compelling new evidence has emerged revealing that high-level Department of Homeland Security officials were secretly and actively developing a new policy and legal framework for separating families as far back as December 2017," he added.

The FBI did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Spokeswoman Katie Waldman said in a statement to The Hill that the department "has never had a blanket policy of separating families in custody."

"As Secretary Nielsen has said publicly and testified multiple times, DHS has never had a blanket policy of separating families in custody," Waldman said in the statement. "What this pre-decisional, pre-deliberative memo — as well as previously leaked pre-decisional, pre-deliberative documents — shows is that the Secretary was provided a menu of options to prevent the humanitarian crisis we predicted at that time and which has manifested itself today."

Waldman went on to claim that Nielsen "specifically rejected a policy proposal to separate all family units in DHS custody."

"Secretary Nielsen specifically rejected a policy proposal to separate all family units in DHS custody. Instead, the Department followed the existing decades-long practice used by multiple administrations of only separating minors from adults 1) when DHS is unable to determine the familial relationship, 2) when DHS determines that a minor may be at risk or 3) when the parent or legal guardian is referred for criminal

prosecution," she added.

Waldman continued, stating DHS did not issue "a new, changed or blanket policy regarding family separations."

Merkley on Thursday provided NBC News with a draft document of what would eventually become the White House's immigration policy. The senator's office said the December 2017 document was leaked to them by a government whistleblower.

In the draft, Trump administration officials discussed targeting parents of migrant families with prosecution as a deterrent, saying the "increase in prosecutions would be reported by the media and would have a substantial deterrent effect."

The draft also said DHS was "considering separating family units, placing the adults in adult detention and placing the minors under the age of 18 in the custody of [the Department of Health and Human Services] as unaccompanied alien children."

A Justice Department official suggested in the document that Customs and Border Protection agents could deny asylum hearings to children who had already been separated from their parents.

"If CBP issues an ER [expedited removal] for the entire family unit, places the parents in the custody of the U.S. Marshal, and then places the minors with HHS, it would seem that DHS could work with HHS to actually repatriate [deport] the minors then," the official wrote.

It is unclear from the draft whether the government planned on reunifying children with their parents prior to the deportation.

The policy "was specifically designed to gain media attention and generate a 'substantial deterrent effect,' " Merkley wrote in his letter to Wray. "Despite this fact, while testifying under oath before the House Committee on the Judiciary, Secretary Nielsen stated unequivocally 'I'm not a liar, we've never had a policy for family separation.' "

DHS responded to NBC News, saying that it was considering "all legal options" to deal with the "crisis" on the southern border.

"The Trump administration has made clear that all legal options are on the table to enforce the rule of law, rein in mass unchecked illegal immigration, and defend our borders," DHS spokesperson Katie Waldman told NBC regarding the document.

Senate Dem on call for Nielsen investigation: I am 'sick and tired of this administration lying' (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/21/2019 10:37 AM, Jordain Carney, 3038K]

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) said on Monday that he is asking for the FBI to investigate Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen for possible perjury because he is "sick and tired" of the administration "lying" to Congress.

"I am just sick and tired of this administration lying to the American people, lying to Congress, doing it under oath and it's time for some real accountability," Merkley told CNN's "New Day."

Merkley sent the bureau a request on Friday asking it to probe Nielsen for potentially lying to Congress. He said on Monday that that FBI had not yet responded to his request, but "this is the official, right way to initiate a referral to the FBI for a pursuit of an investigation regarding perjury."

Merkley, in his letter to the FBI, said that "compelling new evidence has emerged revealing that high-level Department of Homeland Security officials were secretly and actively developing a new policy and legal framework for separating families as far back as December 2017."

Merkley's office gave NBC News a December 2017 draft document last week of what would eventually become the White House's immigration policy.

In the draft, administration officials discussed targeting parents of migrant families with prosecution as a deterrent, saying the "increase in prosecutions would be reported by the media and would have a substantial deterrent effect.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), according to the draft, was also "considering separating family units, placing the adults in adult detention and placing the minors under the age of 18 in the custody of [the Department of Health and Human Services] as unaccompanied alien children."

DHS spokeswoman Katie Waldman said in a statement to The Hill late last week that the department "has never had a blanket policy of separating families in custody."

"What this pre-decisional, pre-deliberative memo — as well as previously leaked pre-decisional, pre-deliberative documents — shows is that the Secretary was provided a menu of options to prevent the humanitarian crisis we predicted at that time and which has manifested itself today," Waldman said.

She added that Nielsen "specifically rejected a policy proposal to separate all family units in DHS custody."

Jeff Merkley Requests FBI Perjury Investigation into Kirstjen Nielsen (Roll Call)

[Roll Call](#) [1/18/2019 3:04 PM, Katherine Tully-McManus, 90K]

At issue is testimony before Congress about family separations at border

Sen. Jeff Merkley is requesting that the FBI open a perjury investigation into Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, based on testimony she gave to Congress in December on family separations at the southern border.

Testifying before the House Judiciary Committee in December, Nielsen stated "I'm not a liar, we've never had a policy for family separation."

Memos made public Thursday show that officials from the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security were exploring family separation policies as a deterrent for illegal immigrants a full year before that testimony.

The memo, which was titled "Policy Options to Respond to Border Surge of Illegal Immigration," laid out options for speeding up deportation of migrant children by denying them their legal right to asylum hearings after separating them from their parents and families.

Merkley's letter to the FBI is focused on that statement and the contrast with the memo, which is dated December 2017, a year before her testimony.

"In light of these conflicting facts, the FBI should immediately investigate whether Secretary Nielsen's statements violate 18 U.S. Code § 1621, 18 U.S.C § 1001, or any other relevant federal statutes that prohibit perjury and false statements to Congress," he wrote.

The practice of separating children from their families, part of a "zero tolerance" approach to immigration, sparked backlash last year as reports of children younger than five years old were placed in government

custody and taken from their parents.

"The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has previously indicated that the Department of Justice requires a formal criminal referral from Congress to initiate an investigation concerning Congressional testimony. I write today to execute such a criminal referral," wrote Merkley.

Leaked memo shows Trump administration weighed separating families at border, Sen. Merkley wants Nielsen investigated for perjury (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/18/2019 1:18 PM, Staff, 2413K]

Memo challenges claims by DHS chief that separating families was never policy.

Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley on Friday asked the FBI to open a perjury investigation into Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen following the leak of a 2017 internal draft document that explored separating families as a way to curb illegal immigration at the border.

The memo challenges the assertion by Nielsen last June on Twitter and in media briefings saying "we do not have a policy of separating families at the border. Period."

The Dec. 16, 2017, document, provided by Merkley's office, which said it received it from a whistleblower, appears to be an internal memo on legal options to address families who were arriving at the border. Among the options listed: the "prosecution of family units" and "separate family units."

"Because of the large number of violators, not all parents could be criminally prosecuted," the memo noted. "However, the increase in prosecutions would be reported by the media and it would have a substantial deterrent effect."

What would happen to their children? The memo said they would become "unaccompanied minors," or UACs. "This will require close coordination with (Health and Human Services), to ensure that sufficient capacity is available to detain the UACs," the document stated.

Merkley points to Nielsen's public comments that U.S. policy never called for separating families. He notes that Nielsen at one point told the House Judiciary Committee: "I'm not a liar. We've never had a policy of family separation."

"Compelling new evidence has emerged revealing that high-level Department of Homeland Security officials were secretly and actively developing a new policy and legal framework for separating families as far back as December 2017," Merkley, from Oregon, wrote in a letter to FBI Director Christopher Wray.

In a statement on Friday, DHS spokeswoman Katie Waldman said, "As Secretary Nielsen has said publicly and testified multiple times, DHS has never had a blanket policy of separating families in custody. What this pre-decisional, pre-deliberative memo — as well as previously leaked pre-decisional, pre-deliberative documents — shows is that the secretary was provided a menu of options to prevent the humanitarian crisis we predicted at that time and which has manifested itself today. Secretary Nielsen specifically rejected a policy proposal to separate all family units in DHS custody."

Shortly after the December 2017 memo was drafted, in April 2018, the Trump administration announced a "zero-tolerance" policy at the border that resulted in the separation of some 2,700 kids from their families in a matter of weeks.

Waldman said the administration was responding to an uptick of border arrests, which it blamed on a lack of a border wall and a court settlement that prohibits detention of children for longer than 20 days. Officials have said previously they believe that court settlement, known as the Flores Agreement, encouraged people to travel with minors.

"In part we were predicting -- and trying to prevent -- the exact humanitarian and security crisis we are confronted by now," Waldman said. "It would be malpractice to not seriously examine every single avenue to gain operational control of the border and ensure that those who are entering our country have a legal right to be here."

In court filings, the administration has estimated a total of 2,737 children were separated from their families under "zero tolerance." But a report released Thursday by internal government investigators found that there were likely "thousands" more kids separated from families in 2017, before that policy took effect. The Health and Human Services inspector general said that the number of kids separated from their families under the current administration is "unknown."

While enforcement deterrents like the ones described in the memo have been effective in stopping adult men from entering further into the U.S. for economic reasons, experts at the nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute say those methods don't address the current humanitarian crisis.

"There is no evidence that such deterrence tactics work against the humanitarian flows today," MPI analyst Sarah Pierce told ABC News. "So not only is it immoral, but it is misguided and foolish."

Sen. Merkley Asks FBI to Investigate DHS Secretary (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [1/18/2019 5:03 PM, AP, 2894K]

A Democratic senator is asking the FBI to investigate whether Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen lied during testimony before the House Judiciary Committee.

Sen. Jeff Merkley said in a letter to the FBI that a December 2017 memo shows DHS officials outlined a policy to separate families.

In April 2018, the Trump administration instituted the "zero-tolerance" policy where anyone caught crossing the border illegally was criminally prosecuted. It resulted in the separation of nearly 2,800 children.

Nielsen said at the hearing last December there wasn't a policy to separate families. She said the separations under zero tolerance happened because children can't be jailed with parents.

Homeland Security officials said the secretary rejected the 2017 memo's suggestion and reiterated there was no policy to separate families. The FBI had no comment.

Merkley, of Oregon, is considering a presidential run.

U.S. Senator Merkley seeks FBI probe of DHS chief for possible perjury (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/18/2019 5:03 PM, Richard Cowan and Mica Rosenberg]

A Democratic U.S. senator on Friday asked the FBI to probe whether Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen committed perjury when she testified to Congress that the administration never had a policy to separate immigrant families.

Senator Jeff Merkley has been an outspoken critic of the Trump administration's moves last year to target immigrant families crossing into the United States for enforcement actions.

The administration implemented a 'zero tolerance' policy to criminally prosecute and jail all illegal border crossers, including those traveling with their children, leading to a wave of family separations last year.

The policy and disturbing images of young children being held in cages sparked a public backlash, causing the administration to subsequently change course on family separation. President Donald Trump

signed an executive order to end the practice on June 20, 2018.

In his letter to FBI Director Christopher Wray, Merkley noted emerging evidence that the Department of Homeland Security, as far back as December, 2017, had been developing a new policy to separate families.

Merkley released a memo on "Policy Options to Respond to Border Surge of Illegal Immigration," which he said was created by senior Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice officials discussing family separation as a deterrent for migrants.

Yet, the senator from Oregon noted, during testimony to the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee on Dec. 20, 2018, Nielsen said, "I'm not a liar, we never had a policy for family separation."

The FBI declined to comment and DHS did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Office of Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) said on Thursday it had identified "thousands" more separated children in addition to the 2,737 included as part of lawsuit challenging family separations brought by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) last year.

The auditor said in a report that prior to the officially announced 'zero tolerance' policy, the government began ramping up separations in 2017 for other reasons related to a child's safety and well-being, including separating parents with criminal records or lack of proper documents.

Trump campaigned for president on a promise to stop the flow of illegal immigrants and drugs over the southwestern U.S. border with Mexico. His demand for \$5.7 billion to build a wall on the border with Mexico has led to the longest-ever partial government shutdown, now in its 28th day.

What the 2017 draft memo reveals about the administration's family separations policy (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/18/2019 1:40 PM, Priscilla Alvarez, 5847K]

A newly released draft memo by officials in the departments of Homeland Security and Justice reveals how far the Trump administration was willing to go to deter migrants, many of whom are seeking asylum, from approaching the US-Mexico border.

The draft memo, dated December 2017, was obtained by Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon. It not only provides a snapshot of the administration's plans to roll out policies aimed at dissuading migrants from trekking north but also shows how early on those options were being discussed.

Merkley told CNN the memo was obtained via a government whistleblower.

The draft, called "Policy Options to Respond to Border Surge of Illegal Immigration," was put together at a time when border apprehensions had dropped compared to the previous year. In December 2017, 40,519 people were apprehended at the border, roughly 18,000 fewer than December 2016, according to Customs and Border Protection data.

Below is a breakdown of some of the options floated in the draft memo that eventually took effect.

This is listed under a section titled "short term (next 30 days) options." And as became evident months later, it came to fruition.

In April 2018, then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the "zero-tolerance" policy that led to families being separated, given that children cannot be kept in federal jail with their parents. The policy sparked outrage across the country and was later reversed in a June executive order.

The draft memo makes clear that the administration was aware of the attention the policy might bring. And that was the point.

"The increase in prosecutions would be reported by the media and it would have substantial deterrent effect," the memo states.

The title, "Separate Family Units," and explanation of this section are significant. It explicitly states what the administration had long denied. After the rollout of the "zero-tolerance" policy, the administration repeatedly said that there was no intention to separate families. In June 2018, DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said on Twitter, "We do not have a policy of separating families at the border. Period." But the draft memo demonstrates that that was not the case.

The draft explains that children would be placed in the custody of Health and Human Services as unaccompanied children, which ultimately led to a slew of issues when trying to reunify families. A new inspector general report released Thursday laid out how the lack of documentation and tracking of children created a number of challenges for HHS. The report found that "thousands" more children were separated from a parent or guardian last year than was previously reported.

While not acted upon, comments in the margins also suggest denying children asylum hearings. "If CBP issues an ER [expedited removal] for the entire family unit, places the parents in the custody of the U.S. Marshal, and then places the minors with HHS, it would seem that DHS could work with HHS to actually repatriate the minors then," the comment reads.

"It would take coordination with the home countries, of course, but that doesn't seem like too much of a cost to pay compared to the status quo."

Last year, the administration rolled out a controversial policy that required that adult members of a sponsor's household to submit fingerprints to the FBI when applying to take in a child. Immigrant advocates argued that the policy led to children remaining in shelters for longer periods of time because sponsors -- some of whom live in mixed-status households -- were afraid to come forward.

The administration, as shown in the draft, was aware of the possible repercussions.

"There would be a short term impact on HHS where sponsors may not take custody of their children in HHS facilities, requiring HHS to keep the UAC's in custody longer," it reads, under a section titled, "near term (2-6 months) options." The policy was reversed in December.

Last year, the Trump administration erected a temporary tent facility in Tornillo, Texas, to hold children who had arrived unaccompanied at the southwest border or been detained as a result of the administration's "zero-tolerance" policy.

The facility came under scrutiny last November when the HHS Inspector General Daniel Levinson warned of "significant vulnerabilities," including not properly vetting staff and a "dangerously low number of clinicians."

It's expected to shut down before the end of the month.

Responding to the release of the memo Thursday, DHS spokeswoman Katie Waldman said, "The Trump administration has made clear that all legal options are on the table to enforce the rule of law, rein in mass unchecked illegal immigration, and defend our borders."

Nearly 300 families may have been separated before 'zero tolerance' took effect, admin says (CNN)
[CNN](#) [1/21/2019 8:05 PM, Priscilla Alvarez, CNN, 5847K]

Nearly 300 undocumented immigrant parents may have been separated from their children months before the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy along the border took effect, and officials did not keep a full record of separations, Customs and Border Protection admitted in a letter released Monday.

The separations took place in west Texas in 2017, Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan said in a letter to Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon.

"[F]ollowing an increase in family unit apprehensions in El Paso, US Border Patrol's El Paso Sector undertook a limited effort to pursue prosecutions against all amenable adults, including parents in family units," McAleenan wrote. "CBP records indicate that this led to approximately 283 parents referred for prosecution between July and November 2017."

Bringing criminal charges against parents for unlawful entry required separating them from their children.

A DHS official previously confirmed to CNN that the agency had tested the policy of prosecuting parents caught illegally crossing the border in the El Paso sector.

Last week, the Health and Human Services inspector general found that "thousands" more children had been separated than the government previously reported. According to the report, some separations occurred before the policy was announced in April 2018. The report notes that they've been released from custody, but it does not say who they were released to or if they were reunited with their parents.

The IG report described the challenges faced by the Department of Health and Human Services in identifying which children had been separated from a parent or guardian when apprehended at the US-Mexico border.

In his letter, McAleenan acknowledged that separations had occurred before the administration's "zero-tolerance" policy went into effect and that records were not consistently maintained prior to April of last year.

"First, while separations have occurred historically for decades in the interest of child safety and welfare, the occurrence was limited, as it is currently," McAleenan wrote. "Additionally, prior to April 19, 2018, when the US Border Patrol implemented changes to its e3 Detention Module, separations were not consistently recorded in the US Border Patrol systems of record." He added that changes were later made to "improve record keeping and information sharing on these cases."

Wyden responded to the letter in a statement: "This Orwellian response from Custom and Border Protection does not respond to the pressing questions about the fate of children and their parents. It fails to deliver the data necessary to understand what happened to these kids and their families."

'Depth of the horror of family separation is unknown,' says congresswoman in border district (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/18/2019 4:23 PM, Victoria Moll-Ramirez, 2413K]

Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-TX) said she and her constituents suspected the initial numbers the government was providing about child separations were inaccurate.

"We knew the numbers were greater. We kept asking for information. We kept asking for transparency," she said on ABC News' The Debrief. "Of course, none of that happened."

Her reaction comes on the heels of a federal report that stated more children were separated at the border than originally estimated.

Kirstjen Nielsen, the secretary of the department of homeland security, has defended the so-called zero-

tolerance and said it was never U.S. policy to separate children.

On Thursday, a spokesman for DHS said the department was looking at every option.

"The Trump administration has made clear that all legal options are on the table to enforce the rule of law, rein in mass unchecked illegal immigration, and defend our borders," said a spokeswoman in an emailed statement.

Still, Escobar does not feel confident the American public is getting the complete truth.

"I think the depth of the horror of family separation is unknown," she said.

Watch the video above for the full segment.

Oversight of child separations is both parties' responsibility (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/20/2019 7:29 AM, Erin Dunne, 629K]

On Friday, Democrats in the House and Senate called for new investigations into the Trump administration's policy of child separations at the southern border. This came in light of newly public information in an inspector General report on the implementation of the separations, as well as a leaked draft memo outlining government intent in these policies. Republicans should stand by their colleagues and demand answers.

The Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services's report, released Thursday, revealed that the government had separated thousands more children at the border than previously acknowledged, that the separations began months before the policy was announced, and that the program was so mismanaged that "the total number of children separated from a parent or guardian by immigration authorities is unknown."

As the report explains, "thousands of children may have been separated during an influx that began in 2017, before the accounting required by the court, and HHS has faced challenges in identifying separated children."

The report also noted that even after President Trump, facing public outcry, ended the policy in June 2018, separations continued.

The failures documented in the report also include, for example, a lack of a unified tracking system for separated families and even after the court ordered that children be reunited, that separated children "were still being identified more than five months after the original court order to do so." Those findings were compounded by a leaked draft memo on the separation policy shared with Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., by a whistleblower, which contained a significant amount of misleading and false information. The suggested policies outlined in that memo offer a dizzying array of ideas to stack hardships on individuals, including children and often contrary to existing laws and protections, who crossed the border.

Under the heading "SHORT TERM (next 30 days) OPTIONS", the first bullet point, for example, reads: "Increase Prosecution of Family Unit Parents: Instruct CBP and ICE to work with DOJ to significantly increase the prosecutions of family unit parents when they are encountered at the border."

The explicit goal of that policy, already in effect "on a limited basis in the El Paso Sector," is to criminally charge parents, holding them in custody while designating children as unaccompanied minors and placing them in the custody of Health and Human Services. The last sentence of that section makes the goal clear: "The increase in prosecutions would be reported by the media and it would have substantial deterrent effect."

The second point is even more explicit, titled: "Separate Family Units." That point goes on to outline what eventually became the policy of child separations: "Announce that DHS is considering separating family units, placing the adult in adult detention, and placing the minors under the age of 18 in the custody of HHS as unaccompanied alien children."

Another short-term idea floated in the memo includes changing the designation of children classified as unaccompanied minors to deny them access to legal protections. Next to that suggestion, an edited comment reads: "This is one of the easiest decisions anyone will ever have to make. There is absolutely no reason not to change this misguided policy."

Other policy options included the collection of fingerprints of sponsors for unaccompanied minors, expansion of ICE detention facilities, holding of children for longer than 20 days, expanding expedited removal, and even reforming the Trafficking in Victims Protection Reauthorization Act to cut protections for minors, including those subject to abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

Importantly, while these policies were explicitly outlined in December 2017, government officials were still denying their existence despite evidence to the contrary in June 2018:

"This misreporting by Members, press & advocacy groups must stop. It is irresponsible and unproductive. As I have said many times before, if you are seeking asylum for your family, there is no reason to break the law and illegally cross between ports of entry."

— @SecNielsen

"We do not have a policy of separating families at the border. Period."

— @SecNielsen

The findings from both documents point to a deliberate and systematic government policy that created chaos and left young children literally lost in a negligent and overwhelmed bureaucracy — problems that were covered up and denied in lies to Congress and the public.

As the documents make plain, there are clear and valid reasons for concern over the policy of child separations at the border. That is exactly the sort of government abuse that lawmakers of all political leanings should be intent on investigating.

Republicans must not leave fighting such abuse to the Democrats.

Instead, they must join Merkley, who has asked for the FBI to investigate alleged perjury by DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, who testified under that there was no policy of separations. They must also support the now-Democratic controlled House Committee on Energy on Commerce that has requested documents from HHS as part of its investigation into the handling of child separations.

After all, fighting the unacceptable treatment of children must be a bipartisan issue.

Poll: Trump's Support Among Hispanics Soars Amid Fight for Border Wall (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/18/2019 6:06 PM, John Binder, 2015K]

President Trump's support among Hispanic American voters has soared as he is refusing to buckle to pressure from Republicans and Democrats to reopen the federal government without funding for his proposed wall along the United States-Mexico border.

In the latest NPR/Marist/PBS Poll, about 50 percent of Hispanic American voters this month said they approve of the job Trump is doing in the middle of the government shutdown. This is a 19 percentage point increase from last month, when only about 31 percent of Hispanic voters said they approved of Trump.

The poll revealed that since the start of the shutdown, Trump's approval has barely changed among nearly all demographic groups. For example, Trump's approval — since doubling down on obtaining border wall funding — with swing voters has hardly moved, with about 37 to 38 percent approving of the job he is doing between December 2018 and January 2019.

The data does suggest Trump could be losing ground with white American voters for the administration's lack of progress on the issue of immigration. Last month, about 50 percent of white voters said they approved of Trump. This month, only about 40 percent of white voters said they approved.

In the meantime, support for Trump's proposed border wall has skyrocketed in popularity with swing voters, as Breitbart News reported.

This time last year, an ABC News/Washington Post poll found that only 34 percent of voters supported a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border. Today, support for the wall has climbed to 42 percent overall. Most notable, about 40 percent of swing voters now say they support a border wall. This is a ten percentage point increase in support for the wall among swing voters since last year.

Currently, the federal government has remained partially shut down as House Democrats block any funding for physical barriers at the U.S.-Mexico border. A handful of Senate Republicans crafted a plan to give amnesty to illegal aliens that ultimately failed to gain traction.

Border crossings in November 2018 — the last month from which data is available — hit close to 52,000, marking the highest level of illegal immigration in the month of November since 2006. Projections indicate that illegal immigration for next year will reach 600,000 border crossings, the highest level of illegal immigration in more than a decade. Meanwhile, drug overdoses in 2017 killed an unprecedented 72,287 U.S. residents, nearly three times the number of individuals killed by global terrorism. Nearly 50,000 of those deadly overdoses were caused by either heroin or fentanyl.

Trump points to a migrant caravan and unverified claim about Muslim prayer rugs as he continues push for wall (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 11:08 AM, John Wagner, 9763K]

The president's arguments, in morning tweets, represented his latest attempt to portray a security crisis at the border using what Democrats have derided as scare tactics.

The tweets come as Trump and congressional Democrats remain at an impasse over his demand for \$5.7 billion in border-wall funding that has led to a partial government shutdown now in its 28th day.

In one tweet, Trump referenced a Washington Examiner story that prominently quoted an unnamed rancher from a remote, southwestern part of New Mexico who said that her discovery of prayer rugs suggested "terrorist threats" unappreciated by the general public.

In a video that accompanied the story, the rancher acknowledged that she "never seen any Middle Easterners" herself. She did not explain how she knows the blankets she says she has discovered are prayer rugs nor did the video show any such rugs.

"People coming across the Southern Border from many countries, some of which would be a big surprise," Trump said in his tweet that referenced the Examiner story.

In advance of last year's midterm elections, Trump also sought to highlight what he said was a threat from "all sorts of people" of Middle Eastern descent joining a caravan making its way through Central America toward the U.S. border.

He at one point acknowledged "there's no proof of anything" before adding "but there very well could be" large number of Middle Easterners in the caravan.

In his tweets Friday, Trump pointed to a new caravan of Central American migrants crossing into Mexico from Guatemala that had been the subjects of segments earlier on "Fox & Friends," a show the president regularly watches.

"Another big Caravan heading our way. Very hard to stop without a Wall!" Trump tweeted.

Later Friday morning, Trump claimed the Republican party remained united around his position not to "cave" on border security.

"A beautiful thing to see, especially when you hear the new rhetoric spewing from the mouths of the Democrats who talk Open Border, High Taxes and Crime. Stop Criminals & Drugs now!" Trump wrote.

Several prominent Republican senators have urged Trump in recent days to agree to reopen the government on a temporary basis before turning to negotiations over wall funding and related issues.

Trump touts story about finding 'prayer rugs' along border (Politico)

[Politico](#) [1/18/2019 10:49 AM, Caitlin Oprysko, 2577K]

President Donald Trump on Friday sought to prop up his administration's claims that migrants who enter the U.S. illegally at the southern border don't come from only Mexico and Central America, in an attempt to justify his demands for a border wall.

Trump cited a story from conservative news outlet the Washington Examiner in which an unnamed rancher living in New Mexico claimed to have found "prayer rugs," or pieces of carpet used by Muslims for prayer, near her property.

The story does not include any first-person accounts of seeing such migrants, however. U.S. Customs and Border Protection in Arizona said recently that it had arrested migrants from seven countries trying to enter the U.S. illegally there, but none of the countries it named were majority Muslim.

Trump, however, indicated the story supports his administration's argument that people are crossing the southern border from many countries.

He has also claimed that terrorists are crossing the border there, though he did not mention it in the tweet Friday. The State Department has said there is no credible evidence terrorist groups send operatives across the Mexican border.

"Border rancher: 'We've found prayer rugs out here. It's unreal.' Washington Examiner People coming across the Southern Border from many countries, some of which would be a big surprise," Trump wrote in the tweet, appearing to use it as evidence to support his claims.

CBP did not immediately respond to questions about the natures of the arrests mentioned in its tweet this week. Nor did it respond to requests for comment for the Examiner's story, which rests on solely secondhand accounts from residents who said they were aware of migrants from places outside of Central America and Mexico entering the U.S. through its southern border.

In a video accompanying the article, the rancher — who was granted anonymity "for fear of retaliation by cartels who move the individuals" — said that though she doesn't "have any proof" of her claims and has "never seen any Middle Easterners" near the border herself, she says she has been told by trusted Border Patrol agents and has seen what she said were prayer rugs.

"There's a lot of people coming in not just from Mexico," she told the Examiner. "People, the general public, just don't get the terrorist facts of that. That's what's really scary. You don't know what's coming across. We've found prayer rugs out here. It's unreal. It's not just Mexican nationals that are coming over."

She also says that "the percentage of what Border Patrol classifies as OTMs [other than Mexicans] has really increased in the last couple years, but drastically within the last six months. Chinese, Germans, Russians, a lot of Middle Easterners, those Czechoslovakians they caught over on our neighbor's just last summer."

The article cites a second rancher in the same New Mexico town whose neighbor said they found migrants from the Philippines on their property last year.

The president has caught heat for his repeated suggestions that "terrorists" like Islamic State militants could sneak into the U.S. through the border with Mexico because of a lack of the extensive border wall he has promised to build.

A quarter of the federal government has been shut down for close to a month over the issue, as lawmakers resist his demands to appropriate funding for his border wall. Trump has sought to paint a recent influx of migrants at the border as a humanitarian crisis as well as a national security issue, claiming without evidence that caravans of asylum-seeking migrants are flush with criminals.

He has also been criticized for making generalizations about the Muslim faith, railing against "radical Islamic terrorism" throughout his campaign and his presidency and instituting early on a travel ban on Muslim-majority countries that he later watered down.

Case of terror suspect caught sneaking into U.S. roils immigration debate (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/21/2019 8:05 PM, Stephen Dinan, 527K]

Zabi-Ullah Hemmat wasn't just one of 415,816 illegal immigrants caught at the southwest border in fiscal 2016. Nor was he just another of the 84 people from Afghanistan apprehended by Border Patrol agents that year.

What made Mr. Hemmat of special interest to authorities is that when he was snared by agents after 11 p.m. on a chilly November night and they ran his name through federal databases, he came back listed on the no-fly terrorist watch-list.

Mr. Hemmat is one of the terrorism suspects caught trying to sneak into the U.S. from Mexico — a category of people that is very much part of the current debate over illegal immigration, with President Trump insisting his border wall would deter people from being able to reach American soil and Democrats saying there's no real danger.

Mr. Hemmat's case suggests both may be wrong.

He was indeed on U.S. terrorism lists, linked to both the Taliban and a plot somewhere in North America, according to Department of Homeland Security documents. But after he was caught, wandering in southern Arizona with two Mexican guides and five other men from Afghanistan and Pakistan, he said he had snuck in by crawling under an existing border fence near Nogales, Arizona.

Democrats say the number of potential terrorists who do try to enter via the land border is negligible, and several news reports over the last week say the numbers amount to the low double digits each year.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen says the exact numbers are too sensitive to release, but she says it's on the increase.

Homeland Security does say it "encountered" more than 3,000 "special interest" migrants — people whose nationalities and travel patterns made them potential national security concerns — at the southern border in 2018.

"I am sure all Americans would agree that one terrorist reaching our borders is one too many. These are just the terror suspects we know about who reach our border," Ms. Nielsen said on Twitter, defending the White House's claims.

The Washington Times has not been able to independently verify a total number of terrorists who have entered via the southwest border, but it has spent several years tracking cases such as Mr. Hemmat's, where someone with terrorist connections was nabbed after sneaking in.

Among those were four Turkish men who claimed ties to a Marxist insurgency known by the acronym DHKP/C, who paid \$8,000 apiece to be smuggled into the U.S. They traveled from Istanbul via Paris to Mexico City, then shuttled to the border where they were caught in 2014.

Analysts at the time said the men's arrival exposed the existence of networks capable of smuggling potential terrorists into the U.S.

The worries were big enough that the government created Operation Citadel, a joint program with Homeland Security, the Pentagon and international partners intended to try to clamp down on those smuggling networks.

One of the big successes of Operation Citadel was sniffing out Sharafat Khan, who ran a network that smuggled people from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh from Asia to Brazil then up the spine of South and Central America, through Mexico to the U.S. border.

Court documents show U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement nabbed upwards of 100 people from 2014 to 2016 who identified being smuggled by Khan. In some cases the migrants were flagged en route by American partners in countries such as Panama and Colombia. Other times they managed to reach the U.S. border before being detected.

Four of those, including Mr. Hemmat, popped up on U.S. terrorist watch lists. ICE acknowledged those in a statement last month, upon Khan's deportation, obliquely noting that "several of the individuals smuggled by Khan's organization had suspected ties to terrorist organizations."

It's not known how many others Khan smuggled managed to evade detection, nor whether any of those were on terrorism lists.

Smuggling network leads long trip to border

Khan, a Pakistani who also went by the alias "Dr. Nakib," lived in Brasilia, where he oversaw recruiters who found clients in Central Asia and operators who would shepherd the migrants on the journey, arranging transportation and food and lodging.

Mr. Hemmat flew through Dubai to Brazil, then began a trip that lasted months, through Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico. Along the way, Khan's clients were forced on a 100-mile walk through the Darien Gap, a tropical forest in Panama that cannot be crossed by vehicle. The foot journey can take up to 10 days.

Court documents don't say how much Mr. Hemmat paid, but Khan's going rate ranged from \$3,000 to \$15,000, authorities said in court papers.

During the trip Mr. Hemmat was detected transiting Panama, where officials took his fingerprints as part of Operation Citadel. They alerted U.S. officials, but released him and he continued on his journey. The documents seen by The Times do not give a reason for his release.

Finally at the U.S.-Mexico border in November 2015 he met up with five other men, one from Afghanistan and four from Pakistan, and two Mexicans who were to serve as foot guides.

One was a repeat smuggler, having done prison time for a past conviction. The other was an illegal immigrant who had been deported from the U.S. but was determined to get back to Tucson, Arizona, to the construction site where he had been working as a mason. That man received a \$2,000 discount on the \$3,000 crossing fee in exchange for serving as a guide.

They crawled through a hole underneath an outdated section of border wall near Nogales in broad daylight — and then immediately got lost, wandering for three days and three nights, with temperatures dipping near freezing at night. They didn't have heavy clothing and quickly ran out of food and water.

It didn't help that the Mexicans only spoke Spanish, while the clients spoke their native tongues, and one, Mr. Hemmat, also spoke some English — though neither of the foot guides did.

Things got testy along the way, with the clients saying the foot guides got "aggressive" with them when they complained about the bungled arrangements.

Near midnight on the third day, they were detected by a Border Patrol surveillance unit and agents swooped in, nabbing them near Patagonia, about 15 miles north of the boundary line.

Hemmat, others flagged on no-fly list

The exact nature of Mr. Hemmat's terrorist dealings remains murky, though documents say he was listed among the more than 80,000 names on the no-fly list as of 2016.

A border alert said Mr. Hemmat had been flagged for past involvement in a plot to conduct an attack in the western hemisphere, either in Canada or the U.S. No more details were provided in the secret document viewed by The Times. Mr. Hemmat also had family ties to members of the Taliban, the border alert said.

Mr. Hemmat told agents he was a doctor and performed vaccinations in Afghanistan. He and the five men with him all intended to lodge asylum claims, according to court documents. It appears those claims failed and he was to be deported.

It's not clear what finally happened, though there is no record of a criminal case against Mr. Hemmat. ICE didn't respond to inquiries about Mr. Hemmat.

Just months before Mr. Hemmat and his group were caught, Border Patrol agents in Arizona nabbed two other men from Pakistan who were flagged for terrorist ties. The documentation seen by The Times showed one was on the watch-list as an associate of a known or suspected terrorist. The other was not watch-listed, but did have "derogatory information" in the system, where he was also identified as an associate of a known or suspected terrorist.

They, too, were smuggled by Khan, as was another Pakistani man detained in Panama during his trip north with two others. When Panamanian authorities ran his identity, they found him on a U.S. terrorism watch-list.

Authorities say Khan maintained safe houses and paid people in each country along the route, selling his services to anyone willing to pay.

Authorities sniffed him out in late 2014 and began working with international partners to probe his activities and to keep track of those he was smuggling.

Brazil served a search warrant on Khan in the spring of 2016, and he fled, making a run for Pakistan. He was snared during a layover in Doha in June 2016 and extradited to the U.S.

After a lengthy legal battle, Khan was convicted and sentenced to 31 months in prison.

"Sharafat Khan organized an intricate network that was open to the highest bidder to transport undocumented migrants, regardless of who they were, from Pakistan and elsewhere through Brazil and Central America and then into the United States," Angel M. Melendez, special agent in charge at ICE's Homeland Security Investigations office in New York said at the time of Khan's sentencing.

The judge who sentenced him was more direct about the risks.

"You don't know whether they're seeking a better life or whether they're trying to get in here to engage in terrorism," Judge Reggie B. Walton told Khan at his sentencing. "Just because you had good intentions doesn't mean the people you were helping have good intentions. People could have died, people could have gotten injured, families could have lost loved ones."

Trump offers to limit his border wall to strategic locations (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/20/2019 7:00 AM, Nolan Rappaport, 3038K]

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) should give serious consideration to the settlement proposal that President Donald Trump made in his televised address from the White House.

Her objection all along has been to building a wall across the entire length of the Mexican border, and Trump no longer intends to erect "a concrete structure from sea to sea."

He has acknowledged that much of the border is already protected by natural barriers, such as mountains and water. He wants the \$5.7 billion he has requested for a strategic deployment of steel barriers at high priority locations.

The border already has many miles of barriers, including 115 miles that are being built or are under contract. He just plans to add another 230 miles this year at locations where they are most urgently needed.

These barriers would not make illegal crossings impossible, but they would make illegal crossings more difficult and make it easier for the Border Patrol to apprehend crossers.

His request includes \$800 million for humanitarian assistance; \$805 million for drug detection technology; 2,750 more border agents and law enforcement officers; and 75 more immigration judges.

In what he describes as an effort to build trust and goodwill, the legislation he is offering to implement his proposal also would extend the status of 700,000 DACA participants for three years.

This is just a temporary measure, but the outcome of the litigation over the DACA program is uncertain, and the participants will be extremely vulnerable if the program is terminated. DACA participation is sufficient in itself to establish deportability, and they can't apply for asylum. There is a one-year time limit on filing asylum applications and they all have been here for more than a year.

The legislation also would extend the status of 300,000 current Temporary Protected Status recipients for three years.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has promised Trump that his bill will be brought to the floor of the Senate this week.

Trump also mentions the immigration court backlog crisis in his address. He says that it is not possible to provide an asylum hearing for every illegal crosser who sets one foot on American soil.

The asylum provisions state that aliens who are physically present in the United States may apply for asylum irrespective of their immigration status, unless one of the stated exceptions applies.

In my opinion, the sheer number of illegal crossers is the real border crisis. It has overwhelmed our immigration courts, making it virtually impossible to enforce immigration laws.

This has produced a powerful magnet that encourages illegal crossings. Undocumented aliens who want to come here are extremely unlikely to be deported once they have reached the interior of the country.

How bad is the backlog?

As of November 30, 2018, the immigration courts had a backlog of 809,041 cases. This did not include an additional 330,211 cases that had not been put on the active docket yet, for a total backlog of 1,139,252 cases.

The average wait for a hearing is 1,018 days.

The immigration court has 395 judges. They have to complete 700 cases a year to get a satisfactory performance rating, which would produce a total of 276,500 cases a year. At that rate, it would take more than four years to clear the backlog — assuming the judges do not receive any new cases, which will never be the case.

The 75 additional judges that Trump wants to hire will not make a significant difference, but he

is proposing another method for reducing the demand for asylum hearings that is more promising. He wants to allow Central American minors to apply for asylum in their home countries.

I made a similar suggestion in July 2014, when I wrote, "Meet the Challenge of Unaccompanied Alien Children at the Southwest Border: Is there a better way?"

I pointed out that the United States does not have to assume sole responsibility for helping the unaccompanied alien children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. I proposed removing them to a safe location outside of the United States where the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees could process them for refugee status.

President Barack Obama did this on a more limited basis with the Central American Minors (CAM) refugee program in December 2014, which provided USCIS in-country refugee processing for qualified children in those Central American countries.

Trump should be encouraged to reinstate and expand this program.

According to Trump, his proposal is just a first step towards dealing with the rest of the serious immigration issues with more comprehensive legislation. Once the government is open and the immediate crisis at the border has been addressed, he will hold weekly bipartisan meetings on reforming our immigration system.

While I know that Pelosi would like more than Trump is offering, his proposal is a reasonable compromise that warrants serious consideration. The ball is in her court now.

'Not a 2,000-mile concrete structure from sea to sea': Is Trump scaling back border wall plan? (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/19/2019 7:24 PM, Christal Hayes, 6053K] Video: [HERE](#)

President Donald Trump is offering to extend temporary protection for people brought to U.S. illegally as children in a bid to secure border wall funding. Trump has struggled to find a way out of a four-week partial government shutdown.

Some people who tuned in to watch President Donald Trump's proposal on Saturday to end the 28-day government shutdown took issue with one particular line of the 13-minute address.

The president proposed a compromise: the \$5.7 billion to build a wall along the southern border for temporary protections for undocumented immigrants, including children. He called the proposal "a common-sense compromise both parties can embrace."

"To physically secure our border, the plan includes \$5.7 billion for a strategic deployment of physical barriers, or a wall," Trump said. "This is not a 2,000-mile concrete structure from sea to sea. These are steel barriers in high-priority locations."

Those at home took notice that Trump seemed to downplay the scope of his wall plan, which he has boasted about during campaign rallies. Many also noted the very public way Trump noted that the wall would not be made of concrete as he had said and wouldn't extend the full length of the border.

"Not sea to sea, not paid for by Mexico, only steel slats. #Trump is walking back more than Michael Jackson," one Twitter user said after the speech.

Another chimed in, saying the president "finally acknowledged that the wall will not be from sea to sea or 1954 miles, because it is would be physically impossible given the terrain. The right will not be happy."

Trump's proposal also drew criticism from some hard-line conservatives, who argued it would encourage more illegal immigration.

"A Big Beautiful Concrete Border Wall will be a monument to the Rule of Law, the sovereignty of the USA, & @RealDonaldTrump," Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, wrote on Twitter. "If DACA Amnesty is traded for \$5.7 billion(1/5 of a wall), wouldn't be enough illegals left in America to trade for the remaining 4/5. NO AMNESTY 4 a wall!"

Conservative commentator Ann Coulter accused Trump of proposing "amnesty" for undocumented immigrants.

"100 miles of border wall in exchange for amnestying millions of illegals," she tweeted. "So if we grant citizenship to a BILLION foreigners, maybe we can finally get a full border wall."

While the president's comments have changed significantly when it comes to what the wall will be made of and how much it will cost, Trump and his Cabinet have said multiple times that a wall would not stretch the entire length of the U.S.-Mexico border, which extends about 1,933 miles.

A look at Trump's "evolving" remarks on his proposed border wall shows that as far back as 2015, the president called for a wall extending 1,000 miles, or about half the length of the border.

"As far as the wall is concerned, we're going to build a wall. We're going to create a border. We're going to

let people in, but they're going to come in legally. They're going to come in legally," Trump said at a presidential debate in 2015, according to The Times. "And it's something that can be done, and I get questioned about that. They built the Great Wall of China. That's 13,000 miles. Here, we actually need 1,000 because we have natural barriers. So we need 1,000."

Already, 34 percent of the border has a wall or fence, about 654 miles. But other areas of the border without fencing would be difficult to enclose because of the Rio Grande and private property, which the government would have to seize, setting up years of legal challenges.

While Democrats dither over the border wall, deadly fentanyl floods our communities (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/20/2019 12:00 AM, Beth Bailey, 629K]

On Christmas Day, 18-month-old Ava Floyd ingested "a large quantity" of fentanyl while her parents were producing and packing the potent drug for sale at their home in Clinton Township, Mich. That afternoon, Ava died at a local hospital. An autopsy found that her tiny body contained "15 times as much fentanyl as officials have seen in recent overdose deaths."

I read the heartbreaking story of Ava's death just before I entered my daughter's room to turn her ambient sound machine from lullabies to white noise. From the side of her crib, I looked down at my daughter's sprawled-out sleeping form, all 23 pounds of her brimming with limitless potential. I reached my hand down to touch her chest, to feel it rise and fall, thinking of the thousands of hours I have devoted to keeping her safe and happy.

As I often do, I worried about her future.

Before I read about Ava, I mostly worried about what might happen when my daughter began to attend the local high school, just over an hour west of Clinton Twp., which has earned its nickname, "Heroin High," from the drug problems that plague our town. At the playgroup where I bring my daughter twice a week, mothers who graduated from the high school sometimes share stories about how heroin sales take place at the school, despite the constant surveillance of security guards. When they sense my abject horror, they say things like, "It's not a big deal, you just learn to stay away from it," as though heroin is a series of unmarked physical pits in the hallways that an unwary student might accidentally fall inside.

After I read about Ava, it became clear that the opioid crisis will not wait until high school to affect my child. Just like Ava Floyd, my daughter was 18 months old at Christmas. Now, she is something Ava will never be: 19 months old.

Fentanyl can strike anyone, at any age, on account of the unique method by which it can be absorbed: through contact with the skin. A relative in the Drug Enforcement Administration warned me last year that, because of fentanyl's increasing use and availability, I should wipe the handle of any grocery cart I use. He explained that people who have developed a tolerance to fentanyl may have handled the cart before me, and that the quantity required for the average adult to overdose and die is just 3 milligrams. Smaller still, he said, was the amount required to kill my daughter.

While many balk at the notion that merely touching fentanyl can lead to an overdose, any contact with the mucous membranes can introduce the drug to the bloodstream. Additionally, according to the American College of Medical Toxicology, the use of alcohol-based sanitizer is both "ineffective in removing fentanyl and may increase drug absorption."

I always try to remember, along with extra diapers and wipes and snacks and the grocery list and fastening the car seat safety clip at my daughter's chest and not her stomach, to watch the places, people, and things my inquisitive daughter's hands touch. Whenever I wipe the handle of every cart we use, I will always wonder whether that maneuver is endangering, or protecting, my child.

Our border crisis is real. About 90 percent of heroin and 80 percent of fentanyl in the U.S. is sourced from Mexico. While rehabilitation and addiction recovery services are a key component of the strategy for dealing with America's opioid crisis, we must also address the porousness of our border.

When we fail to keep deadly drugs out of our country, Americans lose. We lose family members and friends, and the capacity those people possessed to positively change the world. We allow American money to be funneled into the hands of vicious Mexican cartels that inflict horrific retribution on those who oppose them.

For the past two weeks, I have written about the congressmen, like Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., who refuse to acknowledge the border crisis, or forget the drug epidemic facing the nation, including southeast Michigan. I have written letters to each of my Democratic congressional representatives detailing the crisis and my concerns, and I have heard nary a peep in response.

Trump insists that a 'border crisis' is ravaging America – Here's what numbers tell us (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/19/2019 12:35 AM, Jessica Tarlov and Harlan York, 9216K]

In a country still deeply divided over the 2016 election, it comes as no surprise that we're talking past each other when it comes to border wall funding.

Tempers are running hotter than ever before. We may be canceling the State of the Union for the wall. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and a group of congressmen and women may not be going on a trip abroad – including a visit to a conflict zone – because of the wall. And we have been thrust into one of the core issues of the 2020 election campaign because of the wall.

What's missing from all of this wall talk, though, is the reality of the "border crisis" that President Donald Trump insists is ravaging our nation.

Border crossings by immigrants without visas have occurred for decades, and for a long time, border crossers were treated pretty loosely by a system that knew America was a better landing place for many people from other parts of the world – particularly for our neighbors to the south.

That ended in the post-9/11 world. By 2010, comparatively few immigrants were entering the U.S. without inspection. Presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama were all enforcement-minded on immigration. President Clinton signed the most draconian immigration laws of the modern era. And President Obama was so tough on immigration that he became known as the "deporter-in-chief."

Data is a stubborn thing. And today, the government's own data isn't working in favor of the Trump administration. According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection's 2017 Border Security Report, illegal border apprehensions have fallen 90 percent since the year 2000. The border has never been more secure than it is now.

This begs the question of whether we need to spend \$5 billion building a wall. Historically speaking, walls have never really kept out "invading hordes." Our current legal system and procedures are doing an effective job, according to the numbers.

But let's say for the sake of argument that Trump gets his money. He'll promptly face tremendous legal barriers to building the border wall.

Trump isn't the first person to try to build a wall. But much of Texas is privately owned, and not all owners want a wall running through their land. There are boundary issues still on the table between the U.S. and Mexico, not to mention indigenous land claims and rights.

President Bush tried to get governmental control of the land when he was in power. Some owners gave in, but others held tight, and they're unlikely to capitulate now.

In 2009, the Homeland Security inspector general concluded that the Border Patrol had "achieved [its] progress primarily in areas where environmental and real estate issues did not cause significant delay." There is no fast way to move the wall construction along; border land has been in stasis for the past decade.

What's more, the wall would, in theory, only be as strong as its weakest link.

A wall is, by its very nature, something that people can go over, under and through, depending on how well it's kept up and guarded. In fact, escaping through and over walls is one of the great movie tropes of all time. All you need is a ladder, a shovel, a terrible storm, a break in the guard duty, and you are free to go. It's happened for centuries in real life too. Remember the Berlin Wall? The Great Wall of China? Jericho?

All this is to say that current immigration laws work to keep our country safe. Let's spend the money extending those.

The figures are clear. The numbers of illegal immigrants entering the country have dropped significantly in the last 10 years while the numbers of those overstaying their visas have risen. However, overstays only represented about 1 percent of those who lawfully travelled to the United States in 2017.

It's not our borders that are the problem. They are statistically more secure than they have ever been.

Congress set aside \$1.2 billion for the 700-mile border fence that was constructed in 2006. It ended up spending \$3.5 billion for construction of the current combination of pedestrian fences and vehicle impediments. This fence line was far smaller than the one being considered today.

Imagine if instead we spent a fraction of that money extending and improving our immigration laws and processes?

This wall isn't the answer. Reform is. This country has been waiting for comprehensive immigration reform that benefits both parties' positions for more than two decades. Now's a good time to finally do it.

Schumer wants answers from Trump on eminent domain at border (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 10:46 AM, Alexander Bolton, 3038K]

Senate Democratic Leader Charles Schumer (N.Y.) sent a letter this week to Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen demanding more information about how the administration plans to use eminent domain against private landholders to build a border wall.

Schumer and fellow Democratic Sens. Dick Durbin (Ill.), Tom Udall (N.M.) and Martin Heinrich (N.M.) are raising concerns about a 153-year-old chapel in the Rio Grande Valley. The Justice Department has filed a lawsuit seeking an easement to build on the property.

The lawmakers warned that the administration's effort to invoke eminent domain against the Roman Catholic diocese threatens to infringe on religious freedom.

"The Trump administration's lawsuit against the diocese raises important questions on the exercise of eminent domain to build a border wall and the impact it will have on religious organizations and American taxpayers," the senators wrote in Thursday's letter.

The diocese has challenged the Trump administration's claim of eminent domain, arguing that building a

border wall on its property is inconsistent with Catholic values and would restrict access to La Lomita Chapel.

The four senators pointed out in their letter that the Trump administration has not provided detailed information about how many landowners will lose property along the U.S.-Mexico border or the timetable for acquiring land.

About 67 percent of the property along the border does not belong to the federal government, meaning the administration would need to seize significant amounts of land to build the wall.

Trump defended the use of eminent domain in a Rose Garden appearance earlier this month.

"Eminent domain is something that has to be used, usually you would say for anything that's long, like a road, like a pipeline or like a wall or a fence," he said.

He told reporters that his administration would use eminent domain only when landholders refuse to sell land needed to construct the wall. He also pledged to pay fair prices.

"I think it's a fair process. I think it's a process that's very necessary, but I think it's fair," Trump said. "A lot of times we'll make a deal, and I would say a good percentage of time we're making deals."

He said a lot of the money the administration has received for border security has been spent on purchasing land to build barriers.

The senators warned in their letter to Nielsen that the federal government "must exercise extreme caution when seizing private property with respect to sacred sites like La Lomita Chapel."

"Eminent domain should not be invoked in violation of any religious organization's First Amendment right of free exercise of religion," they wrote.

The lawmakers asked the Homeland Security secretary to inform them by month's end how many religious organizations and citizens will have their land seized through eminent domain to build a wall.

They have also asked for the estimated costs and timetable for planned land seizures and demanded to know whether Homeland Security has ever waived or plans to waive the requirements of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to build a wall.

Despite shutdown, DOJ moves forward with land-grab cases for border fence (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/18/2019 7:40 PM, Nick Valencia and Priscilla Alvarez, CNN, 5847K]

Justice Department attorneys are continuing to work on cases to seize land from property owners along the US-Mexico border, despite other cases being put on hold until the government reopens.

A case to acquire nearly 5 acres of private land in the Southern District of Texas for the purpose of erecting fencing proceeded this week. The court transcript, dated January 15, reveals how some federal attorneys are moving forward amid the shutdown.

The judge in the case, Micaela Alvarez, acknowledged the shutdown in her opening remarks.

"In light of the fact that even with the shut down, I understand that the attorneys handling these matters on behalf of the Government are not being furloughed and they still have to appear—I wanted to get these cases disposed of as quickly as possible, one way or the other," she said.

"This is all I'm allowed to work on, Your Honor," said Assistant US Attorney Eric Paxton Warner.

According to Justice Department guidance, in the event of a lapse in appropriations, civil litigation -- which these cases fall under -- "will be curtailed or postponed to the extent that this can be done without compromising to a significant degree the safety of human life or the protection of property."

A spokeswoman for the US Attorney's Office Southern District of Texas said, "It is within the discretion of the US Attorney to determine excepted or non-excepted duties."

She added, "In collaboration and agreement of the Department of Justice, US Attorney Patrick deemed that the ongoing border fence litigation, among other matters, were excepted and will continue to be as long as the federal courts are open."

Asset forfeiture litigators and affirmative civil litigators, for example, also continue to work. Some prosecutors are funded separately and not affected by the lapse in funding.

There are at least "six or seven attorneys" for the government working exclusively on fencing cases, according to the court transcript. Alvarez referred to them as the "golden children," likely because of President Donald Trump's focus on erecting additional barriers along the southern border.

But these cases aren't directly pegged to the President's signature wall. They have been ongoing for years.

In 2006, President George W. Bush signed the Secure Fence Act, authorizing some 700 miles of fencing along the US-Mexico border. While some of that land was owned by the government, other areas weren't. The government needed to acquire private property to build on the land, kicking off a slew of lawsuits. Approximately 80 cases are still outstanding, according to the Justice Department.

Tuesday's land condemnation case dates to 2008. It involves defendant Pamela Rivas, who the government says is the "only party left in this cases to settle with" after at least a year of negotiations. Another family that also owned some of the land settled.

Warner said the government wants to build an "18-foot fence" on the land, according to the court transcript.

"We can't build wall right there," Warner said. "There's no levee that runs through Los Ebanos, so it won't look like the rest of Hidalgo County where we take half the levee and dump it on the north side and build a wall."

The land is slotted for fencing in 2019 "if there is any money in the fiscal year," according to Warner.

Regardless of whether funds are available, the government is pressing forward, indicating the significance of these cases in a heated debate over the border wall. The Justice Department also appears to be preparing for additional lawsuits in the area in the future: The department listed job postings for attorneys. Qualifications include "litigation of land condemnation cases."

Customs and Border Protection has said it would consider eminent domain in the future.

"It is always CBP's preference to acquire property through a voluntary, negotiated sale. The Government will attempt to negotiate an offer to sell using survey data and value estimates gleaned from the surveying process," reads an excerpt in a border wall Q&A on their site. "The Government will attempt to negotiate an offer to sell before moving forward with exercising eminent domain. However, if the Government and landowner are unable to reach a negotiated sale or if the Government is unable to obtain clean title, the Government will need to file an eminent domain action."

For now, however, the federal attorneys in southern Texas intend to continue their work on the cases at hand.

"We continue to work alongside our law enforcement partners from FBI, DEA, ATF, DHS, USMS and numerous others who are charged with conducting enforcement operations and advancing significant investigations," said US Attorney Ryan Patrick in a statement. "Our work is not impacted by the shutdown. It is essential to public safety."

Justice Department Is Hiring Lawyers To Take On Property Seizures For Trump Border Wall (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/18/2019 3:50 PM, Jason Hopkins, 867K]

In a strong indication the Trump administration is preparing for the next phase of the immigration battle, the Department of Justice is now hiring lawyers to handle border wall litigation in South Texas.

The two attorney positions — which are advertised to pay between \$53,062 and \$138,790 — are to be based in the southern Texas towns of Brownsville and McAllen. Preferred candidates are to have "at least four (4) years of civil litigation experience in litigation of land condemnation cases, oil and gas disputes, and real estate matters," according to the posting on USAJobs, adding that knowledge of the Spanish language "is helpful, but not required."

The jobs were first posted in December, with the deadline for applications closing on March 5.

The attorneys will likely be tasked with eminent domain and other property seizure legalities — issues that will undoubtedly arise if President Donald Trump is able to move forward with construction of a wall on the southern border.

The federal government is on the 28th day of a partial shutdown — the longest in U.S. history. Trump is demanding Congress send him a budget that includes \$5.7 billion in funding for 200-plus miles of new and replacement barriers on the U.S.-Mexico border, but liberal lawmakers have stood sharply opposed to the proposal.

The budget standoff between the president and Democratic leaders has reached a fever pitch.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Wednesday told reporters she would delay the State of the Union address, an annual speech by the president that is held in the House of Representatives, because of the government shutdown. Trump responded the following day by cancelling Pelosi's planned trip to Europe and the Middle East. Trump's letter reportedly came minutes before the speaker and Democratic staffers were to board a bus for the trip.

Trump, however, told Pelosi she was free to fly commercial if she so chooses.

Should the White House ultimately prevail in the border wall fight, the administration would then have to negotiate with property owners who reside on the wall's path. While the law typically favors the government in eminent domain cases, property owners could possibly drag out court cases for over a decade.

"Eminent domain is something that has to be used, usually you would say for anything that's long, like a road, like a pipeline or like a wall or a fence," Trump told reporters earlier in January in the Rose Garden. He made clear that the White House would wield eminent domain authority only if landowners refuse to sell the land needed for the wall, and he pledged that all landholders would receive fair prices.

"I think it's a fair process. I think it's a process that's very necessary, but I think it's fair," he explained. "A lot of times we'll make a deal, and I would say a good percentage of time we're making deals."

Finding a way through the border fence was easy. Winning the right to remain won't be.
(Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 7:00 AM, Maria Sacchetti, 9763K]

President Trump has deployed tear gas, military helicopters and miles of razor wire to stop migrant caravans from entering the United States. It took one day for Nubia Estrada's 8-year-old daughter, Elen, to discover a way in.

"Hold your breath," a group of men told Estrada as they helped her and her four children squeeze through a narrow gap in the fence on the westernmost part of the U.S.-Mexico border.

In a thick fog, with the Pacific Ocean lapping nearby, the family sprinted into California, joining thousands of migrants who have made their way into the country to seek asylum despite increasingly urgent government efforts to stop them.

In Trump's first two years in office, his administration has tried to narrow migrants' chances to qualify for asylum, slow the number allowed in at legal checkpoints and deny protections to those who crossed the border illegally. The government tried filing criminal charges for all who crossed illegally with their children, a measure that led to the separation of thousands of family members last spring.

But many of Trump's plans have been blocked or temporarily halted in federal courts, and the number of families coming in continues to rise.

Some, including Estrada's, seek the relative safety and minimal cost of a locally organized caravan, like the latest group that departed from Honduras this week. Others are smuggled through remote, rugged passes, including two young children who died in U.S. government custody last month.

Estrada's story illustrates why U.S. efforts to keep the families from entering the country are not succeeding — a combination of unrelenting demand, limited detention space, restrictions on how long children can be detained and how fast they can be deported.

It also makes clear the significant obstacles that migrant parents and children face once they arrive.

Trump took to Twitter Dec. 20 to berate the caravan in which Estrada traveled and claim that the military, and immigration and border agents, had successfully kept its participants out.

"Remember the Caravans?" he wrote. "Well, they didn't get through and none are forming or on their way. Border is tight."

At that moment, Estrada, 34, was 250 miles past the border, in central California, staying in the modest two-bedroom bungalow of a half sister and brother-in-law she barely knew.

She had a monitoring device on her ankle, no money or work permit, and a list of immigration check-ins and court dates piling up. Her children were frustrated, bored, unruly.

It was dawning on her that the caravan was only the first leg of a long and difficult journey. Crossing into California, step by step

The caravan had been Estrada's salvation, a way out of Honduras for herself and her four children that didn't require the \$15,000 smuggler's fee.

She and her husband earned \$8 a day baking bread in a firewood oven attached to their adobe house and selling it on the street in their town of Jícaro Galán.

But last year a robber put a gun to her daughter Sheyla's head on a bus and stole their money. A cousin, Jefferson, was shot 10 times and killed in August. And Estrada's husband was growing increasingly violent, her children say.

One night in October, Estrada and her children watched news of the caravan on television. The next day they boarded a bus to join it, carrying two clothes-filled backpacks and \$40.

Estrada's sister in Honduras alerted a grown niece in Atlanta that the family was on its way. The niece called other relatives in America, who debated which of them could afford to take in a family of five. A cousin in Texas backed out. A different sister in California demurred.

That left Francisca Estrada de Espino, 56, who lives in Bakersfield with her husband and his two sons and who hadn't seen Estrada in many years.

She watched the caravan trudging in the rain on television and wept.

"How could my sister do this? It's so difficult," she recalled saying about the trek.

Estrada de Espino and her husband had crossed the border decades earlier, in an era when few migrants paid smugglers or landed in jail.

Rogelio Espino arrived in 1984 from Mexico to pick grapes and obtained a green card under the amnesty offered by President Ronald Reagan. He successfully applied for U.S. citizenship in 1997 after California's governor, Pete Wilson — a Republican, like Reagan — attempted to crack down on undocumented immigrants.

"He did me a favor," said Rogelio, a 54-year-old apartment maintenance worker.

Now a different Republican president was working to curtail immigration in every way possible.

Estrada had intended to cross the southern border at the legal checkpoint in Tijuana, Mexico, where advocates and lawyers were available to help and guide migrants. But food was scarce, daily crossings were strictly limited, and she ended up No. 1,520 on a dubious waiting list kept in a tattered notebook. One night, protesters threw rocks at the sports complex that was housing her family and thousands of others.

She and the children were terrified of returning to Honduras. They heard whispers about a tiny beach not far from the stadium, where a rusty border fence vanishes into the Pacific Ocean. A taxi ride later, they were scouring the metal strips for weak spots, padding over the sand as if searching for seashells. Elen soon poked her tiny hands through a cracked metal sheet.

They crossed into California in late November and immediately surrendered to the Border Patrol. Officials released them to her sister and brother-in-law, who traveled by bus to get them since they couldn't all fit in the Espinos' battered blue Mazda. Together, they rode the bus back to Bakersfield, a city of 380,000 that sits 110 miles north of Los Angeles.

The rose-colored house, with a yard overflowing with scrap metal parts, was quickly engulfed in the chaos of two teenagers and two young children who had been on the road for the past six weeks.

Espino installed an extra refrigerator and filled it with eggs, tortillas and pizza. His wife packed plastic

containers with clothes from yard sales and Ross Dress for Less. They hung a hammock in the living room for Estrada, over a bed where her children could sleep. Nine people share one bathroom.

"I want to help them," said Estrada de Espino, a housewife.

But there was no money for lawyers, and the long list of legal organizations Estrada had been given were all at least an hour's drive away. Her hosts had little time to ferry her to appointments.

With the caravan, Estrada had been decisive. When her teenagers disappeared in the crowd for two days, she commandeered another migrant's phone to find them. She lost the children's birth certificates but had copies texted to her and printed in Tijuana. A gum infection cost her a front tooth, but it did not stop her journey.

In California, though, her confidence faded. She had no money for Christmas gifts. The kids gobbled food she could not pay for. They stayed home all day, screaming or blasting music, as her sister pursed her lips in disapproval.

She couldn't summon the courage to ask to borrow her sister's phone to call nonprofits for help. "They're feeding me," she whispered. "How can I use their phone to call a lawyer?"

Waiting for a case worker

Her life, for now, was shaped by check-ins with Immigration and Customs Enforcement on a palm-tree-lined street in Bakersfield.

"How can I get a work permit?" she said she asked an officer on her first visit. Instead of an answer, she was handed the list of faraway lawyers.

She was told to stay home at her sister's the following Monday, when a case worker with the federal contractor BI Inc. would visit to verify Estrada's new address.

Estrada was also told to keep her ankle bracelet charged, another way for the government to track her whereabouts.

In Honduras people had talked about immigrants who snip off the bracelets and run away. But Estrada and her sister wanted to follow the rules. "It's better not to act incorrectly," Estrada de Espino said.

Estrada rose early that Monday to make breakfast and keep an eye on the front window, jumping when someone parked outside. The case worker was supposed to show up sometime between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m.

The monitoring would eventually lead to an immigration court hearing that could determine the rest of their lives. But Estrada didn't want to tell a judge or anyone else that in addition to gang violence, she was fleeing a husband who had threatened to kill her and their children.

"He was a good person when he wasn't drunk," Estrada said softly, sitting on her sister's couch.

"She doesn't like to tell the story about him," 17-year-old Sheyla interrupted, sitting a few inches away. "When he came home drunk, we had to leave to find another place to sleep. He would come home and hit us."

Tears welled in her mother's eyes. But Sheyla's gaze was hard. She said her father would point to a rifle he owned for killing livestock and say, "I'll kill you with this."

Sheyla and 14-year-old Eiro said the threats happened "many times."

Estrada de Espino listened and handed her sister tissues.

"I don't like people to know my problems," Estrada said, clutching a teddy bear and watching the window.

At 12:12 p.m., a FedEx truck pulled up. At 3:08, the U.S. Postal Service arrived.

Sheyla cocooned herself in a blanket and texted her friends in Honduras; Eiro played an online soccer game. Erickson, 4, and Elen kicked soccer balls outside, stopping when they saw a group of schoolchildren pass. They hadn't been in school since mid-October.

At 3:27 p.m., a neatly dressed young woman from B.I. Inc. arrived at the front gate apologizing and holding a phone with a dead battery. Estrada finger-combed Erickson's hair and greeted her at the door.

After learning that a Washington Post journalist was with the family, the woman canceled the appointment without explanation and said she would come another day.

"Disculpa," the woman said in American-accented Spanish. "Excuse me."

The next day Estrada had another check-in with BI Inc. Again, she asked about working. The employee, she said later, told her she needed a permit to legally get a job but also acknowledged that many migrants work without one. The employee warned her to show up for her immigration appointments, Estrada said, and told her, the rest is "up to you."

Bumpy start to a new life

The next day Estrada and her sister took Elen and Erickson to enroll in school, walking several blocks in the crisp air.

Elen, excited, wore a frilly black-and-white dress from the plastic container in the living room. She smiled when they arrived at the school, where the signs were in Spanish and almost everyone seemed to be Latino — either immigrants or U.S.-born. The only disappointment came when the clerk said Erickson was too young for kindergarten.

"The houses are so pretty," Estrada said, gesturing to a small, tidy house with a pair of shade trees out front.

Even though her sister insisted she could stay as long as she needed, Estrada was anxious to start working, save money and get her own place. The sisters made plans to call a legal nonprofit, and Estrada asked whether she could find a job on a farm, maybe trimming grapevines for next season.

"I'll learn what I have to learn," Estrada said, "even if I have to collect garbage all day."

Her family's first immigration court hearing is scheduled for Jan. 31, but she received notices to appear in two different courtrooms, one of which is in a facility that immigration officials haven't used since 2012. The other is in San Francisco, a 4 ½ -hour drive away.

She still needs to check in periodically with immigration officials and spend one afternoon each week at her sister's house, waiting for the contractor to visit.

This month, her three older children started school.

Estrada missed being home for Christmas. She used to bring her mother fresh-baked bread, and a little money, every Christmas morning. She said she hoped to have the chance to go back to Honduras, at some safer time, and share the holiday with her mother again.

Returning home is a fantasy every immigrant shares, her sister told her, especially when they first arrive. But millions end up staying in America, with or without permission.

"That's how it is," Estrada de Espino said. "Once you leave, you don't want to go back."

Immigration Courts Have A Huge Backlog. The Shutdown's Making It Worse (NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/19/2019 7:01 AM, Farida Jhabvala Romero, 4491K] Audio: [HERE](#)

Hundreds of thousands of cases are awaiting hearings, but many are being canceled until the shutdown is resolved. For a Filipina mom in California, that means her seven-year-long wait will go on.

TRANSCRIPT

SCOTT SIMON, HOST:

The federal government shutdown is leading to thousands of people seeing their immigration court proceedings canceled. California has the most cancellations of any state - more than 9,000 - and the largest backlog of pending cases. From member station KQED, Farida Jhabvala Romero reports.

FARIDA JHABVALA ROMERO, BYLINE: It's the end of the school day at Oceana High, south of San Francisco. Hundreds of students blast out of classrooms and swarm the halls.

Navigating the crowd is Mario Guzman, a lanky 18-year-old from El Salvador. Like other seniors here, Guzman's waiting to hear whether colleges will let him in to pursue his passion.

MARIO GUZMAN: I want to major in either graphic design or animation.

ROMERO: But unlike his friends at school, Guzman's destiny doesn't just depend on college admissions. He's applying for asylum, and his fate lies with an immigration judge. But his final hearing was scheduled for January 3. It was canceled because most immigration judges are furloughed.

GUZMAN: It's really hard because I can plan to do things here, but, certainly, I don't know how much time I have here.

ROMERO: Guzman has been preparing for his hearing with his lawyer for months. And in that preparation, he's had to revisit some of the violence and terror that made him flee El Salvador. He says his cousin, who was like his brother, was shot by gang members.

GUZMAN: And seeing how the life of my cousin was destroyed, it was really hard for me.

HELEN LAWRENCE: So it's just pretty traumatic. And he's a high-schooler. And, you know, he's trying to go about his teenage life.

ROMERO: Helen Lawrence is Guzman's attorney.

LAWRENCE: I think, for him, it's just - he would like to get it over with, to move on.

ROMERO: Guzman has waited for about a year to get his day in court. But other people with canceled hearings have waited much longer. Jasmine Ngo is a single mother of two who lives in the Los Angeles

area.

JASMINE NGO: My immigration case is going to be seven years in March.

ROMERO: She's had a green card for almost 30 years, but she was convicted of shoplifting, and now she's fighting deportation.

NGO: It's hard to move forward when you have something hanging over your head.

ROMERO: She doesn't know when she'll get her next court hearing.

NGO: It could be years. It could be months. We don't know.

ROMERO: The shutdown is a massive disruption to an already overburdened system, says Judge Dana Leigh Marks, a past president of the National Association of Immigration Judges.

DANA LEIGH MARKS: Because we are so backlogged and so short-staffed, the calendars are jam-packed and basically full for the next two to three years.

ROMERO: Marks is currently furloughed. But she says once she's back in court, she'll try to squeeze in as many canceled appointments as she can.

MARKS: But, by and large, they're going to go to the end of the line.

ROMERO: For some people, the shutdown may be a blessing. Marks says good, strong cases suffer by the delay, but weaker ones that are likely to lose may benefit by having more time to prepare. Every week the shutdown continues, an estimated 20,000 more cases are delayed nationwide.

For NPR News, I'm Farida Jhabvala Romero in San Francisco.

(SOUNDBITE OF ANI DIFRANCO SONG, "UNWORRY")

As More Migrants Are Denied Asylum, An Abuse Survivor Is Turned Away (Northern Public Radio)

[Northern Public Radio](#) [1/18/2019 7:23 AM, Joel Rose, 3K]

[Editorial note: consult audio at source link]

ACLU Sues Government Agencies For Supposedly Using Big Tech To Snoop On Black People (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/18/2019 1:27 PM, Chris White, 867K]

The American Civil Liberties Union in California filed a lawsuit Thursday targeting seven government agencies that the group claims are investing in the kinds of technologies supposedly violating people's privacy.

The ACLU's lawsuit specifically names the FBI, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the departments of Justice, State, and Homeland Security. Social media surveillance technologies put millions of people at risk, according to the lawsuit.

Technologies allowing agencies to pinpoint cell phones risk "chilling expressive activity and can lead to the disproportionate targeting of racial and religious minority communities, and those who dissent against government policies," the ACLU noted.

Recent reports have shown the extent to which wireless cell companies can distribute the geolocations of the many of their customers to outside vendors, oftentimes without permission.

Motherboard published a report on Jan. 8 fleshing out a marketplace in the resale of location data tracking cell phones, which led major U.S. wireless carriers to announce they would stop selling the repositories of data. Car dealers, bounty hunters and law officials were often given the kind of data allowing people to be located within a few blocks of their position.

Tech companies have been under pressure for months to be more transparent about their technologies, especially as it pertains to consumers personal data.

Facebook, for instance, has used facial recognition intelligence for years to recognize users. Engineers with the Silicon Valley company are also rolling out video artificial intelligence (AI) products like Portal, which allows a camera to follow users around rooms and automatically focus on their faces.

Recent media reports have also laid out the degree to which Facebook is able to cobble together and distribute users personal data. One report from The New York Times in December showed the company began forming data partnerships with the likes of Amazon, Microsoft and Yahoo.

The dual partnerships allowed Facebook to adhere itself to multiple social media platforms while insulating itself from competition. The partnership program became too unwieldy by 2013 for mid-level employees to govern, so the company resorted to relinquishing the reins to artificial intelligence.

[TX] Texas lawmakers push legislation on three key immigration issues (Houston Chronicle)

[Houston Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 6:20 PM, Paul Cobler, 199K]

As the national debate over funding for a border wall intensifies, Texas lawmakers are also taking a run at several immigration issues.

Bills filed by Democratic and Republican state lawmakers address the separation of Central American migrant families seeking asylum, in-state tuition at Texas universities for young immigrants who have lived in the state for more than three years, and weakening of the so-called sanctuary cities law that passed in 2017.

Last week, immigration advocates highlighted the legislation and railed against President Donald Trump's policies as well as House Bill 413 by Rep. Kyle Biedermann, R-Fredericksburg, which would repeal an 18-year-old law that grants in-state college tuition for longterm residents of the state who are not U.S. citizens.

"The question today for our Legislature is in 2019 will they be upholding these values or will they continue to walk the path of divisiveness and believing the fake immigration crisis that Trump has presented before us?" said Adriana Carena, coordinator for Reform Immigration for Texas Alliance.

Top state lawmakers have framed the 140-day legislative session that began Jan. 8 as a return to "bread-and-butter" legislation like more funding for schools and reforms to tamp down escalating property taxes, rather than more controversial issues like last session's Senate Bill 4, which requires local police and sheriffs to fully cooperate with federal immigration authorities.

At the same time, leaders in both the Texas House and Texas Senate have indicated they will continue to spend roughly \$800 million in the next two-year budget for border security measures including patrols by state troopers.

Biedermann's HB 413 is the latest in a series of attempts to repeal the "Texas DREAM Act," which was passed in 2001. While previous efforts to repeal the law fell flat, Biedermann says he sees signs of support after Gov. Greg Abbott said the law was "flawed" last year during a debate.

Citing a tight budget, Biedermann told Austin TV news outlet KXAN in November the current law creates an unnecessary burden on taxpayers.

"Why should we give them a deduction or a subsidy at taxpayer expense when other Texans could use the funds also to be educated?" Biedermann said.

On the other side of the immigration debate, Sen. Jose Rodriguez, D-El Paso, has introduced three separate bills that look to water down Texas' ban on sanctuary cities, saying living in the border city has given him a more accurate understanding of the situation on the border than those sounding immigration alarms.

"Immigrants are tremendous contributors to our economy and our growth in this nation," Rodriguez said in a news conference at the Texas Capitol. "The policies of the present administration and some of the advocates in the majority party here in this dome don't recognize that."

All three of the bills target a key provision of the law by preventing specific local entities from working with federal immigration officers when they encounter people suspected of being in the country illegally.

Reps. Cesar Blanco, D-El Paso, and Mary Gonzalez, D-Clint, as well as Rep. Victoria Neave, D-Dallas, and Rep. Ramon Romero Jr., D-Fort Worth, have also introduced bills that would repeal sections of the sanctuary cities law — for example, one would prevent police departments from reporting immigrants to federal authorities if police encounter them in places like hospitals, churches, universities and domestic violence shelters.

Foes of the sanctuary city law have long warned that it would hinder police investigations by making immigrants less likely to come forward as witnesses or victims of crime.

Two other bills from Gonzalez and Blanco would address the family separation issue by requiring increased reporting to state agencies on the number of children and adults in custody.

The Democrats, significantly outnumbered in both the Texas House and the Senate, acknowledge that their proposals are unlikely to pass. But the national battle over border security will keep the subject in the periphery for the foreseeable future, and they say their point of view is important to balance the hardline immigration talk coming from the White House.

"No longer are we going to let politicians like Donald Trump come to McAllen and say it isn't safe," Blanco said.

[CA] Governor earmarks funds for migrant shelter in proposed budget (San Diego Union Tribune)
[San Diego Union Tribune](#) [1/21/2019 5:00 PM, Kate Morrissey, 214K]

Gov. Gavin Newsom wants to use state funds to help migrant families arriving at the California border.

Much of the money will likely go to San Diego nonprofits and community organizations, collectively known as the San Diego Rapid Response Network, running a temporary shelter for families released by federal officials after asking for asylum at the southwest border.

In his proposed budget, Newsom allocated \$20 million available over three years beginning in July to fund a "rapid response network" to provide services during immigration or human trafficking emergency situations. He is also asking the legislature to approve \$5 million in funding to be used before this fiscal year ends in June.

Newsom visited San Diego's shelter shortly before being sworn in as governor, and he mentioned the experience in his inauguration speech.

"I went to San Diego and met volunteers providing relief to desperate migrants who others treat like criminals – like the 3-year old girl, just a year older than my youngest, at a shelter who captured my heart," Newsom said.

In a document detailing the budget ask, the governor's office also refers specifically to the San Diego shelter.

"The current influx of migrants seeking asylum at the California border with Mexico has strained the capacity and resources of the rapid response network of community-based organizations and nonprofits providing aid," it says. "Many of the organizations in San Diego that provide emergency shelter and rapid response services indicate that they are at full capacity and need supplemental resources to continue serving this population."

The Rapid Response Network has been pushing for support from local and state governments for months. The collective opened its temporary shelter after federal immigration officials announced in October that they would no longer help migrant families arrange travel plans with their sponsors across the country before releasing them in San Diego.

About 5,000 migrants have passed through the shelter since it opened, most staying one or two days before traveling on to cities all over the United States. The shelter itself has moved five times since it opened and has yet to find a permanent location.

Both the city and county of San Diego have made some efforts to find a space for the shelter.

The Board of Supervisors voted recently to try to identify a county-owned site to serve the migrant families. It also voted to make a working group to look at long-term solutions to support border arrivals. The county has staffed the current temporary shelter with medical personnel to conduct health screenings.

The city proposed using a closed juvenile detention facility in Alpine, and Mayor Kevin Faulconer touted his office's efforts in his recent State of the City speech.

"These political games are affecting real people," Faulconer said. "Look no further than the migrant families that federal immigration agents are dropping off on San Diego's street corners with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. For months, my administration has been working with nonprofits and our partners at the County and State to provide shelter and prevent this humanitarian crisis from becoming a San Diego crisis."

The mayor's office began meeting with the Rapid Response Network about a month and a half ago.

Norma Chávez-Peterson, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union in San Diego and Imperial counties, one of the organizations spearheading the network, called the recent attention received by officials "tide-shifting."

"It's been a combination of many, many, many different pieces that collectively got aligned and helped to really shed light," Chávez-Peterson said. "Until people see it, feel it, hear it — that moves folks to action."

She worried about the city's proposal to use Camp Barrett as a shelter. She was particularly concerned that the mayor's office published the location. Shelter organizers have worked hard to keep its whereabouts a secret to protect the arriving migrants.

Chávez-Peterson said the network is still exploring options and welcomes suggestions from community

members as well as government officials. The shelter is scheduled to move again in early February, but organizers haven't yet found another temporary space, she said.

She anticipated that if the state funds the networks' efforts, some organizations would open a similar site in Imperial County. Border Patrol in the El Centro Sector currently bus migrant families to the San Diego shelter for help.

Bill Jenkins, who runs Safe Harbors Network, a group of churches and individual homes that provide shelter to asylum seekers who don't have sponsors to help them, hopes that as government officials take a growing interest in helping, some of the aid and attention might go to the migrants he works with.

He's been offering shelter to migrants since an influx of Haitians came to the Tijuana-San Diego border in 2016.

He doesn't see himself as in competition with the Rapid Response Network, but rather as another important part of supporting new arrivals in San Diego.

"The ones we get are the ones who have no support network and are going to require more long-term care," Jenkins said. "It takes both of us to do what we're doing."

Whether the funds will actually be made available, and what criteria will be required to get them, will be up to the legislature.

[Mexico] Mexico sets up new process for Central American migrants headed toward U.S. (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/21/2019 11:01 AM, Staff, 2890K]

A new caravan of some 1,800 Central Americans is making its way toward the U.S. They started crossing into Mexico from Guatemala late last week and continued arriving through the weekend.

On a bridge near the border where you enter Mexico from Guatemala, the lines of migrants extend as far as you can see. They're waiting to be officially registered by the Mexican government, reports CBS News correspondent Adriana Diaz.

In a new process that started a week ago in preparation for the caravan, the Mexican government gives people wrist bands to register them, their identities are verified, and five days later they get humanitarian visas allowing them stay in Mexico for a year to work and to live.

It's a stark contrast to last October when an earlier caravan that had more than 7,000 migrants at its height. The same bridge was packed and migrants jumped from the bridge to swim to Mexico. In that caravan, some 2,600 who reached the U.S. border and tried crossing illegally were arrested by U.S. border patrol. About 1,300 opted to return to their home countries. Roughly 2,900 received Mexican visas. Fewer than 700 are still in Tijuana along the U.S. border trying to get U.S. asylum.

Some people here have told us despite getting visas to stay in Mexico, they still plan to go to the U.S. border more than 2,000 miles away. One father saw that Diaz was American and asked her if the U.S. is letting migrants in if they are traveling with children.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[Mexico] Thousands of caravan migrants request temporary asylum in Mexico; some try returning to US (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/20/2019 7:44 PM, Griff Jenkins and Samuel Chamberlain, 9216K]

Thousands of Central American migrants, many of them from Honduras, are taking Mexico up on its offer of temporary asylum and work visas.

Mexican immigration officials said Sunday that 3,691 people associated with various migrant caravans have registered for temporary status in the country, and the number is expected to grow as more people arrive at the border with Guatemala.

Meanwhile, local officials in the southern town of Huixtla provided several buses to transport some of the more than 2,000 migrants on the next stage of their journey towards Tijuana. Others weren't so lucky and pressed on in blistering 90-degree heat.

Mexico has promised to allow migrants through the border crossing as long as they are orderly, and the country's new government has agreed to house third-country asylum-seekers while their claims are heard in the United States. The caravan is estimated to contain 1,800 people, including about 100 from El Salvador.

One migrant from Honduras told Fox News on Sunday that he was in the first caravan that reached the U.S.-Mexico border last October. The man said he made it to San Diego illegally, was caught and deported.

Another migrant named "Alex," who previously received protection under the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, told Fox News he grew up in Indiana after being brought to the U.S. from El Salvador as an infant. Alex said he received a letter nine months ago, after he turned 18, informing him that his DACA status was expiring and that he had 24 days to return to El Salvador or face prosecution.

Alex told Fox News he didn't know what to do as he watched the ongoing battle over immigration policy play out in Washington.

"I just want to get back to the life I had," he said. "It's all I know."

Also Sunday, a second caravan set out in the morning from San Pedro Sula, Honduras, the same location from which the current caravan originated last week. Local reports said that caravan had more than 1,000 people in it.

The second caravan's departure coincided with calls for a week-long national strike in Honduras to protest the policies of the country's president, Juan Orlando Hernandez.

[Mexico] Another Caravan Crosses Mexican-Guatemalan Border (The Wall Street Journal)

[The Wall Street Journal](#) [1/18/2019 5:30 PM, Juan Montes]

Some 1,500 Central Americans forced their way across Mexico's southern border early Friday and began their trek north toward the U.S. in the first migrant caravan of the year, stoking the heated political debate in the U.S. over a border wall.

An estimated 1,700 more were waiting at the border town of Tecún-Umán, Guatemala, with the aim of entering Mexico legally, a senior Mexican immigration official said.

Caravans have been gaining in popularity among migrants because they find safety in numbers, but they account for a fraction of the overall number of migrants who come into Mexico. Most of the migrants who joined one of several caravans that formed last year ended up returning home, staying in Mexico or getting stranded at the border as they wait to apply for entry to the U.S.

U.S. President Donald Trump has used the latest migrant caravan as an argument that Congress approve

funding for a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico.

"Another big Caravan heading our way. Very hard to stop without a Wall!" he tweeted on Friday. The U.S. government has been partially shut down since late December as Democrats balk at granting Mr. Trump the more than \$5 billion he wants for a wall or barrier on the U.S.-Mexican border.

Further south at Mexico's southern border, the estimated 1,500 migrants forced their way through a steel fence at the international bridge separating Guatemala from Mexico and are expected to reach Tapachula in southern Mexico late Friday, walking and hitchhiking.

The migrants, most of them from Honduras, set out Jan. 14 from San Pedro Sula, Honduras's second-largest and most violent city. Fleeing unemployment, poverty and violence, many of them are undeterred in their goal to get to the U.S., despite the prospect of being blocked and ending up deported back to Honduras.

"My life in Honduras is miserable," said Alison Rodriguez, a 19-year-old who said she was three-months pregnant. "Life is a risk, and if you don't risk you can't win."

Some members of the group broke padlocks to gain access to the port of entry during the night despite Mexican authorities' offer to give them temporary humanitarian visas within five days to live and work in Mexico. The procedure normally takes 30 days.

"You offer them the best, and they opt for the worst," the senior Mexican official said, adding the Mexican government would try to persuade them to apply for the visas.

Even before the highly visible earlier caravans set out from Central America in October, the Trump administration had sharply limited the daily number of asylum applications processed in ports of entry and sent soldiers to the border. The U.S. government has since announced plans to force most asylum seekers to wait in Mexico while their cases are adjudicated in the U.S.

The percentage of asylum seekers who are granted U.S. asylum by immigration judges is at a nearly 20-year low, down to a 33% approval rate in fiscal year 2018, according to the Migration Policy Institute, a think tank in Washington.

Mexico's Deputy Interior Minister Alejandro Encinas on Friday played down the importance of the caravans, saying their numbers are "infinitely smaller" than the total of more than 750,000 Central Americans who enter Mexico to work temporarily every year, mostly in agriculture in the country's southeast.

"We want to bring order," Mr. Encinas said at a press conference. "The vast majority of people who take part in the caravans are fleeing from violence and from poverty in their countries." He said Mexico can employ migrants in jobs Mexican workers aren't taking.

But there were others, he added, who seek to take advantage of this desperation to carry out people-trafficking and recruit people for criminal activities, "and in this we are going to be very strict."

The arrival of thousands caravan migrants in the northwest border city of Tijuana late last year led to protests by resident groups, and local officials complained about the lack of funds and resources to provide food, shelter and sanitary assistance for the Central American travelers.

But tension has eased in the city across the border from San Diego as the caravans have gradually broken up, according to government officials and shelter workers.

Of about 8,000 migrants who crossed into Mexico in October and November in several caravans, some 3,000 have returned voluntarily to their home countries, according to estimates from the Mexican government. About 1,500 have crossed illegally into the U.S., the Mexican officials said.

The number of caravan migrants encamped at Tijuana's main shelter has dropped by more than half, according to local government officials and social workers. Some 3,000 remain in or around Tijuana, many of them in a disused concert hall that was adapted in November as a shelter, 13 miles from the city's main border crossing.

Close to 1,000 migrants found work and obtained humanitarian visas from the Mexican government.

"Many of those with work are now renting rooms," said Agustín Novoa, a Catholic priest and director of Tijuana's Salesian Project, which runs migrant shelters and charities. "Tension has dropped to the extent that migrants are less visible now, partly because the new shelter is in a place in the city that is less central."

[Mexico] 800 New Caravan Migrants Break Border Gate into Mexico (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/18/2019 2:19 PM, Ildefonso Ortiz and Brandon Darby, 2015K]

Hundreds of migrants forced their way into Mexico by breaking the gates at one of the international ports of entry with Guatemala and are now being escorted north by federal police.

The incident took place overnight at the Rodolfo Robles international port of entry when a group of migrants broke the lock at the gate and forced their way into Mexico.

Milenio first reported on the incursion, reporting that Mexico's National Coordinator for Civil Protection David De Leon said he was not able to get a real headcount of the migrants but believes they numbered more than 800.

Rather than arrest or deport the migrants, Mexican authorities provided a police escort on their way north. According to Milenio, the move follows Mexico's new policy of providing security for migrants passing through the country.

In addition to the hundreds who entered in a violent fashion, Mexico documented 1,064 who are undergoing the immigration process to enter legally.

[Mexico] New migrant caravan enters Mexico, legally or not (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/18/2019 6:18 AM, AFP, 2015K]

Hundreds of Central Americans entered Mexico illegally as the latest migrant caravan to set its sights on the United States began crossing the Mexican-Guatemalan border en masse Friday.

Not content to wait five days for the humanitarian visas Mexico is offering them, several hundred migrants took to make-shift rafts to cross the Suchiate River, which forms the frontier, or snuck across the loosely guarded border bridge overnight, AFP correspondents said.

That could trigger a new Twitter firestorm from US President Donald Trump, who has urged Mexico to halt such caravans, and who tweeted early Friday: "Another big Caravan heading our way. Very hard to stop without a Wall!"

Caravans of migrants hoping to find safety in numbers have taken center stage in the raging US debate over Trump's proposed border wall, which has led to a government shutdown that is now the longest in history.

Around 2,000 migrants are traveling in the latest caravan — smaller than the one that swelled to 7,000

migrants late last year, leading Trump to warn of an "invasion" by "criminals" and "thugs" and send thousands of troops to the US-Mexican border.

Mexican authorities are urging the migrants to cross the border legally and offering expedited "visitor cards" that let them work and access basic health care in Mexico.

So far, 969 migrants from Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua have been registered under the program and given bracelets that they can exchange for visitor cards in five days.

But hundreds more migrants ignored the offer and crossed illegally, not content to wait in the park where the caravan has camped out in the border city of Tecun Uman, Guatemala.

"A lot of us aren't interested in waiting five days. Our goal is to reach the United States," said Alma Mendoza, a nurse and single mother making the trip with her three children.

"We don't have food, much less money. We want to reach our destination," she told AFP.

Other migrants said they would consider staying in Mexico.

"My goal is to reach the United States, but if I can't I'll stay in Mexico and work. They're giving us an opportunity," said Christian Medrano, 33, an industrial technician.

– 'AMLO' walking fine line –

The caravan set out Tuesday from San Pedro Sula, in northwestern Honduras, and has grown along the way.

The migrants are mostly fleeing poverty and crime in Central America's "Northern Triangle" of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Brutal street gangs have made the three countries among the most violent in the world.

Another caravan of about 200 migrants set out Wednesday from El Salvador and is now in southern Mexico, possibly poised to join up with the first.

Many of the migrants are traveling in families, often with small children.

Those who reached Mexico's southern border have covered about 700 kilometers (435 miles) so far. They have roughly 4,000 kilometers to go if they take the same route as the last caravan, to Tijuana, across from San Diego, California.

When that caravan reached Mexico in October, the authorities tried to stop it with riot police. But the migrants stormed in anyway, tearing down border fences then crossing the river illegally when police refused to let them through.

Since then, Mexico has got a new government, led by President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, an anti-establishment leftist.

"AMLO," as the new president is widely known, has promised to treat migrants more humanely than previous governments. But he has also sought to stay on Trump's good side with talk of reducing migrant flows.

The October caravan largely dispersed after reaching Tijuana.

US Border Patrol agents fought back two attempts by the migrants to rush the border, firing tear gas to disperse them.

Some have since found work in Mexico, some crossed the border and filed asylum claims, and many returned home. About 400 remain in a shelter set up for them in Tijuana that is slated to be closed on Wednesday.

[Mexico] Migrant caravan freely crosses Mexican border after gates were left open, authorities avoided 'confrontation' (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/18/2019 10:06 AM, Griff Jenkins and Lukas Mikelionis, 9216K]

Around 1,000 Central American migrants marched freely through the Guatemala-Mexico border on Friday after the gates were left wide open, with Mexican authorities standing down from confronting the caravan.

The border gates were open only temporarily, but migrants – who crossed the bridge from Tecun-Uman to Ciudad Hidalgo – were surprised to find no locks on the gates, effectively giving them a free pass to enter the country without being stuck at the border or registering with immigration officials and now begin the trek to the U.S. border, which can range from between 1,000 to 2,500 miles depending on the point of entry.

There was little presence of police or border security officials. A Mexican official told Fox News that they "did not want to confront" the migrant caravan, fearing the repetition of last year's incident where violent clashes between police and the migrants broke out.

It remains unclear if the border gates were left open intentionally by the authorities or if migrants broke the locks.

President Trump, who is embroiled in a bitter standoff with Congressional Democrats over funding for the border wall, jumped on reports of migrants entering Mexico and warned that the caravan is coming towards the U.S.

"Another big Caravan heading our way. Very hard to stop without a Wall!" he wrote in a tweet.

The unrestricted crossing on Friday looked starkly different from the scene in October at the exact same location, when migrants tried to push through closed gates and ranks of riot police, prompting authorities to fire pepper spray.

It was thought on Thursday that Mexican authorities will follow the new procedures introduced by the government in the wake of the clashes that would force migrants to wait five days for their paperwork to be processed before letting them enter the country.

But some caravan members have told Fox News that they won't be following the new procedures, claiming they don't trust the government, and may even cross the border without waiting.

Since the last caravan crossing, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador was sworn in as the new Mexico president. He's an advocate of a more humane solution to the migrant caravan, including a jobs program for the migrants in an effort to stop the flow of migrants towards the U.S.

In exchange, the Mexican leader asks Trump to put in money to improve economic conditions in the region.

Guatemalan Officials estimated the caravan at 1,800 people as another two caravans are on their way - one from El Salvador with approx 150 ppl and another set to depart from Honduras on Sunday.

[Mexico] Hundreds of Central American migrants enter Mexico with few checks (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/18/2019 5:53 AM, Sofia Menchu]

Hundreds of mostly Honduran migrants entered southern Mexico on Friday, joining around 1,000 other people from Central America who crossed a day earlier and putting to the test Mexico's vows to guarantee the safe and orderly flow of people.

The cohort crossed the Guatemalan border into Chiapas state before dawn without needing the wrist bands that Mexican officials on Thursday gave migrants to wear until they could register with authorities, several migrants and an official told Reuters.

"The road today was open," said Marco Antonio Cortez, 37, a baker from Honduras traveling with his wife and children, ages 2 and 9. "They didn't give us bracelets or anything, they just let us pass through Mexico migration."

A migration official at the entry point, who asked not to be named because she was not authorized to speak to media, said that at least 1,000 people crossed from Guatemala into Mexico before dawn, without putting on wrist bands.

Asked why migrants did not receive wrist bands, David Leon, the director of civil protection, said authorities faced a caravan of hundreds of people early in the morning and let them pass rather than risk a confrontation.

The migrant group proceeded on foot alongside cars on a highway, accompanied by federal police officers, arriving at a shelter in the city of Tapachula around midday.

Sitting by the side of the road rubbing cream onto his children's feet, 40-year-old Honduran migrant Santos Pineda said he and his family entered Mexico easily, and without having to provide documents or wear any wrist bands. The family's plan was to press on to the United States, he said.

A migration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said those who entered without wrist bands ran the risk of being detained for crossing illegally.

Around 300 mostly Honduran migrants with wrist bands were still waiting to cross into Mexico on Friday afternoon.

Mexico's migration institute said the migrants can stay in temporary shelters in Mexico until they receive humanitarian visas allowing them to remain in the country, or they can wait in Guatemala for their document to be ready.

Groups of migrants left El Salvador and Honduras earlier in the week, the latest in a string of caravans of people largely fleeing poverty and violence.

The caravans have inflamed the debate over U.S. immigration policy, with President Donald Trump using the migrants to try to secure backing for his plan to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexican border.

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador is pursuing a "humanitarian" approach to the problem, vowing to stem the flow of people by finding jobs for the migrants. In exchange, he wants Trump to help spur economic development in the region.

[Mexico] Fuel pipeline blaze in Mexico kills at least 67 (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/19/2019 9:17 AM, AFP, 2015K]

An explosion and fire in central Mexico killed at least 67 people after hundreds swarmed to the site of an illegal fuel-line tap to gather gasoline amid a government crackdown on fuel theft, officials said.

Early Saturday the Hidalgo state governor, Omar Fayad, had put the death toll at 66 dead and 76 injured,

but one of the injured subsequently died in hospital.

The injured included at least eight minors, one of them 12 years old.

The blast occurred near Tlahuelilpan, a town of 20,000 people about an hour's drive north of Mexico City.

As soldiers guarded the devastated, still-smoking scene, forensic specialists in white suits worked among the blackened corpses — many frozen in the unnatural positions in which they had fallen — and grim-eyed civilians stepped cautiously along in a desperate search for missing relatives.

The pungent smell of fuel hung in the air. Fragments of burnt clothing were strewn through the charred brush.

When the forensic workers began attempting to load corpses into vans to be transported to funeral homes, some 30 villagers tried to stop them. They demanded their relatives' bodies, saying funeral homes were too expensive. The bodies were ultimately taken to a morgue, authorities said.

On Friday, when authorities heard that fuel traffickers had punctured the pipeline, an army unit of about 25 soldiers arrived and attempted to block off the area, Defense Secretary Luis Crescencio Sandoval told reporters.

But the soldiers were unable to contain the estimated 700 civilians — including entire families — who swarmed in to collect the spilled gasoline in jerrycans and buckets, witnesses said.

The armed soldiers had been moved away from the pipeline to avoid any risk of confrontation with the crowd when the blast occurred, some two hours after the pipeline was first breached, Sandoval said.

President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, a leftist who took office only weeks ago, traveled to the scene early Saturday.

He did not fault the soldiers, saying, "The attitude of the army was correct. It is not easy to impose order on a crowd." He vowed to continue fighting the growing problem of fuel theft.

"I am deeply saddened by the suffering in Tlahuelilpan," Lopez Obrador wrote on Twitter. He called on his "whole government" to extend assistance.

The US Secretary of Homeland Security, Kirstjen Nielsen, tweeted that her department "stands ready to assist the first responders and the Mexican government in any way possible."

Video taken in the aftermath showed screaming people fleeing the scene as an enormous fire lit up the night sky.

"I went just to see what was happening, and then the explosion happened. I rushed to help people," Fernando Garcia, 47, told AFP. "I had to claw through pieces of people who had already been burned to bits."

The tragedy comes during a highly publicized federal government war on fuel theft, a problem that cost Mexico an estimated \$3 billion in 2017.

Acting attorney general Alejandro Gertz described the latest disaster as "intentional" because "someone caused that leak. And the fire was a consequence of the crime."

But he acknowledged that investigators would be hampered by the fact that "the people closest to the

explosion died."

Federal and state firefighters and ambulances run by state oil company Pemex rushed to help victims with burns and take the injured to hospitals.

Local medical facilities struggled to cope with the flood of arriving victims, said AFP correspondents at the scene.

The fire had been brought under control by around midnight Friday, the security ministry said.

Pemex said it was also responding to another fire at a botched pipeline tap in the central state of Queretaro, though in that case there were no victims.

Mexico is regularly rocked by deadly explosions at illegal pipeline taps, a dangerous but lucrative business whose players include powerful drug cartels and corrupt Pemex insiders.

Fayad said that two hours after the pipeline was punctured, "we were informed that there had been an explosion" and the flames "were consuming everything around."

About 15 oil pipeline explosions and fires causing more than 50 fatalities each have occurred around the world since 1993. Most were in Nigeria, where in 1998 more than 1,000 people died in such a blast. A fire after a pipeline rupture in Brazil killed more than 500 people in 1984.

– Rampant fuel theft –

The tragedy comes as anti-corruption crusader Lopez Obrador presses implementation of a controversial fuel theft prevention plan.

The government has shut off major pipelines until they can be fully secured and deployed the army to guard Pemex production facilities.

But the strategy to fight the problem led to severe gasoline and diesel shortages across much of the country, including Mexico City, forcing people to queue for hours — sometimes days — to fill up their vehicles.

The president, who took office on December 1, has vowed to keep up the fight and asked Mexicans to be patient.

At the scene, some locals blamed the shortages for the tragedy.

"A lot of people arrived with their jerrycans because of the gasoline shortages we've had," said Martin Trejo, 55, who was searching for his son, one of those who had gone to collect the leaking fuel.

He also lashed out at the army for failing to stop the looters.

"These lives would have been saved if they had done their jobs to remove people and not let them get close. They never did anything."

Tanker trucks are being used to deliver fuel, but experts say there are not nearly enough of them.

Mexican bank Citibanamex estimated Wednesday that the shortages would cost Latin America's second-largest economy around \$2 billion, "if conditions return to normal in the coming days."

The roots of the fuel theft problem run deep in Mexico, where the practice — known locally as "huachicoleo," or moonshining — is big business for some communities.

[Mexico] Pipeline explosion witnesses describe scene where 73 died: 'People's skin came off' (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/20/2019 3:08 AM, Louis Casiano, 9216K]

Grief-stricken family members and witnesses to Friday's pipeline explosion in central Mexico -- which killed at least 73 people, burning many to just bones or ash, and injured at least 74 -- were still reeling from the tragedy Saturday.

"Some people's skin came off. ... It was very ugly, horrible. People screamed and cried," local journalist Veronica Jimenez told Reuters.

She said she arrived at the scene before the explosion, watching as some 300 people carried containers to collect fuel from an illegal tap in the pipeline Friday evening.

After the blast, "They shouted the names of their husbands, brothers, their family members," she recalled, of people searching for loved ones.

On Saturday, health officials were taking DNA samples from relatives to help identify the dead, dozens of whom were badly burned. Hugo Olvera Estrada said he visited six nearby hospitals hoping to find his 13-year-old son, who joined the crowd at the spill and remains missing.

"Ay, no, where is my son?" he wailed.

Isaias Garcia, a farmer who witnessed the explosion from a distance, explained why so many had come to the area.

"Everyone came to see if they could get a bit of gasoline for their car," he said. "There isn't any in the gas stations."

"Some people came out burning and screaming," he added.

The tragedy comes as Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador -- known as "AMLO," who took office in December -- has vowed to eradicate fuel thieves who illegally drilled taps into pipelines an estimated 12,581 times during the first 10 months of 2018, an average of about 42 violations per day.

"We are going to eradicate that which not only causes material damages, it is not only what the nation loses by this illegal trade, this black market of fuel, but the risk, the danger, the loss of human lives," said Lopez Obrador, who ran on an anti-corruption platform before being elected last year.

The tragedy prompted reactions from officials in the United States, including Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, who offered assistance from her agency in a tweet Saturday.

"Our condolences go out to those who lost their lives in Mexico yesterday. @DHSgov stands ready to assist the first responders and the Mexican Government in any way possible," she wrote.

Friday evening had begun much differently. Hundreds of people gathered in a festive atmosphere in a field in Tlahuelilpan in Hidalgo state - about 62 miles north of Mexico City -- to where a duct had been punctured by fuel thieves, sending gasoline spewing 20 feet in the air.

Over two hours, hundreds descended on the site.

The pipeline, which was operated by state oil company Petroleos Mexicanos, or Pemex, then burst into flames and exploded. Pemex Chief Executive Octavio Romero said around 10,000 barrels of gasoline

were rushing through the pipeline when it ruptured.

He said fuel theft costs Mexico up to \$3.5 billion annually, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Mexican Defense Secretary Luis Cresencio said Saturday that 50 soldiers are stationed every 12 miles along the pipeline, aided by patrols. They have been ordered not to confront fuel thieves out of fear that it could result in the shooting of unarmed civilians or soldiers being attacked by a mob.

"We don't want this sort of confrontation," Cresencio said.

In December, Lopez Obrador ordered pipelines closed, leading to gas shortages in central Mexico. Local media reports said more than half of the gas stations in Hidalgo were closed.

Arely Calva Martinez said the shortages have tempted some to get gas through illegal means. Her brother, she said, is a teacher and badly needed gas for his commute to work when he saw on Facebook that fuel had been spewing onto the field.

The brother, Marco Alfredo, and another brother, were at the field when the explosion occurred.

"I think if there had been gas in the gas stations, many of these people wouldn't have been here," Calva Martinez told the Associated Press while holding a photo of her brothers.

The brother of Erica Bautista and his wife were both missing Saturday. She said he faced "enormous lines" for gas and received a phone call alerting him of the fuel spill.

"We want to at least find a cadaver," she said while weeping.

[Central America] MS-13 and the violence driving migration from Central America (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/18/2019 6:32 AM, Arijeta Lajka, 2890K]

Its name has become a sinister shorthand for the fear of violence seeping across America's borders. MS-13, or "Mara Salvatrucha," is one of the largest gangs in the world, a menace in several countries and a frequent target of President Trump's rhetoric. Its violent grip in Central America is one of the forces driving thousands of migrants to flee for the U.S. — which, ironically, is where the gang got its start.

The Trump administration refers to MS-13 as "violent animals," and Mr. Trump often invokes MS-13's gruesome acts of violence to justify hardline policies against immigration.

"This is a crisis. You have human trafficking, you have drugs, you have criminals coming in, you have gangs, MS-13. We're taking them out by the thousands and bringing 'em back," the president said last week.

In recent months, migrants from the Northern Triangle — Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador — have headed to the U.S.'s southern border in much-publicized caravans to flee rampant violence and poverty. In 2017, there were close to 4,000 homicides in El Salvador, a nation of about 6 million people. Though that's down from over 6,600 killings in 2015, El Salvador still has one of the highest murder rates in the world.

"I got shot with a '38. I had like a fifty-cent-size hole on both of my sides," said Rafa Arturo, 45, an El Salvador native who spent much of his life in the U.S. before being deported. He was shot twice in 2016. He now lives in San Salvador with his 5-year-old son Jacob, who was born there. "It happened in front of my house," he added.

Rafa was just a toddler when he came to the U.S. with his parents, settling in Los Angeles. But after a string of convictions, Rafa was deported in 2008, leaving behind four daughters. According to public records, he was convicted for three crimes involving theft from 1992 to 2001. He now works in a call

center in San Salvador and worries about the rampant violence.

"What I'm truly afraid is that, we go out someplace ... and then we get both shot," Rafa said. "The reason why I want to send Jacob to the States is because ... his safety. That's number one."

MS-13 and a rival gang, Barrio 18 or 18th Street, actively recruit members as young as 8 years old in El Salvador.

"You guys have been to a public school here, there's gang walls written already," Rafa said. "That's just the kindergarten school. By all means necessary, as a parent, I'll do whatever it takes to get my son to a next step."

Rafa tried to unite Jacob with his sisters in the U.S. but his visa was rejected multiple times. Out of options, Rafa is preparing to head to the border again, this time with Jacob — a dangerous journey to a country that will try to turn them back.

Where did MS-13 come from?

"We have people coming into the country, or trying to come in — and we're stopping a lot of them," President Trump said of MS-13 last May. "You wouldn't believe how bad these people are. These aren't people. These are animals." The following month, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said "large criminal organizations such as MS-13 have violated our borders and gained a deadly foothold within the United States."

But MS-13 isn't exactly a foreign invader — it originated in Los Angeles.

During El Salvador's Civil War in 1980s, the U.S. provided right-wing governments political, economic and military support against leftist guerrillas, while government forces were carrying out the bulk of human rights violations. As the government sent thousands to their deaths, civilians were indiscriminately targeted. Hundreds of thousands of Salvadorans fled as the war progressed, and many arrived to the U.S. undocumented.

Reagan-era immigration policies made it especially tough for Salvadorans to obtain asylum status or temporary legal status. Living in low-income neighborhoods, Salvadoran immigrants faced obstacles to landing steady employment and an education. Marginalized Salvadoran youth in LA neighborhoods joined gangs or formed their own.

"[Gangs] are really a social problem, and they attract young people who feel marginalized, who feel excluded from mainstream society," said Sonja Wolf, who researches street gang culture in Central America.

MS-13 initially began as MSS, a stoner gang made up of teenage immigrants who mostly smoked weed and listened to heavy metal music, according to anthropologist Thomas Ward. However, as more migrants arrived, MSS began to protect themselves from other gangs.

According to Ward, the group took a more malevolent turn when members in the LA County jail began adopting street gang subculture. It wasn't until the mid-1990s that the group became MS-13, as members began negotiating with the Mexican mafia for protection in jails and prisons from other Latino gangs.

The gang spread to other states when families moved for work. "Sometimes their children were affiliated with MS or had some kind of link," Ward said. "In order to fit in the new community, they would claim to be LA gangsters to get some clout and start up new cliques claiming MS."

This LA street gang became a problem for El Salvador after a change in U.S. immigration policy in 1996,

when the U.S. increased the number of crimes that were subject to deportation. The U.S. also deported those with suspected gang links. El Salvador hardly had the infrastructure to handle the influx of returning migrants and dismantle criminal organizations, especially since it was still recovering from the war. Between 1998 and 2014, the U.S. deported over 81,000 migrants back to El Salvador.

Deportees reported prejudice against them when trying to find employment in El Salvador, according to Nestor Rodriguez, a sociology professor at the University of Texas at Austin. The Salvadoran press emphasized that planeloads of criminals were returning to the country. "They [deportees] would go to an employer, the employers would say roll up your sleeves. They would see tattoos and say if we need you, we'll call you," Rodriguez said.

Deportees returned to a society torn apart by war, a country they no longer had ties to. When Rafa returned to the country of his birth, he barely spoke Spanish and felt like an outsider. "Me and my son are an attraction, because I walk right here and talk to them in English," he told CBS News.

Meanwhile, the gang put down roots. El Salvador crafted policies to target gang members, but instead MS-13 grew more strategic and powerful, placing members in the police and military, even at the university where they studied law and accounting.

"The societal response was a gang repression, this iron first policy of trying to crack down," Ward said. "The gangs responded by becoming more organized and more rebellious, it created this cycle of violence that has perpetuated until some kind of new policy is instituted where they are not demonized."

Today, there are an estimated 10,000 active MS-13 gang members in local cliques in the U.S. and 50,000 across Central America.

The U.S. has a perspective that once these people are deported, "it's no longer our problem," according to Rodriguez. But he said, "This doesn't disappear. It's like a boomerang, and it's going to create more pressure for migration."

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Houston case reveals extortion, death threats among brutal tactics employed by human traffickers (Houston Chronicle)

[Houston Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 4:30 AM, Gabrielle Banks, 199K]

The Houston caller told the woman to send \$7,000 if she wanted to see her brother alive.

Ilsia Mazariegos-Salazar was not just afraid but bewildered since she had already paid human traffickers in Guatemala \$8,500 to shuttle her brother Migdael across two international borders last summer. Now the smugglers were demanding an additional fee, according to the caller, known as El Sobrino, The Nephew.

He threatened to have Migdael "killed, chopped up into pieces and disappeared" if she didn't come up with the money, Mazariegos-Salazar later told Homeland Security investigators. And he warned that Migdael would be killed if she told police about his threat, according to court documents.

"They had people everywhere," the New Jersey woman told authorities.

Federal agents tracked Ilsia's next call to a southwest Houston apartment complex and safely recovered Migdael in a prearranged undercover operation at an H-E-B outside the Beltway. Investigators found four other smuggled immigrants locked up a mile away in an apartment with boarded-up windows.

The Houston-based federal prosecution of six men charged with aiding in the Alief stash house and another residence offers a rare glimpse into the ruthless tactics experts say are used to extract cash in the underground human cargo trade in which Houston is a major hub.

"It's a vicious world. They know intimidation is a factor in getting paid," said David G. Ramirez, a former assistant special agent with Homeland Security who worked undercover for years in international smuggling operations. "It's not a customer-friendly business."

Although thousands of people are charged with harboring undocumented immigrants, the case is one of just 16 federal prosecutions against 48 defendants in the region since 2014 on allegations of "hostage taking" by a smuggling crew.

Lawyers for four of the men declined to comment about the case, and one defendant remains a fugitive. Attorney Andrew Williams said his client was not involved in human smuggling but was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Williams said he has seen a rise in these kinds of prosecutions in recent years.

"They're becoming more common and people are getting greedier," said Williams, who had a previous client sentenced to 35 years in prison for holding immigrants hostage for ransom.

Hoping for an honest smuggler

Historically, immigrants smuggled into the U.S. face a number of known dangers, including the risk of heat exposure in the desert, a deadly rollover during car chases with local police, suffocation in the back of a big rig trailer, as well as brutal assaults, rapes and raids at stash houses.

"Every person who has family member that goes through the pipeline knows the danger," said Ramirez, the former undercover agent. "They can only hope they get an honest smuggler."

Like Ilesia, many relatives who finance clandestine international transit for loved ones consider the perils during the border crossing but they are often blindsided by smugglers' threats and the accompanying bribes they tack on at the end of the journey, said Special Agent Mary Magness of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, who is second in command over human smuggling investigations for Homeland Security in the sprawling Houston region.

Magness said that extortion occurs in almost every smuggling case.

Threats, exploitation, violence and abuse occur in an echo chamber because migrants who enter the country through illegal channels and relatives who finance their journeys are less likely to contact law enforcement, according to international human rights organizations.

But a scholar who has researched international smuggling and organized crime disputed Magness' assessment, saying the alleged threats to the New Jersey woman represent an aberration from what typically occurs at the end of a human trafficking transaction.

Sheldon X. Zhang, chair of the Criminology & Justice school at University of Massachusetts Lowell, said his field interviews with undocumented migrants and smugglers indicate most traffickers deliver on their original promise to family members.

"At the end of the day, smuggling is a business that relies on repeat customers," Zhang said. "There are rogue smuggling operators, but most established ones are hoping to secure further interactions with the

migrant sending communities. Each success story brings more business."

A wad of cash tossed through the window

The New Jersey woman told federal agents the smugglers put her brother on the phone during calls on Aug. 12 and Aug. 20, according to testimony by a Homeland Security agent at a recent detention hearing.

Federal agents asked the New Jersey woman to place a monitored call to that same cell phone number and tell the man on the line that a friend in Houston would deliver the \$7,000. That call led them to the Sunset Crossing apartments on Beechnut west of the Beltway and authorities set up surveillance there, the agent testified.

At a prearranged meeting at a local supermarket on Aug. 23, two men were "extremely aggressive and uncooperative" with an undercover agent. The agent confirmed that Migdael was in the back seat as he tossed a wad of cash through the car window while other agents moved forward to make an arrest.

Migdael's anguished journey ended in the custody of immigration officials in Houston, where he will likely be called as a witness at trial, said Williams, the defense attorney.

Agents found four other immigrants at locked in an apartment at Sunset Crossing. The family of one Guatemalan migrant detained at the stash house had advanced \$15,000 smugglers for the man's safe arrival, and the crew was extorting relatives for an additional \$2,300, according to the agent's statement. A third Guatemalan family had paid about \$14,000 up front and was ordered to send a few thousands more.

As the federal investigation of the scheme progressed, agents raided another stash house in north Houston on Nov. 28, where they found two Indian nationals and four Guatemalans locked up in a detached garage, according to court records. Authorities also recovered three pistols, a shotgun, a rifle, ammunition, \$12,000 in cash and documents related to the rental properties at Sunset Crossing.

Six Mexican nationals— including a pair nicknamed Gordo, or fatty, and Viejon, Old Timer — ranging in age from 19 to 33 have been indicted in connection with the raids. All except the one fugitive have been detained without bond pending trial.

They are variously charged with illegally transporting foreign nationals across the border, harboring them and conspiring to hold them hostage, and threatening them with violence and death if relatives didn't pay a ransom.

Williams, who represents 19-year-old Daniel Lopez-Garcia, who was sitting in the front seat during the grocery store exchange, said his client had nothing to do with any hostage-taking scheme.

Ashley Kaper, a federal public defender representing defendant Joel Osornio-Cruz, 31, noted at his detention hearing this month that her client told officials he was a victim of the smugglers and was forced to help them at the north Houston stash house to pay off his own \$3,000 smuggling debt by cooking, grocery shopping, mowing the lawn, putting up a security fence and guarding his fellow captives.

One of the smuggled migrants, however, told officials that Osornio-Cruz also guided their group through the brush at the border, to bypass Border Patrol checkpoint, an agent testified.

Thousands charged in Houston-area cases

Magness, the Homeland Security official in Houston, said human hand-offs like the one at the supermarket by smugglers probably take place daily in Houston — at shopping centers, at downtown bus stations, in suburban subdivisions. Federal prosecutors filed 407 human smuggling cases in the region

last year and roughly 2,800 cases in the past five years, court records show.

She said smuggling organizations typically function like well-established businesses. They rely on many interrelated components, so an immigrant may interact with a dozen or more players along the way. Ring members focus on money, communications, security, accommodations, food, travel routes and transport during various portions of the trip.

"It's not unlike an airline," Magness said, "where there is a ticketing agent, someone handling your bags, the pilot, the flight attendants, the ground crew and the people in the tower ... The part where it gets muddled is once they've gotten into the U.S."

Williams, the lawyer for an alleged smuggling crew member in the Sunset Crossing case, said he has become familiar with extortions at stash houses. One client, Cesar Avila, who was convicted in a 2011 case, had been smuggled into the country only to find that his traffickers compelled him to guard the others to work off the money he owed, Williams said.

Witnesses, however, testified that Avila lived with them at the back of a garage at the stash house and held them at gunpoint. A fellow migrant told the court that Avila sexually assaulted her while she was in his custody. Avila faced up to life in prison but the judge gave him 35 years.

Williams, who has been appointed by judges to defend alleged smugglers for nearly 25 years, said prosecutors could elevate all stash house cases by adding a hostage-taking charge, but they only tend to charge that when there is a threat or violence. Unlike harboring migrants, a charge of hostage-taking carries a possible life sentence.

In Migdael's case, Ilesia may have saved his life, but she did not get what she paid for. As a witness in a criminal case, he likely will be tied up for months before his status is reviewed.

It's a better outcome than some families face, however, said Ramirez, the former undercover agent. Some crews occasionally follow up on gruesome threats of chopping people up and feeding them to hogs, he said.

"From the moment you put your lives in somebody else's hands it's scary," he said. "Extortion has now become typical in smuggling scenarios...It's a brutal world."

Afghan military interpreter freed after week in ICE detention (Houston Chronicle)

[Houston Chronicle](#) [1/18/2019 4:50 PM, St. John Barned-Smith, 199K]

An Afghan interpreter for the U.S. military, detained at a Houston airport and threatened with deportation, has been released after a week in custody, advocates and a government spokesman said.

The interpreter, Mohasif Motawakil, 48, who was detained at George Bush Intercontinental Airport Jan. 10 after arriving in the U.S. with his wife and five children, was freed Thursday, his lawyers said.

A spokesman for U.S. Customs and Border Protection confirmed the news.

"State Department has reviewed their initial decision, and Mr. Motawakil's visa has been reinstated and he has been deemed admissible for entry into the United States," the spokesman said in an emailed statement.

Afghan and Iraqi interpreters who worked alongside American troops can qualify for special immigrant visas granting them residency in the United States if they receive letters of support from American officials and show that their lives are in danger. The process takes years for many applicants, who undergo extensive security screenings.

Motawakil's family appears to have raised suspicion in part when he handed customs officers an envelope that was supposed to be sealed containing their medical records. Someone, apparently a family member, had mistakenly opened the envelope, according to lawyers with Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services, or RAICES, a legal advocacy group.

"It's shocking to see the way this administration is treating those who have supported our troops," Erika Andiola, chief advocacy officer for RAICES, said in an announcement of Motawakil's release. "The administration is engaged in a systematic attack on all who it thinks do not belong in this country, and this is just the latest evidence of that."

The detention of Motawakil and his family prompted a flurry of protests, and several members of Congress called for his release.

His wife and family were allowed to leave the airport after more than 24 hours, but their visas were revoked, meaning they would have to seek asylum and would no longer qualify for cash assistance and other benefits already allocated to them, such as help finding work and learning English.

Motawakil's family arrived late Saturday in San Antonio, where they are staying with another Afghan interpreter. Motawakil was held at Bush Intercontinental Airport for four days, then moved to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center in Montgomery County for three days before he was finally released, according to William Fitzgerald, with RAICES. Fitzgerald also confirmed that Motawakil's family's visas had been reinstated.

"It's exciting the interpreter has been released," said Betsy Fisher, policy director of the International Refugee Assistance Project, which sued the federal government last year over the delay in processing these visas for Afghans and Iraqis. "But CBP has a lot to answer for. Why was someone — in danger because they worked for US. and who secured a visa after years of vetting — arrested and detained with his family on arrival?"

U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Houston, one of those who pushed for Motawakil's release, said she was "grateful the process worked."

"America must always stand for human rights and dignity," Jackson Lee said Friday. "When people sacrifice for the American cause, American values, such as translators in dangerous places, it is important to keep our promise — and our duty to do so. It's very important to the security of our troops and personnel around the world, and in dangerous places."

Thousands of Afghans and Iraqis and their families have entered the U.S. on special immigrant visas since Congress enacted The Afghan Allies Protection Act in 2009 and a similar program for Iraq in 2008.

Many face danger from the Taliban and other militants after working with U.S. troops. In 2014, the International Refugee Assistance Project, a nonprofit in New York City, estimated that an Afghan interpreter was killed every 36 hours.

Under the Trump administration, the number of Iraqis and Afghans coming here through these programs has drastically fallen, particularly after Trump in 2017 implemented a controversial ban on immigrants from certain Muslim countries.

Only about four dozen Iraqis were admitted in 2018 through a program Congress created specifically for those employed with the U.S. government or American contractors. More than 3,000 came in 2017.

Another Afghan translator on the same visa as Motawakil was similarly detained when he arrived at Newark Airport shortly after the so-called travel ban was announced in 2017. After more than a year in

prison, he was granted asylum in 2018 and released.

On Friday, advocates for refugees said CBP's actions warranted continued scrutiny.

Jennifer Quigley, an advocacy strategist with Human Rights First, an international nonprofit, said the agency misused its discretion in Motawakil's case. Special immigrant visa applicants only receive visas only after extensive background checks that frequently last years.

"It's undermining the years of work the State Department and intelligence agencies have put in vetting these individuals," Quigley said.

Detained immigrants paid \$1 a day, with toothpaste costing \$11: report (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 11:04 AM, Aris Folley, 3038K]

A detained immigrant who was paid \$1 a day for his work at a privately run detention facility in California was reportedly subjected to higher than normal prices for goods at the site's commissary.

Douglas Cruz, a Honduran detainee who spent eight months at the Adelanto Detention Facility last year, told Reuters that he had to resort to bartering for cookies and ramen noodles because he couldn't afford goods at the commissary.

According to Reuters, a can of tuna was being sold at the commissary for \$3.25 – reportedly more than four times the price tag at a Target near Adelanto.

A separate center, run by CoreCivic Inc., which reportedly also pays \$1-a-day wages, charged detainees \$11.02 for a 4 oz. tube of Sensodyne toothpaste that costs \$5.20 on Amazon.com, according to Reuters.

"CoreCivic ensures all daily needs of detainees are taken care of including three meals a day, clothing, underwear, socks, shoes, sheets, blanket, towels, laundry bag and personal hygiene products such as soap, (toilet) tissue, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrush and disposable razors," Amanda Gilchrist, a spokeswoman for the company, told The Hill in a statement. "Detainees can choose to purchase additional items at the commissary, but the facility provides for all the daily needs listed above at no cost to the detainee."

Some immigration attorneys have reportedly said the hiked-up prices are part of a larger effort by privately run prisons and facilities to profit off cheap labor from inmates.

Adelanto, which is owned by Geo Group Inc., the largest for-profit corrections company in the U.S., has faced accusations from migrants and activists that it purposely skimps on basic essentials to coerce migrants into cheap labor.

Pablo Paez, a spokesman for the company, dismissed the allegations as "completely false" in a statement to Reuters, adding that detainees at facilities operated under Geo Group are given dietician-approved meals and a volunteer labor program.

The company said its commissary prices are "in line with comparable local markets" and that the Geo Group earns only a "minimal commission" on the goods. The bulk of that commission is reportedly directed to a "welfare fund" for other items for detainees.

A company representative told The Hill that the commissary is run by a third-party vendor, and that Geo Group does not profit off the commissary sales.

The representative also said the daily wage paid to detainees is set by the federal government and that detainees at its centers are provided about a dozen different types of hygiene products upon request.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is reportedly the top customer by revenue for Geo Group, which has added hundreds of beds to its immigration detention facilities in the past year.

[NY] It Was a Sanctuary for Immigrants in the Bronx. Then One of Its Owners Was Arrested (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/18/2019 7:19 PM, Christina Goldbaum, 20737K]

Offering traditional Mexican food and social justice conversations, La Morada in the South Bronx is equal parts restaurant and refuge. Run by an immigrant family from Oaxaca, it is home to both fresh tostadas and a community book exchange.

The purple walls are adorned with posters denouncing deportations and neighborhood children's art projects. And one member of the family once spent two weeks in an Arizona immigration jail — by choice — as a form of political protest.

But on Friday, an altercation between one of La Morada's owners and police officers turned the haven into a hostile flash point, fracturing an often strained relationship between police officers in the 40th precinct and the community they serve in the South Bronx.

The interaction resulted in the arrest of Yajaira Saavedra, a daughter of Natalia Mendez and Antonio Saavedra, who opened the restaurant in 2009. Police also attempted to arrest her younger sister, Carolina, 25, but after Carolina started showing signs of a panic attack, police did not carry out the arrest, according to the Saavedra family.

A few hours later Ms. Saavedra, 30, was released and her arrest voided after police determined she had not committed a crime.

"As an undocumented immigrant, we are always on our toes when it comes to immigration raids and police raids," said Ms. Saavedra, who is a recipient of DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, the Obama-era program that protects undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children. "They both create terror."

Accounts of the incident depict an ill-fated encounter between police in the midst of sting operation that ended with an officer's safety in jeopardy and a community with deep-seated distrust of all police activity.

La Morada is situated in a part of the New York City where homicides, fueled by entrenched poverty and rival criminal crews fighting over turf, stubbornly persist.

Whereas some police precincts in New York now regularly experience no killings in a given year, the 40th precinct in the Bronx — made up of the Melrose, Mott Haven, and Port Morris neighborhoods — logged 14 in 2016, six in 2017, and eight last year.

To crack down on crime, officers in the 40th precinct are active in the area but have tried to limit negative interactions with residents to maintain public trust, according to the police.

"There has been a significant decrease in the number of interactions with the public while crime has continued to decrease," according to Lt. John Grimpel, an NYPD spokesman. "We continue to correct conditions while at the same time using discretion and precision."

After the community fallout from Ms. Saavedra's arrest, the 40th Precinct's Community Affairs Unit said they were doing outreach to explain what happened and hear community members' concerns. But that outreach does not always attract the community buy-in the unit needs to change residents' negative perception of the police.

"We put ourselves out there, we make ourselves available to the public, but we don't receive the participation from the community we would like to see," said Detective Claudia Mera of the Community Affairs Unit.

The unit holds a meeting once every three months and invites area residents to bring up concerns.

Still, there is no specific plan to address the incident at La Morada.

Members of the community believe the tactics they use have created a schism between law-abiding residents and police officers who treat all residents as a possible threat.

"I've been working in and with this community for two decades now and police brutality has always been an issue, relationships between the police department and the community have always been an issue," said Alyshia Galvez, 45, a cultural anthropologist who works in the South Bronx. "The way Yajaira was disrespected is the same way other members of the community are disrespected on a daily basis."

For the South Bronx's immigrant community, a negative experience with the police is not just an issue of respect and trust. It also brings fears for their immigration status. For Ms. Saavedra, her arrest made that fear palpable.

"It doesn't matter if I live in a sanctuary city," she said. When the incident occurred, "I was just thinking that this could lead to my deportation."

It all began around 4:30 p.m. last Friday when an undercover officer from the Bronx narcotics unit made a felony purchase of narcotics on the street outside the restaurant and the individual from whom she purchased the drugs began acting aggressive, according to a police spokesman.

Noticing what appeared to be an arrest happening outside the restaurant, Ms. Saavedra began filming the incident on her phone, mindful of the stories she hears often from friends and customers of what she describes as prejudiced police practices in the neighborhood.

The police do "not have a good relationship with the community," Ms. Saavedra said. "We see them making unfair arrests, racially profiling us, so I started recording so if that happened it could be exposed."

As the undercover officer entered La Morada for her own safety, another plainclothes officer approached Ms. Saavedra's brother, Marco Saavedra, and asked him to momentarily close the restaurant to new customers. The siblings instead asked that the officers leave, explaining they did not want to be involved in any police activity.

"I could tell the officer was getting frustrated, and that's when he said he would 'flip the place upside down' if we didn't do what he told us to," said Mr. Saavedra.

The police officers then left the restaurant, returning minutes later with additional officers and handcuffing Ms. Saavedra.

Ms. Saavedra was trembling as she described her encounter on Monday morning after community members filled the restaurant offering their support.

"La Morada is like the watering hole for this community, it's our meeting point, and this family is an inspiration for us," said Vanna Valdez, a 31 year old resident who has lived in the neighborhood her entire life.

Ms. Saavedra's parents opened La Morada in 2009, after living in the United States for 17 years. When

they came in 1992 after crossing the Sonoran Desert, their plan was to stay only one year. But settling into Washington Heights, her mother, Natalia Mendez, was impressed by the schools and the neighborhood so she sent for her children to come join them and begin life anew.

When she and her husband, Antonio, opened the restaurant on Willis Avenue it became a neighborhood sensation. Longtime neighbors and resident artists became regulars. Mayor Bill de Blasio stopped by. The five moles Ms. Mendez prepared for her customers soon earned glowing reviews from critics who praised the family's ability to bring both Oaxacan food and its sense of selfless reciprocity to the neighborhood.

But the critical need the restaurant filled — providing neighbors a safe, positive, community-oriented space — also underscored the dangers that surrounded it.

The attention Yajaira's arrest garnered has made the incident a rallying cry for neighbors who have experienced similar interactions with the police and feel their voice is rarely heard.

On Friday residents arrived at the precinct to demand her release while others went to La Morada to comfort her family members, who were shocked by the way the officers treated Yajaira.

"This is the kind of thing I would see in Mexico not here in the United States, a country that respect laws," said Antonio Saavedra, Ms. Saavedra's father. "Where is the law? I don't see it here right now."

[MD] ICE confirms why it ended contract with Maryland county (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 6:33 AM, Staff, 337K]

Federal immigration officials have confirmed that they ended a contract with a Maryland county to house immigration detainees because local officials quit participating in a screening program.

The Capital reports that a spokesman for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said in an email that the decision to end the contract with Anne Arundel County was tied directly to the county's decision to no longer participate in the 287(g) program.

The program trains correction officers to screen inmates for immigration violations. County Executive Steuart Pittman withdrew from the program in December, saying it didn't make people safer.

ICE spokesman Vincent Picard said the agency partners with counties that cooperate with its public safety mission. He said ICE believes the county's decision to terminate the 287(g) program "undermines this mission."

[MI] Marine vet with PTSD held by ICE for 3 days before agency realized he was citizen (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/19/2019 3:14 PM, Anna Hopkins, 9216K]

A Marine vet with post-traumatic stress disorder was held for three days by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for possible deportation before authorities realized he was a citizen born in Michigan, lawyers said Wednesday.

Jilmar Ramos-Gomez, 27, of Grand Rapids, was deemed "a foreign national illegally present in the U.S." by ICE and was detained on Dec. 14. He was released on Dec. 17 after records demonstrated he was an American citizen.

"Why did they think he was a noncitizen? Did they get him confused with someone else? Who knows," American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) attorney Miriam Aukerman said. "This is an individual who's incredibly vulnerable with a mental illness."

Ramos-Gomez was apprehended by police after being accused of trespassing and damaging a fire alarm at a Grand Rapids hospital on Nov. 21. He was placed in Kent County jail, and was set to be released on

Dec. 14 after reportedly pleading guilty to the charges against him. At that point, he was turned over to ICE and taken to a detention center 70 miles away, though he reportedly had his U.S. passport with him.

Kent County Deputy Sheriff Chuck DeWitt shifted the blame when contacted for a comment. "Once he was released from our custody, he was under the domain of ICE," he said. "Where they take him is their process. Our procedures were followed."

Ramos-Gomez is undergoing mental health treatment, so little is known about the time he spent in ICE custody. However, Aukerman called the treatment of the veteran as "appalling."

Robert Kessler, an immigration lawyer based in Grand Rapids, was familiar with Ramos-Gomez because he aided in securing temporary residency for the veteran's mother, Maria Gomez. When Ramos-Gomez's mother told him what happened to her son, he took action.

"I immediately called ICE and shouted at them," he told The Washington Post. "And they called me back and said, kind of, 'Oops, yeah, come and get him.' They didn't say, 'Our bad,' but kind of implied that."

He added that the situation was a clear example of racial bias. "I think it's racial stereotyping. And it should have been evident that he had pretty significant mental health issues."

Ramos-Gomez served in the Marines from 2011-14, during which time he received accolades including a national defense service medal, a global war on terrorism service medal, an Afghanistan campaign medal, and a combat action ribbon. Upon returning home, the ACLU says he was "a shell of his former self," and suffered from PTSD as a result of things he'd seen in combat. According to his family, he often has episodes in which he experiences dissociative amnesia - disappearing for periods of time with no recollection of where's been.

[MI] Kent County changes its policy on ICE requests after Marine veteran mistakenly detained (Michigan Public Radio)

[Michigan Public Radio](#) [1/18/2019 5:40 PM, Dustin Dwyer, 31K] Video: [HERE](#)

The Kent County Sheriff's Department is changing its policy on cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

That's after ICE detained a Kent County resident and Marine combat veteran for possible deportation last month. The man, Jilmar Ramos-Gomez, is a U.S. citizen. He was handed over to ICE by the Kent County jail, after ICE sent a request to the jail to hold him.

Kent County Sheriff Michelle LaJoye-Young says she's outraged by the incident.

"I notified ICE officials earlier today that the Kent County Sheriff will hold detainees for ICE only after ICE presents to our office an arrest warrant signed by a federal judge or magistrate," she said at a press conference this afternoon in Grand Rapids.

Other counties in Michigan, including Wayne, Ingham and Kalamazoo counties already had these policies on cooperation with ICE.

Immigration advocates and civil rights attorneys have been pressuring Kent County for months to change as well. The requests from ICE are considered "administrative warrants" which are not reviewed by any outside agency.

Data from Syracuse University show that Kent County has received about 2,000 of these requests in the past decade, more than double the number of any other county in Michigan.

Last year, Sheriff LaJoye-Young defended the practice of cooperating with the requests, saying that ICE had the authority to detain people without getting a warrant signed by a judge.

"It's not for us to determine if the legal process that congress set out is fair or if it's appropriate or sufficient," she said at the time.

Immigration advocates, including members of Movimiento Cosecha GR, the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center and the ACLU of Michigan all warned that holding suspects based solely on an ICE request, and not on a warrant reviewed by a judge, led to unnecessary harm, and could lead to mistakes.

In December, that's just what happened, when Jilmar Ramos-Gomez was turned over to ICE custody and held for deportation for three days before his mother was able to hire an attorney to get him out.

"I don't like that what they did to my son," the mother, Maria Gomez-Velasquez said. "Kent County need to wake up. They need to do their job."

This afternoon, Sheriff LaJoye-Young said she shares the outrage over what happened.

"Absolutely. Of course I do," she said. "Very sad and unfortunate situation."

LaJoye-Young says the Sheriff's Department is conducting an investigation into what went wrong. She says one thing she's learned so far is that her department did not report Ramos-Gomez to ICE.

Instead, it was the Grand Rapids Police who notified ICE when Ramos-Gomez was first arrested on November 21st of last year.

Ramos-Gomez was arrested for property damage and trespassing at a local hospital, where he made his way to the helipad area on the roof. His family says he suffers from mental issues, including PTSD, as a result of his service in the Marines in the Afghanistan war. They say that's what led to the incident at the hospital.

But Grand Rapids police didn't take it lightly.

"Our police department took this incident very seriously and believed it was a possible act of terrorism," said Dave Kiddle, interim chief of the Grand Rapids Police Department, in a statement posted online. "In the interest of public safety and because there was a risk to federal airspace, we contacted federal authorities, including the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force and ICE."

In a statement posted by Fox17 in Grand Rapids, Immigration and Customs Enforcement said its officers interviewed Ramos-Gomez after his arrest. ICE says he claimed he was "illegally present" in the U.S.

[MI] Michigan sheriff: Warrant needed if ICE wants jail inmates (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/18/2019 4:27 PM, Staff, 337K]

The sheriff in western Michigan's largest county says her jail won't release people to federal immigration agents unless they present an arrest warrant from a judge.

The decision was announced Friday, after lawyers said a war veteran was picked up at the Kent County jail and detained for three days in December. Jilmar Ramos-Gomez was released by Immigration and Customs Enforcement after a lawyer proved he's a U.S. citizen born in Michigan.

Sheriff Michelle LaJoye-Young says she joins people who have expressed "outrage" over Ramos-Gomez' treatment by ICE.

The 27-year-old Marine veteran was in jail on charges related to an incident at a hospital. Grand Rapids police say they contacted ICE.

Ramos-Gomez has mental-health problems. ICE says he told them he was in the U.S. illegally.

[MI] Deported after 30 years in US, father still stuck in Mexico one year later, without wife and kids (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/19/2019 10:13 AM, Niraj Warikoo, Detroit Free Press, 6053K] Video: [HERE](#)
Inside a room in his aunt's home in Mexico, Jorge Garcia spends most of his days alone.

Separated from his wife and two children in metro Detroit, the 40-year-old father feels isolated, struggling to find work and make connections in a land he hasn't lived in for 30 years.

One year ago, the man from Lincoln Park, Michigan, was deported to Mexico. His emotional departure was captured in a Detroit Free Press story and picked up by media across the U.S. as immigration emerged as an explosive issue over the past year.

Born in Mexico, Garcia was brought to the U.S. when he was 10 years old by an undocumented adult and had lived in America for 30 years, working and paying taxes to help support his wife and two teenage children. He had no criminal record, but was too old to qualify for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), which allows the children of undocumented immigrants to live in the U.S.

Now, amid divisive debate in the country over immigration and President Donald Trump's calls for a border wall, Garcia remains stuck in Mexico, unable to even get an appointment with the U.S. Embassy's office in Juarez, the first step for possible readmission into the U.S.

"It's been tough," Garcia, 40, told the Free Press by phone from his home about one hour from Mexico City. "I'm still trying to adjust to living in a different country."

He tries to talk often with his wife and children by phone, but it's not the same as being with them. From helping them with their homework to driving them to school, he's missing out on their lives.

"It's been pretty stressful," he said of being separated from his 16-year-old daughter and 13-year-old son. "Even though you can talk on the phone, it's not the same as talking to them in person."

His wife, Cindy Garcia, is also struggling without her husband at home.

Born and raised in Detroit, Cindy, 46, married Jorge in 2002. She's on retired disability after going through two C-sections and years of heavy lifting at work in a truck plant in Dearborn.

"It's harder when you drop off the kids at school," Cindy said. "You're at home by yourself and your mind starts to wander. You get sad and depressed knowing your spouse is not there when you need the moral support."

Cindy and her two children, Soleil Garcia, 15, and Jorge Garcia Jr., 13, miss Jorge especially during special moments, like birthdays. Last year, Jorge missed his daughter's Quinceañera, the 15th birthday celebration popular among Mexican-Americans, which often includes a father-daughter dance.

"It's been rough mentally, knowing that he is in a country that he doesn't know," Cindy said. For the children, "it's been hard because they lack their father in their lives. They're used to doing their homework with him, and now their dad is not here with them. It's very hard."

Cindy and her two children are currently on a holiday vacation, staying with Jorge in Mexico at his place in

Nicolás Romero. They were able to celebrate Christmas, New Year's Day, and Jorge's birthday, and they were there to mark the one-year anniversary of him being deported.

"It's a day that is going to be stuck in my mind," Jorge said. When he was deported on Jan. 15, 2018, "I didn't think I would be separated from my family ... this long."

Jorge has been fighting to obtain legal status since 2005, hiring attorneys and spending fees in an attempt to get U.S. citizenship. In the past, he was allowed by immigration authorities to remain in the U.S., but that changed as Trump cracked down on immigration. In November 2017, he was told he had to leave by Jan. 15.

Escorted by federal agents, he hugged his crying wife and children on Martin Luther King Jr. Day before boarding the gates in a moment captured by the Free Press that went viral.

Jorge's attorney, Marya Lorenzana-Miles, said they are waiting to get an appointment with the U.S. Embassy. After that, they then have to apply for a waiver before Jorge can be readmitted. His wife has to show she is suffering from hardship in order for Jorge to get the waiver, she said.

Lorenzana-Miles said it's taking longer for deported immigrants to get appointments with embassies.

"The system does not work properly," she said. "The system does not care about the family. The system is creating bigger problem and more problems."

The State Department, which oversees foreign embassies, referred questions to the Department of Homeland Security, which did not return a request seeking comment on Jorge's case.

In a statement last year, the Detroit office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) said Garcia was "an unlawfully present citizen of Mexico" who "was ordered removed by an immigration judge in June 2006." ICE said it had previously "exercised prosecutorial discretion on multiple prior occasions" before deciding to deport him.

Immigrant advocates say that across the U.S., deportations are ripping apart families, leaving kids without parents to support them, both financially and emotionally. Jorge worked as a landscaper and was active in his children's lives.

"It's not just my kids, it's a lot of kids being affected," Cindy said. "They all need their parents, to have them back in their lives to give them guidance. They're teenagers, they need that extra help and guidance."

Jorge wants to work in Mexico, but he said it has been difficult dealing with the local bureaucracies that require paperwork and other hurdles. One of his cousins occasionally helps him get small jobs in construction when they are available, but most of the time, he's unable to find work.

"It's hard to get jobs," he said.

Jorge said he hopes that the U.S. can pass immigration reform that would give a path to citizenship to people like him with no criminal records brought to the U.S. as children.

For now, he waits, filling his time with calls to his wife and thinking of his children. He remembers how easy it was to get around Detroit, while in Mexico, "I don't even feel comfortable going out to places here by myself."

[NV] Man in custody for 4 'brutal' killings that shook Reno communities: Officials (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/21/2019 11:49 AM, Emily Shapiro, 2413K] Video: [HERE](#)

A man was taken into custody this weekend in connection with four "brutal" murders that shook communities in the Reno, Nevada, area, officials said.

Wilbur Ernesto Martinez-Guzman, 19, was apprehended Saturday, Washoe County Sheriff Darin Balaam said at a joint news conference Sunday.

"We feel confident we have evidence that will link him to all four homicides," Balaam said. "The information we have now indicates there are no outstanding suspects."

Martinez-Guzman "was likely in the United States illegally and was detainable," immigration officers verified Saturday afternoon, said Carson City Sheriff Ken Furlong.

Martinez-Guzman, who has been living in Carson City for about a year, is being held in the Carson City Detention Facility on immigration charges and charges related to possession of stolen property, Balaam said.

Investigators will be seeking an arrest warrant for the murders in the coming days, Washoe County District Attorney Chris Hicks said at the news conference.

No motive has been released, and authorities added that Martinez-Guzman was not known to the Carson City Sheriff's Office.

All four victims were found shot dead in their homes, reported ABC Reno affiliate KOLO.

The first of the four victims, 56-year-old Connie Koontz, was killed Jan. 9 or 10, KOLO reported.

Sophia Renken, 74, was found dead Jan. 13, according to KOLO, and then Gerald David, 81, and his wife Sharon David, 80, were found shot dead in their home on Jan. 16.

"Our communities were shaken by these brutal murders," Hicks said.

From Jan. 10 to Saturday, Jan. 19, investigators were following up on tips and leads in the four killings, and by Friday, those leads allowed agencies to focus on several specific locations in Carson City, Furlong said.

Friday afternoon surveillance teams were sent to find Martinez-Guzman and anyone associated with him, and by 7 a.m. Saturday, according to Furlong, investigators found him at a home in east Carson City.

Authorities said family members of all four victims were at Sunday's news conference.

A relative of Gerald and Sharon David told reporters, "We'd like to express our sincere sympathies to the families of the other victims. They are in our prayers. We will continue to keep our eyes on God, trusting in him, as we walk through the aftermath of this tragedy."

[NV] Man linked to 4 killings suspected of being in US illegally (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 11:31 PM, Staff, 337K]

Authorities investigating four recent Nevada killings say murder charges are pending against a man suspected of being in the U.S. illegally.

Wilbur Martinez-Guzman, 20, was arrested Saturday in Carson City and is being held on possession of stolen property, burglary and immigration charges.

Authorities say they expect to file murder charges against him in the coming days in the shooting deaths of an elderly Reno couple and two women who lived near the town of Gardnerville.

Carson City Sheriff Ken Furlong said at a Sunday news conference that federal immigration authorities told his office Martinez-Guzman had lived in Carson City for about a year and was in the country illegally.

Furlong said Monday he didn't know where Martinez-Guzman is originally from, and a message left with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was not immediately returned. President Donald Trump mentioned the killings Monday in a tweet making the case for his long-promised border wall.

Authorities say Connie Koontz, 56, was found dead Jan. 10 in her home in Gardnerville Ranchos, about 15 miles (24 kilometers) south of Carson City. Three days later, 74-year-old Sophia Renken was found dead in her home about a mile from where Koontz lived.

On Wednesday, the bodies of 81-year-old Gerald David, and his 80-year-old wife, Sharon, were found in their home on the southern edge of Reno, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) north of Carson City.

Furlong said the investigation is ongoing and it's too soon to comment on a possible motive. He said Martinez-Guzman didn't yet have an attorney who could comment on his behalf.

This story has been corrected to show Martinez-Guzman is 20 years old, not 19.

[Central America] These Central Americans have a second chance at asylum after being "unlawfully" deported. First ICE needs to bring them back (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/21/2019 1:05 PM, Kate Smith, 2890K]

After years of rape, beatings and persecution from notorious gangs in their home countries, 12 Central Americans fled to the United States last year to seek asylum. But then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions had just issued a policy change: Domestic and gang violence would not be grounds for asylum.

They sued, and in December, a federal judge said the policy change was "unlawful," and those individuals would get a second chance. But six of them had already been deported back to their native countries and, per the judge's orders, ICE agents are responsible for bringing them back. All of six remain in Central America, and the government blames the shutdown.

Among the plaintiffs still stuck in Central America is Nora, an El Salvadorian women who survived years of beatings and rape by her partner, a known gang member. When Nora attempted to end the relationship in May of last year, her partner's gang targeted her, threatening to rape her and kill her children.

"In May, when Nora was walking home with her three young children, [her partner's friend] pursued her down the street and told her that he knew she lived alone with her children and that he would come to her house at night to have sex with her," according to the original complaint against Sessions' new asylum policy. "He showed her a gun in his waistband and then looked to her son, indicating that he would kill them both if she did not submit to his demands."

Shortly after the threat, Nora and her son fled El Salvador, seeking asylum in the United States. Even though an immigration officer believed her story — hers is a typical experience for women in the Central America — she did not pass her "credible fear" interview because of the new policy.

Generally, asylum is available to anyone who fears persecution in their home country because of their affiliation with one or more of five accepted groups: race, religion, nationality, political opinion or particular social group.

In his December ruling on the lawsuit, the judge called the policy change "arbitrary, capricious, and in

violation of the immigration laws insofar as those policies are applied in credible fear proceedings."

Of the 12 plaintiffs in the case, *Grace v. Whitacker*, six had already been deported to Central America, five had been released from detention centers as they awaited removal, and one remains detained, according to Jennifer Chang Newell, an attorney with the ACLU's immigrants' rights project who worked to strike down Sessions' asylum policy.

The judge ordered that the six who had been removed be brought back to the United States for immigration proceedings. But the partial government shutdown has restricted ICE agents' ability to follow through, according to a status report filed by the government on January 18.

"Due to the lapse in appropriations, the normal process for paying departure and passport fees has become complicated," the report said.

Some of the plaintiffs have had to pay their own travel document fees — despite the judge's order saying that would be the government's responsibility — and told that they would be reimbursed eventually, according to the report.

"There's been a few logistical issues getting them back, things like travel documents, passports, parental consent and travel fees," said Newell in a telephone interview with CBS News on Friday.

As they wait, six of the plaintiffs remain in the countries and situations that prompted them to seek asylum in the first place. Nora and her son "continue to fear for their lives," according to the original complaint.

Though the plaintiffs will get a second chance at asylum, thousands others won't.

"If someone has already been removed because of the Sessions decision and they weren't part of the lawsuit, they're just out of luck," said Anne Dutton, an attorney at the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies who also worked on the case, in a telephone interview with CBS News on Friday.

What exactly happens to the plaintiffs next isn't clear. The government is appealing the decision. And last week's status report said part of the delay in returning the asylum seekers is because the "parties do not agree on the process that will be applied to the Plaintiffs once they are returned to U.S. soil."

The government argues that upon their arrival in the United States, Nora, her son and the other four should be detained until their credible fear interview, which could take months to schedule. Lawyers representing the Central Americans, however, believe that they should be able to begin that process without being held in a detention center.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[Central America] Federal Judge orders 12 immigrants to be given a second chance at asylum (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/21/2019 6:24 PM, Staff, 2890K]
Judge orders ICE to return deported immigrants

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Citizenship and Immigration Services

300 DHS employees to return to work Tuesday (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/21/2019 3:57 PM, UPI, 2015K]

Some 300 furloughed Department of Homeland Security employees were notified Monday to return to work to lessen the impact of the ongoing partial government shutdown.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen approved U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' request for the workers to return to work Tuesday with pay, the Washington Examiner reported.

The workers, all from the agency's E-Verify office, will be reinstated to new USCIS positions that are seen as necessary until the shutdown ends.

The E-Verify office offers employers a voluntary service to confirm the employment eligibility of their workers, and it has been shuttered since the shutdown began on Dec. 22.

"USCIS is fortunate that our highly trained and experienced E-Verify staff are returning to help support the agency's mission in other capacities until their program is fully functional," USCIS spokesman Michael Bars said in a statement reported by the Washington Examiner.

The workers will receive their regular paycheck despite taking on new positions, CNN reported, adding that the employees will be trained on their new positions starting Tuesday and will return to their E-Verify office positions once the shutdown ends.

The 300 employees stationed nationwide will take on positions that are funded by fees.

The move by Homeland Security follows the U.S State Department informing overseas employees to return to work no later than Tuesday after it was able to secure funds for two weeks' salaries.

The shutdown started mid-December due to an impasse over funding for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. President Donald Trump is looking for some \$5.7 billion to construct the border wall that congressional Democrats oppose.

Nearly 300 federal workers recalled from furlough to perform different jobs (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/22/2019 1:02 AM, Geneva Sands and Nick Valencia, CNN, 5847K]

Nearly 300 furloughed Department of Homeland Security employees are being called back to work amid the longest government shutdown in history.

Those federal workers -- all from the E-Verify division of US Citizenship and Immigration Services -- will be back on the job and the payroll starting Tuesday morning until a deal is reached to fund the parts of the government that are closed.

However, the E-Verify employees won't be going back to their pre-shutdown jobs for now. Instead they will be required to take on other responsibilities within Citizenship and Immigration Services. Employees will be assigned to jobs that are fee-funded, according to Citizenship and Immigration Services spokesman Michael Bars.

Employees will receive the same pay rate they did before the shutdown.

Citizenship and Immigration Services and a portion of the Federal Emergency Management Agency make up the majority of the DHS workforce that continued to report to work and to be paid during the shutdown from other than annual appropriations, according to a DHS official.

The E-Verify staff was an exception. It has been in furlough status since the shutdown began on Dec. 22.

"As you can imagine we are thrilled to have them back in our ranks, however, we continue to support all government employees who are working without pay and those who are not working," said Danielle

Spooner, the president of American Federation of Government Employees Council 119, which represents Citizenship and Immigration Services employees.

Notices were sent to the some 300 E-Verify staff stationed around the country informing them they had to report to work this week and would be reassigned to other jobs until the end of the shutdown.

According to a notice obtained by CNN, employees went back on the payroll on Sunday and are required to report to the office after the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

The measures were proposed by Citizenship and Immigration Services and approved by DHS to help mitigate the impact of the partial government shutdown, according to Bars.

"USCIS is fortunate that our highly trained and experienced E-Verify staff are returning to help support the agency's mission in other capacities until their program is fully functional. We're thankful for their patience and flexibility during this time," Bars said.

Employees will receive training for their new job functions and will return to their E-Verify jobs when a deal is reached to fund the government, according to USCIS.

Although E-Verify employees will be back at work, the program itself, which allows businesses to electronically confirm the employment eligibility of their workers, will remain dormant.

Due to "the continued lapse in appropriations, you are still prohibited from performing work in support of the E-Verify program. As such, you will perform exempt (fee-funded) activities in support of the USCIS mission," read a notification sent to employees.

Participating in the E-Verify program is voluntary for employers, except for some state requirements and some federal hiring, according to a union official who works for the program.

"E-Verify is shut down right now, so employers cannot verify eligibility of employees," said the official.

However, Citizenship and Immigration Services took a "number of steps to minimize the burden on both employees and employers," such as suspending the "three-day rule" for creating E-Verify cases, said Bars.

"Fidelity to a lawful workforce doesn't stop with the suspension of the E-Verify program," said Bars in a statement to CNN. "USCIS is committed to protecting U.S. workers, the integrity of our immigration system, and our laws."

Although it wasn't immediately clear what jobs the E-Verify staff would be doing, the work would likely be immigration-related, which is fee-funded at the agency, according to the union official.

At least one reassignment was to the Field Operations Directorate to help process Notices to Appear -- a document that instructs an individual to appear before an immigration judge, according to an employee notification obtained by CNN.

E-Verify employees had mixed reactions to the news that they would be called back to work.

"I am most upset about being recalled for a job I wasn't hired for and having to pay back the furlough assistance loan immediately without back pay from the two missed checks," an E-Verify employee told CNN.

The employee, who said they had faced financial hardship during the past month, was concerned that

previously agreed-upon telework options may not be available in the new role.

"I won't know if we'll be allowed to telework, however, I believe our pay stays the same," the employee said.

Spooner told CNN she had heard concerns about telework and requiring staff to work different jobs, but that she also had heard about people glad to be going back to work and making a living.

"I would like to think that most are happy to get back to work and these are small issues in comparison to being forced to work and not getting paid. That causes a financial hardship," said Spooner.

The union official, who had to take on outside work during the furlough, said, "I don't ever look a gift horse in the mouth."

"I need to go back to work because I need to pay my bills. There are some questions that employees have. What are we going to be doing? Were we hired for that?" said the union official, who works for E-Verify outside of Washington.

When asked if most people were happy to go back to work, the official said, "Absolutely."

E-Verify employees can return to work despite partial government shutdown, DHS says (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/21/2019 8:00 PM, Samuel Chamberlain, 9216K]

Approximately 300 employees of the federal E-Verify program who have been furloughed due to the partial government shutdown will be able to return to work Tuesday, the Department of Homeland Security announced late Monday.

The returning employees will be assigned to work temporarily on non-E-Verify related tasks until Congress approves funding for the program, which is meant to prevent illegal immigrants from gaining legal employment by comparing their identifying information against data gathered by DHS or the Social Security Administration.

"[U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services] is fortunate that our highly trained and experienced E-Verify staff are returning to help support the agency's mission in other capacities until their program is fully functional," spokesman Michael Bars said in a statement. "We're thankful for their patience and flexibility during this time."

The employees will return to work exactly one month after the start of the partial government shutdown, which has resulted from a lapse in funding for nine of the 15 Cabinet-level departments, including DHS. The stalemate stems from President Trump's demand that Congress allocate \$5.7 billion to construct a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Congressional Democrats repeatedly have refused to allocate any new funding for the wall and have pushed legislation that would provide an additional \$1.3 billion for border security — including 75 more immigration judges and infrastructure improvements — but no funding for the wall.

Over the weekend, Trump offered to provide temporary protections for some immigrants in exchange for wall funding, an idea that Democrats roundly rejected.

An estimated 460,000 federal employees have been working without pay, including Transportation Security Administration screeners at airports. Last week, the Internal Revenue Service announced that it had recalled approximately 46,000 furloughed employees to assist in processing tax returns and refunds.

Last week, Trump signed legislation guaranteeing back pay for federal workers who have been furloughed or forced to work without pay during the partial shutdown.

DHS reinstating 300 furloughed employees to carry out critical tasks (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/21/2019 8:00 PM, Anna Giaritelli, 629K]

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen has approved a request by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to reinstate 300 furloughed employees, a senior DHS official told the Washington Examiner.

The personnel have been out of work 30 days as a result of the partial government shutdown but will head back to the office Tuesday and will be paid for their work, the official said. Employees of the Immigration Records and Identity Services Directorate and other components of USCIS were notified Monday that they will be required to return to work in a day.

The group of reinstated personnel are from the agency's E-Verify office, which oversees a program that companies can use to validate a job applicant's legal ability to work in the country.

However, employees will not be going back to their normal jobs. All 300 workers will be trained starting Tuesday and then assigned to other USCIS jobs that have been deemed critical. They will continue in these new roles, the nature of which the official did not specify, until the shutdown concludes.

"USCIS is fortunate that our highly trained and experienced E-Verify staff are returning to help support the agency's mission in other capacities until their program is fully functional. We're thankful for their patience and flexibility during this time," USCIS spokesman Michael Bars said in a statement.

USCIS will pay the employees their normal pay despite doing different jobs for an undisclosed length of time.

The initiative is being funded with exam fees. Bars did not share the costs involved of bringing hundreds of employees back to work.

E-Verify was suspended due to the shutdown, but those filling out paperwork to start jobs are still required to fill out the Employment Eligibility Verification, or I-9, form.

Homeland Security citizenship office to bring back workers, with pay, during shutdown (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/21/2019 8:12 PM, Stephen Dinan, 527K]

E-Verify remains shut down due to lack of congressional appropriations

Homeland Security has found a way to bring back about 300 people who were furloughed under the government shutdown, finding them alternate jobs they can do until the funding crisis is over.

The employees work at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services on the E-Verify program, which allows businesses to check their workers' immigration status.

While most of USCIS is funded by fees and has remained open despite the funding lapse, E-Verify is paid for out of congressional appropriations, so when Homeland Security's money lapsed the program went offline and the workers were furloughed.

E-Verify will still be shut down, but the workers can come back to help out on other USCIS missions, the agency said.

"USCIS is fortunate that our highly trained and experienced E-Verify staff are returning to help support the

agency's mission in other capacities until their program is fully functional," said agency spokesman Michael Bars.

The employees are back on the payroll as of Tuesday and will be trained in their new temporary tasks.

E-Verify is voluntary for most of the country, though federal rules make it mandatory for some government contractors, and some states have made use of the program mandatory for businesses within their boundaries.

The program is a more thorough check of workers' status than the current I-9 forms, which most businesses use, but which are easily defrauded.

Some Democrats have chided President Trump for the shutdown curtailing E-Verify, saying while he's fighting for a border wall a more effective tool to combat illegal immigration has gone dark.

Administration officials say that even without E-Verify, businesses can still use the I-9 system.

In the meantime, businesses and employees alike are freed from deadlines that apply to E-Verify use.

Trump again endorses immigration changes for seasonal migrant farm workers (Roll Call)

[Roll Call](#) [1/18/2019 9:45 AM, John T. Bennett, 90K]

For the third time this week, President Donald Trump on Friday signaled support for immigration policy changes that would make it easier for seasonal farm workers to enter the United States.

Trump pleaded in a Friday morning tweet for someone to inform Speaker Nancy Pelosi that "her 'big donors' in wine country that people working on farms (grapes) will have easy access in!"

That came after he floated on Monday what his aides have called for in recent months, a rare break with his own hardline immigration stance in remarks to a farmers group. In that speech, the president said he wants to "actually make it easier for them to help the farmers because you need these people."

"A lot of people don't understand this. You need people to help you with the farms," he said Monday. "I'm not going to rule that out."

The president repeated a version of that during Thursday remarks at the Pentagon.

His endorsement of such changes could be a fig leaf to Democrats and part of any potential eventual deal to end the partial government shutdown that is in its 28th day. Talks remain stalled, however, as the sides are far apart on Trump's proposed border barrier.

Self-interest almost might be in play. Trump owns a winery in Virginia, and has sought workers through the seasonal farmworker program run by the Labor Department, according to past reports.

Democrats propose legal status for undocumented immigrant farmworkers (Roll Call)

[Roll Call](#) [1/18/2019 4:22 PM, Ellyn Ferguson, 90K]

Legislation would protect workers from deportation, ease labor shortages, proponents say

Two California Democrats filed legislation Thursday that would give undocumented immigrant farmworkers and their families a path to legal resident status and possibly U.S. citizenship.

The legislation by Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Rep. Zoe Lofgren is designed to ease agricultural worker shortages and protect undocumented workers already in the United States from deportation. The bills come as the nation grapples with an extended partial government shutdown fueled by an impasse

between President Donald Trump and congressional Democrats over funding for a border wall and broader differences over immigration policies.

The companion Senate and House bills revive proposals by Feinstein in prior Congresses to allow immigrant farmworkers to apply for so-called blue cards from the Department of Homeland Security, which would provide temporary legal status for those who qualify. Applicants would have to undergo background checks, have no criminal records, and pay federal taxes, immigration processing fees and \$100 penalty fee to DHS.

The department could begin to adjust blue card workers to lawful permanent residence five years after the law takes effect. Eligible workers would have to have performed either 100 days of agricultural work each year for five years or 150 days of such work each year for three years.

Feinstein and Lofgren said the legislation would address a key labor issue for California and other states with produce and dairy operations that rely heavily on a pool of immigrant workers that is largely undocumented.

Some estimates put the share of agricultural workers in the United States illegally as high as 75 percent. Feinstein's bill has 11 co-sponsors, all Democrats, and Lofgren's bill has 58 co-sponsors, all Democrats.

"By protecting farmworkers from deportation, our bill would ensure that hardworking immigrants don't live in fear and that California's agriculture industry has the workforce it needs to succeed," Feinstein said in a statement. "Despite their significant contributions to California's economy and communities, farmworkers are a priority for deportation under the Trump administration's policies."

Lofgren said the legislation would allow farmworkers to focus on work and their families rather than fearing deportation.

"With this legislation, farmworkers will be able to improve their wages and working conditions, resulting in a more stable farm labor force and greater food safety and security to the benefit of American employers, workers, and consumers," she said in a statement.

Jason Resnick, vice president and general counsel for Western Growers, called the legislation "a step in the right direction" although it is unclear how it will fare in a divided Congress.

Resnick said a broader revamping of immigration policy by Congress that makes changes to the H-2A visa temporary guest worker program would also help to address farmers' labor problems. The Labor Department issues H-2A visas for foreign agricultural workers hired by farmers to do seasonal work, such as harvesting crops.

Farmers complain the program is costly and cumbersome while farmworker groups say it provides inadequate pay and protection for the temporary workers.

Trump alluded to the program during a Jan. 14 speech to the American Farm Bureau Federation convention.

"You know, when we have proper security, people aren't going to come, except for the people we want to come because we want to take people in to help our farmers, et cetera," the president said. "We're going to make that actually easier for them — to help the farmers. Because you need these people."

He provided no specifics.

Trump has since repeated versions of those remarks, first on Thursday at the Pentagon and then in a

tweet Friday, in which he signaled support for immigration policy changes that would make it easier for seasonal farm workers to enter the United States.

"Could somebody please explain to Nancy [Pelosi] & her 'big donors' in wine country that people working on farms (grapes) will have easy access in!" the president said on Twitter.

Michigan Sen. Debbie Stabenow, the top Agriculture Committee Democrat, said she would like to see Congress work on a comprehensive immigration bill that would address agriculture's needs as well as other issues. The Senate passed a comprehensive bill in 2013, but the House at the time opted for a more piecemeal approach.

"The real answer is and has always been a comprehensive immigration bill," Stabenow said. "It's certainly something we've not been able to have a discussion on in the last two years."

H-2B visas need fixing, employers and immigration attorneys say (Northern Public Radio)

[Northern Public Radio](#) [1/18/2019 5:36 PM, Andy Uhler, 3K]

You've probably heard of H-1B visas. Those are the ones lots of tech firms use to bring in highly skilled workers from countries like India. Lesser-known but still vital to the economy are visas like the H-2A. Those are temporary, seasonal visas handed out to the people who help grow and harvest our food. Then there are H-2Bs, also temporary and seasonal, but not farm-related. They're for the workers who staff tourist hotels, ski resorts or who do landscaping and other jobs. Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta tells the Wall Street Journal that H-2B visas are broken and need fixing. He said for one thing, there's too much of a rush to apply at the beginning of the year. Selection might need to be random, rather than first-come, first-served. And, he said, some states with a lot of seasonal employment may need higher caps. Many employers and immigration attorneys would also like to see H-2B changes.

[Editorial note: consult audio at source link]

Supreme Court Hints It Won't Hear Trump's DACA Appeal This Term (Bloomberg)

[Bloomberg](#) [1/18/2019 5:45 PM, Greg Stohr, 5702K]

The U.S. Supreme Court took no action Friday on President Donald Trump's bid to end deportation protections for hundreds of thousands of young undocumented immigrants, suggesting the program may stay in place at least until the end of this year.

Under the court's usual practices, Friday was the last day to accept an appeal and schedule the case for the last week of arguments in late April. The court's current term runs through June, and the next one starts in October.

The administration is challenging rulings that are blocking Trump from rescinding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA. Lower court judges have said the administration's explanation -- that DACA is illegal -- isn't adequate.

A decision not to hear the case this term would be a blow to the administration, which had contended the case was especially urgent. The government took the unusual step of turning to the Supreme Court even before a federal appeals court had ruled. The administration said it wanted a "timely and definitive resolution of the dispute this term."

The San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals later ruled against the administration, saying it acted based on a faulty view of the law. The panel left open the possibility the administration could end the policy for other reasons.

DACA, begun under President Barack Obama, protects undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children. Dreamers, as the applicants are known, are shielded from deportation and allowed to

apply for work permits.

DACA briefly became part of the debate over how to end the partial federal government shutdown. Some lawmakers floated the possibility of a compromise that would protect DACA while providing money for a border wall. Vice President Mike Pence rejected the idea, and Trump said he wants the Supreme Court to rule before he considers such a deal.

The Supreme Court is scheduled to issue a list of orders Tuesday. The court could reject the administration's appeals or agree to hear arguments in the term that starts in October.

The Supreme Court also took no action Friday on a list of other major cases, suggesting the justices will take a low profile in Justice Brett Kavanaugh's first term. Those cases include a Trump administration bid to ban most transgender people from serving in the military and appeals testing whether federal law bars job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

The court Friday also scrapped plans for a Feb. 19 argument involving the Trump administration's plan to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census.

The court, however, could reschedule the showdown for later this term to consider a trial judge's ruling this week barring the Commerce Department from adding the question. The Feb. 19 argument had been designed to tackle a preliminary issue.

Supreme Court Inaction Suggests DACA Safe for Another Year (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [1/18/2019 5:02 PM, Mark Sherman, AP, 2894K]

The Obama-era program that shields young immigrants from deportation and that President Donald Trump has sought to end seems likely to survive for at least another year.

That's because the Supreme Court took no action Friday on the Trump administration's request to decide by early summer whether Trump's bid to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program was legal. The program has been protected by several federal courts.

Based on the high court's usual practices, the earliest the justices would hear arguments in the case would be this fall, if they decide to hear the case at all. If arguments take place in October, a decision would not be likely before 2020, when it could affect the presidential campaign.

The administration "never asked for a stay of the rulings below which to us indicated it has known all along that there's no real rush to resolve these important issues," said Theodore Boutrous Jr., a lawyer in Los Angeles who represents some young immigrants who challenged the administration's plans.

Trump and Congress could take the issue out of the court's hands altogether if they strike a deal on the program known as DACA, perhaps even in negotiations to end the partial government shutdown.

The immigration case is among several high-profile issues the court has apparently decided not to add to its calendar for decision by late June. Other pending appeals involve Indiana abortion restrictions, whether the main federal employment discrimination law protects LGBT people and Trump's policy to limit military service by transgender people. The court also has yet to act on a separate administration request to let the transgender policy take effect, even before the case is decided.

On immigration, the administration sought to end DACA in 2017, but federal courts in California, New York and Washington, DC, have prevented it from doing so. A federal judge in Texas has declared the program is illegal, but refused to order it halted.

DACA has protected about 700,000 people who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children or came with

families that overstayed visas.

The Obama administration created the DACA program in 2012 to provide work permits and protection from deportation to people who, in many cases, have no memory of any home other than the United States.

The Trump administration has said it moved to end the program under the threat of a lawsuit from Texas and other states, raising the prospect of a chaotic end.

Then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions determined DACA to be unlawful because President Barack Obama did not have the authority to adopt it in the first place. Sessions cited a 2015 ruling by the federal appeals court in New Orleans that blocked a separate immigration policy implemented by Obama and the expansion of the DACA program.

Texas and other Republican-led states eventually did sue and won a partial victory in a federal court in Texas. Civil rights groups, advocates for immigrants and Democratic-led states all have sued to prevent the end of the program.

In November, a three-judge panel of the federal appeals court in San Francisco ruled that the administration decision to end DACA was arbitrary and capricious.

The appeals court noted that the federal government has a long and well-established history of using its discretion not to enforce immigration law against certain categories of people.

While the federal government might be able to end DACA for policy reasons under its own discretion, it can't do so based on Sessions' faulty belief that the program exceeds federal authority, the court held.

The administration has twice tried to sidestep the appeals courts and win a swift ruling by the Supreme Court. The justices rejected a first attempt last year as premature. In taking no action so far on the second request, the high court is signaling that it considers the issue less urgent than the administration does.

Supreme Court silent on 'Dreamers' appeal, other big cases (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/18/2019 5:37 PM, Lawrence Hurley]

It is looking increasingly likely that the U.S. Supreme Court will not hear Trump administration appeals involving the "Dreamers" immigrants, transgender troops and gay rights during its current term, meaning rulings in these major cases may not come until next year.

With time running out for the justices to take cases to decide in their current term that ends in June, they took no action on Friday in those high-profile appeals. If they eventually agree to hear the cases but not until the nine-month term that begins in October, chances of rulings being issued this year are slim, a blow to President Donald Trump.

Under the court's normal procedure, Friday was the last day the court would add new cases to be decided in its current term. The last arguments of the term typically are held in April. The court could next act on whether to hear pending appeals on Tuesday.

The administration in several big cases has tried to get appeals to the Supreme Court as quickly as possible, putting its faith in a bench with two Trump appointees and a 5-4 conservative majority.

Appeals remain pending before the court on Republican Trump's 2017 move, blocked by lower courts, to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program implemented in 2012 by his Democratic predecessor Barack Obama.

DACA protects about 700,000 immigrants, often called "Dreamers" based on the name of legislation that failed to pass Congress, from deportation and provides them work permits, though not a path to citizenship. Most of the "Dreamers" are Hispanic young adults.

With the lower courts ruling against the administration and the high court not yet taking action, DACA remains in place.

The justices also have not acted on whether to hear Trump's bid to revive his restrictions on transgender troops in the military, also blocked by lower courts, and three related cases on whether gay and transgender people are protected under a federal law that bars sex discrimination in the workplace.

The employment cases focus on whether gay and transgender people are covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bars employers from discriminating against employees on the basis of sex as well as race, color, national origin and religion.

The court on Friday canceled arguments that had been scheduled for next month in the administration's appeal relating to its contentious move to add a citizenship question to the 2020 U.S. census.

The administration had challenged the scope of evidence that U.S. District Judge Jesse Furman in Manhattan could use in considering his decision in a lawsuit filed by 18 U.S. states, 15 cities and various civil rights groups challenging the legality of the citizenship question.

The justices disclosed the cancellation of the Feb. 19 arguments in a notation on the court docket a day after the challengers, including New York state, filed court papers calling the administration's appeal moot because Furman issued his final decision this week invalidating the census question.

The Justice Department on Thursday said it would appeal Furman's ruling and it could seek to fast-track the case to the Supreme Court, but by Friday had not yet filed anything with the justices.

Court inaction implies 'Dreamers' safe for another year (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/18/2019 3:02 PM, Mark Sherman, AP, 1773K]

The Obama-era program that shields young immigrants from deportation and that President Trump has sought to end seems likely to survive for at least another year.

That's because the Supreme Court took no action Friday on the Trump administration's request to decide by early summer whether Trump's bid to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program was legal. The program has been protected by several federal courts.

Based on the high court's usual practices, the earliest the justices would hear arguments in the case would be this fall, if they decide to hear the case at all. If arguments take place in October, a decision would not be likely before 2020, when it could affect the presidential campaign.

The administration "never asked for a stay of the rulings below which to us indicated it has known all along that there's no real rush to resolve these important issues," said Theodore Boutros Jr., a lawyer in Los Angeles who represents some young immigrants who challenged the administration's plans.

Trump and Congress could take the issue out of the court's hands altogether if they strike a deal on the program known as DACA, perhaps even in negotiations to end the partial government shutdown.

The administration sought to end DACA in 2017, but federal courts in California, New York and Washington, D.C., have prevented it from doing so. A federal judge in Texas has declared the program is illegal, but refused to order it halted.

DACA has protected about 700,000 people who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children or came with families that overstayed visas. The Obama administration created the DACA program in 2012 to provide work permits and protection from deportation to people who, in many cases, have no memory of any home other than the United States.

Former Attorney General Jeff Sessions determined DACA to be unlawful because President Barack Obama did not have the authority to adopt it in the first place. Sessions cited a 2015 ruling by the federal appeals court in New Orleans that blocked a separate immigration policy implemented by Obama and the expansion of the DACA program.

Civil rights groups, advocates for immigrants and Democratic-led states all have sued to prevent the end of the program.

[Philippines] Philippines May Appeal Trump's Ban on Temporary U.S. Work Visas (Bloomberg) [Bloomberg](#) [1/22/2019 3:17 AM, Cecilia Yap and Andreo Calonzo, 5702K]

The Philippines wants more information on the Trump administration's move to stop issuing temporary worker visas to Filipinos, and may appeal the decision if it's found without basis.

The Southeast Asian nation will look for other countries where its citizens can work should the U.S. Department of Homeland Security pursue its ban on temporary worker visas for Filipinos, President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman Salvador Panelo said Tuesday.

"We need to know the basis of this decision," Panelo said during a televised briefing. "And if we see that there's none, we will ask for a reconsideration."

The Philippine Foreign Affairs Department, in a separate statement, reminded its citizens to respect U.S. immigration rules, and expressed openness to work with American authorities to address the issue.

The U.S. agency imposed the ban starting Jan. 19, saying in a notification last week that many Philippine citizens don't comply with the terms of the visas. Nearly 40 percent of Filipinos who received an H-2B visa overstayed, it said.

The H-2B visas allow a foreign worker to come temporarily to the U.S. for non-agricultural services on a seasonal basis. The Philippines accounted for 767 H-2B visas in fiscal year 2017, the most in Asia but less than 1 percent of the total given out worldwide, according to State Department statistics.

The U.S. Embassy in Manila also issues the greatest number of T-derivative visas, which are reserved for family members of victims of severe forms of human trafficking, the Homeland Security Department said. The embassy in Manila issued about 40 percent of total T-derivative visas issued worldwide from 2014 to 2016, and many of the victims were trafficked on H-2B visas, it said.

The Department of Homeland Security and Department of State "are concerned about the high volume of trafficking victims from the Philippines who were originally issued H-2B visas and the potential that continued H-2B visa issuance may encourage or serve as an avenue for future human trafficking," it said. The same ban was also imposed on Ethiopia and the Dominican Republic.

The move to ban Philippine temporary workers caused concern in Guam, an American territory. Governor Lou Leon Guerrero will restate Guam's continued need for skilled labor from the Philippines for its military and civilian construction projects, Pacific Daily News reported.

Customs and Border Protection

Sending troops to border is legal (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/21/2019 10:00 AM, Joseph Moreno, 3038K]

Few issues inspire more passion than that of immigration policy, particularly as the federal government remains paralyzed while our leaders in Washington fight over border wall and border security funding. These emotions have been further inflamed by the Trump administration recently using the United States military to help secure the southern border, a move which some have criticized as both unnecessary and improper as a matter of law. There are certainly policy and practical arguments to be made as to why military force is not the most effective way to enforce our immigration laws. However, from a strictly legal perspective, the current use of troops at the border is likely to withstand judicial scrutiny if challenged in court.

This began in November, at the request of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), President Trump approved the deployment by the Department of Defense (DoD) of roughly 3,000 National Guard and active component troops to the border between the United States and Mexico for 45 days. Their initial mission was to provide transportation, engineering, logistics, and medical support for Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents as they performed their law enforcement duties.

This was later broadened to include protecting CBP personnel which could include a show of force, crowd control, temporary detention, and searches of individuals who posed a threat to federal agents. However, the DoD made clear in defining the mission parameters that military personnel would not perform law enforcement-type functions such as arrests and searches and seizures. The mission was later extended to January 31 this year and will possibly be extended further.

There is in fact precedent for doing this. The last two administrations, both Democrat and Republican, also utilized the military at the southern border. In 2010, President Obama authorized approximately 1,200 troops for a year to support Operation Phalanx, whose purpose was to provide transportation and logistical support to CBP. Prior to that, in 2006, the Bush Administration similarly deployed approximately 6,000 troops to the border for Operation Jump Start where they remained for two years in a similar capacity. In each case, forces were activated from the Army National Guard and deployed to various locations along the border between the United States and Mexico.

While federal law prohibits the military from conducting law enforcement activities, a number of exceptions and caveats that are frequently overlooked by critics of the current deployment. The Posse Comitatus Act (PCA), which is a post-Civil War criminal statute enacted in 1878, prohibits active duty Army and Air Force troops from providing direct assistance in "executing" the domestic laws of the United States. This refers to such activities as making arrests, searching for and seizing property, and investigating criminal activity. These are exactly the types of activities which the White House and the DoD prohibit all troops, not just at the border, from engaging in. However, the PCA does not prohibit indirect law enforcement assistance such as information sharing, training, and the use of certain military equipment and facilities.

In addition, the PCA does not apply to the Navy or the Marine Corps, and while the DoD has enacted a policy that applies the restrictions to the other service branches such policy does not have the force of law and could be changed going forward. The PCA also does not apply to the use of the Coast Guard, or to National Guard troops when under state control which is often the case. As a result, the DoD has a number of resources at its disposal that allow it to legally utilize military resources at the border despite the limitations thought to be imposed by the PCA.

Moreover, the Supreme Court has recognized that a president has the inherent authority under Article II of the Constitution to protect federal functions, property, and personnel. This is the authority that President Trump has asserted in his deployment of troops whose mission is not only to provide certain indirect law enforcement assistance to CBP agents but also to use force if necessary to protect them. This constitutional authority vested in the president is not restricted by the PCA.

Reasonable individuals can disagree on whether it makes sense to use the military to help secure the

nation's borders. Since the September 11 attacks, the number of CBP agents has grown from 9,000 to nearly 21,000 and still they struggle to police a porous border that spans over 1,900 miles across four states. The military has immense resources and personnel that can be invaluable in supporting the national security goal of keeping our nation secure.

On the other hand, it is hard to deny that a military presence on the border is expensive, increases the potential for accidental deadly force against civilians, and adds more emotion to an already volatile situation with international implications. But regardless of where you come down policy wise and politically on the issue, the current deployment and use of military troops on the southern border likely is legal.

Border Patrol official on apprehensions spike... (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/20/2019 8:10 PM, Staff, 2890K]

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Mexican drug cartel leader indicted two decades ago admits transporting drugs to the U.S. (Los Angeles Times)

[Los Angeles Times](#) [1/18/2019 10:55 AM, Alejandra Reyes-Velarde, 3575K]

A leader in a Mexican drug cartel pleaded guilty Thursday to transporting cocaine and other narcotics to the U.S. and laundering drug proceeds, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Juan Jose Alvarez-Tostado Galvan, also known as "El Compadre," admitted that in his role as a financial manager in the Juarez cartel, he collected at least \$24 million in narcotics proceeds in Chicago, prosecutors said.

Alvarez-Tostado obtained large quantities of cocaine from Colombia and transported it to various locations in the U.S. through Mexico, according to his plea agreement. Once distributed, he admitted to collecting and laundering the drug proceeds.

He was indicted in 1998 along with more than 100 other people and three major Mexican banks. He was arrested in Mexico in 2005 and charged with operating a continuing criminal enterprise, money laundering and conspiracy. He was extradited to the U.S. in 2018.

His capture was part of a Los Angeles-based investigation — Operation Casablanca — into drug money laundering by Mexican banks that was launched in 1995. Undercover officers from what was then the U.S. Customs Service set up shop in an L.A. warehouse and posed as freelance money launderers seeking assignments from Mexican drug dealers and bankers.

The 1998 indictment alleged Alvarez-Tostado collected more than \$40 million from narcotics sales in the U.S. and transferred the money into Mexican bank accounts on behalf of Amado Carrillo Fuentes, the reputed chief of the Juarez cartel until his death in 1997 during plastic surgery.

According to his plea agreement, Alvarez-Tostado supervised the collection and laundering of drug proceeds from distributors in the U.S. The money was transferred to his suppliers in Colombia, often through wire transfers to U.S. bank accounts he controlled.

A co-defendant, Victor Manuel Alcala-Navarro, directed undercover officers based in Santa Fe Springs to deliver money directly to them in Mexico and the U.S, according to the plea agreement. Alcala-Navarro and Alvarez-Tostado also directed the undercover officials to deliver proceeds to their cocaine suppliers in Colombia.

The drug proceeds were used to pay expenses of the drug trafficking enterprise and finance large shipments of drugs to the U.S.

Alvarez-Tostado's sentencing is scheduled for March 28, according to the U.S. attorney's office. Prosecutors are seeking a sentence of 18 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine set by the court.

This is how much of the border wall has been built so far (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/19/2019 3:50 PM, Catherine E. Shoichet and Geneva Sands, CNN, 5847K]

Nearly two years into Donald Trump's presidency, the border wall that was a signature promise of his campaign hasn't been built.

And even if he gets all the money he wants from Congress this year, the wall won't be anywhere near finished.

Contractors have replaced miles of dilapidated fencing with more modern alternatives, but they haven't built barriers anywhere they didn't exist already.

That could soon change. Construction is scheduled to start in February on a project that will bring 14 miles of new border wall to the Rio Grande Valley.

Meanwhile, Trump and Congress are locked in a shutdown stalemate over funding for more wall construction. Officials say the \$5.7 billion the administration is asking for would cover the cost of more than 200 miles of new and replacement wall.

But that would still leave most of the border without a wall.

Here's a look at what's already at the border, what construction is planned and what the Trump administration wants to build:

Man-made barriers cover only about a third of the border.

The US-Mexico border stretches for 1,954 miles. Currently, physical barriers cover 654 of those miles, according to US Customs and Border Protection.

What's known as vehicle fencing covers 280 miles. This is fencing that's low to the ground. It would stop a car, but people can easily step over it.

What's known as pedestrian fencing covers some 374 miles. This is taller and designed to block people from crossing on foot.

Some border fencing is made from helicopter landing mats.

There are several pedestrian fence designs in place at different points along the border.

Some areas contain layers of barriers, referred to as primary, secondary and sometimes tertiary fences. Currently about 37 miles of the border have secondary pedestrian barriers, according to CBP.

Much of the older fencing is made from repurposed Vietnam War-era helicopter landing mats. Newer fencing generally consists of 18- to 30-foot-tall steel bollards.

Trump now says his 'big, beautiful wall' can be made of steel.

Yes, the President talked a lot about building a concrete wall on the campaign trail. But officials have said for a while that concrete is not the only option. When requesting bids for prototype designs back in March 2017, the focus was on making the wall "physically imposing."

In recent weeks, the President has expressed a greater interest in a barrier made of steel slats. It's not clear exactly what that means; some have pointed out it sounds a lot like the steel bollard fencing that's already in place at some points along the border -- which experts have long said would be the better option.

The wall prototypes have gone by the wayside.

As you might recall, construction firms built eight wall prototypes at the border -- four designed to be 30-foot concrete walls, four made of other materials -- that were then subjected to testing.

Some reports have suggested they didn't do that well in tests conducted by breaching experts, though the results haven't been made public.

Customs and Border Protection officials have sidestepped questions about what exactly the tests revealed. But they've said they were helpful in informing plans for new and replacement fencing that's currently being installed.

The idea of border barriers didn't start with Trump.

It's true that Trump has placed the idea of a border wall front and center ever since he first set foot on the campaign trail, but the idea of building barriers along the US-Mexico border took root long before he took office.

Construction of the federally funded border fence as we know it began with a 14-mile stretch near San Diego. Construction started during George H.W. Bush's presidency and continued into Bill Clinton's first term. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act, which Clinton signed into law in 1996, authorized the fortification of that fencing.

And the Secure Fence Act, passed during President George W. Bush's administration, authorized the construction of hundreds of miles of additional fencing. Notably, that measure also passed with support from then-Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.

Since 2007, CBP says it's spent about \$2.3 billion on fencing and related infrastructure along the US-Mexico border.

Contractors are already working on hundreds of miles of construction.

A number of contracts have been awarded since Trump took office, funded by appropriations from Congress for the 2017 and 2018 fiscal years.

Among them: Nearly \$300 million to build 40 miles of replacement structures in multiple locations. These consist of both pedestrian walls and vehicle barriers. As of December 21, 35 of those 40 miles had been completed, according to Andrew Meehan, CBP's assistant commissioner for public affairs.

Appropriations last year provided \$1.375 billion in funding to build 82 miles of new and replacement barriers in multiple locations across the border, Meehan said. Of that funding, \$700 million has gone to contracts for construction of new and replacement wall systems, he said, and another \$300 million "is ready to award as soon as the government reopens." The rest of the money, Meehan said, "supports CBP project management to include real estate, environmental, legal and program management support and will be obligated over the duration of the projects."

Soon we're actually going to see a wall built in a new section of the border.

Yes, that's the plan. Construction is expected to begin in February on 14 new miles in the Rio Grande Valley.

Called a levee wall system, the project includes the construction of a reinforced concrete levee wall, 18-foot-tall steel bollards installed on top of the concrete wall, and vegetation removal along a 150-foot enforcement zone. The price tag: \$312 million.

The administration wants \$5.7 billion to pay for 234 miles of construction.

Officials say the construction starting in February is only part of the picture. Funding from fiscal year 2018, they say, also covers the cost of building 70 more miles of barriers -- about 57 miles of which is replacement fencing.

And if the Trump administration's proposal for \$5.7 billion more for a border wall is approved, officials say they'll be able to build 234 miles of new and replacement barriers -- about 100 miles of which will cover parts of the border that didn't have a barrier before.

But given that a partial government shutdown over the wall is already in its fifth week, whether that work will happen -- and exactly what will happen next -- is anybody's guess.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Border wall won't stop migrants but will increase use of smugglers (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 8:00 AM, Kimberly Mehlman-Orozco, 3038K]

Earlier this month, President Donald Trump held a White House press briefing to make a case for his southern border wall with a statement from Brandon Judd, president of the National Border Patrol Council. As a border patrol agent for 21 years, Mr. Judd told the press, "I can personally tell you ... physical barriers ... walls actually work." In support of his assertion, he claimed that areas with physical barriers had exponential decreases in "illegal immigration."

What Mr. Judd neglected to mention is that Customs and Border Protection measures undocumented migration through the proxy of apprehensions. This is problematic because most immigration scholars regard border apprehensions as a highly imperfect statistical proxy for the volume of undocumented migration. Basically, it isn't a good measure.

Despite Mr. Judd's anecdotal beliefs, the reality is that the border wall will not stop undocumented migration. As an expert in human trafficking and smuggling, I know the evidence suggests it will simply increase the use and price of smugglers.

Prior to 2006, there were only 83 miles of existing fence or wall along the United States-Mexico border. By 2009, fencing and physical barriers increased to cover 580 miles of the southern border. That is an astounding 598 percent expansion in inanimate border barriers in a relatively short period of time. At present, there are 654 miles of border fencing.

Customs and Border Protection leaders such as Mr. Judd believe that the construction of the border wall has been successful in deterring undocumented migration because while border apprehensions fairly steadily increased from 1990 to 2000, after the border wall was expanded, border apprehensions reached a 10-year low in 2011 with only 327,577 apprehensions along the Southwest border.

Although some attribute the substantial decrease in apprehensions to deterrence from the increased border security and construction of massive border barriers, others contend that this same evidence suggests that, in the wake of increased border security, undocumented migrants may be evading

detection through the increased use of smugglers.

The process of undocumented migration to the United States has changed since the 1990s as border enforcement was heightened. Increased border enforcement has been linked to the rising use and cost of smugglers by undocumented migrants.

However, this increase is not mirrored by the reported use of smugglers among the apprehended undocumented migrant population. This is because smuggled undocumented migrants are evading detection more often than non-smuggled undocumented migrants. In addition, as Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) recently pointed out, since 2007 the majority of unauthorized immigrants enter the United States not through undocumented border crossings, but as visa overstay.

Along with the increase in demand for smugglers that has coincided with the contemporary tightening of our southern border, there has been an increase in cost. While smuggling costs in 1980-1981 ranged from \$150 to \$250 for a coyote, costs increased to \$700 in 1996 and ranged from between \$5,000 to \$10,000 in 2000. According to the Department of Homeland Security ENFORCE data, the average annual growth of real smuggling costs was 5.3 percent from 2000-2006. The cost is much lower for apprehended undocumented migrants when compared to data on smuggler cost for not apprehended undocumented migrants. This suggests that those who are smuggled successfully pay larger sums than those who are not.

Data from the Mexican Migration Project suggest that undocumented migrants from Mexico are less likely to use a smuggler (23.2 percent) than undocumented migrants from other countries and on average pay less (mean \$558). However, like other undocumented migrants, Mexican undocumented migrants who used a smuggler are less likely to be apprehended by Customs and Border Protection.

Constructing a border wall has not been empirically shown to deter undocumented migration; instead, it displaces crossing methods and increases the use and cost of smugglers. This is dangerous because smugglers have been known to physically and sexually abuse undocumented migrants and even engage in human trafficking.

Given the nexus between human smuggling and human trafficking, legislators should focus on reducing undocumented migrants' reliance on human smugglers. International migration experts suggest this is an opportune time to shift from a policy of immigration suppression to one of immigration management. Facilitating legal migration would decrease the reliance on smugglers, and granting undocumented migrants legal status likely would increase the rates of return migration.

Ultimately, it is important for Americans to understand that border walls keep undocumented migrants in, not out, and increase the demand for smugglers and their associated criminal networks.

Some migrants say a wall wouldn't stop them from entering the US, but Customs and Border Protection says it's a key part of the solution (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/20/2019 10:21 AM, Quinn Scanlan, Freda Kahen-Kashi and Molly Nagle, 2413K]

Video: [HERE](#)

Alisson Luna, 22, fled Honduras, after she said was raped, with her three children and grandmother, embarking on a nearly 3,000-mile journey to reach the United States in order to seek asylum. Waiting in Tijuana, Mexico until she and her family could make their claim, Luna told ABC News that this was her only option.

Luna and her family are waiting at El Barretal, a music venue turned migrant shelter about 30 miles south of the U.S. southern border in Tijuana. The cramped and crowded shelter had only 300 migrants when ABC News was there Wednesday, but at its peak, was the waiting place for some 3,000.

Raddatz asked Luna if a border wall would stop people attempting to cross illegally.

"No," she said.

A wall along the U.S.-Mexico border was a signature campaign promise for President Donald Trump, and the government has been partially shut down for a record 30 days because Trump and Congress can't agree on a funding deal.

On Saturday, Trump announced a new immigration and border security plan as an attempt to reach an agreement between Republicans and Democrats to end the shutdown. In addition to many funding propositions related to enhanced border security, at the crux of this proposal, Trump wants \$5.7 billion to build an additional 230 miles of a see-through steel barrier system, "or a wall," as Trump said Saturday.

"This is not a 2,000-mile concrete structure from sea to sea," Trump said from the White House. "These are steel barriers in high-priority locations."

In an attempt to entice Democrats to support the deal, he also proposed extending protections from deportation for three years for some 700,000 so-called "Dreamers," children brought to the U.S. illegally by their parents who were given a protected status under former President Barack Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) executive order, and for Temporary Protected Status recipients whose status is currently facing expiration.

Apprehensions at the border have been declining for nearly two decades, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). For the last year, those numbers have been rising, but that rise is not necessarily a trend.

After traveling back to the U.S. side of the border, Raddatz and her team toured 14 miles of the border with CBP San Diego Sector Chief Patrol Agent Rodney Scott. It didn't take long for them to witness migrants, including a 25-year-old woman fleeing El Salvador with her 2-year-old son, trying to sneak into California in an area where new walls were being built. The woman and her son were apprehended by CBP.

"Is there any part of you still where you look at that family and think I've got to help?" Raddatz asked Scott.

"On many, many levels I feel compassion for those people," Scott answered. "But I also feel compassion for the several thousand people that have been in line at the San Ysidro [San Diego] port of entry for several weeks, waiting to do it right, and those people literally just cut in line in front of them."

Scott said CBP needs more areas with a border wall, even if it's not a complete solution.

"We cannot effectively control the border without barriers to slow down illegal entries," he told Raddatz, adding that while a wall wouldn't necessarily stop the illegal flow of drugs, which mainly come through legal port of entries and tunnels, a wall would allow Scott "to free up personnel to focus on that threat."

In addition to border wall funding and temporary protections for some immigrants, Trump's border security proposal seeks nearly \$800 million for additional border agents, law enforcement officers and other staff, \$800 million in humanitarian assistance, including new temporary housing for migrants, and more than \$800 million for "technology, canines and personnel to help stop the flow of illegal drugs, weapons and other contraband."

Just on Thursday morning, CBP officers near San Diego had already arrested almost 100 people, including children. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of families crossing the border, and

after backlash over a Trump administration "zero tolerance" policy which led to children being separated from adults once apprehended, families are now held together, but there's a limit to how long children can be detained.

"If you come with a child, you will be released within about 20 days," Scott said told Raddatz. "So that's created a pull factor and once people figured that out, they don't mind being arrested, incarcerated for a few days because they know they're going to be released into the U.S."

Many asylum seekers are tracked with an ankle bracelet, including some migrants Raddatz spoke to at the Safe Harbors Network in San Diego, a shelter that has helped more than 7,000 refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers over the past two and a half years.

An 18-year-old mother at the shelter, who asked to not be shown on camera, said she was fleeing gang violence. She said she had climbed a fence to enter the United States and that a wall wouldn't have stopped her.

Pastor Bill Jenkins, the executive director of Safe Harbors Network, said that he hasn't met any family that's entered the country "for any other reason than the fact that if they stayed where they were, they would've been killed, they would've been raped, they would've been exploited."

"I don't care how high you build your damn wall," the pastor said. "Immigration is going to continue."

Democrats ignore the wall wishes of the people who know the border best: Border agents (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/21/2019 3:23 PM, Staff, 629K]

Democrats show no interest in solving illegal immigration, and they downplay the drug and humanitarian problems it causes, yet liberals in the media never ask them to explain why.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., has so far said she's unwilling to do anything on immigration, so long as the White House refuses to sign a bill funding the small portion of the government that's been shut down for a month.

As agents here at the southernmost point of Texas will tell you, the way to deter smugglers from bringing in drugs and undocumented immigrants from Mexico is to install cameras, strategically place personnel, and build a physical barrier.

In the Rio Grande Valley Sector, where illegal crossing apprehensions are tens of thousands higher than anywhere else, they have pieces of all three of these. But what they're asking for first and foremost is more wall.

"This area used to be almost unmanageable, a lot worse," border agent Hermann Rivera told me Friday. I asked him what made the difference. "The wall," he said.

Division chief John Morris said the same thing. When they say "wall," they're referring to a 25-foot-high barrier that was first built around 2005. It acts as a reinforcement for levies that help prevent flooding from the Rio Grande.

There is about 12 feet of concrete that comes up, vertical with the levee. Atop that is another 13 feet of steel slats, placed side by side.

Agents at the border say they want more of it. The White House says they can have it. Democrats say they can't. Why?

When the border patrol took me on a tour of the area here Friday, we saw a riverbank where smugglers simply load up a small raft or boat with people or drugs, push it across the river, and dump them onto U.S. soil.

If the cargo is people, Morris told me that they're instructed by smugglers (who often rape the women they're carting) to simply walk up the path away from the river and an agent will greet them — as if the border patrol were a welcoming committee.

So far, this is what Democrats have indicated they support. Border agents want wall. Democrats want free daycare for immigrants here illegally.

On our tour, we came across a family unit of eight: one woman and seven children. They told Morris that a person on the other side of the river carried them across into the U.S.

"We walked to the river, and they put us on a raft and pushed us across and said just to walk this way and then that's how we got lost," the woman told Morris. "And we walked around the brush all night and we just decided to sit down because we're hungry and we're tired."

Morris called an agent who specializes in paramedics to care for the family, and then we kept moving to the riverbank.

Looking just across the Rio Grande, I saw yet another group of people who Morris was certain had been brought there by smugglers, ready to cross.

They looked back at us and then one of them, likely their smuggler, started cursing at us from across the river in Spanish. He made signs at us and then began slingshotting rocks at us, one of which hit a tree about 10 feet from me. We had to leave the spot.

Agents say more wall won't stop illegal immigration, but that it will make it easier for them to apprehend anyone trying to make their way into the country outside of a legal port of entry.

Democrats don't support a wall. They also don't support changing the asylum law, which Morris repeatedly referred to as a "loophole." They don't support anything that deters the influx of people making their way into the U.S. without anyone knowing who they are.

Border agents have told us what they want and why they want it. Why won't Democrats give it to them?

How the Border Patrol has changed over the years (Houston Chronicle)

[Houston Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 12:49 PM, Brian Rausch, 199K]

The agency once known as the U.S. Border Patrol is in its 95th year and in most ways looks nothing like it did when it was created May 28, 1924.

The first recruits received only a badge and a revolver from the federal government. They didn't receive uniforms until December 1924, and even furnished their own horse and saddle. Most of their work was guarding the expanse between border stations.

A year later, the government expanded the agency's duties to patrol the nation's coasts despite having only 450 inspectors. Still, the vast majority of agents patrolled the U.S. border with Canada, a particularly important job during Prohibition.

Meanwhile, the need for Mexican immigrants as laborers meant the U.S. paid relatively little attention to the southern border.

It wasn't until the early 1950s that the federal government turned the agency's attention to the nation's border with Mexico. As undocumented immigration from the south exploded in the 1970s and 1980s, the agency responded with increases in manpower and technology.

The booming U.S. economy in the mid- to late 1980s, along with an increase in drug and human smuggling, persuaded the U.S. to complete its first physical barrier in 1994, a 13-mile wall between San Diego and Tijuana.

Today, the nation's nearly 2,000-mile border with Mexico is guarded by several hundred miles of barriers, sensors, cameras, other surveillance equipment and agents of the Customs and Border Protection created in 2003.

[TX] The border agent who stops the most illegal crossings into the US doesn't care if you call it a 'wall' (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/21/2019 10:11 AM, Eddie Scarry, 629K]

The Rio Grande Valley on the southern border here in southernmost Texas sees more apprehensions of illegal immigrants than any other sector in the country. John Miller, the division's chief of law enforcement, knows what this part of the border needs, and he doesn't care if you want to call it a "wall" or anything else.

Miller on Friday took me on a tour of a portion of the border he oversees, of which only pieces here and there are enforced by 25-foot-high "wall"— a mix of concrete and rows of thick steel bollard that often prop up against levees to help with flooding from the Rio Grande.

"This is the busiest sector in the country for illegal alien apprehensions and the busiest place in the country for marijuana seizures," he said, adding that 97 percent of the illegal crossings are in the areas where there is no border wall.

In fiscal year 2018, the Rio Grande Valley saw more than 162,000 apprehensions of illegal immigrants making their way the short distance across the river and into southwest Texas, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The sector with the second highest number was Tucson, Ariz., with 52,000, less than a third as many.

The Valley covers roughly 320 miles of river. At the eastern end, towards the Gulf of Mexico, nearly all of it is covered by border barrier. But further west, right before the river turns north toward Laredo, a smorgasbord of private property, federal wildlife sanctuaries and high patches of thick bushes and shrubs is all that separates metropolitan McAllen or Mission from anyone in Mexico who swims or floats across the narrow river.

President Trump is demanding \$5.7 billion in funding for "wall" barrier that could potentially go to the Valley but even congressional Democrats who have indicated mild support for some form of physical barrier say they're caught up on the terminology.

"Well, first of all, I don't think [Trump] said some kind of new barrier; I think he said 'the wall,'" freshman Rep. Katie Hill, D-Calif., said Monday on CNN. "And I think that's a really important distinction because, again, the connotation around the wall has so much to do with the hateful rhetoric that he's been spewing for at this point years."

During my time with Miller, the Valley's division chief, he repeatedly referred to the pieces of "wall" that he says work in his sector. But he said it would make no difference if you were to call it something else.

"I'm talking about the physical barrier that stops and slows down people from illegal entry into the country," he told me. "And in this area of the border down here, it's steel bollard."

Trump has offered flexibility on his own definition of "wall." On Twitter last month, he referred to "artistically designed steel slats." He has also said a wall could be concrete or steel, materials that are were in use on the border well before he came into office.

Morris said agents all over the southwest refer to "walls" on their barriers but that there is no single type of wall.

"If you go to San Diego, theirs looks different than Yuma, whose looks different than El Paso," he said. "So, in general, do we all use the term wall? We do."

His main point: A structure of some form is necessary.

"When a lot of my friends or representatives or folks call me, 'John, do you guys really need a 30-foot concrete — because they're picturing a 30 foot concrete wall — I'm like, well, that would probably work but that's not what we have down here, and what we have is working," he said.

[AZ] 376 migrants arrested in Arizona after crossing border (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 6:51 PM, AP, 9763K]

376 migrants enter via holes under barrier

A group of 376 Central Americans was arrested in southwest Arizona, the vast majority of them families who used short, shallow holes dug under a barrier to cross the border, authorities said Friday.

The group dug under a steel barrier in seven spots about 10 miles east of a border crossing in San Luis and made no effort to elude immigration agents. Among them were 176 children.

The unusually large group was almost entirely from Guatemala. They were taken to Yuma after entering the country Monday.

The area became a major corridor for illegal crossings in the mid-2000s, prompting the Bush administration to weld steel plates to a barrier made of steel bollards that had been designed to stop people in vehicles, not on foot, Border Patrol spokesman Jose Garibay said. In those spots, there is no concrete footing to prevent digging.

The group used multiple holes in an apparent effort to get everyone across the border quickly, Garibay said.

[AZ] Largest group of asylum seekers to ever cross border used tunnels: report (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 10:04 AM, Aris Folley, 3038K]

Customs and Border Protection say the largest single group of asylum seekers to ever cross the border at one time did so on Monday by tunneling under barriers near San Luis, Ariz., according to a report by ABC News.

Smugglers dug multiple holes that were several feet long underneath the steel border fence for the group to enter, according to ABC.

CBP said a record 376 people crossed the border, including 179 who were children. Thirty of those children were unaccompanied minors.

"In my 30 years with the Border Patrol, I have not been part of arresting a group of 376 people," Anthony Porvaznik, the CBP sector chief in Yuma, told ABC. "That's really unheard of."

Porvaznik told the news agency that his unit needs funding to provide for the families crossing and better barriers along the border.

"That's our No. 1 challenge that we have here in the Yuma sector, is the humanitarian problem," Porvaznik said.

The crossing comes as a partial government shutdown continues with no end in sight.

President Trump is demanding \$5.7 billion in funding for a wall on the Mexican border and additional security to deal with what he's described as a humanitarian crisis.

Democrats have demanded that Trump re-open the government and have rejected the calls for wall funding.

[AZ] Largest Migrant Group to Enter Arizona Burrowed Under Border Fence, Say Feds (Breitbart)
[Breitbart](#) [1/18/2019 5:36 PM, Robert Arce, 2015K]

A group of 376 Central American migrants illegally crossed into the U.S. on Monday by crawling underneath a border fence in Yuma, Arizona, and immediately surrendered themselves to U.S. authorities.

Yuma Sector Border Patrol say they were "inundated" by the single largest group of migrant families and unaccompanied minors to cross in the area.

Almost all of the group was made up of families and unaccompanied minors primarily from Guatemala. The illegal crossing occurred approximately 4.5 miles east of San Luis, Arizona.

The migrants gave no resistance and formed an orderly line while waiting to be processed, according to videos released by the CBP Friday. A Yuma Border Patrol spokesperson said that smugglers dug seven holes under the border barrier in Arizona. Those responsible have not been arrested, according to CBP local reporting.

"The United States Border Patrol is constantly building intelligence in order to combat these trafficking organizations that are constantly targeting them and gaining intelligence in order to apprehend them in the future," said Jose Garibay, Yuma Sector Border Patrol public information officer. "They know that if you travel with a child, or there's a child with you when you cross, then you have to be released within 20 days."

Garibay further explained the reason the migrant groups are growing in numbers is they have figured out immigration system loopholes governing large groups with unaccompanied minors therein.

Due to the large size of the migrant group, CBP personnel from the surrounding locations were summoned to assist the local agents.

[AZ] Largest single group of migrants ever tunnels under border wall in Arizona, says Border Protection (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/18/2019 9:38 AM, Matt Gutman] The largest single group of asylum seekers ever to cross into the U.S. tunneled beneath the border wall near San Luis, Arizona, on Monday, voluntarily turning themselves into Customs and Border Protection, according to the agency.

Migrants can be seen marching toward Border Patrol agents by the hundreds, according to video obtained by ABC News. Smugglers dug a series of seven holes, only a few feet long beneath the steel border fence, with hundreds going beneath the wall and a smaller number clambering over it, according to CBP.

The fresh sand and scuff marks of shoes on the rusty steel were still there when ABC News visited the site on Thursday.

The agency says 179 of the record 376 people who crossed were children, including over 30 unaccompanied minors -- children under 18 traveling on their own.

The overall number of unauthorized crossings has plummeted since its peak in the 2001, when CBP logged about 1.6 million apprehensions, according to government statistics. However, the demography of those crossing has changed dramatically.

Parents with children now comprise over 80 percent of the total apprehensions of those crossing the 2,000-mile long border with Mexico. The vast majority of them, like the group near Yuma Monday, surrender immediately or seek out Border Patrol agents in order to begin the asylum process.

CBP Yuma Border Sector Chief Anthony Porvaznik said his unit needs better border barriers, but more urgently it needs funding to provide for these families.

"That's our No. 1 challenge that we have here in the Yuma sector, is the humanitarian problem," Porvaznik said. "As I mentioned, 87 percent of the apprehensions here are family units and unaccompanied alien children."

The mass crossing this week took place in a sparsely populated stretch of the border -- where an old model of border barrier rises about 12 feet from the sandy ground. The stretched agency only had three agents patrolling that 26-mile-long section of the border.

It took hours to process the families, most of which were sent to the area's chronically overcrowded central processing center in Yuma.

"In my 30 years with the Border Patrol, I have not been part of arresting a group of 376 people," Porvaznik said. "That's really unheard of."

On Thursday, hundreds of asylum seekers were being held in cinderblock cells with thick glass windows that overlooked a central bullpen where CBP agents worked to process them and provide humanitarian needs. The asylum seekers were separated into cells: fathers with sons, fathers with daughters, unaccompanied minors and mothers with children.

As in all such facilities, the CBP said it works to process them as quickly as possible, and provides basic medical care. Still, detainees eat, sleep and use the bathroom in the same room. Scraps of food mingled with silvery space blankets on the floor. In one cell, several boys had balled up the blankets into a makeshift soccer ball they were kicking around.

One man in the group said he left Guatemala eight days ago and made most of the trip by bus along with his 12-year-old daughter. They were planning to leave the processing center destined for San Diego -- plane ticket in hand.

The father said he saved about \$5,000 to pay a coyote to quickly get them to the border. He left a wife and two younger daughters back in Guatemala. Next to them were a mother and two daughters on their way to Cincinnati, also from Guatemala. They too traveled by bus and the journey took about eight days.

Just two days after the group tunneled under the border wall in Yuma, the Border Patrol took in another huge group of migrants in New Mexico. The 247-person group, including unaccompanied minors, crossed near the Antelope Wells Port of Entry and immediately surrendered to authorities for processing.

The CBP said 24 large groups -- quantified as 100 or more -- have crossed the border near Lordsburg, New Mexico, just since Oct. 1, 2018.

[AZ] Hundreds of Central Americans arrested for tunneling under border barrier, Border Patrol says (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/18/2019 6:11 PM, Elizabeth Zwirz, 9216K]

A group of 376 Central Americans reportedly made their way into the U.S. at the Arizona border this week via holes that were dug beneath a barrier, the Border Patrol said.

Members of the group were arrested after they entered the country on Monday. They did not attempt to avoid law enforcement prior to their apprehension, the Border Patrol said, according to The Associated Press.

The crowd of migrants, which reportedly consisted of 176 children, dug under a steel barrier in multiple areas, located to the east of a border crossing in San Luis, according to the agency.

Customs and Border Protection Arizona tweeted a video of the group, adding that "almost all were families or unaccompanied juveniles."

Another video and photos from the agency showed Yuma Sector Border Patrol agents processing the group on Monday.

Nearly the entire unit was from Guatemala, according to The Associated Press.

There is no concrete under that stretch of the barrier, allowing people to dig short, cross-border holes, Border Patrol spokesman Jose Garibay said.

The group's apprehension comes amid the ongoing partial government shutdown, during which Democrats and Republicans have been at odds with each other over funding for a barrier at the southern U.S. border.

[AZ] 30 unaccompanied children were among 376 migrants who tunneled under border wall into Arizona (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/19/2019 8:41 AM, Lukas Mikelionis, 9216K]

Around 30 unaccompanied minors were smuggled into the U.S. after tunneling beneath the border wall near San Luis, Arizona on Monday together with a group of over 300 Central American migrants who then surrendered themselves to the Border Patrol.

The tunnels -- a few feet long -- were reportedly dug by smugglers under the steel border fence, letting hundreds of supposed asylum seekers enter the U.S, according to the Customs and Border Protection.

The migrants shortly surrendered to the authorities and requested asylum. The agency said that 179 of the record 376 people who crossed the border illegally were children, with over 30 of them being unaccompanied minors.

The group is believed to be the largest one yet to cross the border in a bid to get asylum in the U.S. The agency noted that smugglers often try to transport large groups of people and instruct them to cross the border and voluntarily surrender.

"In my 30 years with the Border Patrol, I have not been part of arresting a group of 376 people," CBP Yuma Border Sector Chief Anthony Porvaznik told ABC News. "That's really unheard of."

In the case of this particular group, since most of the migrants were with their parents, they are supposed to be released into the U.S. while they wait for the government to process their asylum applications – a law many say only encourages illegal immigration.

The Trump administration previously tried to implement a new rule that would ban migrants from requesting asylum if they illegally cross the border in a bid to encourage applying to asylum outside the U.S.

The policy was shot down by a federal judge in November following uproar from Democrats and civil rights organizations.

Porvaznik said that only "a change in the law" will help to solve the problem of illegal immigration. "The only reason they're trying to say that they're family units is that they know if they're a family unit, they're going to be released within 20 days."

The crossing comes amid a political showdown in Washington, D.C., where President Trump has been sparring with Congressional Democrats over funding for the border wall, leaving the government closed for 28 days now.

The White House wants over \$5 billion for the border wall, but Democrats have so far refused to cave in to the demands, President Trump's signature campaign issue.

President Trump on Friday wrote in a tweet that he'll make "a major announcement" Saturday afternoon concerning the ongoing partial government shutdown and the "humanitarian crisis" on the southern border.

But despite a recent surge in asylum-seeking families from Central America in recent months, the data indicated that border arrests remain low by historical standards.

The Border Patrol made 396,579 arrests on the Mexican border in the 2018 fiscal year, up 30 percent from a 46-year low during the same period a year earlier but still well below a high of more than 1.6 million in 2000.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[AZ] Nearly 400 Migrants Tunnel Under Border Wall to Enter United States from Mexico (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [1/17/2019 3:30 PM, Alan Neuhauser, 2894K]

The migrants turned themselves into authorities and are believed to be the biggest group taken into U.S. custody at one time.

The largest single group of asylum-seekers to be taken into custody in the U.S. reportedly tunneled beneath a section of the border wall outside Yuma, Arizona.

Border Patrol and its parent agency, Customs and Border Protection, this week said that 376 people crossed beneath the barrier, most by traveling through seven tunnels – each only a few feet long – that were dug by smugglers.

"They dug under the fence," National Border Patrol Council President Brandon Judd told CNN. "Unlike most areas along the border, Yuma has some very sandy areas that is easy to dig in."

The group turned itself into Customs and Border Protection agents, according to ABC News, which first reported the incident. It included 30 so-called unaccompanied minors, or children traveling without their

parents.

People seeking to cross into the U.S. illegally often travel in groups to avoid being preyed on by smugglers or others during the journey to the U.S.-Mexico border. Some 400 miles east in Lordsburg, New Mexico, for example, two-dozen large groups – consisting of at least 100 people – have crossed the border since Oct. 1, according to CBP.

The record-large group that entered the U.S. on Monday, meanwhile, made the crossing in a particularly rural area, a 26-mile stretch of an older section of barrier that Border Patrol said was being monitored by only three agents.

"In my 30 years with the Border Patrol, I have not been part of arresting a group of 376 people," Chief Patrol Agent Anthony Porvaznik, who oversees CBP's Yuma Sector, told ABC News. "That's really unheard of."

The number of people being taken into custody after illegally crossing the border has fluctuated in recent years between 400,000 and 570,000 people. In fiscal 2018, more than 521,000 people were apprehended according to CBP figures, up from 415,500 people taken into custody the previous year.

In the past, asylum-seekers taken into custody inside the U.S. have been processed and released pending further action. The Trump administration last month said that people seeking asylum in the U.S. must apply for the protection while still in Mexico rather than in the U.S.

[AZ] Record-setting group of migrants tunneled under U.S. border wall (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/18/2019 1:43 PM, Staff, 6053K] Video: [HERE](#)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection process their largest single group of migrants who entered the U.S. by tunneling underneath the border wall. Veur's Kircher has more.

[AZ] Largest-ever group of migrant families tunnels under Yuma, Arizona, border fence (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/18/2019 6:22 PM, Rafael Carranza, Arizona Republic, 6053K]

The largest single group of migrant families and minors ever recorded in the Yuma area tunneled underneath a border fence and voluntarily turned themselves in to federal agents, according to Customs and Border Protection officials in Arizona.

A group of 376 migrants, composed almost overwhelmingly of Guatemalan families and children seeking asylum, breached the U.S.-Mexico border just before noon Monday, approximately 4½ miles east of the San Luis commercial port of entry.

Customs and Border Protection officials disclosed details of the incident Friday, releasing videos and photos showing the migrants walking along the U.S. side of the border fence and waiting in line for agents to process them.

Agent Jose Garibay, spokesman for the U.S. Border Patrol's Yuma Sector, said that migrants, with the help of smugglers, dug seven holes in the sandy soil underneath the bollard-style fence and the metal plates welded to the bottom of the barriers.

"The bollards, when they were put in, they didn't have concrete footers, because it wasn't designed to stop from digging under, it was designed to stop the vehicle traffic," Garibay said.

The group included 176 minors, Customs and Border Protection said. Thirty of the minors were unaccompanied.

Overall, it is the largest, single group of families and minors ever recorded since the agency began seeing a surge in the arrival of these migrants in the past two years, Garibay said.

One 15-second video that the Border Patrol released Friday shows the large group of migrants walking along the border enforcement road next to the bollard-style fence.

A second, 26-second video taken by helicopters shows the migrants queuing up in line. Some are sitting in the desert sand as a Border Patrol agent processed paperwork.

In all, the process took "several hours," Garibay said.

Since the group was so large, the Border Patrol had to pull agents from other assignments to help process and transport the migrants using any vehicles at their disposal, including patrol cars, vans and buses that "had to make several trips," he added.

Though this is the largest single group, border agents in the Yuma area have routinely encountered large numbers of migrants crossing en masse.

The numbers and frequency have only increased since the area emerged as one of the busiest routes for Central Americans to reach to the United States.

The number of families and minors crossing through Yuma began to rise at the start of 2018, breaking records month after month. The government began tracking the data in 2013. This trend is seen nationwide, with historic numbers of families reaching the U.S.-Mexico border.

In fiscal year 2018, which ended in September, nearly three-quarters of all migrants encountered by border agents along the Yuma sector were families or minors.

These two groups are single-handedly driving up the number of apprehensions in the area, which is now at the highest level since 2008.

Stakeholders and migrant advocates on the ground don't know why more and more Central American migrant families and minors are crossing through the Yuma area.

But border officials said they know what's behind the surge in their arrivals to the U.S.-Mexico border.

"They know that if you travel with a child, or there's a child with you when you cross, then you have to be released within 20 days," Garibay said. "That's what these smugglers are relying on. And that's what these individuals are relying on."

"Which is why you see such a large number – 176 of these individuals are children, because they know the loopholes in our immigration system and they know how to exploit it, and that's what they do," he said.

Even though the apprehension of 376 migrants took place Monday, Customs and Border Protection officials made the incident public Friday, likely because of the ongoing partial government shutdown that has entered its fifth week.

President Donald Trump and congressional Democrats are at odds over his demand for \$5.7 billion for border security, including a wall.

The border agency stopped sending regular updates about their enforcement activities at the start of the shutdown in December, publishing only a few releases.

Previously, the Border Patrol's Yuma Sector regularly sent updates about large groups of migrants crossing through the area.

Because of the shutdown, the Yuma Sector said it just received clearance Friday from Customs and Border Protection in Washington, D.C., to release information about Monday's group.

Customs and Border Protection has not responded to requests for comment.

In recent months, the Yuma area has struggled to cope with the increasing arrival of Central American families and minors due to the limited resources to house and care for them.

By law, the Border Patrol is allowed to keep only migrants in their custody for up to 72 hours before handing them over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The arrival of large groups of asylum seekers at the same time has strained manpower, with the Yuma Sector having the second-fewest number of agents among all nine sectors along the border, according to Border Patrol's most recent data.

Holding space has also been an issue.

"This group alone was 140 percent of capacity at the Yuma station," Garibay said. "So to start the day, we already had individuals in custody, and then to top it off, this group that crossed all at the same time, in and of itself was 140 percent over our capacity."

To cope with the situation, Border Patrol officials in Yuma said they transported some of the migrants to two other stations within their sector, one in Blythe and one in Wellton.

None of the 376 migrants in this group required medical attention, Garibay added. But the Yuma sector said they've seen an increase in the number of injuries, consistent with the surge in arrivals.

When this happens, such as when a 14-year-old girl was hospitalized in December after being dropped from the 18-foot-tall border fence, agents have to be pulled from their duties to remain with the migrants until they are released.

Areas close to where the migrants tunneled under the existing fence on Monday are slated to get replaced with newer, 30-foot-tall fencing starting in April.

Customs and Border Protection awarded a \$172 million contract last year to a Montana company to install 14 miles of bollard-style fence in the desert area east of the San Luis port of entry.

Garibay said he was unsure whether the site of Monday's breach is within the 14 miles slated for replacement.

Customs and Border Protection has previously said it plans to replace a total of 27 miles of fencing at the Yuma Sector.

About 25½ miles of that total is east of the San Luis border crossing, although so far Customs and Border Protection has announced plans to begin construction only on 14 miles at the sector's easternmost portion.

Tunneling will likely remain a concern, even with new physical barriers.

Garibay said digging under the fences is not uncommon, given the sandiness of the soil throughout most

of the sector.

In August, Border Patrol officials also found a drug tunnel inside an abandoned fast-food restaurant in San Luis.

[AZ] 400 Migrants Overwhelmed US Border In Yuma Sector During Week-Long Period (Daily Caller)
[Daily Caller](#) [1/18/2019 4:13 PM, Hanna Bogorowski, 867K] Video: [HERE](#)

Nearly 400 migrants traveled underground Monday through a series of tunnels built by smugglers before turning themselves in to Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in what appears to be the largest single group of migrants ever attempting to seek asylum.

Smugglers dug a series of seven holes just a few feet beneath the steel border near San Luis, Arizona, ABC News reported. Hundreds of asylum seekers went under with a few attempting to climb over the 12 foot wall.

Of the 179 minors in the group, Newsweek reported, 30 of them were unaccompanied.

Another 247 migrants crossed the border Wednesday by the Antelope Wells Port of Entry and entered New Mexico; Both groups voluntarily turned themselves in.

"In my 30 years with the Border Patrol, I have not been part of arresting a group of 376 people," CBP Yuma Border Sector Chief Anthony Porvaznik told ABC News. "That's really unheard of."

Porvaznik said that while his team needs stronger barriers, its foremost concern right now is having enough funding to take care of the families that crossed over.

"That's our No. 1 challenge that we have here in the Yuma sector, is the humanitarian problem," he told ABC News. "As I mentioned, 87 percent of the apprehensions here are family units and unaccompanied alien children."

[AZ] They left food and water for migrants in the desert. Now they might go to prison. (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/20/2019 2:52 PM, Kristine Phillips, 9763K]

During the summer of 2017, when temperatures reached triple digits in Arizona, four women drove to a vast desert wilderness along the southwestern border with Mexico. They brought water jugs and canned food — items they later said they were leaving for dehydrated migrants crossing the unfriendly terrain to get to the United States.

The women were later charged with misdemeanor crimes. Prosecutors said they violated federal law by entering Cabeza Prieta, a protected 860,000-acre refuge, without a permit and leaving water and food there. A judge convicted them on Friday in the latest example of growing tension between aid workers and the U.S. Border Patrol.

Aid workers say their humanitarian efforts, motivated by a deep sense of right and wrong, have been criminalized during the Trump administration's crackdown on illegal border crossings. Federal officials say they were simply enforcing the law.

The four women, all volunteers for the Arizona-based aid group No More Deaths, were convicted after a three-day bench trial at a federal court in Tucson. They could face up to six months in federal prison.

Their trial coincided with a partial government shutdown that has now entered its 30th day, the longest in the country's history. Negotiations have stalled as President Trump stands firm on his demand for \$5.7 billion in border wall funding, citing a humanitarian and security crisis at the southern border.

In his verdict, U.S. Magistrate Judge Bernardo Velasco said the women's actions violated "the national decision to maintain the Refuge in its pristine nature." Velasco also said the women committed the crimes under the false belief that they would not be prosecuted and instead would simply be banned or fined.

Catherine Gaffney, a volunteer for No More Deaths, said the guilty verdict challenges all "people of conscience throughout the country."

"If giving water to someone dying of thirst is illegal, what humanity is left in the law of this country?" she said in a statement.

The criminal charges stem from an incident on Aug. 13, 2017, when a federal wildlife canine officer found the women's pickup truck near Charlie Bell Pass, a historic site at Cabeza Prieta. Inside were water jugs, canned beans and several similar items. The officer spotted the women a few hours later. They admitted leaving food and water at the site, according to court records.

Natalie Hoffman, Oona Holcomb, Madeline Huse and Zaachila Orozco-McCormick were charged in December 2017. They said their work for No More Deaths was motivated by their religious convictions and a belief that everyone should have access to basic survival needs, according to court records.

Federal prosecutors argued that the defendants should have been aware that leaving disposable items at the refuge is a punishable crime. During the trial last week, prosecutors said the women had admitted willingly violating federal law, the Arizona Republic reported.

In court documents, prosecutors pointed to a conversation between representatives of No More Deaths and a refuge manager who said officials prefer to use rescue beacons to help stranded migrants because they result in "actual rescues." Rescue beacons are scattered across the area for migrants to activate if they need help, officials said.

No More Deaths said rescue beacons result in only a small number of rescues. The group also points to the number of migrants who have died trying to cross the vast desert terrain in the region. More than 3,000 migrant deaths have been reported between October 1999 and April 2018, according to data gathered by Humane Borders and the medical examiner's office in Pima County, which covers part of Cabeza Prieta.

During the trial, one of the women, Orozco-McCormick, likened being on the refuge to being in a graveyard because of the number of migrants who have died there, the Arizona Republic reported.

The women are among several No More Deaths volunteers who are facing similar charges. Five others are scheduled for trial in February and March, the group said.

One of them, Scott Warren, is also accused of alien smuggling, a felony charge that No More Deaths claims was a retaliation for the group's activism. Last year, the group published footage showing Border Patrol agents kicking over water jugs left in the desert. One agent was seen emptying a gallon of water onto the ground. Warren was arrested shortly after the footage was published.

A Border Patrol spokesman told The Washington Post earlier that the agency is not targeting the group and is simply enforcing immigration laws. Court records say Warren met with two Mexican natives at a building known as "the Barn," in the town of Ajo, Ariz., near the Cabeza Prieta refuge, and gave them food and water.

Warren's attorney, Bill Walker, told the Arizona Republic last year that his client's intention was to give food and medical care, not to smuggle migrants into the country.

[AZ] Four women found guilty after leaving food and water for migrants in Arizona desert (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/19/2019 7:04 PM, Aris Folley, 3038K]

A federal judge on Friday reportedly found four women guilty of misdemeanors after they illegally entered a national wildlife refuge along the U.S.-Mexico border to leave water and food for migrants.

According to The Arizona Republic, the four women were aid volunteers for No More Deaths, an advocacy group dedicated to ending the deaths of migrants crossing desert regions near the southern border.

One of the volunteers with the group, Natalie Hoffman, was found guilty of three charges against her, including operating a vehicle inside the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, entering a federally protected wilderness area without a permit and leaving behind gallons of water and bean cans.

The charges reportedly stemmed from an August 2017 encounter with a U.S. Fish and Wildlife officer at the wildlife refuge.

The three other co-defendants — Oona Holcomb, Madeline Huse and Zaachila Orozco-McCormick — were reportedly passengers in Hoffman's truck at the time and were also charged with entering federally protected area without a permit and leaving behind personal property.

Each of the women face up to six months in prison for the charges and a \$500 fine after being found guilty.

In his three-page order, U.S. Magistrate Judge Bernardo Velasco reportedly wrote that the defendants did not "get an access permit, they did not remain on the designated roads, and they left water, food, and crates in the Refuge."

"All of this, in addition to violating the law, erodes the national decision to maintain the Refuge in its pristine nature," he continued.

He also criticized the No More Deaths group for failing to adequately warn the women of all of the possible consequences they faced for violating the protected area's regulations, saying in his decision that "no one in charge of No More Deaths ever informed them that their conduct could be prosecuted as a criminal offense nor did any of the Defendants make any independent inquiry into the legality or consequences of their activities."

Another volunteer with No More Deaths, Catherine Gaffney, slammed Velasco's ruling in a statement to The Arizona Republic.

"This verdict challenges not only No More Deaths volunteers, but people of conscience throughout the country," Gaffney said.

"If giving water to someone dying of thirst is illegal, what humanity is left in the law of this country?" she continued.

According to The Associated Press, the ruling marks the first conviction brought against humanitarian aid volunteers in 10 years.

[AZ] Humanitarian volunteers convicted on charges related to leaving food, water for migrants at Arizona-Mexico border (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/21/2019 6:37 PM, Julia Jacobo, 2413K]

Four humanitarian aid volunteers have been found guilty in federal court on charges related to them leaving food and water in a protected wilderness for migrants crossing the border near Arizona.

Each of the women convicted are part of Tucson and Phoenix-based advocacy group No More Deaths, which seeks to end the deaths of undocumented immigrants crossing the desert regions near the U.S.-Mexico border, according to the group's website.

The charges stem from an incident on Aug. 14, 2017, when the helpers encountered a U.S. Fish and Wildlife officer at the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge in southwestern Arizona after they operated a vehicle there without a permit and left behind gallon jugs of water and cans of beans, the Arizona Republic reported.

The location was near where three migrants who crossed the border weeks earlier had gotten lost, according to the Phoenix newspaper. One of the migrants was never found.

Volunteer Natalie Hoffman was charged with operating a motor vehicle in a wilderness area, the verdict states. She and volunteers Oona Holcomb, Madeline Huse and Zaachila Orozco-McCormick were also charged with entering a national wildlife refuge without a permit and abandonment of property, according to the verdict, which was filed in the U.S. District of Arizona on Friday.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Bernardo Velasco wrote in his decision that a federal law requires people who access Cabeza Prieta to obtain a permit for entry, which would require the applicant to remain on designated roads and not leave anything within the refuge.

"In short: with authorized permits, pack it in/pack it out," Velasco wrote.

Not only did the women not get a permit for access, they also left water, food and crates on the protected land, the verdict states.

"All of this, in addition to violating the law, erodes the national decision to maintain the Refuge in its pristine nature," Velasco wrote.

In addition, the preserve is "littered with unexploded military ordinance" because it is surrounded by the U.S. Department of Defense's Barry Goldwater Bombing Range, according to the verdict. The Tohono O'Odham nation and U.S. Border Patrol are also nearby, Velasco wrote.

After the trial began last week, Orozco-McCormick testified that she considered the work to be "sacred" and compared the refuge to a graveyard due to all the migrants who have died there, the Arizona Republic reported.

The women did not seek a permit because they would have been required to sign an agreement, which is required of anyone seeking a permit, according to the Republic.

When Hoffman was asked why she didn't sign the document, she replied, "I was there to leave water," the newspaper reported.

Velasco wrote in his decision that the defendants claimed they were acting in accordance with a higher law, adding that one of the defendants claimed "her conduct is not civil disobedience, but rather civil initiative, which is somehow not a criminal offense."

The women did not know their conduct could be punishable for up to six months in prison, and each acted on "the mistaken belief that the worst that could happen was that they could be banned" or fined, according to the verdict. No More Deaths did not inform them their conduct could be prosecuted as a criminal offense, Velasco wrote.

The court will decide on an "agreeable date" for sentencing next week. In addition to six months in prison, the women may also face a \$500 fine each, the Tucson Sentinel reported.

After the decision was filed, protesters with No More Deaths held a "vibrant noise demonstration" outside of the Eloy Detention Center in Pinal County, Arizona, the group wrote on Instagram.

"We wanted those inside to know we see them, that we know they resist, that they are not forgotten," the group wrote. "We took this action because though our work is so often centered on the death and suffering in the desert, but we know the story doesn't end there."

Neither No More Deaths nor an attorney for the volunteers immediately returned ABC News' request for comment.

[AZ] Four aid volunteers found guilty of dropping off water, food for migrants in Arizona desert (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/20/2019 7:34 PM, Rafael Carranza, 6053K]

A federal judge found four humanitarian aid volunteers guilty on some of the charges against them for dropping off water and food for migrants at a protected wilderness area along the Arizona-Mexico border, notorious for the number of human remains recovered each year.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Bernardo Velasco found Natalie Hoffman, a volunteer with humanitarian aid group No More Deaths, guilty on all three charges against her. He also found three other volunteers — Oona Holcomb, Madeline Huse and Zaachila Orozco-McCormick — guilty of the two charges they each faced.

Hoffman had been charged with operating a vehicle inside the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge in southwestern Arizona, entering without a permit, and leaving behind 1-gallon water jugs and cans of beans. The charges stemmed from an encounter with a U.S. Fish and Wildlife officer at Cabeza Prieta on Aug. 13, 2017.

The court found her three co-defendants, all passengers in the truck Hoffman was driving inside the refuge, guilty of entering the area without a permit and abandoning personal property.

"The Defendants did not get an access permit, they did not remain on the designated roads, and they left water, food, and crates in the Refuge. All of this, in addition to violating the law, erodes the national decision to maintain the Refuge in its pristine nature," Velasco wrote in his three-page order posted online Friday afternoon.

In his decision, Velasco chastised No More Deaths for failing to warn the four volunteers about the full consequences of violating the refuge's regulations. He said all four had acted "in the mistaken belief" that a worst-case scenario for them would have been to get a citation or barred from the refuge.

"No one in charge of No More Deaths ever informed them that their conduct could be prosecuted as a criminal offense nor did any of the Defendants make any independent inquiry into the legality or consequences of their activities," he wrote in his decision.

"The Court can only speculate as to what the Defendants' decisions would have been had they known the actual risk of their undertaking," he added.

In a statement, Catherine Gaffney, a longtime volunteer with No More Deaths, criticized Friday's ruling.

"This verdict challenges not only No More Deaths volunteers, but people of conscience throughout the country," she said. "If giving water to someone dying of thirst is illegal, what humanity is left in the law of this country?"

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Arizona, which prosecuted the case, has not responded to requests for comment.

Having been found guilty, each of the four women face up to six months in federal prison and a \$500 fine. No date for sentencing has been set yet.

The trial at the U.S. District Court in Tucson began Tuesday and concluded after three days.

Prosecutors with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Arizona presented a factual approach, arguing the four women on trial admitted in court to having willingly violated the refuge's regulations for which they were charged.

The four volunteers testified in their defense that their activities that day were part of sincerely held beliefs to help people in need.

Orozco McCormick said she considered the work almost "sacred," and described being on the refuge as "like being a graveyard," because of the number of migrant deaths that had taken place there.

All four also explained that one reason none of them had obtained permits to enter Cabeza Prieta centered around language added to an agreement anyone seeking a permit is required to sign beforehand.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife added the paragraph in July 2017, a month before the incident for which they were cited. It specified that leaving behind food, water, medical supplies and other aid in the refuge was not permitted.

"I was there to leave water," Hoffman said, when asked why she didn't sign the document.

Defense attorneys also claimed that the federal government had singled out No More Deaths, arguing that the volunteers for the organization faced many hurdles that other members of the public didn't.

That included special instructions for all wildlife officers to refer any member of the organization seeking a permit to the refuge manager, and a "do not issue" list which contained the names of certain volunteers who were not allowed to get a permit.

Lawyers for the four women also cited a July 2017 meeting among members of No More Deaths, wildlife officials and an assistant U.S. attorney, at which the attorney had allegedly said that they were not interested in prosecuting volunteers for dropping off water and food.

Prosecutors dismissed those arguments countering that no written or oral agreement between the U.S. Attorney's Office to not prosecute these cases existed.

No one from the U.S. Border Patrol testified in court, but the agency's activities along Cabeza Prieta played a significant role in the trial.

Testimony from both sides highlighted the rising tensions between humanitarian aid groups like No More Deaths and the Border Patrol.

Although several areas of Cabeza Prieta are restricted to the public and aid volunteers, defense attorneys pointed out that Border Patrol agents regularly drive through the areas of the refuge.

Prosecutors argued that the 10 rescue beacons that the Border Patrol installed inside the refuge was the

"preferred way to save lives," rather than dropping off water jugs with gave "false hope" to migrants, Assistant U.S. Attorney Nathaniel Walters said.

Defense attorneys responded that access to the beacons was key, and that migrants who were dehydrated might not be able to get to them.

What was not discussed during the trial were the accusations from No More Deaths that Border Patrol agents "systematically" destroy or empty water bottles they leave behind for migrants in the desert.

The guilty verdict is the first of its kind under the administration of President Donald Trump, who has advocated for stricter immigration and border enforcement.

Five other volunteers with No More Deaths face unrelated charges for similar activities on Cabeza Prieta. Their trials are scheduled to begin in the next two months in Tucson.

One of those volunteers is Scott Warren, who also faces a separate trial in connection to his felony arrest in February 2018 on charges of harboring undocumented immigrants.

Friday's verdict is the first conviction against humanitarian aid volunteers along the U.S.-Mexico border since 2009, when a federal judge found another No More Deaths volunteer guilty of littering for dropping off water jugs at the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, west of Nogales.

A year before, Dan Millis was found guilty of littering on the Buenos Aires refuge. However, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned his conviction.

Other charges brought against humanitarian aid groups and volunteers mostly had been dismissed.

[NM] The Latest: Another migrant group smuggled to New Mexico (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 8:11 PM, Associated Press, 9763K]

The Latest on groups of immigrants apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico border (all times local):

5:10 p.m.

U.S. authorities say 115 migrants smuggled to a border crossing in New Mexico are the second large group of Central Americans encountered by agents at the remote port of entry in as many days.

The U.S. Border Patrol said in a statement Friday that the latest group of migrants arrived at Antelope Wells on Thursday and were mostly families and unaccompanied children. Fifteen families requested medical attention soon after being taken into custody.

On Wednesday, nearly 250 immigrants were taken into custody at the same crossing after turning themselves in to authorities.

In December, 7-year-old Jakelin Caal and her father were among 160 migrants picked up by agents in the same stretch of desert. She became ill on a bus ride to the nearest Border Patrol station and died at a Texas hospital.

2:30 p.m.

The Border Patrol says it arrested a group of 376 Central Americans in southwest Arizona, the vast

majority of them families who used short holes dug under a barrier to cross the border.

The agency said Friday that the group dug under a steel barrier in seven spots about 10 miles (16 kilometers) east of a border crossing in San Luis and made no effort to elude authorities before they were arrested.

The group included 176 children.

The unusually large group was almost entirely from Guatemala. They were taken to Yuma after entering the country on Monday.

Border Patrol spokesman Jose Garibay says there is no concrete under that section of barrier, allowing people to dig short cross-border holes.

[NM] Thousands of Migrants Crossing Remote Section of New Mexico Border (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/20/2019 1:23 PM, Bob Price, 2015K]

El Paso Sector Border Patrol officials report that at least 2,500 migrants illegally crossed the border along a small section of the New Mexico Border. The migrants crossed the border this fiscal year as part of large groups of Central American families and unaccompanied minors near the Antelope Wells Port of Entry.

In an area that normally only sees a few hundred illegal border crossings per year, El Paso Sector officials reported that 25 large groups of migrants crossed the border near the Antelope Wells Port of Entry in the first few months of Fiscal Year 2019. The Border Patrol defines a "large group" as more than 100 people, FOX14 reported.

This small section of the border is patrolled by agents assigned to the Lordsburg Station. Due to the remoteness of this area, agents are assigned to work from Camp Bounds Forward Operating Base at Antelope Wells, New Mexico. The Lordsburg Station falls under the supervision of the El Paso Sector.

During the entirety of Fiscal Year 2018, which ended on September 30, 2018, the El Paso Sector reported apprehending a total of 31,561 migrants. Those included 12,312 family units and 5,461 unaccompanied minors, according to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's 2018 Southwest Border Migration Report. Officials told Breitbart News in December that the Lordsburg station's apprehensions represent a small portion of those numbers. And, the Camp Bounds Forward Operating Base, located in the extreme southwestern part of the New Mexico boot heel, accounted for a small portion of that.

However, since the new fiscal year began on October 1, 2018, at least 25 groups of more than 100 migrants have been apprehended. Fox14 reported that Border Patrol agents apprehended nearly 300 migrants last week alone — one group of 247 and a second group of 115.

Officials told the local Fox affiliate that smugglers have started using the large groups of migrants as a distraction to tie up Border Patrol agents while they smuggle drugs across the border elsewhere.

Officials said that at about the same time the agents engaged with this very large group of migrants, drug smugglers reportedly moved a load of 265 pounds of marijuana across the border west of Antelope Wells.

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said the pressure on Border Patrol agents due to the unsecured border is pushing the system "to a breaking point."

Now it appears that drug smugglers are attempting to take advantage of the overwhelming nature of the crisis at our southern border by exploiting these families and children and pushing them to remote and desolate areas of the border to make their crossing.

[NM] Smugglers Use Migrant Families to Distract Border Agents, Move Drugs Across (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/19/2019 5:48 PM, Bob Price, 2015K]

El Paso Sector Border Patrol officials say smugglers are using large groups of family unit migrants and unaccompanied minors to distract agents so they can move drugs across the border in other locations.

Camp Bounds Forward Operating Base agents apprehended another large group of migrants who illegally crossed the border in a remote part of New Mexico-Mexico border. The agents apprehended a group of 247 migrants shortly after they crossed the border near Antelope Wells, New Mexico, KFOX14 reported.

Border Patrol Agent Denisse A. Licon told the local Fox affiliate that most of the group were families and unaccompanied minors from Central America.

Officials said that at about the same time the agents engaged with this very large group of migrants, drug smugglers reportedly moved a load of 265 pounds of marijuana across the border west of Antelope Wells.

To complicate processing, agents reported that fifteen migrant families requested medical attention shortly after being apprehended.

Antelope Wells is the same area where a young Guatemalan girl, Jakelin Caal, and her father crossed the border. The young girl became ill hours later and died after being taken to an El Paso hospital.

Processing these large groups of migrants from the remote forward operating base to the Lordsburg Border Patrol station is a time-consuming task. The station is a 94-mile drive from the operating base and can be up to a four-hour round trip for the transport bus.

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said the pressure on Border Patrol agents due to the unsecured border is pushing the system "to a breaking point."

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[AK] A Small Alaska Town Reels as the Coast Guard Weathers On Without Pay (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/19/2019 12:23 AM, Thomas Gibbons-Neff, 20737K]

The morning after more than 40,000 Coast Guard members missed their first paycheck, and the federal government's shutdown stretched into its fourth week, Eleanor King placed an empty jar next to her diner's cash register.

In scribbled black marker, a sign on the jar, written in all capital letters, read: Donation Coast Guard. By 9 a.m. on Wednesday, nearly an hour before a rainy winter sunrise, the jar held \$120 — money with which patrons were effectively buying meals for members of the maritime force.

While the shutdown has affected hundreds of thousands of federal workers across the United States, halting paychecks and furloughing those who have been deemed nonessential personnel, it has brought a particular chill to Kodiak, a small town of 6,300 on an isolated island in the Gulf of Alaska.

Roughly a quarter of the island's population is either an employee or dependent family member of the Coast Guard, which has now had to scale back some of its operations in one of the world's most dangerous waterways.

A high cost of living is common to communities in the Alaskan wilderness, but the Coast Guard contingent in Kodiak makes the town especially vulnerable to the drought in federal cash. Local businesses like Ms. King's diner are losing money daily even while trying to help.

Kodiak's predicament is a result of President Trump's political fight with Congress over \$5.7 billion in funding for a border wall, forcing the government to shut down and leaving a series of agency budget bills unfinished. That included funding for the Department of Homeland Security, the parent agency of the Coast Guard.

"This impacts everyone," Ms. King said. Like some of the other businesses in Kodiak, her diner is giving a 10 percent discount to Coast Guard members; the donations from her jar help pay for meals.

The Coast Guard is the only branch of the military that is part of an otherwise completely civilian agency. It was created to enforce maritime laws and conduct rescue operations at sea, but it can be ordered to protect the United States from foreign threats during war or conflicts.

That the Coast Guard is going without pay during the shutdown is "the first time in our nation's history that service members in a U.S. armed force have not been paid during a lapse in government appropriations," Adm. Karl L. Schultz, the Coast Guard commandant, said in a statement on Tuesday.

If the shutdown continues, Coast Guard retirees will also not be paid at the end of the month.

Jed A. Bergstrom, who runs a food bank at a Baptist mission community center in Kodiak, said a Coast Guard family showed up at his door the day after service members were supposed to be paid.

Residents are donating fish and game from their freezers to their neighbors. Big Al's Take and Bake, another restaurant in the area, sent more than 30 pizzas to a food bank on the Coast Guard base. They quickly disappeared.

Alexandra's Salon, a hair styling shop, is giving i.o.u.s to clients instead of making them pay, and the Alutiiq museum, focused on the community's native heritage, has waved its \$7 entry free.

But eventually, said Mayor Patricia B. Branson, if the government does not reopen soon, the business owners and landlords will have to find a way to get paid.

"I think it's important that the people in the faraway land D.C. understand what's going on in a small town," she said. "And how people are affected by all this nonsense."

Legislation that was introduced earlier this month by a bipartisan group of lawmakers, known as the Pay Our Coast Guard Act, has gained support in Congress in recent days. But its fate, at least in the short term, remains unclear.

Other organizations have raised funds to help Coast Guard families, including a \$15 million donation from the USAA financial services company.

Flush with greenery and emerald water in the summer, while cold and wet in the winter, Kodiak is economically supported by the Coast Guard base, one of the largest in the United States. The town is also dependent on its fishing port, which often oscillates between being the second- and third-most prosperous in the country.

The fishing industry off Alaska's coast rakes in more than \$4 billion annually, according to the National Marine Fisheries Service. But with most of that service also closed, Kodiak's primary economic driver might soon be in jeopardy.

For now, though, little has changed. The fishing season for pollock opened this week in the northern Pacific, and the Coast Guard moved a MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter and its Kodiak-based crew hundreds of

miles to a small base in the Aleutian Islands to help, if need be, with search-and-rescue missions.

Still, the Coast Guard has had to stop some of its law enforcement missions in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. Some routine patrols have been halted, as has the practice, in at least some cases, of boarding fishing boats to ensure that crews are following maritime laws.

"Generally, activities have been scaled back if it doesn't support life and property or the protection of national security," said Lt. Brian Dykens, a Coast Guard spokesman.

Besides search and rescue, and unlike air stations in the mainland United States, the Coast Guard missions in Alaska often include medically evacuating people from remote areas — as aircrews have done at least seven times since the shutdown began.

In the winter, the Bering Sea is known for its hurricanelike weather and 50-foot waves. It has claimed the lives of dozens of fishermen in recent years.

Salt water, battering winds and constant strain ensure that Coast Guard aircraft need constant maintenance. The flights that are based in Kodiak are responsible for covering four million square miles of coastline and ocean.

But with hundreds of civilians on furlough, a backlog of repair requests are quickly accruing at the Coast Guard's primary maintenance hub in North Carolina. Already, active-duty Coast Guard mechanics are filling in for their furloughed civilian colleagues at the Kodiak Air Station.

If it drags on, the ability of the force to initiate the most rudimentary search-and-rescue missions are at risk of being hampered, said one Coast Guard official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the effects of the shutdown. Some of the smaller Coast Guard air stations across the country could close.

Lt. Cmdr. Zachary Koehler is among the Coast Guard helicopter pilots in Kodiak who are currently not being paid as they undertake missions over the volatile Bering Sea. He and his wife, Beth, have a son and daughter, both 11, and run Grand Slam, a toy store the family opened in 2017. The store has lost 30 percent in sales this month compared to last January.

"In the first couple days, I think everyone thought this wasn't going to continue," Ms. Koehler said. "So they kept spending like they usually do. And after that first weekend, it was amazing — it just stopped."

"It hurts," said Aimee Williams, who spent 12 years in the Coast Guard and is married to a C-130 pilot who is still in the service. "And it's just going to keep getting worse here until it's fixed."

Transportation Security Administration

Number of TSA checkpoint agents calling out during shutdown stresses major airports (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/20/2019 3:15 PM, Ashley Halsey III and Michael Laris, 9763K]

The number of airport security workers failing to show up for work hit an all-time high over the weekend, straining checkpoint lanes at several major hub airports.

The number of unscheduled absences was 8 percent nationally, compared with 3 percent a year ago, as the Transportation Security Administration conceded that many of its workers could no longer handle the financial hardship of working without pay during the government shutdown.

The agency said the stress was being felt at checkpoint lanes in New York, Atlanta, Chicago and Miami.

At Baltimore-Washington International Marshall Airport, one checkpoint was shut down at 5:35 p.m. Saturday because of a shortage of workers. Authorities said the checkpoint would be closed early again Sunday. At various points during the shutdown, airports in Atlanta, Houston and Miami also have operated under contingency plans to address the shortage.

"There is an increasing percentage of the TSA workforce that is calling out, predominantly for financial reason," TSA spokesman Michael Bilello said. "This is isolated now to a number of our largest hub airports."

Bilello said the agency had sent special agents from its National Deployment Force (NDF) to supplement checkpoint agents. NDF members normally are dispatched when an event like the Super Bowl or a crisis like a major hurricane takes place.

"We have fully deployed our established NDF and [are] increasing its size substantially," Bilello said, "but TSA's capability is still limited and will ultimately lead to increased lane closures in order to maintain security effectiveness."

Bilello said NDF officers have been deployed at airports across the system, including Atlanta, Newark and New York's LaGuardia.

He reiterated that the TSA will not allow the staffing shortage to compromise airport security.

"Airports will continue to change daily as needs arise; TSA will continue to monitor volume fluctuations to schedule those changes and make decisions accordingly," Bilello said. "While we are not releasing specific numbers, we can confirm that there are limited resources available and our ability to reinforce airports with National Deployment Officers is becoming more difficult."

TSA agents are among the estimated 800,000 federal employees who are furloughed or working without pay during the shutdown, which has entered its fifth week.

Brent D. Bowen, a professor of aviation at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's Arizona campus, said the demand for TSA workers to continue work without pay would have an inevitable impact.

"We can't expect any group of people to work indefinitely for no pay," Bowen said. "It affects morale. They're worried about their families. When that happens, you can't focus on your job as well as you would under normal circumstances."

Rolland Vincent, an industry expert and co-chair of an aviation group under the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, said TSA agents have a vital job to do, and their work, along with that of the Federal Aviation Administration, is being recklessly undercut by the shutdown.

The nation, he said, "is playing with guns."

"We're exposed," added Vincent, co-chair of the Transportation Research Board's subcommittee on commercial aviation. "Somebody is going to get hurt."

Despite the record number of no-shows among TSA checkpoint agents Saturday, the TSA said that virtually all of the 1.6 million passengers screened passed through within the agency's 30-minute standard, and that almost 94 percent were cleared in 15 minutes or less.

10 percent of TSA workers called out Sunday as shutdown continues (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/21/2019 11:01 AM, Ashley Halsey III and Michael Laris, 9763K] Video: [HERE](#)

The government shutdown continues to take a toll on the nation's air safety system as a growing number of workers decide they can't afford to keep working without pay.

The number of Transportation Security Administration agents who failed to show up for duty Sunday hit a record 10 percent, meaning long waits for travelers at checkpoints at several airports, including Minneapolis and New Orleans.

The union that represents the TSA workers, the American Federation of Government Employees, has warned since the federal shutdown began that its employees are among the lowest salaried on the federal pay scale and simply may be unable to afford to continue to work without pay.

At some airports, community groups have set up food banks for federal workers; at others, airport food vendors have donated meals.

In addition to a 35-minute wait at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and a 45-minute wait at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport (the city hosted a National Football League playoff game Sunday), the 40 busiest airports showed the strain of processing passengers with as many as 1 in 10 workers out. Fourteen airports had checkpoint waiting times of more than 20 minutes, with three of them pushing the maximum TSA acceptable wait time of 30 minutes. In Los Angeles (29 minutes), Tampa (28 minutes) and Chicago (27 minutes), the lines were extensive.

One of three TSA checkpoints at Baltimore-Washington International Marshall Airport was shut down twice over the weekend, but the TSA said Monday that it was operational again.

"The fact of asking, or in fact demanding, that people continue to come to work and not receive something and have no idea whether they even will receive back pay in many cases is an absolute killer for morale," said Erin E. Bowen, a psychology professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's Arizona campus. "Any time you have these situations where people feel like they have no control over their work environment and no control over whether their effort receives payment, you're going to see really wide-ranging consequences, and some of them are going to be bordering public safety concerns."

Rolland Vincent, an industry expert and co-chair of an aviation group under the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, said TSA agents have a vital job to do, and their work, along with that of the Federal Aviation Administration, is being recklessly undercut by the shutdown.

"We're exposed," added Vincent, co-chair of the Transportation Research Board's subcommittee on commercial aviation. "Somebody is going to get hurt."

The absentee rate one year ago — Jan. 20, 2018 — was 3.1 percent, the TSA said.

Overall, the TSA said that it screened 1.78 million passengers Sunday. They said that more than 93 percent of them waited for 15 minutes or less.

'Morale is at an all-time low': Unpaid Pittsburgh TSA workers demand end to shutdown (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 7:56 PM, Staff, 9763K] Video: [HERE](#)

Transportation Security Administration workers, who continue to work despite not getting paid, rallied against the government shutdown Jan. 18 at the Pittsburgh International Airport.

TSA says many employees not reporting to work because of 'financial limitations' (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/20/2019 4:54 PM, Justin Wise, 3038K]

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) said Sunday that many of its employees are not reporting to work because of "financial limitations," a statement that comes as the government shutdown persists into its fifth week.

"[Saturday's] complete figures show that TSA experienced a national rate of 8 percent of unscheduled absences compared to a 3 percent rate one year ago on the same day," TSA said in a statement released Sunday afternoon. "Many employees are reporting that they are not able to report to work due to financial limitations."

The statement added that "airports may exercise contingency plans due to call-outs and traveler volume in order to maintain effective security standards," noting that it took that step at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport due to "excessive callouts."

TSA closed a checkpoint at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport over a lack of staffing on Saturday.

The event occurred about a week after Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport closed one of its checkpoints.

The government shutdown, which was triggered on Dec. 22 after Democratic and Republican lawmakers failed to reach an agreement on a spending bill, has impacted thousands of federal workers, including TSA agents, across the nation.

TSA agents, as essential personnel, have been forced to work without pay.

A union president for the TSA said earlier this month that some agents have already walked off their jobs amid the shutdown, which is now the longest in U.S. history.

"Every day I'm getting calls from my members about their extreme financial hardships and need for a paycheck. Some of them have already quit and many are considering quitting the federal workforce because of this shutdown," said Hydrick Thomas, the TSA council president for the American Federation of Government Employees.

As government shutdown continues, more TSA agents calling out 'due to financial limitations' (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/21/2019 1:36 PM, Kaitlyn Schallhorn, 9216K]

With the partial government shutdown nearing the one-month mark, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has seen a rise in "unscheduled absences" among employees – many for financial reasons.

TSA said Monday it has seen a rate of about 10 percent of unscheduled absences. In comparison, there was a rate of about 3 percent this time last year.

"Many employees are reporting that they are not able to report to work due to financial limitations," the TSA said in a statement.

The government partially shuttered on Dec. 22, affecting about one-quarter of the government, as President Trump and Democrats remain steadfastly at an impasse over funding for a border wall. Some 800,000 federal employees have been off the job or forced to work without pay as the government remains closed.

TSA screeners missed paychecks last week although some are able to get \$500 bonuses and received pay for working the first day of the shutdown, according to The Associated Press.

Despite the rise in employee absences, TSA stressed the national average wait times are within its normal range of about 30 minutes for standard lanes and 10 minutes for pre-check – although some airports had longer average times. Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport had an average

wait time of 45 minutes and Daniel K. Inouye International Airport in Honolulu, Hawaii, had an average wait time of 12 minutes in pre-check, according to figures released by the TSA.

"In coordination with airport and airlines partners, TSA continues to carry out its mission by optimizing resources, managing consolidation efforts and ensuring screening lanes are properly staffed," it said. "Airports may exercise contingency plans due to call-outs and traveler volume in order to maintain effective security standards. Travelers should seek current airline and airport information and should allow enough time to get through the airport and board their flight."

One security checkpoint was closed at the Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI) Saturday due to staffing issues. However, an airport spokeswoman said there was "minimal if any" problems for customers and stressed it's not unusual for TSA and BWI to open and close security checkpoints based on projected travel levels, flight schedules and security staffing.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Government shutdown, TSA absenteeism spark travel industry fears (CBS News)

[CBS News](#) [1/18/2019 7:04 PM, AP, 2890K]

America's busiest airport, Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International, is a blur of activity on the best of days. But an extra layer of anxiety gripped the airport Friday, the eve of a three-day holiday weekend. The partial government shutdown — the longest ever — has thinned the ranks of federal workers who staff airport security lines. And some travelers had braced for the worst.

"I have a 3 o'clock flight, and I arrived at 10:15 a.m.," Beth Lambert said while waiting to check in at a Delta Air Lines counter as her 5-year-old, Michael, rode around on his wheeled bag like a scooter. "We're going to be hanging out for a while."

The scene at most of the nation's airports has so far been marked more by concerned passengers showing up early than by missed flights. Longer lines are evident at some airports. But delays resulting from a rise in federal security screeners calling in sick have been slight.

Yet concern is quickly growing. President Donald Trump and Democrats in Congress remain far apart over Trump's insistence on funding for a wall along the Mexican border as the price of reopening the government. With the two sides trading taunts and avoiding talks, travel industry analysts and economists have been calculating the potential damage should the shutdown drag into February or beyond.

Airlines and hotels would suffer. So would parks and restaurants that cater to travelers. And, eventually, the broader U.S. economy, already absorbing a trade war with China and a global economic slowdown, would endure another blow.

The travel and tourism industries generate about \$1.6 trillion in U.S. economic activity — one-twelfth of the economy — and one in 20 jobs, according to the Commerce Department. Macroeconomic Advisers says it now expects the economy to expand at just a 1.4 percent annual rate in the first three months of this year, down from its previous forecast of 1.6 percent, because of reduced government spending during the shutdown.

America's air-travel system will face its sternest this weekend, which coincides with Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday, a federal holiday. The Transportation Security Administration predicts it will screen over 8 million passengers between Friday and Monday, up 10.8 percent from last year's MLK weekend. And it will do so with fewer screeners. On Thursday, the TSA said 6.4 percent of screeners missed work — nearly double the 3.8 percent rate on the same day in 2018.

A TSA spokesman said the agency was offering overtime to screeners for this weekend, though those

workers wouldn't be paid — for their regular pay or for overtime— until the shutdown eventually ends.

On top of potentially longer airport security lines this weekend, a blast of winter weather could snarl travel this weekend in the Midwest and Northeast.

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International, home to Delta Air Lines, has likely been the hardest hit airport. Delta said this week that the shutdown will cost it \$25 million in January because fewer federal employees and contractors will be flying. By contrast, United Airlines, which has a substantial presence around Washington, D.C., said it hasn't felt much impact yet.

But the airlines fear that if the shutdown doesn't end soon, more TSA agents will call in sick or quit. A shortage of screeners would cause security lines to swell. Air traffic controllers, who are also working without pay, say they, too, are short-staffed. If the controller shortage became severe enough, the government could restrict the number of flights, though some analysts think that's unlikely.

"Luckily this is the low season — January is one of the weakest months of the year," said Savanthi Syth, an airline analyst for Raymond James. "This spilling into February is a real concern. The risk is that the longer this drags out, it might cause some passengers to say, 'I don't want to deal with all the hassle, maybe I won't take that trip.'"

Consumers are, in fact, taking a dimmer view of the economy, in part because of the shutdown. A measure of consumer confidence fell this month by the most in more than six years, according to the University of Michigan, which conducts the survey. If Americans were to cut back on travel and other discretionary spending, it would weaken consumer spending, the U.S. company's primary fuel.

Laura Mandala, who runs a travel and tourism research firm, said the shutdown might discourage international travelers, too.

"These uncertainties will result in fewer conferences being booked," Mandala said, leading to "convention and hotel staff layoffs, reduced schedules, resulting in less income for workers to spend in the local economy."

Hotels are starting to feel the impact, particularly in the Washington, D.C., region but also in other cities with substantial federal workforces, such as San Diego, which has a large naval base.

In the Washington area, including its nearby suburbs in Maryland and Virginia, hotel revenue plunged 26 percent in the second week of January compared with the same period last year, according to STR, a travel research firm. That's much steeper than the 8 percent decline that occurred nationwide.

Michael Bellisario, an analyst for investment bank R.W. Baird, suggested that other factors accounted for the most of the nationwide drop but said the shutdown almost certainly played a role.

"In no way is the government shutdown a positive for hotel demand and travel," Bellisario said.

If the shutdown lingers and people see more reports of long TSA lines on television news, "they will say, 'Oh wow, traveling is hard,' and that impacts the hotel industry," said Jan Freitag, a senior vice president at STR.

For now, though, the most visible impact has been at airports. One of the seven checkpoints at Houston's main airport has been closed all week and will remain so indefinitely, a spokesman said. Miami closed one concourse during the afternoons and evenings last weekend. On the other hand, officials at airports in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Miami said they weren't experiencing any problems.

The problems would emerge if the shutdown persists, and the damage would extend to the private companies that operate airport shops and restaurants.

Mike Boyd, an airport consultant in Colorado, noted that a pullback in travel would be felt most in airports that are heavily dependent on government employees such as Reagan National Airport outside Washington, Manhattan Regional Airport in Kansas, near the Army's Fort Riley, and Watertown International Airport in upstate New York, near Fort Drum.

Federal employees going without pay — there are about 800,000 of them, including 420,000 who are still working — are already suffering, of course.

"We still have to make sure our kids eat, make sure to have a roof over their head," said Shalique Caraballo, whose wife is a TSA worker in Atlanta. "We sweat in private and don't let the kids see the struggle."

Some in the airline industry and even in Congress have suggested that longer TSA security lines could exert enough pressure on politicians to break the stalemate that is keeping the government shuttered.

Others have all but lost hope.

"I would love to think that politicians understand that travel and tourism is an incredibly important gear in the economy," said Ninan Chacko, CEO of Travel Leaders Group, which owns and manages travel agencies, "but I don't think that is really the rational discussion that is taking place in Washington."

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

What TSA is telling key officials to say about the shutdown (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/18/2019 9:50 PM, Rene Marsh, 5847K]

Top Transportation Security Administration management has instructed key agency officials at airports around the country to not make details public about how many officers are missing work due to the partial government shutdown, according to an internal email obtained exclusively by CNN.

The talking points sent Friday morning from TSA's deputy assistant administrator for public affairs, Jim Gregory, illustrate how the agency is working behind the scenes to control messaging on how the four-week government shutdown is impacting the agency and its security screening efforts.

"You can engage with media and address topics that touch your workforce such as how they are doing overall but there are some areas you can't address," the email states.

"Do not offer specific call out data at your airport," the email adds. "You can say you have experienced higher numbers of call outs but in partnership with the airport and airlines you are able to manage people and resources to ensure effective security is always maintained."

TSA has repeatedly said the shutdown will not impact security even as screeners, working without pay, continue to call out from work on a higher-than-average basis, as first reported by CNN.

Talking points from government department headquarters are commonplace, and on Friday, Gregory told CNN that a select group of TSA leaders had asked for the guidance.

"In short, they are suggested language to be used if the situation applies. Yesterday, our operations center asked if they could forward my talking points out to all (federal security directors), and I thought it might be helpful, so I agreed," Gregory said of his email.

TSA this week has issued press releases with national percentages of what it calls "unscheduled absences." On Friday, TSA said 6.4% of its workforce had not showed up to work due to the shutdown compared with 3.8% last year.

However, because TSA is providing only nationwide averages, it is difficult for the flying public to know which airports are most impacted by the callouts.

While TSA has released nationwide call-out numbers, the agency denied a request for actual numbers of employees who have called out at specific airports since the shutdown began, citing security concerns.

"We consider callout numbers to be sensitive and are not releasing them publicly because we believe adversaries could use the information to exploit perceived vulnerabilities," Gregory told CNN.

"Additionally, callout numbers don't tell the whole story since it's more about whether FSDs are able to properly staff checkpoints. Regardless, we want to ensure people know security will not be compromised at TSA and we will maintain security standards."

Gregory also tells TSA airport leadership in his email, "Don't discuss things that happened at other airports. Earlier in the week there were articles in the media about the gun missed at ATL on Jan 2. You can say that we take all security incidents seriously but I'd refer you to our headquarters to address that specific incident."

TSA, part of the Department of Homeland Security, has been under public scrutiny since the shutdown began and CNN reported that hundreds of screeners were calling out sick at major airports.

On Monday, wait times at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport reached a maximum of 88 minutes, according to TSA. Last weekend, Miami International Airport reported callouts at double the normal rate and at one point a concourse was shut down. And Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport has shut down one checkpoint for six days.

In a tweet Thursday the head of TSA David Pekoske acknowledged the increasing calls outs. "There is a rise in callouts from officers who say they are not able to report to work due to financial reasons. I understand this & where necessary, we will exercise contingency plans using the resources & staff available."

Talking points from the internal email and agency press releases say airports are "exercising our contingency plans to ensure and maintain effective security due to call outs and anticipated high volume."

The agency isn't revealing details of all the contingency plans for security reasons, but CNN has learned that part of the plan involves deploying backup TSA officers to bolster airport staffing levels.

The general manager of Atlanta's airport said Wednesday that 20 backup TSA officers were brought in. CNN has also learned at least six TSA officers were sent to Newark Liberty International Airport.

Gregory's email notes that members of the flying public have expressed their gratitude to screeners working without pay.

He advises the TSA officials they can say: "Public support from passengers to airport personnel, and others making their way through terminals across the country, is greatly appreciated."

Another line: "TSA officers cannot accept gifts at the checkpoint, however they are grateful for everyone's gratitude. It makes a difference."

TSA officers open up about what the government shutdown is doing to their families (USA Today)

[USA Today](#) [1/18/2019 10:22 AM, Melissa Yeager, 6053K]

Standing in the security line at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport in Arizona, passengers likely haven't felt the impact of the partial shutdown of the federal government.

Employees of the Transportation Security Administration are working without pay, but wait times have consistently been 5-10 minutes at most checkpoints. Passengers move through as normal. Agents say some people stop to thank them for showing up for work.

Like TSA officers elsewhere in the country, these officers missed their first paycheck on Jan. 11. They haven't officially earned pay since Dec. 22.

Airports in Atlanta and Miami have been hard hit by employees calling out from work at almost double the normal rate, but Sky Harbor's absentee rate has remained unchanged. Employees still get up, sometimes as early as 1:30 in the morning, and drive to Sky Harbor to report for their shifts.

Privately, the shutdown has made many of these workers worry about their own security as the longest shutdown in U.S. history threatens to leave them without a second paycheck.

They worry about how they will manage their family budgets and whether a continued shutdown might force some co-workers to leave for careers offering more stability.

TSA lead officer Bryan Bentley speaks three languages: English, Spanish and Portuguese. He left the private sector for TSA in 2010 because he wanted to serve his country.

"I believed in public service and I wanted to give back," Bentley said.

Bentley's no stranger to how politics can affect his job. He's weathered several shutdowns over the years but this one, he said, feels different. He's worried by the seemingly "unending nature of it."

He voiced frustration with both parties, Congress and the president. He and other TSA agents we spoke with expressed dismay at the Office of Management and Budget's suggestions for how to manage their finances — like recommending they negotiate with their lenders if they are in danger of missing a mortgage payment.

"My mortgage company is pretty unbending and I don't know where I would come up with the money other than to get a loan," Bentley said.

As the executive vice president of the local branch of the American Federation of Government Employees, the union representing TSA workers, Bentley said he has received a steady stream of texts and calls from worried co-workers. He's found it hard to ease their fears.

"I'm really worried about my co-workers and my family. We don't know when it is going to end. That not knowing is very stressful," Bentley said.

The stress also is hitting Tina Anderson, a mother of three who left teaching a couple of years ago to take a job with TSA. Anderson has a master's degree in education but switched jobs so she could have good insurance for her daughter, who she calls "medically fragile."

Anderson said her 11-year-old has undergone 16 surgeries, including five on her brain, and is dependent on a variety of medications. The family has income from her husband's job, but with her daughter's health issues, it takes two incomes to make ends meet. Her daughter can't go without her medications.

"If she doesn't take them, it's a big deal. You can't just stop those for a child," Anderson said.

At the beginning of the year, their health-insurance deductible reset. That has left the family scrambling to figure out how to pay doctor bills with no assurance that they'll soon have that second income back.

Anderson said she tried to use the OMB's tactics for negotiating leniency with her daughter's neurologist.

"If you do not pay the co-pay, you do not see the doctor," Anderson recalls the front desk clerk telling her.

Anderson plopped down her credit card.

On Monday, she was one of 300 employees who picked up food from the St. Mary's Food Bank mobile pantry, which came to the TSA offices.

"If you're working, you expect to be OK," Anderson said.

Both Anderson and Bentley said they have seen co-workers retire or quit and move on to more secure jobs. They both worry about the toll a continued shutdown could have on staffing.

On usajobs.gov, the federal government's job-application site, listings for an entry-level TSA officer show a starting salary of \$15.63 an hour. Union representatives said some of their members have take-home pay of about \$500 a week.

Anderson and other TSA workers say travelers, at least at Sky Harbor, have been unusually polite and empathetic. Occasionally, a passenger tries to offer them a gift card but the workers have to decline. It's against the department's ethics policy.

But the thought behind the gesture is appreciated especially since Bentley feels like Washington is treating him like a "political pawn."

"If this was a private company that didn't pay employees there would be lawsuits," Bentley said.

"But this is the government."

TSA absences rise as shutdown continues (Reuters)

[Reuters](#) [1/21/2019 10:22 AM, Staff]

The Transportation Security Administration said Monday that unscheduled absences among the more than 50,000 U.S. airport security officers rose to 10 percent on Sunday as the government shutdown continues.

The agency said the rate was more than three times the 3.1 percent absence rate on the same day last year. The agency said that, despite the absences, nearly all 1.78 million passengers screened Sunday faced normal security waits of 30 minutes or less.

The agency said many employees, who are not being paid because of the shutdown, are not reporting to work because of financial hardships.

Union warns of threat to air safety from the partial government shutdown (Michigan Public Radio)

[Michigan Public Radio](#) [1/21/2019 5:04 PM, Steve Carmody, AP, 31K]

The technicians who maintain the nation's air traffic system warn the ongoing partial federal government shutdown is affecting air safety.

A weekend offer that President Donald Trump says is a compromise with Democrats doesn't appear to be on track to ending the partial government shutdown, now in Day 31.

Members of the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists union spent time Monday picketing outside airports in Flint and Grand Rapids.

Spokesman Tim Mach says the month-long shutdown is forcing technicians to forego needed supplies.

"It's definitely getting to a point where, 'Well, do we really that? Do we really need that right now?'" says Mach. "So those kind[s] of decisions are being made. And those are the kind of decisions that could jeopardize aviation safety."

Mach says some younger aviation technicians are running short of money after a month since their last paycheck. He says those who can may soon retire, which will leave them shorthanded.

Meanwhile, the percentage of TSA airport screeners missing work has hit 10 percent as the partial government shutdown stretches into its fifth week.

The Transportation Security Administration said Monday that Sunday's absence rate compared to 3.1 percent on the comparable Sunday a year ago.

The workers who screen passengers and their bags face missing another paycheck if the shutdown doesn't end early this week. According to TSA, many of them say the financial hardship is preventing them from reporting to work.

TSA says the national average waiting time in airport checkpoint lines is within the normal limit of 30 minutes, but there are longer lines at some airports.

The agency has dispatched extra screeners to airports in Atlanta, Miami, and Newark, New Jersey.

Conservative leader: Shutdown would quickly end if TSA workers walked off job (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 3:21 PM, Scott Wong, 3038K]

A conservative leader said Friday that the longest shutdown in U.S. history would be resolved in "two days" if unpaid Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers all walked off the job at airports around the country or another cataclysmic event took place.

"TSA agents, if they walked off the job tomorrow, I think the shutdown would be done in two days," said Tim Chapman, the executive director of Heritage Action, the political arm of the Heritage Foundation, said in an interview on C-SPAN's "Newsmakers."

"The fact that so many TSA agents are showing up and really being patriotic in doing their job is a real credit to them," he said, "but an external event like that could put a lot of pressure on it, there's no doubt."

Long security lines have been reported at airports around the country — including in Miami, Atlanta and Seattle — due to a higher number of TSA employees calling out sick. But the majority of TSA employees, almost none of who are getting paid during the shutdown, have continued showing up for work.

Chapman wouldn't weigh in about whether Trump's shutdown strategy was effective but said "what he's trying to achieve is a completely worthy objective."

And he said Trump's decision to halt Speaker Nancy Pelosi's (D-Calif.) overseas congressional trip to Afghanistan and other countries this weekend "merits applause." Pelosi and other Democratic leaders should remain in Washington and keep negotiating with Trump, Chapman said.

"I think it's important for everyone to not just go about business as usual when we're a month into a

shutdown," he said.

"What you need is to have some leader on the left to come out and say, 'OK let's just end this thing.' I'm pretty sure the president would agree to some sort of compromise ... south of what he's asked for. And it could be over tomorrow if that happened."

[PA] TSA agents protest government shutdown at Pittsburgh airport (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 4:37 PM, John Bowden, 3038K]

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) employees at Pittsburgh International Airport held a protest on Friday demanding an end to the government shutdown, which has forced TSA officials to work without pay.

Photos of the protest obtained by local news stations showed dozens of TSA employees with signs calling on Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) to hold votes on bills passed by the House to reopen parts of the government.

TSA agents and other government workers still reporting for duty amid the shutdown are set to miss a second paycheck this month on Jan. 25.

"They've already missed a paycheck on Jan. 11, and they're about to miss a paycheck on Jan. 25 and I wonder how secure is the government going to be or the airports going to be when these people can't come to work anymore, can't afford gas, can't afford to pay their bills?" Phil Glover, national vice president of the American Federation of Government Employees, told Pittsburgh Action News.

"It's time for the Senate to call a vote, and that's what we need them to do," he added.

Pennsylvania Rep. Conor Lamb (D) appeared at Friday's rally, where he urged Republicans in the Senate to have votes on the measures, which McConnell has refused to do until Democrats reach a deal with the White House for the president's approval.

"They deserve more than money. They deserve a country that has leadership that is actually working together doing its job," Lamb said.

The president of the area union of TSA agents, which organized Friday's protest, told a local CBS affiliate that "morale is at an all-time low" among his colleagues.

"The morale is starting to drop because we don't see an end in sight," he added, according to Pittsburgh Action News.

The partial government shutdown stretched into its 28th day on Friday, with no resolution in sight. The shutdown began Dec. 22 amid disagreements over Trump's demand for more than \$5 billion in funding to construct a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

[MD] TSA closes checkpoint at BWI airport, citing 'excessive callouts' (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/19/2019 6:59 PM, Martin Weil, 9763K]

The Transportation Security Authority said it had closed a security checkpoint at BWI Marshall Airport Saturday evening because of a shortages of screeners.

In a Twitter message sent Saturday evening, the agency said it "will be exercising a contingency plan" at BWI "due to excessive callouts."

TSA is responsible for security screening of airline passengers in the United States. TSA screeners are among the federal government employees required to work during the partial shutdown of the federal

government. Reports have circulated about possible staffing shortages since the shutdown began.

In its message, TSA said one of its checkpoints at BWI would close at 5:30 p.m.

It recommended that passengers arrive early.

In another news release, TSA said there were more than twice as many unscheduled absences nationally on Friday as last year on the same date.

It said the national rate of unscheduled absences was seven percent, compared with last year's three percent.

In the release TSA said many employees were saying they could not come to work because of financial limitations.

BWI is one of three airports serving the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. It is located between Baltimore and Washington.

[MD] TSA closes checkpoint at Baltimore-DC airport after 'excessive' employee callouts amid shutdown (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/20/2019 9:20 AM, Avery Anapol, 3038K]

The Transport Security Administration (TSA) on Saturday closed a security checkpoint at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport over a lack of staffing.

The TSA said that due to "excessive" employee callouts, it shut down BWI's Checkpoint A at 5:35 p.m., according to NBC Washington.

The absences come as the partial government shutdown approaches its fifth week. The TSA has reported a heightened rate of employees calling in sick across the nation amid the shutdown.

TSA agents are among the estimated 800,000 federal employees who are furloughed or working without pay during the funding lapse. They are set to miss a second paycheck at the end of this coming week.

Agents held a protest at Pittsburgh airport on Friday demanding an end to the shutdown, and a number of other airports have shut down security checkpoints.

[Canada] Fire aboard June WestJet flight caused by e-cigarette batteries, says TSB (BNN Bloomberg)

[BNN Bloomberg](#) [1/18/2019 4:51 PM, The Canadian Press, 158K]

The Transportation Safety Board says an onboard fire that forced a WestJet plane to return to the Calgary International Airport soon after takeoff last June was caused by spare e-cigarette lithium-ion batteries that a passenger failed to declare in his checked baggage.

The agency says in a report that a backpack caught fire and caused minor thermal damage to the cargo compartment's fire-resistant liner near the bag.

An investigation could not determine if the damage occurred before the batteries arrived at the airport or during baggage handling.

The unidentified frequent business flyer was aware of airline policies requiring that e-cigarettes and lithium-ion batteries only be carried in the cabin and be removed from devices but inadvertently left two spare batteries in his checked bag.

The proliferation of personal electronic devices using these batteries has increased events involving smoke, fire or explosion because of the high temperatures they generate. The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration has recorded 206 incidents involving lithium-ion batteries between 1991 and May 2018.

The TSB report says it is a shared responsibility among passengers, air carriers and security screeners to ensure the contents of baggage comply with rules about restricted items.

"As portable electronics continue to gain popularity, it's essential that guests review baggage policies when prompted at the time of check-in and are aware of what they pack for the safety of our guests, crew and aircraft," the Calgary-based airline wrote in an email.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Shutdown should focus attention on common-sense flood insurance reform (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 2:30 PM, Liam Sigaud, 3038K]

As the partial federal government shutdown drags on, numerous agencies have closed shop or are operating with a skeleton crew. That includes the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the government-run insurer intended to help Americans recover from floods. With more than 5.1 million policies providing over \$1.3 trillion in coverage, the NFIP is by far the biggest flood insurer for both residential and commercial properties in the U.S.

Over the last few months, calls for overhauling the program have intensified, and for good reason. The NFIP has accumulated \$20.5 billion of debt to the U.S. Treasury while its operating expenses are estimated to outstrip its revenues from premiums by about \$1.4 billion annually — and that's assuming that no major disasters like Hurricane Katrina or Superstorm Sandy strike.

Despite these challenges, lawmakers continue to put off meaningful reforms to how the federal government approaches flood insurance.

When Congress voted last December to keep the NFIP afloat until May 31, 2019, it was the program's tenth short-term extension since September 2017. That's right, over a 14-month period, lawmakers kicked the can down the road ten times instead of passing a long-term fix to address the NFIP's fiscal challenges.

With NFIP operations at a stand-still due to the shutdown, it might be a good time for Congress to consider reforming this badly dysfunctional agency to ensure that it continues to serve the millions of Americans who count on it when disaster strikes.

There's no shortage of ideas. Earlier this month, Congressman Blaine Luetkemeyer of Missouri introduced several pieces of legislation that would set the NFIP on a more sustainable fiscal path. The Taxpayer Exposure Mitigation Act, for example, would require FEMA, the NFIP's overseer, to purchase reinsurance to transfer the risk of flood losses to the private market instead of saddling taxpayers with the bill. The NFIP has already begun using reinsurance to mitigate some of its financial exposure, but it needs to go further, following the example of programs like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The program needs to push its risk to the private sector, and purchasing reinsurance will help accomplish that.

Rep. Luetkemeyer has also reintroduced a bill to require the NFIP to calculate premiums based on a property's replacement cost value, instead of using national averages that fail to account for significant disparities in property values across different regions. By relying on national averages to set rates instead of more detailed, property-specific information commonly used in the private sector, the NFIP tends to undercharge wealthy, coastal customers and overcharge lower-income homeowners.

As a result, policyholders in less expensive homes subsidize those in more expensive ones. Ending this unfair practice by charging homeowners accurate premiums would go a long way in rebalancing the

NFIP's finances.

Another measure, the Community Mapping Act, would allow states and communities to develop their own flood maps, as long as they meet rigorous standards. At present, flood mapping is controlled by bureaucrats in Washington. Partly because of this centralization of power and lack of local input, the majority of the NFIP's flood maps do not accurately reflect flood risk, according to a recent Inspector General report. Letting states and localities play an active role in developing flood maps would empower those who know their communities best and help the NFIP craft its policies on a foundation of factual information.

These reforms are a good start.

The new Congress should hold hearings to debate and discuss these proposals — and others — before the NFIP's extension expires this June. Postponing meaningful reform may be politically expedient, but it will only make the problem worse. American Consumers deserve better.

Project looks into how drones can predict spread of wildfire (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/20/2019 8:26 AM, Staff, 337K]

A University of Missouri researcher is teaming up with scholars in Kansas and Georgia to develop drone technology to monitor and potentially predict the spread of wildfires.

The \$1.2 million research project that began last month aims to use unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, to collect real-time data and send the information to firefighters to help contain wildfires, the Columbia Missourian reported.

"Currently, the (nation's) firefighting, or fire management system, is not very effective and efficient," said University of Missouri professor Ming Xin. "One of the main issues is we cannot predict where fires spread."

Xin is working with University of Kansas professor Haiyang Chao and Georgia State University professor Xiaolin Hu in the wake of nearly 56,000 wildfires burning across the country last year, including California's devastating Camp Fire in November that killed nearly 90 people.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and National Science Foundation are sponsoring the project.

Xin said the project's drones follow a simulation that can precisely predict where a fire will spread for the next 10 to 30 minutes. The simulation is based on thermal imagery of an area and data on wind, terrain and vegetation. The drones collect the real-time data with thermal imaging cameras and sensors that help estimate the wind field.

The most significant factors affecting the spread of a wildfire are an area's terrain, vegetation and weather, Xin said. While information on an area's terrain and vegetation can be collected from a geological survey, the area's weather patterns are more difficult to determine, Xin said.

Xin hopes the technology will help firefighters with their decision-making because they'll be able to see the scene of a fire on a larger scale.

The researchers plan to launch test flights at the University of Kansas Field Station this summer.

[AL] 'Never Heard Nothing Like It': Southern Storm Wrecks Landmark Churches (NPR)

[NPR](#) [1/20/2019 8:01 AM, Kyle Gassiot, 4491K] Audio: [HERE](#)

While powerful winter storms hit parts of the Midwest on Saturday, heavy thunderstorms swept through the South. A tornado may have destroyed prominent buildings in a town north of Montgomery, Ala.

TRANSCRIPT

LULU GARCIA-NAVARRO, HOST:

It's shaping up to be a brutal winter, in part, because the polar vortex has splintered. Powerful storms are moving across the country, now hitting the East Coast. In the south, heavy thunderstorms spawned an apparent tornado that hit parts of a town in central Alabama. Troy Public Radio's Kyle Gassiotte reports.

KYLE GASSIOTT, BYLINE: The Coosa River runs through the heart of Wetumpka, which is 20 miles north of Alabama's capital city, Montgomery. On the east side of the river is the business district, which has a casino that brings around 3 million people to the area each year. Jonathan Smithart manages a restaurant in the casino. He says he was at an intersection on his way to work on Saturday afternoon when the storm hit.

JONATHAN SMITHART: I look up and the light starts - traffic light starts shaking, jumping back and forth. And then just gray and just strong wind, and the car starts shaking. And...

GASSIOTT: Then, he says, a tree fell on the trunk of his car.

SMITHART: So three feet and it would've been on my head, maybe - pretty scary.

GASSIOTT: Some injuries were reported after the storm passed as citizens saw the damage to buildings and houses on the immediate west side of the river.

JERRY WILLIS: This church has probably been painted and captured on canvas more than any other place or structure, you know, in our area, in our county.

GASSIOTT: Mayor Jerry Willis is standing in front of what used to be the Presbyterian church and is now a pile of wood with a few standing walls. The church was over a century old. And its tall, white steeple was one of the most well-known landmarks in the area. Now that steeple is gone as is the one on the Baptist church across the street. Emma Hoppes has lived next door to both of the historic churches for 35 years. She's ready for things to be rebuilt. But first, she wants to put the memory of this storm out of her mind.

EMMA HOPPE: It sounded awful. I thought I was working in a steel mill or something. It was awful. I never heard nothing like it - don't want to hear it no more, either.

(SOUNDBITE OF MACHINERY RUNNING)

GASSIOTT: By nightfall, with a curfew for citizens in place, work on clearing the streets of debris and power lines has begun. At the Presbyterian church, someone has rescued a painting of the steeple and placed it on a post near the street. I ask Mayor Willis if the image of Christ smiling down on the building speaks to the strength of the community.

WILLIS: Well, it tells you that. And it tells you where we need to put our trust.

GASSIOTT: The National Weather Service in Birmingham has said that it will determine if a tornado did indeed hit the area and if so, what rating it should get. For NPR News, I'm Kyle Gassiotte in Wetumpka, Ala.

(SOUNDBITE OF ROBERT RANDOLPH & THE FAMILY BAND'S "I STILL BELONG TO JESUS")

[AL] EF-2 Tornado damages homes, businesses in Alabama town (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/20/2019 2:17 PM, UPI, 2015K]

A EF-2 tornado damaged at least 25 homes, the police department, two churches and other buildings in a small town in Alabama.

The twister touched down in Wetumpka in Elmore County, about 12 miles north of Montgomery, on Saturday afternoon, the National Weather Service confirmed on Twitter.

On Sunday, the NWS in Birmingham tweeted that a preliminary survey indicates the area was hit by EF-2 — 111-135 mph — that was 300 yards wide. Also, an EF-1 tornado — 86-110 mph — occurred near Booth in Autauga County.

John De Block, NWS Warning Coordination meteorologist, told the Montgomery Advertiser a two-person team is finding evidence of 120 to 130 mph winds in downtown Wetumpka.

Wetumpka's population was 8,148, based on a 2017 U.S. Census Bureau estimate.

The injury, which was reported at 4:30 p.m., does not appear to be serious, the Montgomery Advertiser reported.

The First Presbyterian and First Baptist churches had heavy damage. The main sanctuary of the First Presbyterian was built in 1856. The church's services Sunday morning were at the Wetumpka Depot Theater.

"If those churches were occupied, we'd be looking at an entirely different situation," De Block said.

In addition, the police department lost five cars.

Downtown Wetumpka appears to have suffered the most damage, Mayor Jerry Willis told the newspaper.

"It's bad, when you love a place as much as we love Wetumpka, to see this devastation," he said. "We have worked so hard to get here and to see it destroyed like this.

"We don't know God's plan, but we know he is in control. If this had been during the week with schools in session. If it had been Sunday morning with churches at worship, it would have been absolutely devastating as far as injuries and even fatalities. We'll come back. We'll clean up and come back."

Electrical workers worked to restore power because of downed lines.

[AL] Tornado tears through Alabama town, destroying homes and trapping residents (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/19/2019 11:32 PM, Hollie Silverman, 5847K]

A tornado roared through central Alabama on Saturday, destroying several homes and leaving families trapped in their basements.

The National Weather Service confirmed Saturday afternoon that a tornado touched down in the town of Wetumpka in Elmore County -- about 12 miles north of Montgomery.

At least seven homes, the police department and a Presbyterian church that is more than 100 years old were destroyed when the tornado made its way through the town, said Lt. Phillip Hethcox with the Wetumpka Fire Department.

The daycare area of a Baptist church was heavily damaged, he said.

Several people had to be rescued from their basements and shelters following the tornado and were

treated for minor injuries.

"Amazing that no one got hurt," Hethcox said.

Many people were able to take shelter when a warning siren went off before the tornado hit, Hethcox explained.

Most of the town, including the downtown area, was still without power late Saturday.

[AL] Tornado devastates Alabama city; mayor says 'God has a plan' (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/20/2019 9:45 AM, Travis Fedschun, 9216K]

Residents of a small Alabama city are picking up the pieces Sunday after a tornado caused significant damage to the downtown area and trapped some residents under debris.

The preliminary EF-2 tornado with winds between 120 and 130 mph touched down around 4 p.m. ET and slammed the city of Wetumpka, located about 15 miles northeast of Montgomery in the central part of the state, according to the National Weather Service.

Wetumpka Mayor Jerry Willis told WFSA that one injury was reported and four people had to be rescued after being trapped in a basement by debris.

A senior center, the police department, and the historic First Presbyterian Church were among the buildings damaged from the afternoon storm, he said.

"When you love a place like we do, and we've worked so hard to move this city forward, and to be devastated like this, you know, we just have to recharge our batteries and go back and redo and put it all back together again," Willis told WFSA.

"God has a plan. We don't always know what God's plan is always, but we'll come together as a community and we'll be better," he added. "I promise you we'll be better because of this and it hurts."

Video from the scene showed several collapsed buildings, overturned cars and toppled trees and power lines.

The NWS in Birmingham said that survey crews were headed to the area on Sunday to assess damage from the storms.

The Alabama Law Enforcement Agency said that troopers are on the ground to assist with the aftermath of the storm.

State emergency management officials estimate 35 homes throughout Elmore County, where Wetumpka is located, were damaged by the tornado.

Roberta Johnson, who received damage to her roof, told the Montgomery Advertiser the rain "hit harder than I ever seen before" as the storm rolled through.

"I ran to a bathroom and it hit, boom, the wind was howling," she told the newspaper. "I never prayed so hard in my life."

Authorities were conducting door-to-door searches before nightfall to look for anyone possibly trapped under debris, according to WSFA. Alabama Power said about 2,000 customers were without service Saturday in Wetumpka, and crews were evaluating the damage.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey said on Twitter she deployed state personnel to assist authorities in Elmore County.

Damage also was confirmed in nearby Autauga County.

A mobile home overturned near the Independence community, but no injuries were reported, Sheriff Joe Sedinger said.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

[FL] Tornado damages Florida air base hit by hurricane (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/20/2019 9:46 AM, Associated Press, 527K]

Buildings on a Florida air base were damaged by an apparent tornado according to base officials.

Tyndall Air Force Base posted a message on its official Facebook page that said the tornado struck early Saturday evening.

The post said that no one was injured but that the tornado damaged structures and vehicles on the military installation. Officials added that assessments of the damage will continue through the weekend.

The air base located in Florida's Panhandle was hammered by Hurricane Michael when the storm ripped through the area in October.

Earlier this month base officials said that they had issued \$175 million in contracts to repair damage left by the powerful storm.

[TX] Harvey victims rebuffed by FEMA finally receive some financial relief (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/21/2019 3:14 PM, Madeleine Rivera, 9216K]

It's been nearly a year and half since Hurricane Harvey devastated this Texas city. Yet, many victims say they are nowhere close to full recovery.

"I'm in limbo. I'm in like a twilight zone right now," said Malbrth Moses.

Moses' home was destroyed by the storm. Mold and water stains mark the walls of the house he shares with his 95-year-old mother. The foundation, he says, shifted after it was flooded.

"Our backyard got so saturated that the house started sinking. You can see the house leaning forward," he said.

Moses said a FEMA inspector examined the damages, but because they were deemed as "pre-existing," they did not qualify for aid. They spent \$5,000 out of pocket to make some necessary repairs.

Still, it's far from what they need. Because Moses can't work due to mesothelioma, money is tight.

"We don't have any more funds trying to get anything done here. So, right now, I don't know what the next step would be," he said.

Many Harvey victims who were shut out of FEMA funding now could be eligible for federal dollars the state received through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. While FEMA is an immediate stopgap for hurricane victims, the agency has stringent restrictions that critics say leave many victims out to dry.

But almost two years later that state is doling out additional funding it received last February that will

provide relief for some victims who felt left out of recovery funds.

Last week, the city opened four recovery centers to teach people about homeowner assistance programs, made possible through a \$1.17 billion federal package.

"What's happening now is the money has arrived," said Tom McCasland, director of Housing and Community Development.

The funds are part of a \$5 billion package that HUD allocated to Texas after Harvey hit. The state's General Land Office distributed more than \$1 billion to Houston and another \$1 billion to Harris County last February -- but it took a year for the application and approval process to take shape, locals officials said.

"FEMA's in charge of the short-term housing recovery. But, HUD has traditionally overseen the long-term housing recovery. And for Hurricane Harvey, this is the first funding from HUD for the long-term recovery," said McCasland.

Hundreds have stopped by the recovery centers since they opened.

Moses is one of those hoping to qualify for the programs, which include reimbursements for completed repairs, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and buyouts.

"To a certain point, it gives me some type of comfort because they're trying to do something for some," said Moses.

Moses said he had been losing hope.

"In the time period it's taking right now, you've got people on the street that have nowhere to go. Houses are still damaged, haven't been torn down, haven't even started to be repaired," he said.

McCasland noted, however, that while the wait seems long, it's actually shorter than the wait time for other recovery efforts.

"We are still waiting to get our money for disasters that occurred in 2016. Here, in perspective, this is a rapid timeline," McCasland said. "But for people who have been waiting, this is far too long."

He said the area is still hoping to get additional funding.

"We think that the real money is closer to \$3 billion for a full recovery. We're still working with federal officials and our elected officials to make sure they understand that," he said.

For now, Moses said the recovery programs are, at least, something. Before finding out which program he qualifies for, however, he'll have to keep waiting.

"I'm just going to keep fighting and keep going back and forth to see what I can get [done]," he said.

[TX] Legislators look to help victims of future storms (Houston Chronicle)

[Houston Chronicle](#) [1/19/2019 10:13 PM, Mike Morris, 199K]

In Texas' first legislative session post Hurricane Harvey, lawmakers have filed bills aimed at better alerting homeowners to their flood risk, lessening the damage of future storms and lowering disaster victims' tax bills.

Whether these or similar proposals pass, a key question confronting lawmakers is whether to allocate

cash for disaster recovery and prevention from Texas' so-called rainy day fund, which is projected to reach \$15 billion at the end of the coming biennium if not touched.

A routine Senate bill providing supplemental funding for the 2018-2019 biennium proposes to draw \$1.2 billion from the Economic Stabilization Fund to cover various state agencies' Harvey expenses. The bill also includes seven placeholder allocations to several agencies, with appropriations for Harvey costs to be filled in later.

The bill makes no mention of state support for flood mitigation projects along the Gulf Coast, but lawmakers from both parties and chambers said there is broad agreement that such an allocation will be made. A spokesman for Gov. Greg Abbott said he has made clear that money from the fund will be spent to aid recovery.

"Now is the time. This would be an excellent opportunity to harden our infrastructure, pull hundreds of Texans out of the floodplains," said Rep. Dade Phelan, R-Beaumont. "With the loss of life and the loss of business activity and loss of revenue from a flood, we could spend a few billion on the front end or \$20 billion to \$30 billion on the back end of the next flood."

Many lawmakers have filed bills with the next disaster in mind.

Phelan and Rep. Sarah Davis, R-Houston, have filed separate bills to create funds to lend or grant to local governments for flood mitigation projects.

Rep. Armando Walle and Sen. Borris Miles, both Houston Democrats, want to form a task force to study flood control needs in Harris County and prepare a report by 2021. Rep. Dan Huberty, R-Houston, wants to form a Lake Houston Watershed Commission to improve flood control communication and planning.

Sen. Eddie Lucio, D-Brownsville, hopes to let local governments, with state approval, adopt housing recovery plans that can be deployed immediately if a disaster occurs. Miles also has filed a bill that would have the state secure standing contracts for all the services necessary to build or repair housing and infrastructure after a disaster.

After the damage

Other bills target property taxes. Davis and Sen. Joan Huffman, R-Houston, have filed companion bills that would force damaged properties to be reappraised after a disaster so homeowners aren't taxed as if their gutted homes are in mint condition.

A similar proposal from Rep. Victoria Neave, D-Dallas, would prevent homes made uninhabitable from paying a higher tax bill for five years. Rep. Hugh Shine, R-Temple, has filed a bill to give storm victims tax exemptions that vary depending on the severity of damage.

Huberty has filed several bills related to sand mining. Experts agree that sedimentation of the San Jacinto River and Lake Houston reduced the capacity of those waterways to hold floodwaters during Harvey; sand mining industry leaders dispute that the prevalence of sand mining along the river was to blame.

Regardless, Huberty wants the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to post best practices for sand mining on its website, and he proposes hiking the fines on unregistered sand mining operations as well as on registered ones that violate state rules.

Other bills seek to improve residents' awareness of their flood risk. Rep. Will Metcalf, R-Conroe, wants to create an alert system to notify residents if a release of water from a dam may put lives or property at risk. Rep. Mary Ann Perez, D-Houston, wants commercial and residential insurers to clearly state in their

policies that flood damage is not covered.

With the devastation around west Houston's Addicks and Barker reservoirs in mind, Huffman filed a bill to require that homebuyers be given a written notice stating whether the seller knows if the property is partly or wholly in a 100-year or 500-year floodplain, flood pool, reservoir or within 5 miles downstream of a reservoir and has flooded or may flood in a catastrophic storm.

Unlike most reservoirs, which form lakes, Addicks and Barker are dry until heavy rains, when water builds up behind earthen dams. Government and private engineers knew for decades that the acreage at risk of inundation in a severe storm was larger than what the government owned, but officials repeatedly judged that a storm that big was unlikely to occur and took no action.

Of the roughly 30,000 homes in the reservoirs' "flood pools" when Harvey hit, at least 9,000 flooded; many are now suing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Many homeowners had no idea they were at risk, as there is no federal law, state law, flood insurance rule or mortgage lender requirement to alert them.

John Breen didn't know his home, which took on a few inches of water during Harvey, was in a flood pool when he purchased it nine years ago.

Fresh off having his roof punctured by a tree during Hurricane Ike, Breen said being notified that the Twin Lakes neighborhood was in the Addicks reservoir flood pool may have affected his decision.

"My assumption was that it was probably a safe zone because it had been approved for construction," he said. "Knowing what we went through with Ike, even though it was different type of storm, with Harvey, it would have been nice to know. Knowledge is always useful. In that case, we felt like we didn't have all the right information."

Allocating the money

Many homeowners did know they were downstream of the dams, Huffman said, but could not imagine government officials knowingly flooding their homes, as occurred during Harvey when the Army Corps of Engineers — fearing uncontrolled flows around the dams' back edges could erode them — opened the reservoirs' floodgates.

Even before many of these bills get a hearing, lawmakers said, they may hash out an issue of more impact: using the rainy day fund for flood projects.

"I don't have any doubt that we're going to put some money into flood mitigation," said Walle, the Houston Democrat. "At this point it's, No. 1, the amount, and No. 2, where are we going to put those resources?"

One idea Gulf Coast officials have pushed is for the state to provide the local match required to draw down Federal Emergency Management Agency funds, both the 10 percent match required with the program that helps replace flooded police cruisers and repair damaged community centers and the 25 percent match required when tackling flood mitigation projects.

In Houston alone, recovery czar Steve Costello estimated that the city's local match could total \$300 million. Mayor Sylvester Turner said Gulf Coast leaders would be seeking "a couple of billion dollars or more," not only for their matches but for projects federal assistance may not cover.

"If we didn't have to supply that (match) locally," said Harris County Flood Control District executive director Russ Poppe, "we have projects we could put that on right now and not miss a beat."

Another proposal, Poppe said, is for the state to set aside funds to enable a faster response after the next

storm, with state coffers being reimbursed once federal disaster funds arrive. Local governments could buy out repeatedly flooded homes within weeks, for instance, rather than approaching homeowners after federal funds arrive, when many have already finished repairs.

One hurdle in these talks is that it is still unclear — and may remain so throughout the 140-day legislative session — what role federal aid will play in recovery.

Still waiting

Most cities' and counties' applications for \$1.1 billion in statewide FEMA mitigation funds are still pending; Houston has had no applications approved, and the only funds released to the Flood Control District have been for home buyouts. The Department of Housing and Urban Development also is months behind in publishing rules outlining how an additional \$4.7 billion in mitigation money headed to Texas can be used, let alone releasing those funds.

"There are a lot of unanswered questions," said Huffman, the Houston Republican. "As we await final numbers and final decisions at the federal level and a decision on which projects are going to be the top priorities, it will be difficult to make decisions in this short time frame that we have on allocations of large sums of money. That's the challenge."

Rep. John Zerwas, R-Katy, who chaired the House Appropriations Committee last session, echoed that.

"We don't want to necessarily pay for things we know is ultimately a federal responsibility and then have them end up saying, 'You obviously don't need it, so we'll put the money elsewhere,'" Zerwas said. "But at the same time, you've got to weigh the fact that there's a several-month hurricane season, and it comes whether you like it or not."

[CA] Federal Judge Faults California Utility As 'Most Recurring Cause' Of Wildfires (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/19/2019 4:40 PM, Tim Pearce, 867K]

A federal court "tentatively" found equipment owned by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) is the "most recurring cause" of wildfires that scorched the state in the past two years, NBC News reports.

U.S. District Court Judge William Alsup issued the ruling Thursday. Power lines owned by PG&E, California's largest utility, have since 2017 sparked more wildfires throughout the state than any other singular cause. The finding was part of a larger ruling on a case related to a 2010 gas pipeline explosion.

"The Court tentatively finds that the single most recurring cause of the large 2017 and 2018 wildfires attributable to PG&E's equipment has been the susceptibility of PG&E's distribution lines to trees or limbs falling onto them during high-wind events," Alsup's ruling said, according to NBC.

"The power conductors are almost always uninsulated," Alsup continued. "When the conductors are pushed together by falling trees or limbs, electrical sparks drop into the vegetation below. During the wildfire season when the vegetation is dry, these electrical sparks pose an extreme danger of igniting a wildfire."

"We are aware of Judge Alsup's latest order and are currently reviewing," the utility said in a statement, according to NBC.

California officials faulted the utility for sparking 12 of 17 wildfires in 2017, but have not ruled on the source of any 2018 wildfires.

Alsup's ruling comes after the utility announced plans to declare bankruptcy around Jan. 29 in part due to the cost of liability for large wildfires. The company faces at least \$30 billion in liability charges over 2017

and 2018 wildfires.

The bill is likely to go up as damages are tallied from the Camp Fire, the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California history. The fire took the lives of 86 people and burned down thousands of homes, including all but destroying the town of Paradise. PG&E has not been officially blamed for the fire, but the utility has admitted some of its equipment located near the start of the fire malfunctioned around the time the fire began.

PG&E's CEO Geisha Williams announced she was leaving the company. The PG&E board of directors is pushing Williams out over fallout from the company's liability in sparking deadly wildfires, according to Reuters, citing a source familiar with the plans.

[CA] Judge Blames California Wildfires On Negligence, Not Climate Change (Daily Caller)

[Daily Caller](#) [1/19/2019 11:15 AM, David Krayden, 867K]

United States District Court Judge William Alsup is "tentatively" blaming poor maintenance of power lines as the cause of California's deadly wildfires, not climate change.

Alsup made the ruling Thursday in a San Francisco federal court, NBC News reports. He was ruling on the actions of the Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) utility company in relation to a 2010 San Bruno gas pipeline inferno that killed several people.

Many have claimed climate change is the culprit for the raging wildfires.

"The Court tentatively finds that the single most recurring cause of the large 2017 and 2018 wildfires attributable to PG&E's equipment has been the susceptibility of PG&E's distribution lines to trees or limbs falling onto them during high-wind events," the judge stated.

"The power conductors are almost always uninsulated," Alsup wrote. "When the conductors are pushed together by falling trees or limbs, electrical sparks drop into the vegetation below. During the wildfire season when the vegetation is dry, these electrical sparks pose an extreme danger of igniting a wildfire."

The wildfires have become a political phenomenon in the last two years, with climate change activists and California Gov. Jerry Brown blaming global warming for the blazes. PG&E itself has pointed to climate change as the cause of the wildfires.

The power company was quick to respond to the judge's ruling with a statement reported by NBC.

"PG&E's most important responsibility is the safety of our customers and the communities we serve," the utility said. "We are aware of Judge Alsup's latest order and are currently reviewing. We are committed to complying with all rules and regulations that apply to our work, while working together with our state and community partners and across all sectors and disciplines to develop comprehensive, long-term safety solutions for the future."

[CA] California Tower to close most of the year for earthquake upgrades (San Diego Union Tribune)

[San Diego Union Tribune](#) [1/19/2019 4:30 PM, Jennifer Van Grove, 214K]

Next month Balboa Park's California Tower will close to the public for an extended period as city and museum officials seek to better guard the structure against potential earthquake damage.

The tower, part of the Museum of Man, is expected to be closed for seven to 10 months starting on Feb. 18, when the city will start its seismic retrofit, which includes improvements based on the latest building codes. The upgrades will cost around \$5.7 million, with a bulk of the funding supplied by the city and \$1 million provided by a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant, a spokesperson for the city said.

A landmark attraction, the California Tower was originally built for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition and was closed to the public in 1935. Eighty years later, and after \$750,000 in improvements, the tower reopened on Jan. 1, 2015, with the museum allowing guided climbs up eight tower floors to a public viewing deck 357 feet above sea level.

Once construction starts, tours will be on hiatus. The Museum of Man will continue with its regular tour schedule — from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily — through Feb. 17. Visitors can purchase tickets, which cost \$23 a piece, at CaliforniaTower.org or at the museum.

Secret Service

George W. Bush delivers pizza to his unpaid Secret Service detail and calls for shutdown to end (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 10:15 PM, Eli Rosenberg, 9763K]

George W. Bush has been an unintentional beneficiary of the Trump administration, his reputation buoyed with the benefit of time and an unpopular president from his own party.

On Friday, he continued to embrace the role of good guy, with a photo of himself delivering pizzas to his Secret Service detail that he posted on Instagram.

"@LauraWBush and I are grateful to our Secret Service personnel and the thousands of Federal employees who are working hard for our country without a paycheck," he wrote. "And we thank our fellow citizens who are supporting them."

The message comes as the shutdown, already the longest in history, nears its 29th day, as Trump's demand for \$5 billion of funding for a border wall has met the harsh political realities of a divided government. Some furloughed workers have taken to accepting food handouts amid the weeks without a paycheck.

But Bush's staff is not going hungry. The president bought them at least six pizzas, according to the Instagram post. He punctuated the post with a call for officials to figure out a way to end the impasse, though he did not give specifics.

"It's time for leaders on both sides to put politics aside, come together, and end this shutdown," he said.

Some 6,000 Secret Service employees are among the 800,000 federal workers not receiving paychecks. Spokeswoman Catherine Milhoan said more than 85 percent of the agency is continuing to report to work every day but declined to comment on any operational details of Bush's protection team.

"He is buying meals for Secret Service agents on his detail as a small way, however insufficient, to show his gratitude for their hard work without pay during the shutdown," Bush spokesman Freddy Ford said in an email. Ford declined to answer how many pizzas Bush purchased or how many agents there were in his detail.

Bush did not face a single government shutdown during his eight years as president.

The Secret Service emerged as a sticking point in the funding debate between House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and President Trump, when Pelosi noted in a letter that the service was stretched thin in the absence of funding, and recommended that the President postpone the State of the Union because of security concerns.

Bush's favorability ratings have climbed in recent years, from about 33 percent when he left office in 2009

to 61 percent a year ago, according to CNN polls. The gain was powered in large part by significant shifts in opinion from self-identified Democrats.

"I never thought I would agree with Bush," one commenter on Bush's post remarked.

Bush calls for end to shutdown, delivers pizza to Secret Service (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 4:42 PM, Owen Daugherty, 3038K]

Former President George W. Bush and his wife, Laura Bush, delivered pizzas to Secret Service members on Friday, calling for lawmakers "on both sides" to end the ongoing partial government shutdown.

"@LauraWBush and I are grateful to our Secret Service personnel and the thousands of Federal employees who are working hard for our country without a paycheck," the former president wrote in an Instagram post Friday afternoon.

"And we thank our fellow citizens who are supporting them. It's time for leaders on both sides to put politics aside, come together, and end this shutdown," he added.

Former presidents and first ladies receive lifetime Secret Service protection.

Roughly 800,000 federal employees have been furloughed or forced to work without pay amid the shutdown, which began on Dec. 22.

President Trump signed a bill this week guaranteeing back pay to federal workers who were furloughed during the shutdown.

Bush's comments are his first public remarks on the shutdown.

The shutdown was triggered last month amid an impasse between the White House and lawmakers over Trump's demands for more billions of dollars in funding for a U.S.-Mexico border wall.

Democrats have refused to comply with the White House's request for wall funding, while Trump has said he would not sign a spending bill unless it included more than \$5 billion for his proposed border wall.

Coast Guard

Coast Guard calls out shutdown in video about upcoming deployment (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/21/2019 7:46 AM, Avery Anapol, 3038K]

The U.S. Coast Guard acknowledged the partial government shutdown and its impact on Coast Guard families as a cutter and crew departed for a multi-month deployment on Sunday.

The Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf and 170 crew members left Alameda, Calif. to support military operations in the Indo-Pacific region.

In a video about the deployment, Coast Guard officials noted that due to the lapse in funding, there has been increased "tension and anxiety" among crew members.

"Our [U.S. Coast Guard] members sail across the world to protect U.S. national interests while their loved ones cope w/ financial challenges & no pay at home," Coast Guard commandant Adm. Karl Schultz tweeted.

Vice Adm. Linda Fagan praised the "outpouring of support" for Coast Guard families.

"I know it is hard for these crews to be leaving behind their dependents and spouses – it's a thousand

times more so when everyone is wondering when their next paycheck will be, and how they can support the family that they are leaving behind," she said.

Coast Guard members, who fall under the Department of Homeland Security, are among the federal workers that have not received paychecks since Dec. 31 due to the funding lapse. Service members in other military branches are covered by the Department of Defense, which is not affected by the shutdown.

Schultz told members in a letter earlier this month that he believes it is the first time U.S. armed forces service members have not been paid because of a shutdown.

Some Coast Guard members have turned to food pantries and other aid during the shutdown, which has now entered its fifth week.

'Pay held hostage': Coast Guard remains on duty but grows increasingly vocal over shutdown (Washington Times)

[Washington Times](#) [1/21/2019 3:46 PM, Ben Wolfgang and Lauren Meier, 527K]

The partial government shutdown hit home for a Coast Guard crew that left port Monday on a monthslong foreign deployment — the latest example of how the stalemate in Washington is fueling financial and emotional distress for a military branch that is still on duty even as their paychecks remain held up by the 30-day-old budget standoff.

The 170-member crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf left California early Monday to support U.S. military operations in the Pacific. That crew, with the rest of the Coast Guard's active-duty force of more than 40,000, has been working without pay since Jan. 15.

Coast Guard officials increasingly have been speaking out about the shutdown's impact on the service and on its member families, many of whom are turning to food pantries and local donation drives to get by. At the Coast Guard's "boot camp" in Camp May, New Jersey, recent recruits are being held after their training is completed because there is no money in the travel budget to send them to their first assignments.

Internal Coast Guard memos released this month recommended that members consider holding garage sales or getting part-time jobs walking dogs to make ends meet — suggestions that sparked anger on Capitol Hill and across the country as political dysfunction takes a toll on the armed forces.

"It is unconscionable that the brave men and women deploying to protect our country today have to worry about how their families are going to pay rent or afford groceries because of the government shutdown," Rep. Joe Cunningham, South Carolina Democrat, said Monday.

Four retired Coast Guard master chief petty officers wrote a blistering op-ed over the weekend on the defense news site Military.com, saying the government breakdown left some 56,000 active-duty, reserve and civilian members of the service financially at sea.

[CT] As Shutdown Drags On, a 'Coast Guard City' Rallies (US News & World Report)

[US News & World Report](#) [1/17/2019 5:42 PM, Susan Haigh and Jennifer McDermott, AP, 2894K]

In New London, Connecticut, the community pulls together to help hundreds of unpaid Coast Guard employees as federal shutdown drags on.

If the uniformed cadets milling about the local movie theaters and pizza joints didn't make it obvious enough, a banner hanging from a downtown parking garage makes it crystal clear: New London is an official Coast Guard City.

The pride is on display everywhere in this former whaling town of 27,000 people that, among other things,

is home to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and U.S. Coast Guard Station New London, which patrols the Long Island Sound.

Now, the town's residents are rallying around their own as the partial government shutdown has left the Coast Guard — the only branch of the armed services that is part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security rather than the Pentagon — out in the cold.

"The people have really just come together and said, 'hey, it's the Coast Guard's time. They need our help,'" said Troy Castineria as he pushed his shopping cart around a pop-up food pantry filled with donated, free goods. Both he and his wife Lauren are former active duty members of the Coast Guard who work at the academy. Both have been furloughed.

"A lot of people have lost faith in humanity. But this right here goes to show that we are appreciated and there are people to help when the time comes," he added, staring with amazement at the makeshift supermarket created by a coalition of local Coast Guard-related advocacy groups.

The free pantry is just one of several efforts big and small by area residents and businesses.

At the popular Slice Pizza Bar, a chalkboard sign proclaims "Proudly serving our USCG" and offers a 15 percent discount to Coast Guard families.

Castineria said the local utility in nearby Norwich has waived late fees for federal employees who are not being paid and can't cover their bills. Separately, nurses at New London's Lawrence and Memorial Hospital have been offering gift cards to needy families; a city activist plans to open her home on Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a drop-off location for donations; local restaurants and other businesses are offering discounts, and local banks are providing no-interest loans to supplement lost paychecks; and the city's police department and the U.S. Navy submarine base in nearby Groton have collected donations.

Waller Walker of nearby Mystic arrived in New London on Thursday afternoon with a friend, driving two vehicles packed with groceries. The pair had reached out to a network of 400 people to raise money and get food donations after hearing about the collection site on the news.

"We want to support the Coast Guard," she said. "They're in our neighborhood and they do so much good."

New London Mayor Michael Passero said the shutdown's impact has been personal for his city, where the Coast Guard is among the city's top employers, with a workforce approaching 1,000 people and a campus with more than 1,000 cadets.

It's also been an opportunity for New London to live up to the city's 2015 congressional designation as a Coast Guard City, a place where Coast Guard men, women and their families are made to feel welcome.

Besides the New London station and the academy, a top military college where the cadets are required to volunteer in New London's schools and social service agencies, the city is home to the U.S. Coast Guard Research and Development Center and the International Ice Patrol Operations Center.

The city is also awaiting construction of a Coast Guard museum, which is planned along the downtown waterfront and seen as a way to attract tourists to help revitalize a sleepy downtown that has struggled to keep storefronts filled.

Passero worries about what will happen to his city if this shutdown continues. He said New London is at the beginning of what he sees as an economic revitalization, given stepped-up hiring at Electric Boat and plans for off-shore wind generation development.

"The longer it drags on, the harder these impacts are going to be felt," he said. "It's going to start to drain public resources and it's going to start to take away from our economic base at some point."

Jessica Bello, whose husband has been in the Coast Guard for eight years, said her family is relying on the free food pantry and her extra shifts working as a bartender and cocktail waitress at nearby Foxwoods Resort Casino to help make ends meet.

"I was sent to the ER three days ago due to sciatica because of the extra hours and stress. I have no choice but to go back to work tomorrow injured or not because my bills don't care if I'm injured," the mother of two said.

In their quest to help, people have been sharing tips about restaurants offering free meals for federal employees, stores discounts and job postings, said Crystal Simmons, 35, who administers a Facebook group for New London Coast Guard families.

"It has been amazing to see people jumping into action," she said. "We're not sitting on our hands and saying, 'What are we going to do?' It's jumping in, posting to find out who needs something, what can we do, who can we contact? It's been really great to see people stepping up to fix what the government's not."

She said people have been cutting back on shopping and eating out, which she predicts will have a "huge trickle-down effect that people aren't thinking about."

Peter Farnan, manager of Mr. G's restaurant, a popular eatery and bar for the academy's cadets, enlisted personnel and instructors, estimated that business is down about 10 percent compared to this time last year.

"If this goes on for another two weeks ... we'll definitely be a little bit more anxious and concerned," said Farnan, who has been offering 10 percent discounts to all Coast Guard employees affected by the shutdown. "We'll start tightening our belts."

The irony of the Coast Guard's predicament wasn't lost on retired Admiral Thad Allen, who toured the pop-up pantry on Thursday during a visit to the academy. He expressed his frustration at how the shutdown has been impacting people who often rescue others from natural disasters.

"We have people under duress right now that are still expected to do their duty. But it's not mother nature that's inflicted the wound. It's our own government," he said, adding how the leaders in Washington need to "carry out their constitutional duties to provide for the general welfare and common defense" or else morale and readiness will suffer.

He added: "It's pretty rough to come in and do your job every day when you're not sure what's happening to your family."

[NY] The Latest: Man rescued from New York river island (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 12:05 PM, Associated Press, 337K]

The Latest on the winter storm hitting the East Coast (all times local):

2:55 p.m.

Coast Guard crew members in New York have rescued a 21-year-old man stranded on an island in the Navensink River in 34-degree weather (1 Celsius) after his small boat broke down.

The Coast Guard said crews arrived on the island just over half an hour after the call came in Monday morning. The air temperature was 7 degrees (minus-14 Celsius) with 30 mph wind.

The search and rescue coordinator for Coast Guard Sector New York says a bad situation can turn to worse very fast in such conditions.

Emergency works throughout the U.S. now say at least six people have died following the vicious winter storm that ravaged the northeastern U.S. over the weekend

A man in charge of transportation at a southwestern Michigan school district had a fatal heart attack while shoveling snow.

11:25 a.m.

Officials say at least five people have died following the vicious winter storm that ravaged the eastern U.S. over the weekend.

At least four people were killed Sunday due to the storm including a 12-year-old girl in suburban Chicago who died after a snow fort collapsed while she was playing outside a church. A utility worker in Connecticut was fatally struck by a falling tree as he was repairing a power line.

And in Wisconsin, the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office says a 59-year-old man and a 91-year-old man collapsed and died Sunday in two separate incidents after removing snow.

A snowplow driver in Kansas was killed Saturday when the plow he was driving rolled over on a highway.

9:15 a.m.

Frigid air and high winds are causing dangerous travel conditions throughout the eastern U.S. after a powerful winter storm pummeled the region over the weekend.

The National Weather Service forecasts Monday's temperatures will be more than 20 degrees (minus-7 Celsius) below normal across the Northeast, with gusty winds and wind chills approaching minus 40 degrees in northern New York and Vermont.

The bitter cold is expected to stymie travel once again with FlightAware reporting nearly 280 flights canceled as of Monday morning.

Another storm system is already developing over the Rockies that could blanket the same region with more snow by the end of the week.

[NJ] Coast Guard rescues duck hunter stranded on island off NJ (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 2:31 PM, Staff, 337K]

The Coast Guard has come to the rescue of a duck hunter who was stranded on a small island off the New Jersey coast.

The hunter was among a group of four men who entered the Navesink River on Monday morning in a small boat that authorities said wasn't suited for the bitter cold and blustery weather conditions.

Three of the men made it back to shore shortly after their boat broke down around 9 a.m. But the fourth man ended up on the island.

Rumson police contacted the Coast Guard, who dispatched a 29-foot rescue boat from their Sandy Hook station, while a helicopter came from the guard's Atlantic City station. The man was brought back to shore a short time later.

None of the hunters were injured.

[NJ] 'I see people panicking': In a Coast Guard town, hardship and resolve amid the shutdown (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 8:24 PM, Dan Lamothe, 9763K]

The Coast Guard's newest class of personnel completed boot camp here Friday with two graduation gifts from Washington: no paychecks and no money to send them all to their first assignments.

The 76 members of Company X-196 joined the service during a closed ceremony, the first since the partial government shutdown forced the Coast Guard to forgo pay.

Unlike the Defense Department's branches of the military, the Coast Guard is operating without a budget, marking the first time in more than a century that part of the armed forces has had paychecks withheld.

While Congress has approved funding for the Defense Department, the Coast Guard is part of the Department of Homeland Security, whose agencies are affected by the shutdown. Active-duty personnel are "essential workers," working for free with the promise of back pay when a spending deal is passed — but they have no idea when that money will come.

"I can see people panicking, and they have every right to," said Katelyn Leckemby, 35, whose husband, Stephen, is an electronics specialist who works on the vessels ported in Cape May. Leckemby is 7-1/2 months pregnant with the couple's fourth child. "It's scary," she added. "A lot of people have families, and we're all just trying to provide for them, and not knowing when the money is going to come in and whether you can provide for them especially, that's terrifying."

Hundreds of thousands of federal workers, including more than 6,000 civilian staffers who support the Coast Guard, have been furloughed since the shutdown began last month over President Trump's demand for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and Democrats' refusal to fund it.

Service members are prohibited from talking to the media during the shutdown, but several Coast Guard spouses said they are increasingly worrying about paying their bills, cutting spending where they can and visiting an ad hoc food pantry set up on base to feed their families. If the paychecks due at the end of January also are withheld, the consequences will be grave, they said.

Leckemby and her husband already have curtailed their spending on cellphones and gasoline, and they've started to use hallway fans to blow heat from a wood-burning stove around their house so they can shut off their heat. The high here Friday was 41 degrees. Monday's forecast calls for a low of 16.

"We're kind of tiptoeing around the situation that I'm very late in my pregnancy," Leckemby said, noting that she often drives an hour one way to meet with doctors. "Our kids are young, but they're not so young that they can't understand hurt feelings. So if I get really emotional and start to cry, I have to walk away."

Deanne Piersol, 27, the wife of another Coast Guardsman, works part time as a teacher's aide in Cape May while caring for their 4-year-old daughter. Initially, Piersol joked with her husband that she'd cover their bills during the shutdown, but as progress in Washington foundered, she started using the food pantry.

Piersol recently learned that she is pregnant with the couple's second child. Her husband, Blaine, works about 80 hours per week training recruits, and while she has tried to explain the difficulties they face to friends back home in Texas, such discussions have not been easy.

"A lot of the comments I'm getting is, 'Well, you'll get a paycheck eventually,' " she said. "Well, yeah. Now, why don't you take your paycheck and then don't use it, act like you don't have it and then still try to pay your bills?"

The situation for graduating recruits adds a new challenge for the Coast Guard amid the shutdown, which turned 28 days old Friday. A service spokesman, Lt. Cmdr. Scott McBride, said the Coast Guard has the ability to issue plane tickets to boot camp graduates who have been assigned to units that "have the capacity to support them during the shutdown." But not all units do, and the situation is more complicated in those cases.

Some graduates will be allowed to return to their hometowns for the leave typically granted to new service members after boot camp. After that, instead of sending them to their units, the Coast Guard will defer the costs associated with permanent transfers by temporarily placing the graduates on recruiting assignments while they're home with family, McBride said.

Others who do not have the means to go home and who have been assigned to units that can't afford to take them on will remain in Cape May.

"We are committed to the health, safety and security of our graduates as they begin their service to the American public," McBride said. "No recruits will depart the training center without an approved transfer plan which accounts for each of their individual circumstances and resources."

A mentor for the new graduates, Coast Guard Capt. Kevin M. Carroll, briefly referenced the shutdown during their graduation ceremony. He said it is "a very difficult time that you're entering the Coast Guard," but he reminded them of their duties as they join the service.

"I'll tell you right now that our core values — honor, respect and devotion to duty — are not funded with cash," he said in remarks streamed online. "They're funded with character. They're funded with commitment. With blood and sweat and tears. And during our visits I saw all of that from you, so you are absolutely ready to be able to join the fleet, and I welcome you here today."

The uncertainty has triggered fear and anger among some affiliated with the service. But even in this beach town that is now mostly deserted for the winter, it has also inspired generosity and resolve.

The food pantry was established at the beginning of the year after firefighters in Seaville, N.J., some 23 miles northeast, took up a collection of nonperishable items. A club for military spouses at Cape May initially stocked the food in a closet but quickly realized that it would need more space, organizer Jessica Manfre said.

Within days, the base commanding officer, Capt. Owen Gibbons, found unused space in a warehouse. Four refrigerators from other parts of the base were rolled in, along with a freezer that a teacher in town supplied. With food donations arriving daily, organizers began using gift cards and lines of credit extended by local stores to buy and distribute produce, meat, cheese, laundry detergent, diapers and more.

Manfre, 33, whose husband, Scott, is a senior chief petty officer, said she is naturally optimistic. But she lost hope weeks ago that Washington would reach a quick resolution and decided she had better get to work. Manfre, who has a 7-year-old son and a 15-month-old daughter, now spends about 10 hours per day volunteering at the food pantry and has a growing army of volunteers.

"I think what we have done has given a lot of purpose, at least for me," she said. "Because I am not a patient person at all. I don't sit around and wait. So, when I'm doing this, I'm not as stressed."

The politicians responsible for the shutdown "need to figure it out, and they need to figure it out soon," she said. "These are our lives."

On Wednesday afternoon, the food pantry was humming, with dozens of people in and out during the three hours it was open. Some were in the Coast Guard's distinctive blue working uniform, and others carried children.

Manfre, Piersol and Leckemby were among the volunteers restocking shelves. Manfre sunnily asked visitors if they were there to "shop" and offered each of them bags.

Before the shift began, Piersol recalled crying the first time she visited the pantry. Then tears rolled down her cheeks again as she described volunteers bringing donated food to distribute.

"The people walking in and feeling guilty, I get how they're feeling," she said. "They say, 'Oh, we've only missed one paycheck.' But what if you miss three, and your money has gone to food when you could be saving that money for your future? I want them to realize that. I want to be like: 'Come on in! Take all you need!'"

[NJ] 'This is a true Coast Guard community' (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 7:50 PM, Staff, 9763K] Video: [HERE](#)

In Cape May, N.J., a food pantry has become a lifeline for Coast Guard families struggling through the shutdown.

[LA] Coast Guard ends search for 2 missing in Mississippi River (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/18/2019 7:22 AM, Staff, 337K]

The Coast Guard has suspended the search for two people missing in the Mississippi River after a workboat capsized.

The Coast Guard made the decision Thursday after a search that lasted 27 hours and covered 130 square miles (nearly 340 square kilometers).

The 32-foot (10-meter) boat was found Thursday. The Coast Guard said Katelyn Carlisle and Ruben Arellano were on board when it capsized late Wednesday morning near Boothville.

The Coast Guard, the Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's Office, Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries and Branch Pilot boat crews responded to the call for help.

Coast Guard Cmdr. Michael Wolfe said it's never easy to make the decision to stop a search.

What prompted the boat to capsize is still under investigation.

[IL] Weather conditions hinder search of Lake Michigan off Waukegan for missing teen (Chicago Tribune)

[Chicago Tribune](#) [1/20/2019 2:40 PM, Phil Rockrohr, 1740K]

The search for a teenager who reportedly jumped into Lake Michigan Friday to rescue another teen who slipped off a pier into the lake was delayed again Sunday by heavy waves, Fire Marshall Steven Lenzi said.

Waukegan fire personnel were unable to resume water-recovery operations on Saturday or Sunday,

despite a drop in wind speeds since the water search was called off Saturday, Lenzi said.

"We're doing a ground search near the water," he said Sunday. "The waves are still too difficult to deal with. The water conditions are still pretty treacherous as you get out in the water. The wind might have died down, but the waves are still heavy."

Crews will continue to search the lakefront until they are able to resume the water search, hopefully Monday, Lenzi said. Illinois State Police Air Operations and the U.S. Coast Guard have also been called for help, he said.

The missing teen was one of two 16-year-old boys who fire personnel searched for on Friday after receiving a call that two youths were struggling to get out of a channel off Municipal Beach, fire officials said. The first teen was located and taken to a hospital late Friday afternoon, officials said.

Fire personnel responded to a call for help in an area near the main pier off the beach near the Stiner Pavilion "for a subject who slipped off the pier and into the water," according to a statement issued by the Fire Department Friday night.

"The caller also advised that a second subject jumped in to try and rescue the first subject and they were both struggling," the statement said. "While fire units were responding, we were advised that one subject was out of the water and in need of medical attention."

Rescuers searched for the second teen for 90 minutes but were unable to find him, the statement said. Worsening weather conditions hampered attempts to locate the teen, Lenzi said.

A witness led Waukegan police and fire personnel to a spot where the teen was last seen, the statement said. Divers immediately began search efforts and additional divers were called for help, it said.

"Scene conditions made operations extremely difficult and very hazardous for rescuers," the statement said.

After 90 minutes of water searching with "very limited visibility and treacherous wave conditions," the divers were unable to find the teen and search operations were shifted to side-scan sonar via boat, it said.

Saturday's conditions included "gale force winds" that created "extremely dangerous icy conditions," Lenzi said.

"After a thorough review and assessment of the current and expected conditions, it was determined that it would not be safe for any sort of water recovery operations to take place," he said.

The teen pulled from the water was transported to Vista Medical Center East in Waukegan, according to the statement Friday. The statement did not indicate the teen's medical condition.

Lenzi declined to provide the name or hometown of either teen and said he was not certain of the rescued teen's medical condition.

Waukegan police Cmdr. Joseph Florip could not be reached for comment Sunday.

[IL] 'We report regardless': Coast Guard protection among Lake County services pressing on during shutdown (Chicago Tribune)

[Chicago Tribune](#) [1/18/2019 11:25 AM, Frank Abderholden, News-Sun, 1740K]

Lake County townships are mobilizing to get the word out to workers either furloughed or working without pay during the federal government's shutdown that they might qualify for some benefits offered by

township government, including use of food pantries.

If the shutdown extends into February, there are also possible shortfalls looming for people using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through a Link card or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

And members of the United States Coast Guard — whose mission includes servicing the Lake County end of Lake Michigan — experienced their first missed paycheck on Tuesday as they continue to work without pay during the impasse.

Some civilian noncritical employees with the Coast Guard have been furloughed, according to Master Chief Alan Haraf, public affairs officer for District 9, which includes the county shoreline and its base in Wilmette, with air support from Traverse City, Mich.

"We were funded through the end of December, so this was the first paycheck we missed," he said. The Coast Guard's mission includes everything from water rescues to icebreaking in the Lake Superior area.

Haraf added that communities have been very responsive in wanting to help out, and superior officers are checking on younger members who might not be as financially sound with young families to support.

"We're looking to see who needs help. The community outpouring has been impressive," he said, noting assistance is coming through organizations like the USO (United Service Organizations) Illinois, which is well known for supporting service members.

"We're here and still reporting for duty," he said. "We report regardless."

Coast Guard members are among the federal employees eligible for assistance through the township food pantry effort, which started when Anne Flanigan Bassi, Moraine Township supervisor, began contacting people and other townships with the idea of helping workers who are struggling financially because they are missing a paycheck or are still working without getting paid.

"Moraine Township residents employed by the Federal Government and not receiving paychecks are encouraged to visit our food pantry, and apply for rent, utility or other assistance for which they may qualify," Bassi said in a statement released Jan. 13.

"At the very least, (making the pantries available) would take the stress of providing food for the family off the table," she said this week.

To utilize the service, workers would need federal ID and proof of residency, like a utility bill. The township covers most of Highland Park, all of Highwood and small parts of Deerfield and Lake Forest.

"Government Workers unable to pay rent, mortgages and other necessities should not also have the stress of being unable to feed their families," added Township Trustee Amy Zisook.

Moraine Township's Food Pantry is located at 800 Central Avenue in Highland Park, and has fresh produce, eggs, dairy and meat, as well as shelf products that users can choose from on Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon, and on Wednesday from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. or by appointment.

Bassi sent a message to other townships encouraging them to do the same.

"We don't know who (the workers) are or where they live," she said, but she encouraged them to come in if they are having financial problems and speak with one of the township's caseworkers to see what they might qualify for. The pantry is open to them immediately.

"The message is, 'You may qualify,'" Bassi added.

Zion Township Supervisor Cheri Neal took notice and is also trying to get the word out. While the township doesn't have its own pantry, it does provide support to four others.

According to Neal, about 12 county townships have food pantries, but those that don't can refer them to one that does.

"We want to help as many families, just in case," she said. Food pantries are run by Christian Assembly of God, 2929 Bethel Blvd. in Zion; Christian Faith Fellowship, 1727 27th St. in Zion; North Point Community Christian Church, 900 Lewis Ave. in Winthrop Harbor; and Our Lady of Humility Parish, 10655 Wadsworth Road in Beach Park.

People who use either SNAP or WIC will find that they will receive their February payment at the end of this month, and authorities have urged members to be careful to budget.

Mark Pfister, executive director of the Lake County Health Department, said storm clouds are approaching on those services if the shutdown continues into next month.

"We have been telling everyone that they will receive at the end of January, but it has to last through February," Pfister said. He added people who receive these benefits spend them locally, and if funds run out, it will affect private businesses that cater to people using those programs.

"They will feel the pinch," he said.

Also this week, the Lake County Board approved \$247,621 in emergency funding for the county's "A Way Out" program for residents seeking treatment for substance abuse, because while it has been approved for a grant through the U.S. Department of Justice, no one is in that office because of the shutdown.

"We're one step away from completing the grant process," Pfister said. "It's been approved, but there is no one there to do it."

The program offers those with substance-abuse issues the option of seeking help at local police stations. Those who voluntarily do so will not face any charges, even if they are in possession of drugs when they come in for help, according to authorities.

Pfister said the health department is also working to keep everyone informed about the issue of ethylene oxide use by two plants in Waukegan and Gurnee. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency had been running a website for the latest information updates, but because of the shutdown, no one is keeping the site up to date.

For road projects headed by the Lake County Division of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Transportation currently provides funding to the Federal Highway Administration via the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, funding projects through 2020.

"Therefore, the current federal shutdown has not impacted any federally funded transportation projects in Lake County. Lake County DOT's 5-year highway improvement program totals around \$578 million, with approximately \$87 million coming from federal funds," county officials reported in a statement this week.

Both Naval Station Great Lakes and the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago are unaffected by the current shutdown, according to the agencies. Great Lakes spokesman John Sheppard said the U.S. Department of Defense is funded through September of this year.

[Bahamas] Coast Guard: 31 rescued from disabled boat off the Bahamas (San Francisco Chronicle)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#) [1/21/2019 5:19 PM, AP, 337K]

The U.S. Coast Guard has returned 31 people to dry land after their vessel became disabled in the waters off the Bahamas.

In a statement Monday, the Coast Guard said the pleasure craft Summer Art was reported disabled early Sunday in the waters about 10 miles (15 kilometers) north of Bimini.

A Coast Guard cutter was diverted to the scene. Officials said 31 Haitians aboard the vessel were transferred to Freeport, Bahamas.

Cmdr. Jason Aleksak said an approaching cold front, high seas and strong winds made the rescue "extremely challenging."

CISA/Cybersecurity

Shutdown's invisible costs: Cyberthreats, untrained firefighters, bug invasions (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 1:23 PM, Todd C. Frankel and Joel Achenbach, 9763K]

The emerald ash borer, *Agrilus planipennis*, is never furloughed. Native to Asia, this insect is an invasive species killing beloved ash trees across North America.

"It's sweeping like fire through timber," said Jeanne Romero-Severson, a plant geneticist at the University of Notre Dame, who has been working with the Forest Service on a breeding program to create an insect-resistant ash tree.

She had been planning to meet with colleagues to discuss the bad beetle at an annual U.S. Agriculture Department invasive species conference scheduled to be held last week. But then came the partial government shutdown. The conference was canceled, even as nature marches — and hops, crawls, wriggles and oozes — onward.

"The invasion continues. The trees continue to die," Romero-Severson said. "We're losing time we cannot recover."

The most severe costs of the shutdown may be these invisible ones — the loss of relatively obscure activities by a massive federal bureaucracy with responsibilities that stretch into unexpected corners of society. The cost of not doing this work doesn't translate neatly into a dollar figure or a percentage of economic growth chipped off the gross domestic product. And it's hardly as tangible as long lines at the airport or long waits to get questions answered by the Internal Revenue Service. But it is the hard-to-fathom toll of telling hundreds of thousands of people with expertise to stay home.

That means canceling training for wildland firefighters, law enforcement and Border Patrol agents. Research grant proposals go unreviewed. Safety checks of sports stadiums are postponed. Efforts to improve election security are put on hold.

Much of the government work that is not considered essential during a shutdown, and thus not labeled "excepted" under agency plans, involves nonurgent but important activities. As the Trump administration rushes to preserve vital functions, it's the type of work that attracts little attention. But those involved say that although it may be hard to measure, letting these efforts lapse will have a long-term cost.

One worrisome area, for example, is cybersecurity. The threats are mounting as the government tries to stave off digital attacks and secure election processes in advance of the 2020 races. But the Department of Homeland Security's shutdown plan called for furloughing more than 1,500 of the 3,500 employees in

the newly formed Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).

"We're under attack every day from very sophisticated nation-states like Russia, China, North Korea and Iran," said Suzanne Spaulding, a Homeland Security undersecretary during the Obama administration in charge of cybersecurity and infrastructure protection. "They get better every day. And we're not. We're in a holding pattern."

"We are in a race with our adversaries, with the bad guys, on innovating in cyberspace," she said. "It is a challenge when you have a full team, when all hands are on deck. And all hands are not on deck."

The CISA issued a brief statement about staffing levels: "Due to the lapse of appropriations, CISA has ceased a variety of critical cybersecurity and infrastructure protection capabilities. However, we have maintained baseline operational capabilities supporting national security, including staff in the National Risk Management Center, in accordance with DHS and OMB guidance."

Medical science and pharmacology are also fields that evolve rapidly and require government regulation. At the Food and Drug Administration, the pipeline for drug approval has slowed, and staffing has diminished because of the shutdown.

The FDA review for a new drug to treat peanut allergies in children has been delayed by the shutdown. Drugmaker Aimmune Therapeutics said the timeline for its federal regulatory approval has been pushed to the end of the year.

Doctors nervously watch for signs of significant delays with new treatments.

"You have to worry," said Walter Curran Jr., executive director of the Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University.

Another concern is wildfires. They've been getting worse in the western United States, and particularly horrific fires have consumed hundreds of thousands of acres and killed scores of people over the past two years. About 200 federal workers who were set to begin training to fight forest fires last week in Colorado Springs were forced to drop out because of the shutdown. Many of them hoped to join fire hotshot crews.

Another training session in Tennessee also was canceled. The missed training means many workers will not be qualified to help fight forest fires or can't move on to become crew bosses or incident commanders.

There's already a shortage of wildland firefighters, said Wendy Fischer, executive director of the Colorado Wildland Fire and Incident Management Academy.

"This situation sets people back," she said. "And we're coming up on fire season."

The shutdown obviously doesn't help the economy. A top White House economist this week said that the economic impact from the shutdown will be twice as great as previously estimated. But the numbers, even if they involve multiple billions of dollars, remain fairly modest compared with the vast scale of the U.S. economy.

That said, the shutdown has the potential to deliver a psychological blow to the country that could send the economy reeling, economists have warned.

"Broadly it's more like an economic corrosive rather than a cliff event. It's wearing down the economy and sentiment, confidence, people's optimism," said Mark Zandi, chief economist for Moody's Analytics. "At some point the corrosive will eat through the foundations of the economy and the economy will break, but no telling when that will happen."

The broader business community likes predictability and reliable data, noted economist Robert Shapiro, who was an official in the Commerce Department during the Clinton administration. He said the Bureau of Economic Analysis — an agency with data so sensitive that it puts officials in a locked room to review numbers that could jolt the markets — is not putting out valuable monthly reports during the shutdown.

"What's happening in home construction? What's happening in manufacturing orders? What's happening in retail sales? What's happening in exports and imports? Do you know we don't know what the trade deficit is, in November? Trump can't even know if his trade tariffs are working!" Shapiro said.

And so the U.S. economy is "flying blind," as he put it on the Brookings Institution's website.

"The decisions proceed with a lot more guesswork than usual, because they don't have the data, and in those cases you're more likely to have bad decisions, and that impairs the efficiency of the economy," he said.

As for the bugs, the cancellation of the invasive species meeting in Annapolis was devastating to many researchers, including Andrew Liebhold, a forest service research entomologist who had been looking forward to hearing from a South African scientist studying the Sirex woodwasp. It inserts eggs into trees, killing them, and could become a major threat to U.S. pine trees.

And an entire morning was to be spent talking about the spotted lanternfly. The bug has exploded from a curiosity in 2014, when the insect native to Southeast Asia was first spotted in Pennsylvania. Now, it's an invasive threat seen in at least six Mid-Atlantic states. The U.S. Agriculture Department spent millions of dollars trying to contain the bug, which is a threat to grapes and hardwoods. The agency thought it had the lanternfly under control, but in recent months the situation turned dire and now the bug is everywhere, Liebhold said.

A government shutdown doesn't help.

"It sets us back a long way. It means the science slows down," he said. "We're already struggling to keep up with invasive species."

No private company is going to take on the research and management of the lanternfly, he said.

"That's what we do," he said.

Shutdown Makes Government Websites More Vulnerable To Hackers, Experts Say (Alabama Public Radio)

[Alabama Public Radio](#) [1/20/2019 10:53 AM, Laura Sydell, 3K]

Several parts of the federal government have been shut down for about a month now, and cybersecurity professionals say government websites are becoming more vulnerable to security breaches each day the shutdown lasts.

Visitors to manufacturing.gov, for instance, are finding that the site has become unusable — its information about the manufacturing sector is no longer accessible. Instead, it features this message at the top of the homepage:

"NOTICE: Due to a lapse in appropriations, Manufacturing.gov and all associated online activities will be unavailable until further notice."

Security certificates help keep websites secure, but last week the British security firm Netcraft reported that more than 130 certificates used by U.S. government websites had expired.

These certificates make sure users know "this is really the government resource that I'm trying to access and not some bad guy," explains Dan Kaminsky, the chief scientist at the security firm White Ops.

The lack of a certificate makes it easier for a bad actor to trick you into going to a fake site. Even though there's a warning when you click on a site without an updated certificate, Kaminsky says, "people might get used to ignoring the browser warnings" because of the shutdown. "Then you think you're really walking into this site and you're really not."

He offers a worst-case scenario: Imagine if the security certificate was down for the Social Security Administration website and a bad actor set up a fake site. Someone could go to the bogus site, enter their password, and give the hackers access to personal information.

The shutdown also means there are fewer IT staff on hand. For instance, around 2,000 employees — down from the usual 3,500 — are working at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, one of the agencies leading the nation's cyberdefenses, according to the White House Office of Management and Budget's contingency plans.

Rob Ragan, a partner in the cybersecurity firm Bishop Fox, says that means a lot of important tasks may not be done, such as updating software with the latest security patches.

"You end up getting buried in a really big backlog of issues that you may never dig yourself out of," he says. "And, at that point, one of those issues may have been an indicator of a compromise or a breach that may go unnoticed for months or years to come."

Security researchers worry that the shutdown is like putting a red blanket in front of a bull. Nations like Russia, China and Iran could see it as a signal to charge ahead. Meanwhile, Ragan says, think about the amount of information on government websites that's personal and even classified.

And the likelihood of security lapses increases as the shutdown drags on, says Vikram Thakur, a technical director at the security firm Symantec.

"We're in the fourth week of a shutdown right now," he says. "But as time goes on and on, that risk is most definitely going to go up exponentially."

Ironically, Thakur says, having fewer personnel on the job lowers at least one kind of security risk: email phishing. That's when hackers send an email with a link that unleashes malware into the system.

"If nobody's opening e-mail and nobody's using the work network, the chances or the success rate for attackers who are using email as their primary mode of attack" drop, Thakur says.

NPR asked the Department of Homeland Security's Cyber Division for comment but did not hear back. House Democratic aides say they're also unable to get information about which federal IT workers are on the job.

But they want to see details when the shutdown ends. In the event of a future shutdown, Democrats might move to keep all IT workers on the job in the name of cybersecurity.

LULU GARCIA-NAVARRO, HOST:

Hackers love to try to breach U.S. computer systems. This now may be easier than ever before. With so many IT and cybersecurity workers furloughed by the shutdown, security professionals say government websites are more vulnerable. NPR's Laura Sydell reports.

LAURA SYDELL, BYLINE: The Trump administration may like to highlight American manufacturing, but try going to manufacturing.gov. The site has become unusable. You can't access any of the details offered about U.S. manufacturing. According to Netcraft, a British security firm, it's one of dozens of government sites that haven't renewed their security certificates. These certificates are a bit like a driver's license - they prove you are who you say you are. Dan Kaminsky, the chief scientist at the American security firm White Ops explains.

DAN KAMINSKY: You need to know you're really talking to your hospital or to something at the Air Force or wherever. And so there are certificates that make it so you know, OK, this is really the government resource that I'm trying to access and not some bad guy.

SYDELL: In some cases, the lack of a security certificate may just make a site unusable. But Kaminsky says the lack of a certificate also makes it easier for a bad actor to redirect you to a fake site.

KAMINSKY: People might get used to ignoring the browser warnings. Oh, well, you know, it's just the shutdown. And then you think, oh, you're really walking into this site. And you're really not.

SYDELL: Kaminsky offers up a worst case kind of scenario. Imagine if the security certificate was down for the Social Security website, and a bad actor sets up a fake one. Someone could go to that site, enter their password and give the hackers access to personal information. The shutdown also means that there are fewer IT staff. For example, according to contingency plans on the White House Office of Management and Budget website, only around 2,000 employees out of more than 3,500 are working at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. That's one of the agencies leading the nation's cyber defenses. Rob Ragan, a partner in the cybersecurity firm Bishop Fox, says there may be a lot of important tasks that aren't getting done, such as updating software with the latest security patches.

ROB RAGAN: You end up getting buried in a really big backlog of issues that you may never dig yourself out of. And at that point, one of those issues may have been an indicator of a compromise or a breach that may go unnoticed for months or years to come.

SYDELL: Security researchers worry that the shutdown is like putting a red blanket in front of a bull. Nations like Russia, China and Iran could see it as a signal to charge ahead. Ragan says think about the amount of information on government websites that's personal and even classified. And as the shutdown drags on, the likelihood of security lapses increases, says Vikram Thakur, a technical director at the security firm Symantec.

VIKRAM THAKUR: That risk is most definitely going to go up exponentially.

SYDELL: Ironically, Thakur says fewer personnel lowers at least one kind of security risk. One of the most popular hacking schemes is email phishing. That's when hackers send an email to an employee with a link that unleashes malware into the system.

THAKUR: If nobody's opening email and nobody's using the work network, the chances of the success rate for attackers who are using email as their primary mode of attack kind of falls all the way through.

SYDELL: NPR reached out to the cyber division at the Department of Homeland Security for comment but didn't hear back. Democratic aides in the House say they, too, are unable to get information right now about which IT workers are on the job. However, when the shutdown ends, they want to see details. In the event of a future shutdown, Democrats might move to keep IT workers on the job in the name of cybersecurity.

[Editorial note: consult audio at source link]

Federal shutdown inviting major cyberattack in U.S., experts say (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/17/2019 10:37 PM, UPI, 2015K]

Experts are concerned that the ongoing partial government shutdown is leaving the United States wide open to risk of major cyberattacks, because those manning U.S. security systems aren't working.

Thousands of employees at two government agencies that monitor national cybersecurity haven't worked in nearly a month, risking hacks and data theft.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Technology Review said 45 percent of employees at the Homeland Security Department's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and 85 percent of staff at the National Institute of Standards and Technology have been furloughed.

A spokesman for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency told Business Insider officials have "ceased a variety of critical cybersecurity and infrastructure protection capabilities."

Employees considered essential are still required to work through the shutdown, but the reduced number of staff still creates situations where departments aren't operating at full strength to guard against threats.

"Monitoring is probably not happening at 100 percent of usual operations, which means that there is an increased chance that malicious activity may not be spotted," Bryson Bort, CEO of cyberdefense firm SCYTHE, told CBS News.

Mike O'Malley, VP of strategy at cloud defense firm Radware, said the U.S. government has basically "laid out the welcome mat to any and all nefarious actors."

"Unfortunately, we know all too well from experience that hackers, especially nation-state sponsored, have a high level of patience and are willing to lie in wait for the most opportune moment to strike," he said.

Bort noted the shortage makes the United States most vulnerable to nation states like China, Iran, Russia and North Korea.

"I don't think they will 'attack.' I do think this is a good opportunity to step up iterative campaigns to compromise, gather intelligence, and place something quiet for the future," he said.

O'Malley said DHS, the State Department and all U.S. intelligence services could be at the greatest risk.

"Any department that has sensitive information that can be used in espionage or fraud would be hit hardest by an attack."

In the immediate future, for-profit hackers could also look to sell data to nation states or access personal identity records for fraud and identity theft. Short term vulnerabilities at the IRS could prevent millions from receiving their tax refunds on time, Bort said.

Many government websites have also had their HTTPS encryption certificates expire, meaning they could be exposed to impersonator sites. A lack of IT staff means software patches and upgrades at government agencies aren't being updated regularly, leaving them susceptible to malware.

The increased vulnerability comes as researchers this week uncovered a new type of malware that can remove security features on Linux cloud servers without detection.

Rocke, a group of hackers who infiltrate servers and use them to mine cryptocurrency is linked to the malware, which serves the purpose of gaining access to computing without being detected.

Damage to U.S. cybersecurity could also extend beyond the end of the shutdown.

When a shutdown occurred in 2013, workers began to seek corporate jobs with greater job security, and the drain on talent entering government jobs persisted for years.

The present shutdown has also resulted in the Department of Homeland Security's annual Cybersecurity and Innovation Showcase — an event where the government observes new advancements in critical next-generation security technologies — being postponed indefinitely.

The Technology 202: Sen. Schatz calls on technology industry to share cyber threats (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 8:26 AM, Cat Zakrzewski, 9763K]

The technology industry is all grown up, and Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) says it's time for Silicon Valley to start getting serious about cybersecurity threats.

Schatz is calling on the technology industry to create an Information Sharing and Analysis Center (ISAC) — an independent organization that acts as a clearinghouse where companies can share cybersecurity threats with each other. These organizations have been very popular in other established industries such as financial services, but there is no centralized hub for just technology companies.

"All mature industries that have a broad impact have an ISAC or an equivalent," Schatz said in an interview. "It's about time we have it in the tech industry."

Schatz — who has drafted a privacy bill targeting the technology industry — isn't planning to introduce legislation calling for this right now, because he thinks the companies can accomplish this without a mandate from Congress. He notes that successful ISACs are largely private-sector initiatives, but he wants to help: Schatz has been talking to one of the technology industry's leading trade groups, the Internet Association, about creating one.

Creating an ISAC, however, would not solve the technology industry's problems with lawmakers. Congress is eager for action -- and reluctant to trust Big Tech to regulate itself -- after high-profile data breaches, bugs and leaks exposed that companies aren't doing enough to safeguard vast troves of personal data they hold. Members have already introduced bills this year to rein in data tracking and how to empower the Federal Trade Commission.

So Schatz's proposal for a technology industry ISAC would likely come in addition to a national privacy law. However, as companies, privacy advocates and policymakers dig in for what is likely to be a heated and lengthy privacy debate, an ISAC could perhaps come together more quickly than a federal privacy law. Schatz said he wants to see the ISAC launch within the year.

The industry appears open to the proposal. Internet Association General Counsel Jon Berroya tells me in a statement that these organizations can be useful in helping protect privacy, "especially when these organizations prioritize fostering trust among the participants."

The trade group is "engaged in preliminary conversations with its members" about whether such an organization would be useful, he said.

"[The Internet Association] members share Sen. Schatz's concerns about this important issue and will continue to prioritize exploring this approach — and other approaches — to address threats to their services," he said.

Creating an ISAC for the technology industry would not be without its challenges — and it's unclear at this

stage how robust and effective such an initiative would be.

I've previously reported on hurdles social media companies face to share threat data about disinformation with each other. Priscilla Moriuchi, the director of strategic threat development at Recorded Future, said there's lots of hype about threat sharing. "It's one of those things that everyone thinks is a great idea," she told me last month. "But in practice, it's more complicated and not as effective as we think."

In fiercely competitive Silicon Valley, it's not going to be easy to convince the companies to share sensitive information about cyberthreats with each other — especially when data breaches can inflict serious brand damage on companies. The initiative would have to come up with serious incentives and tough guidelines to ensure companies don't use the threats as ammunition against one another.

Also, there's the issue of resources. Any industry initiative will have to take measures to ensure it's not a drain on already strapped security teams. Some companies within the technology industry participate in other industry ISACs. For example, some members of the Internet Association that build fintech already participate in an ISAC for financial services companies.

Many threats may also not apply across the board. The membership of the Internet Association — which ranges from ride-hailing companies like Uber to social networks like Facebook to dating websites like Match Group — highlights the diversity of the businesses that are considered technology companies. The cybersecurity threats facing Twitter could be pretty different from the potential cyberattacks Lyft worries about.

As the Internet Association talks with its member companies, there has been discussion about how to square this. One option: Creating "working groups" to share threat information between specific kinds of technology companies, according to a person familiar with the deliberations who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on the record. There could, for instance, be one threat-sharing group for marketplace businesses like Uber, Airbnb and Lyft, and another for social networks like Facebook and Twitter.

Sen. Schatz said he thinks the industry can sort out these challenges.

"We're confident they're moving expeditiously and will be able to establish an ISAC," he said.

Four cybersecurity priorities for Congress to confront active threats (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/20/2019 11:00 AM, David Hickton and Kiersten Todt, 3038K]

The 116th Congress may have difficulty finding common ground on most issues. But there is at least one area that presents the opportunity for bipartisan action: cybersecurity.

Cyber threats do not discriminate based on party affiliation.

There are four key issues within cybersecurity where this Congress has the potential to make progress with impactful legislation that would make all Americans — and our democracy — more secure.

Election security: The Department of Homeland Security has made considerable progress on election security over the past 18 months. But, with 10,000 local jurisdictions responsible not just for administering elections but now for protecting our democracy against nation-state threat actors, more must be done.

The answer does not lie in funding alone. Paper ballots paired with risk-limiting audits are critical; and Congress should take a hard look at the vendors who play an outsized role in our democracy. We also must share expertise and training across jurisdictions and ensure that jurisdictions are prepared to recover in the face of a cyberattack. The election security provisions in the House Democrats' first bill are an excellent start and should not fall way to partisan rancor.

Data privacy and security: Data breaches should not be the new normal. Yet, even after compromises of 3 billion Yahoo email addresses, the credit profiles of 150 million Americans at Equifax, and the personal information of up to 500 million Marriott guests, the U.S. government has yet to take action. Congress can do so now by legislating policies that help to move security away from the end-user.

Congress must incentivize companies to bake security and privacy protocols into the design of products and services. Individuals also must take responsibility by making security a component of consumption choices. This integrated approach — of both moving security away from the end-user and creating a culture where individuals take responsibility for their security — will ensure a more resilient nation.

Infrastructure protection: The United States must protect its critical infrastructure, including elections, power, transportation and financial, from cyber threats. The recent establishment of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency within the Department of Homeland Security is one necessary step in doing so. Yet, more is required.

Congress must push for a better understanding of the interdependencies of our critical infrastructure, as well as rapid reassessments based on the current and future threat environments. A new critical sector has emerged over the past several years, yet our government is failing to organize itself to respond to it. Social media now directly affect the national and economic security of our nation. Congress must work with the executive branch and industry to identify what appropriate measures must be instituted to manage it.

Workforce development: Any effective cybersecurity strategy will require the right people to do the job. Right now, we don't have them. There is a dangerous shortage of people to implement what needs to be done to make America safe in the digital age. Right now, there are an estimated 300,000 cybersecurity jobs going unfilled in this country, from top managers and technicians to every kind of support personnel. It is a number that will only grow.

We also must reconsider who is responsible for cybersecurity and create a culture of cybersecurity. Every individual who uses a phone or laptop to perform a function of their job is now part of the cyber workforce. More education and training are needed. Congress should pass legislation prioritizing and incentivizing cyber education throughout the public school system, as well as throughout the workforce.

There are additional cybersecurity priorities Congress must address, especially protecting the defense supply chain and regulating the unsecured explosion of the internet of things. There is a reasonable path forward on these issues in groundwork laid in the 115th Congress.

As Americans increasingly are recognizing, cybersecurity is critical to the national and economic security of our nation. Congressional legislation that focuses on election security, data privacy and security, critical infrastructure protection, and workforce development is an important and necessary step in helping our nation confront these active threats.

Fighting AI With AI: Army Seeks Autonomous Cyber Defenses (Bloomberg Government)

[Bloomberg Government](#) [1/18/2019 11:15 AM, Chris Cornillie]

The U.S. Army is seeking information about "Autonomous Cyber" capabilities that use artificial intelligence and machine learning to defend its networks and protect its own intelligent systems against sophisticated cyberattacks. In other words, the Army wants to pit AI against AI in cyberspace.

A branch of the Army's research and development enterprise known as the Space and Terrestrial Communications Directorate, or S&TCD, is seeking cybersecurity tools able to make "automated network decisions and defend against adaptive autonomous cyber attackers at machine speed," according to a Jan. 14 solicitation.

The RFI reflects the Pentagon's growing interest in algorithmic cybersecurity tools. Public and private sector organizations around the world are investing in intelligence and automation, to a varying degree, to compensate for the global shortage of trained cybersecurity analysts.

The Army envisions acquiring technologies that use machine learning to autonomously detect and address software vulnerabilities and network misconfigurations – routine mistakes that could offer attackers an entry point onto its systems.

Another reason organizations are turning to AI-powered cyber defenses: to counter the threat posed by intelligent cyber weapons. In February 2018, a group of more than two dozen researchers representing the Washington-based Center for a New American Security, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and nonprofit organizations including the Electronic Frontier Foundation and OpenAI, issued a groundbreaking report warning that AI technologies could amplify the destructive power available to nation-states and criminal enterprises.

The report outlines dozens of ways attackers could use artificial intelligence to their advantage, from generating automated spear-phishing attacks capable of reliably fooling their human targets, to triggering ransomware attacks using voice or facial recognition, to designing malware that mimics normal user behavior to evade detection.

Although there haven't yet been confirmed cases of AI-enabled cyberattacks, the researchers conclude that, "the pace of progress in AI suggests the likelihood of cyber attacks leveraging machine learning capabilities in the wild soon, if they have not done so already."

Combating 'Adversarial' AI

Pentagon officials appear to be taking the threat seriously. In Dec. 11 testimony before the House Subcommittee on Emerging Threats, Pentagon chief information officer Dana Deasy said that researchers at the new Joint Artificial Intelligence Center (JAIC) are already working on ways to develop technologies to "detect and deter advanced adversarial cyber actors."

The JAIC will play a key role alongside the Pentagon's Research & Engineering (R&E) enterprise to "deliver new AI-enabled capabilities to end users as well as to help incrementally develop the common foundation that is essential for scaling AI's impact across DoD," Deasy said.

One of the JAIC's first tasks is to organize the massive stockpiles of data that Pentagon agencies will use to train their machine learning algorithms and make the data more resilient to tampering, Pentagon Undersecretary for R&E Lisa Porter told lawmakers. Porter highlighted the risks posed by "adversarial AI" – attacks designed to trick intelligent systems into making mistakes – that could undermine trust in these systems.

"Adversaries have the ability to manipulate AI data and algorithms to the point where the AI system is defeated," wrote Celeste Fralick, chief data scientist and senior principal engineer at the cybersecurity giant McAfee, in a recent op-ed. For example, attackers could target the Pentagon's own intelligent cyber defenses with what's known as a "black box" attack – reverse-engineering the defender's algorithms in search of blind spots malware can slip through.

Similarly, said Fralick, machine learning systems are vulnerable to "poisoning" attacks, where a hacker injects false data into a training data set to bias the results of the algorithm. To use predictive maintenance as an example, the Air Force is investing heavily in machine learning tools to analyze flight records, maintenance logs, and sensor data in an effort to predict when parts will wear out or which aircraft will require maintenance on a given day. If adversaries are able to "poison" the predictive

maintenance algorithm, the Air Force could, in theory, be forced to spend millions on redundant repairs. Worse, it might send unsafe aircraft out on duty.

Maintaining trust in these systems is central to the mission of the JAIC and the larger R&E enterprise, said Porter, noting that countering adversarial AI is a top priority for the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency's five-year, \$2 billion AI Next initiative.

The Army appears to be working toward the same objective in parallel. Its Autonomous Cyber solicitation calls for multiple tools and methodologies it can use to "red team" – or pressure test – its current AI-based cyber defenses and improve resistance to manipulation.

Interested parties have until Feb. 13 to respond to the RFI.

Health-care sector is far too vulnerable to cybersecurity threats (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 1:00 PM, Mohammad Jalali, 3038K]

The digitization of health care promises to be transformative for patients and medical practitioners alike. New technologies and techniques — including big data, machine learning and artificial intelligence — are already helping to make health-care delivery more efficient, effective and less expensive.

In spite of this vast potential, though, there exists a serious challenge that hospitals and health-care organizations have not yet managed to overcome: keeping patients' personal data out of the hands of hackers.

Health care suffered more breaches last year than any other industry, according to the Verizon Data Breach Investigations Report. As a result, personally identifiable information was the most common type of data compromised. (Payment card and banking information were second and third, respectively.)

This has important implications. In the event of a financial hack, people can easily get a new credit card number or bank account — even a new Social Security number is possible. But if their health-care data has been compromised, they can't very well change their entire personal health histories.

The scope of the problem goes beyond data breaches. Cyber incidents can potentially impact the safety of patients through interrupting care operations, compromising the integrity of data and damaging medical devices.

So, what can health-care organizations do to protect the safety of their patients from cyber threats?

For starters, they need to devote more resources to safeguard their operations. When it comes to investing in technology, many health-care organizations opt to fund information technology (IT) infrastructure not cyber security.

On one level, this is understandable. The benefits of spending on IT infrastructure, such as making upgrades to server capacity or implementing a new HR system, are immediate and effective. They often result in cost reductions or improved productivity.

Investing in cyber security, on the other hand, is akin to buying an insurance policy. It's risk management for worst-case scenarios that may never happen. But at a time when cyber crime costs the world almost \$600 billion a year, health-care organizations cannot afford to ignore this threat.

Investing in cyber security starts with hiring people with deep expertise and knowledge of the issues. Hospitals and health-care organizations are exceedingly complex bodies. But many lack an information security officer.

This needs to change. Having a dedicated person — and team — to develop and implement security standards, controls and procedures is a necessity.

Next, hospitals and health-care executives need to cultivate a culture of security. This means that every member of staff — from upper management and top physicians to on-call nurses and EMTs — needs to be in alignment that cyber security is a priority.

Creating a culture of security entails a shift in mindset. Nurses and doctors and other medical personnel are busy people with competing commitments. Protecting precious patient data must be ingrained in their every routine.

What's more, organizations must take a proactive approach to educating workers on cyber threats and counter-measures. After all, in any enterprise, employees are the greatest source of vulnerability to hackers.

Holding seminars that encourage employees to change their passwords every three months or remind them of email protocol is not enough. Not even close. Organizations must provide rigorous, ongoing training that helps employees understand how to create a more secure environment for their patients. Critically, organizations should also seek feedback to improve the effectiveness of the training.

Creating a culture of security also requires that organizations prepare for times of crisis. No matter how good an organization's prevention tactics are, chances are it will one day be hacked. Medical workers and health-care administrators need to have a clearly defined incident response strategy.

What will doctors do when they don't have access to patient data? How will nurses respond when the ER is being shut down due to a breach? Whose job is it to communicate with patients during a crisis? And who will communicate with the media?

Health-care organizations need a blueprint — similar to a disaster recovery plan — that lays out the steps they will take in the event of an emergency.

Finally, policymakers play a role here, too. Today, the bar for compliance for patient data safety is laughably low. The danger is that hospital administrators and health-care executives are too comfortable. "We comply with the law, therefore we are secure," they think.

This extremely low bar makes hospitals very attractive to cyber criminals. We need stricter state and federal policies and more stringent requirements. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, centers around privacy; we need a similar law that's better focused on security.

This is a crucial moment for cybersecurity in health care. If health-care organizations don't shore up cybersecurity, the next cyber incidents could directly compromise the safety of patients, and it will be too late to intervene.

The Cybersecurity 202: How does a country spy on its citizens? A cybersecurity company got an inside look (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 7:49 AM, Joseph Marks, 9763K]

A cybersecurity company will reveal this weekend the secretive details of how one government spies on its citizens and adversaries.

The company Lookout discovered a cache of digital messages between government officials in an unnamed nation with a relatively nascent surveillance program -- and more than a dozen companies eager to outfit it with bespoke spying tools.

The messages, which Lookout will detail at the ShmooCon cybersecurity conference, highlight how the barrier to entry for getting sophisticated spyware tools has dramatically lowered. The proliferating private market for hacking tools has allowed even poor and developing nations' governments to scoop up troves of private conversations from critics, activists and political opponents — often far outside their borders.

"Historically, these tools were the purview of a few nations that had people to develop them in house. Now there's another tier that don't have the technology but can pay for it, and there are fewer checks and an even greater potential for abuse," John Scott-Railton, a senior researcher at the University of Toronto's Citizen Lab, which has extensively investigated spyware, told me.

The nation that Lookout is profiling started with a \$23 million budget for spyware, researchers Michael Flossman and Andrew Blaich told me. The government apparently negotiated with companies -- including major spyware players such as Italy's Hacking Team and Israel's NSO Group -- offering complex hacking tools that cost as little as \$50,000 and as much as \$7 million.

The government was mainly focused on exposing the contents of smartphones and tablets, the researchers say. Ultimately, the nation couldn't afford what it really wanted within its price range, so it opted to build its own more moderate tool in house, the researchers said.

Lookout isn't naming the country or providing details on its spying targets because researchers are still studying the operations, Flossman and Blaich said. The researchers discovered the messages between the government and spyware companies, along with internal communications after they were exposed by an error in a computer server the officials used.

Lookout has experience studying government spyware campaigns. The company previously uncovered what appeared to be a Pakistani military spying operation targeting the mobile phones of diplomats, military personnel, and activists in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Iraq, and elsewhere.

But the troves of messages shed new insight into this highly opaque form of government contracting. One big takeaway for researchers was how easy it was for the government to get pitches and compare prices from numerous spyware companies, almost as if they were contracting for construction or janitorial work rather than invasive spying tools.

"This shows the low barrier to entry when it comes to building a mobile surveillance program," Flossman told me.

The spyware companies also mirrored more conventional businesses, offering slick sales brochures and tiered pricing options, Flossman and Blaich said.

In one case, a company trying to sell the government one hacking tool offered to throw in a second tool if the first one was discovered and patched by the software company within 40 days. The deal was off, though, if the government did something stupid that might draw the software company's attention to the hack, the spyware company said.

The messages also provide an unusual inside look at the practices of spyware companies under frequent criticism for selling their tools to autocratic regimes that use them to spy on political opponents, journalists and human rights activists.

The spyware products sold by Hacking Team and NSO Group, for instance, are often purchased and used for legitimate law enforcement investigations -- and also to clamp down on dissent within their borders. A 2018 Citizen Lab investigation found instances of NSO Group malware in 45 nations frequently targeting civil society actors rather than criminals.

"We know that once these are in the possession of a security service there's an incredible temptation to abuse them," Scott-Railton told me.

America avoided election hacking in 2018. But are we ready for 2020? (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/18/2019 12:28 PM, Chris Good, 2413K] Video: [HERE](#)

After red flags were raised about vote hacking in 2018, the midterms came and went without much cybersecurity fanfare.

Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats had cautioned that "the warning lights are blinking red again," and experts warned that voting systems, in particular, could be at risk. Russia had likely targeted them in all 50 states in 2016 and had gained access to voter-registration files in Illinois and Arizona.

But despite myriad concerns about vulnerabilities—from voting machines to tabulation systems to phishing attacks on campaigns—election hacking, by and large, did not factor in the 2018 elections. A recent report from Coats' office to the White House confirmed as much: U.S. intelligence officials had no evidence that voting systems had been compromised, although social-media disinformation aimed at American voters had continued apace.

"The Russians didn't need to do much in 2018. They enjoy all the turmoil in the U.S. and probably take credit for 2016 outcomes," said James Lewis, senior vice president and director of the Technology Policy Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "Midterms are confusing and the Russians probably couldn't figure out the pressure points to swing voters. If they have new tricks, they are saving them for 2020."

If Russia (and other foreign powers) are biding their time for the next election year, is America ready for a fresh round of attempted interference? And as the 2020 elections approach, what have officials and experts learned?

One benefit of 2016's meddling was that it brought a slew of recommendations from election and cybersecurity experts on how to guard against vote hacking. Before the 2018 midterms, experts had recommended a handful of equipment and policy changes—like new voting machines, anti-phishing training, and two-factor authentication for employees logging into voter databases.

States took \$380 million in election-upgrade funding from Congress, but spending it in a timely manner proved difficult, as legislative and procurement calendars slowed the process down. The bulk of that money will have been spent by 2020, however, according to a senior government official familiar with the matter.

Of major concern to experts were the five states that use paperless voting systems statewide and could not examine a paper trail if the vote was compromised. All of those states are now taking steps toward using voting machines with auditable paper trails. Delaware and South Carolina expect to have them in place by 2020; Georgia, where a lawsuit failed to force the state to buy new machines before November 2018, after sensitive election-related files were left unguarded on a server, has set buying new machines by 2020 as a goal; and New Jersey has begun a pilot program, with two counties already having bought new machines.

Louisiana had planned to make the switch by 2020, but that is now in doubt, after the losing bidder challenged Louisiana's decision to award a contract for new voting machines to a competitor, and the state ultimately issued a new request for bids, starting the process over.

One federal effort, in particular, seems to be working: across the board, state election officials said coordination with the Department of Homeland Security improved drastically between 2016 and 2018 -- even as fewer than half of U.S. states took DHS up on its offer of in-person reviews of vulnerabilities in

their election systems. The cyber-threat-sharing forum established for the states by DHS drew positive reviews.

"There were a few [malicious] scans that were certainly passed on from that," said Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman, who also said DHS and FBI staff were in Washington State to help out on election night. "They shared lots of info. We had many lists of bad IPs to block. They shared info about spear-phishing attempts to look out for."

But apart from actual vote-hacking, campaign cybersecurity, most notably a dreaded hack-and-leak campaign, remains a concern, as does disinformation on social media.

Surprisingly few campaigns contracted with cybersecurity firms to provide protection in 2018; CrowdStrike, one of the more prominent firms in the field, worked for both political parties but was signed on by only one campaign. Campaigns, and particularly House campaigns, operate on tight budgets and may not have the resources to spare for cybersecurity services, when that money could go to extra advertising or canvassing. The Democratic Party, for its part, guided its House campaigns to a set of best practices that included things like multi-step logins and encrypted messaging.

But two notable spear-phishing attacks were attempted on national party committees in 2018: a spear-phishing campaign against the National Republican Congressional Committee before the midterms, and a similar, recently revealed attack on the Democratic National Committee after Americans voted.

Meanwhile, disinformation continues to evolve and, some say, grow more aggressive.

"I would expect to see a more aggressive effort in 2020, for two reasons," said Bret Schafer, who tracks Russian-affiliated disinformation accounts for the German Marshall Fund's Alliance for Securing Democracy. "One, there were a lot of races this time, and there wasn't a way to significantly alter one race ... and two, I think there's just going to be a far more divisive, highly political campaign in 2020 than the midterms were."

The FBI launched a task force to address foreign political influence and indicted a Russian woman in October for allegedly interfering in 2018. But the Justice Department has acknowledged limits in the government's ability to counter foreign political messaging publicly: public announcements "must be conducted with particular sensitivity in the context of elections, to avoid even the appearance of partiality," Deputy Assistant Attorney General Adam Hickey told the Senate Judiciary Committee in June.

And foreign actors have not been the only source of interference. For example, The New York Times reported that Democratically-aligned operatives created a false Facebook page and may have used bots in the Alabama special Senate election.

Disinformation has been geared toward exacerbating existing divisions, and we can expect to see "more of it happening on fringier platforms ... places that are not going to have to set up war rooms because they're not under the same kind of congressional scrutiny," Schafer said.

Still, Congress has grilled tech executives about foreign meddling, and while the social media firms have taken some steps to address the issue -- Facebook, for instance, removed more than 2.1 billion fake accounts in 2018, some of which were linked to foreign political activity -- not everyone has been pleased with the response or the state of play moving forward.

"A couple of the big companies were denying that anything was wrong until a few months ago," CSIS's Lewis said. "It gave [Russia] an unobstructed path. Maybe we'll figure out what to do by 2020."

D.N.C. Says It Was Targeted Again by Russian Hackers After '18 Election (New York Times)

[New York Times](#) [1/18/2019 10:23 PM, Nicole Perlroth, 20737K]

The Democratic National Committee believes it was targeted in a hacking attempt by a Russian group in the weeks after the midterm elections last year, according to court documents filed late Thursday.

On Nov. 14, the documents say, dozens of D.N.C. email addresses were on the receiving end of a so-called spear phishing campaign by one of two Russian organizations believed to be responsible for hacking into the committee's computers during the 2016 presidential race. There is no evidence that the most recent attack was successful.

The documents, filed in federal court in New York, were part of an amended complaint in a lawsuit filed in April that claimed the committee was the victim of a conspiracy by Russian intelligence agents, President Trump's 2016 campaign and WikiLeaks to damage Hillary Clinton's presidential run.

The new court filings say the time stamps and contents of the spear phishing emails received in November were consistent with separate cyberattacks around the same time tied to the Russian hacking group known as Cozy Bear, one of the two Russian groups suspected of breaching D.N.C. computers in 2016.

Security researchers believe the hacking attempt against the D.N.C. in November was part of a broader campaign that used decoy emails that appeared to come from the State Department.

That campaign had more than a dozen targets, including government agencies, think tanks, law enforcement officials, journalists, military personnel, defense contractors, pharmaceutical companies and transportation officials, according to a report by the cybersecurity firm FireEye. Researchers believe the goal was to ferret out American foreign policy, particularly related to Africa; Democratic policy positions; and the platforms of 2020 Democratic presidential hopefuls.

FireEye said the attempted hacking of the D.N.C. in November resembled other recent attacks attributed to Cozy Bear, including in its "deliberate reuse" of old phishing tactics and reliance on a similar list of victims. But there were a few new wrinkles, including new decoy email addresses and different obfuscation techniques.

The hackers sent some targets of the broader campaign three phishing emails at most. In other instances, they were more aggressive, sending as many as 136 emails to a single organization. In some cases, the malware-laced emails were successful. And once they gained access to a computer network, it was only a matter of hours before they were deploying stealthier hacking tools.

The attackers in November compromised a hospital email server to launch their phishing emails, a common tactic of the Cozy Bear group, said Nick Carr, a senior manager at FireEye.

Cozy Bear hackers are skilled at rummaging through a network without drawing attention, said Matthew Dunwoody, a FireEye security researcher. Once in, they often swap out their phishing tools for malware that can be hard to detect, he said.

FireEye said that although Cozy Bear was the likeliest culprit, the firm could not firmly establish who was responsible for the 2018 campaign against the D.N.C. and other targets. CrowdStrike, another cybersecurity firm, also noted an uptick in hacking activity in November, but it could not say definitively that Cozy Bear was to blame.

Cozy Bear, also known by security firms as APT 29 or the Dukes, was one of two Russian groups involved in the 2016 hacking of the D.N.C. It has not attracted the same scrutiny as the other group, Fancy Bear, or APT 28, which has been linked to a string of cyberattacks against the D.N.C., the International Olympic Committee and other international organizations.

Cozy Bear has been active since 2016, security researchers say, and has been linked to a coordinated wave of hacking attacks on Democratic Party officials.

The D.N.C. says in the amended complaint that the November campaign was consistent with a continuing push by Russian hackers to target Democratic candidates and party leaders. In 2017, Russian hackers are believed to have attempted a hack of the computer network of former Senator Claire McCaskill of Missouri and the networks of at least two other candidates in the midterm elections.

Mr. Trump has long denied any collusion with Russia, and in December several defendants named in the D.N.C.'s lawsuit argued that it should be dismissed because the committee was using it to try to "explain away" the Democratic "candidate's defeat in the 2016 presidential campaign."

On Friday, Geoffrey A. Graber, a D.N.C. lawyer, said the committee expected defendants named in the case to file another motion for dismissal soon.

The Russian government has consistently denied hacking the D.N.C. In a "statement of immunity" from Russia's Ministry of Justice, Russian authorities argued that even if it were responsible for the hacking, such a "sovereign act" would be considered a "military action" protected by a 1976 law that offers some immunity from lawsuits regarding foreign governments' actions in the United States.

DNC says it was target of Russia cyberattack after 2018 midterms (Politico)

[Politico](#) [1/18/2019 11:20 AM, Rebecca Morin and Eric Geller, 2577K]

The Democratic National Committee filed a legal complaint Thursday night alleging that it was the target of a cyberattack by Russia one week after the 2018 midterm elections.

"In November 2018, dozens of DNC email addresses were targeted in a spear-phishing campaign, although there is no evidence that the attack was successful," the DNC alleged, according to court documents filed to the District Court of the Southern District of New York. "The content of these emails and their timestamps were consistent with a spear-phishing campaign that leading cybersecurity experts have tied to Russian intelligence."

The complaint is part of an ongoing lawsuit against Russia, WikiLeaks, Donald Trump's presidential campaign and other key individuals.

According to the complaint, the timing as well as the content of the spearphishing emails match the practices of Russian hacking group Cozy Bear, one of two Kremlin-tied groups that hacked the DNC in 2016, according to the complaint. Spear-phishing is a cyberattack tactic in which hackers send emails that appear to come from a trusted sender to try to get the targeted individuals to reveal confidential information.

"Therefore, it is probable that Russian intelligence again attempted to unlawfully infiltrate DNC computers in November 2018," the DNC said in its filing.

The malicious emails targeted a wide range of party officials, from junior staff to some of the party's most senior ranks including people at the "director" level, according to a Democratic official who requested anonymity to discuss a security incident. DNC directors oversee portfolios such as grassroots mobilization, data science, African-American media outreach and state operations.

The emails were almost identical to the ones attributed to Cozy Bear sent to a wide range of targets last year, the Democratic official told POLITICO. In a report on those attacks, the security firm FireEye said that it discovered them on Nov. 14, the same day that the DNC said it received the new emails.

Attached to the emails was the same fake State Department internship application form shown in FireEye's report, the Democratic official said. Other aspects of the emails, including the description of the attachment, also matched the campaign detailed by FireEye.

Once the DNC learned about the messages, it looked for evidence of the infected email attachments dropping malware on party computers and found nothing. It then worked with security consultants to verify its internal assessment. The Democratic official told POLITICO that the party was confident that no one opened the attachments and unleashed the malware.

The DNC has not said how or when it discovered the new spearphishing messages, but the Democratic official said the committee had formal and informal partnerships with a variety of security firms and tech companies. A third party may have alerted the DNC to the emails, possibly after receiving some itself.

The DNC has not received any more Russian spearphishing emails since the mid-November campaign, according to the Democratic official.

In the complaint, the DNC also suggested that the president's denial of Russia's interference in the 2016 election, his continued criticism of special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia probe and some of his policies that the committee characterized as favoring Russia, are part of the alleged collusion between Trump's presidential campaign and the Russian government.

Democrats claim alleged Russian hackers posed as State Department official in attempted DNC hack (CNN)

[CNN](#) [1/18/2019 1:08 PM, Donie O'Sullivan, CNN, 5847K]

The Democratic National Committee claims that in the days after the 2018 midterm elections it was likely targeted by a group of Russian intelligence hackers, according to court documents filed overnight.

The hackers posed as a State Department official in the attempted hack, a senior Democratic Party source with direct knowledge of the attempt told CNN.

Dozens of DNC email addresses received spear-phishing emails that were ostensibly sent from a State Department official, the source said. The emails contained a PDF attachment that, if opened, was designed to gain access to systems through the recipient's computer, the source explained.

The DNC said it did not believe the attempt was successful.

In a court filing that is part of an ongoing civil lawsuit against the Russian government, President Donald Trump, WikiLeaks and others, the DNC explained it believed the spear-phishing campaign was likely orchestrated by a Russian hacking group known as "Cozy Bear." The DNC said the timing and contents of the emails shared characteristics with a suspected Cozy Bear campaign that had been identified by the cybersecurity firm FireEye.

The DNC added, "it is probable that Russian intelligence again attempted to unlawfully infiltrate DNC computers in November 2018."

FireEye said the campaign targeted multiple organizations, including think tanks, defense contractors, government and media.

Cozy Bear is one of two hacking groups linked to Russian intelligence that is believed to have accessed the DNC's internal systems in the lead-up to the 2016 election.

Spear-phishing attempts normally involve hackers sending emails designed to look like they came from trusted sources in an attempt to induce potential victims to hand over confidential information. In 2016, the

email account of Hillary Clinton's campaign chair John Podesta was hacked after a successful spear-phishing attempt by another Russian hacking group.

Special counsel Robert Mueller indicted members of Russia's military intelligence in July for the 2016 hacking of the DNC, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and Podesta.

The alleged Russian military intelligence hacking group that targeted the Democratic National Committee (DNC) after November's midterms elections did so by posing as a State Department official, a senior Democratic Party official with direct knowledge of the hacking attempt tells CNN.

[Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Terrorism Investigations

[NY] Man charged in alleged drugs-for-weapons deal with al-Qaeda-linked group (ABC News)
[ABC News](#) [1/18/2019 1:39 PM, Aaron Katersky, 2413K]

A Colombian described by federal drug agents as the country's most significant drug trafficker in Africa has been arrested and brought to the United States to face charges of narcoterrorism conspiracy, according to a criminal complaint unsealed Friday.

David Cardona-Cardona arrived Thursday in New York where he was charged with arranging to trade cocaine for surface-to-air missiles and other advanced weaponry.

He is due to appear in federal court on Friday afternoon.

Cardona allegedly needed to move the drugs into Europe and agreed to give the weapons to a terrorist group linked to al-Qaeda in exchange for use of the group's smuggling routes through the Sahara Desert, the DEA said in the complaint.

"In particular, Cardona expressed a desire to provide the weapons to the organization Ansar al-Dine, and specifically indicated that the purpose of the weapons was to shoot down manned and unmanned aircraft belonging to the United States and other allied nations operating in West Africa," the complaint states.

Cardona has been charged in the Southern District of New York with narcotics conspiracy, narcoterrorism conspiracy, firearms conspiracy and conspiracy to violate maritime drug enforcement laws.

The case was brought by the DEA and an agent from Homeland Security Investigations.

The United States designated Ansar al-Dine a foreign terrorist organization in 2013.

It operates mainly in Mali and cooperates with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb, according to the State Department.

According to the criminal complaint, Cardona arranged the alleged drugs-for-weapons trade with two confidential DEA sources in Madrid, where he described years of drug trafficking through the Sahara Desert and working with Islamic extremists.

He also mentioned access to a Gulfstream jet that could fly from Africa to southern Europe, according to the complaint.

"Cardona explained that he worked with a friend in Africa who has an aviation company using aircraft brought from the United States," the complaint said.

"Cardona agreed with the confidential sources that 'our plan is to try to do an operation with this plane.'".

Allegedly needing access to desert runways controlled by the al-Qaeda-linked extremists, whom he referred to as "Barbudos," or "Bearded ones," Cardona allegedly plotted with the confidential sources, a cooperating witness and an undercover Croatian law enforcement officer to ship them tens of thousands of dollars' worth of surface-to-air missiles,.

50 caliber rifles and night vision goggles using the same aircraft that delivered his cocaine to southern Europe, according to the complaint.

National Security News

The government shutdown is shutting down our national security: OPINION (ABC News)

[ABC News](#) [1/20/2019 6:16 PM, Donald J. Mihalek, 2413K]

Right now, border patrol agents are trying to keep our nation's borders secure. But when they detain those who cross the border illegally, there is no court to hear their cases, so some are summarily released. Secret Service agents are working to protect our nation's leaders, but when they travel, they do so at their own expense. FBI and ICE agents are trying to track criminals and terrorists, but can't pay informants, pay for travel or even cover investigative expenses.

Why? America's government is shutdown, allegedly over border security concerns, with no end in sight.

While the majority of federal law enforcement officers would agree that border security is important, and that barriers, technology and a better immigration system are necessary to make our border safe, the backbone of that security is the individuals protecting the border and America. Their vigilance becomes hard to maintain, though, when they are preoccupied with thoughts of potentially losing a home or not being able to feed their family.

To make matters worse, and rub salt into already-festering wounds, this shutdown has now become America's longest, and federal law enforcement officers must come to work without any idea of when they will be paid next. While they show up and their professional support staffs -- analysts, forensic examiners - sit home on furlough, bills mount, mortgages become overdue and their families get nervous.

Federal law enforcement agencies have taken it upon themselves to try to help their employees. The FBI has released a list of food banks and unemployment resources. The TSA has received food and goods donations in various communities. All amounting to a sad state, as our nation's protectors are faced with accepting charity while working.

But many in federal law enforcement are also handcuffed from helping themselves. Secret Service Agents protecting the president and other DHS agents are being told by the Department of Homeland Security that it is unethical to take on another job without receiving approval, or to accept gifts due to their public position.

Yet as the over 800,000 federal employees maintain a stiff upper lip, their frustration is mounting.

Especially when they see members of Congress taking a trip to sunny Puerto Rico. This trip was allegedly to assess what else the Congress can do to help the Island recover from damage caused by Hurricane Maria. But a photo of recently-acquitted Sen. Bob Menendez of New Jersey on a beach clearly sent the wrong message. Perhaps the best thing members of Congress could have done was stay home and work on ending the shutdown.

A government shutdown doesn't affect the paychecks of sitting Congressmen, though. They have to choose not to be paid. Lucky them.

Amazingly, as the shutdown drags on, instead of a sense of urgency to reopen the government, we see more posturing and politicking. This includes calls from Nancy Pelosi to cancel the State of the Union due to "security concerns," and President Trump's revoking the use of government planes for members of Congress.

In law enforcement there is a common thread of selflessness, teamwork and shared sacrifice which is being showcased right now as federal law enforcement officers continue to try and keep America safe with no resources, no support and no pay.

It appears our elected officials could learn a lesson or two from our nation's finest, and come to terms with the fact that despite everything else, it takes people, not politics to make America safe.

A national security reset is in serious order (The Hill)

[The Hill](#) [1/18/2019 3:35 PM, Terron Sims II, 3038K]

Hope and Change: These words were chanted over and over again during the 2008 Obama campaign. I should know, as I was a surrogate for the campaign on the veterans and defense policy teams.

Hope and Change, however, meant different things to different people. As a national security expert, I understood Hope and Change as killing Osama bin Laden and withdrawing forces from Iraq and Afghanistan. Under the Bush administration, we Democrats rightfully admonished the president's national security decisions and use of force; yet, when President Obama took office and implemented what many of us refer to as Bush 2.0, most of my Democratic colleagues began singing a different tune. President Obama was in a perfect position to do a full on national security reset—but instead his administration pressed forward with "old" policy in the Middle East and made matters worse in the region through our actions in Libya, Egypt, Syria, and Yemen.

Our current state of affairs in the Middle East and Afghanistan are much worse than they were in 2009. Libya is a wreck. Syria and Yemen are battlefields. Russia is aggressively acting militarily. Saudi Arabia is dictating our actions in Yemen and Syria. Turkey is poised to invade Kurdistan. Kurdistan is threatening to secede from Iraq. The Taliban is poised to reclaim government control of Afghanistan.

Amid all the chaos, it is apparent that at the senior leader level where civilian leadership of the military lies, after action reviews (AARs) have not occurred. AARs are a method leaders use to assess a unit's proficiency after an operation and determine how to craft future operations, if needed. Given that military operations in the Middle East have yet to meet any of the original objectives, it is evident that either AARs have not occurred at the senior leader level or said leaders have chosen not to action the AAR results. The joke amongst honest combat vets and policy wonks about Afghanistan is that everyone knows that the Taliban is going to reclaim control of the government. It is simply a matter of when; U.S. military presence is merely delaying the inevitable.

A thorough review of U.S. military posture and goals is desperately needed. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton understood this need very well: In June 2016, I spoke alongside her on a national security panel, where she said, "We've got to be very honest about how challenging it is to do this. But, I think you're right. It's time for us to take a strategic look at where we were and how we responded in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and now with what's happening with some of the anti-terrorism operations." Once we have assessed our military operations, we then must establish clear steps necessary to withdraw all U.S. conventional forces from ground operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan. We have been in 16 years of perpetual war with no end in sight. Our absence will create additional chaos, but that is the nature of war. When only 1 percent of our nation serves in uniform and only 13 percent of our service members serve in combat, it is clear that our country's elected leaders are not truly supportive—for if they were, every resource would be applied to win ... however winning is defined.

The United States withdrawing from the Middle East is a strategic move that can have long-term positive effects. Essentially, the United States currently stands in the way of Middle Eastern countries determining their own path forward. We are standing in the way of the Middle East undoing the unforeseen chaos that was spawned with the passing of the Sykes-Picot Agreement just after WWI.

To properly reset our national security agenda, the United States needs to: cease all direct and indirect military action in Syria and Yemen; permit military advisors only at the Iraqi army division level in Iraq; and withdraw all forces from Kuwait and shutdown our installations. Iraq is an ally country, so it is imperative that we not abandon them, especially since our invasion in 2003 sparked the flame that we are fighting today; therefore, we will maintain our naval presence and installation in Qatar. The United States must also pull all conventional forces out of Afghanistan and return the mission to SOCOM, so they can continue the al Qaeda disruption mission. Yes, the Taliban will probably regain control of the government, but we never entered Afghanistan to topple the Taliban regime. We only fought the Taliban because they would not turn Osama bin Laden over to us in 2003; if they had done so, the Taliban would still run Afghanistan.

An overall national security reset is in serious order, especially in the regions where we are losing American lives. The Founders wrote the Constitution to make it difficult for the United States to go to war. President Washington set the precedent of keeping the U.S. out of foreign entanglements. We need to be more like President Washington, not Woodrow Wilson, and return to our roots as a country and ask ourselves if our military actions in the Middle East and Afghanistan make us a stronger and better nation.

Pentagon report says bases face climate risks, but critics say it's short on details (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 5:47 PM, Brady Dennis, Chris Mooney, Missy Ryan, 9763K]

Report listed 53 bases exposed to current flooding risk but it's so thin it "carries about as much value as a phone book."

Dozens of military installations around the country already are experiencing the impacts of climate change, and rising seas, wildfires and other climate-fueled disasters are likely to cause increasing problems for the armed forces, the Defense Department said Thursday in a report to lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

The 22-page document comes in response to a request from Congress in an annual funding bill, which required defense officials to provide a list of the 10 most vulnerable sites that each military branch faces over the next two decades, and an analysis of what could be done to protect them.

The document affirms a longstanding sense that the U.S. military, with massive energy needs and bases flung around the globe -- including some on low-lying islands -- is well attuned to how the planet is changing due to the burning of fossil fuels.

But while the report calls climate change "a national security issue" and highlights individual bases that face potential impacts, it did not include such a list of the most at-risk installations -- an omission that drew quick criticism on Friday.

"It seems like they have not made it past anecdote to analysis," said John Conger, director of the Center for Climate and Security and former acting assistant secretary of defense for energy, installations and the environment. "It's concerning to me because Congress was looking for the department's best judgment on how to prioritize the risks."

Department of Defense spokeswoman Heather Babb said Friday that the report "represents a high-level assessment" of the vulnerabilities that military installations face from floods, droughts, wildfires and other climate- and weather-related threats, as well as an overview of efforts to increase resiliency.

"DoD will focus on ensuring it remains ready and able to adapt to a wide variety of threats - regardless of the source - to fulfill our mission to deter war and ensure our nation's security," Babb said.

Examining 79 military installations, the report finds that 53 already suffer from "recurrent flooding," 43 have been exposed to drought, and 36 to risk from wildfires. And it finds that risks like these could extend to more installations in the coming years.

Rhode Island Democratic Senator Jack Reed, ranking member of the Armed Service Committee, blasted the document, charging that the Defense Department failed to answer the key questions that lawmakers were seeking, and instead produced an "alphabetical" list of selected installations facing climate risks.

"While those 79 installations are no doubt important for mission assurance, without any prioritization for resources and installation-specific resilience plans, the report is incomplete," Reed said in a statement on Friday. "Instead, the report reads like a introductory primer and carries about as much value as a phone book."

Congressman Jim Langevin (D-R.I.), a member of the House Armed Service Committee, sponsored the amendment to the defense spending bill in late 2017 that required the report. He said Friday he was deeply disappointed.

"While the Pentagon does rightly acknowledge that a changing climate will affect military readiness and installations, the report does not reflect the urgency of the challenge," Langevin said in a statement, noting that recent hurricanes caused billions of dollars in damage to Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida and Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

But the Pentagon's Babb countered that "the report highlights the climate vulnerabilities of the top 79 mission assurance priority installations. By using this alternative approach, we are able to highlight where there are operational risks."

This week's report differs from another study backed by the military and published last year, which showed that more than a thousand low-lying tropical islands risk becoming "uninhabitable" in coming decades, upending the population of some island nations and endangering key U.S. defense assets.

The research has ramifications for the U.S. military, whose massive Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site sits, in part, on the atoll island of Roi-Namur — a part of the Marshall Islands and the focus of the research. The U.S. military supported the research in part to learn about the vulnerability of its tropical-island installations. The Pentagon base on Roi-Namur and surrounding islands supports about 1,250 American civilians, contractors and military personnel.

Last year the Pentagon also released a survey of a much larger number of military installations and the risks they were facing, but that document appeared to have been watered down somewhat in comparison with a draft version composed during the Obama administration.

By contrast, this week's report only examined a smaller subset of installations, their current risks, and whether those are expected to increase over the next 20 years.

The document does point out that individual bases are experiencing serious problems -- for instance, from flooding and wildfires.

"Joint Base Langley-Eustis (JBLE-Langley AFB), Virginia, has experienced 14 inches in sea level rise since 1930 due to localized land subsidence and sea level rise," the document notes. "Flooding at JBLELangley, with a mean sea level elevation of three feet, has become more frequent and severe."

Meanwhile, Vandenberg Air Force Base in California saw 380 acres burned in a wildfire last year and required evacuations, the report said.

On a global scale, climate change can make the military's job harder by creating regional instabilities through worsening disasters, the report said. And it notes that with more maritime activity in the melting Arctic, the Navy's job is getting tougher.

And, the document notes, since it only looks out 20 years, military installations could face far greater challenges beyond that timeframe.

"Analyses to mid- and late-century would likely reveal an uptick in vulnerabilities (if adaptation strategies are not implemented)," the report noted.

Pentagon warns Congress that climate change is a 'national security' risk to military bases (Washington Examiner)

[Washington Examiner](#) [1/18/2019 11:49 AM, Josh Siegel, 629K]

The Defense Department issued a report to Congress Thursday finding that climate change is a "national security" issue that could leave military bases vulnerable to coastal flooding and wildfires fueled by drought.

"The effects of a changing climate are a national security issue with potential impacts to Department of Defense missions, operational plans, and installations," the 22-page report said.

Congress mandated the report in the fiscal year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act, asking DOD to report on "vulnerabilities to military installations and combatant commander requirements resulting from climate change over the next 20 years."

The NDAA also required the Pentagon to report on the top 10 at-risk bases and what should be done to protect them. But the new DOD report to Congress does not provide a list.

Rather, it reviewed 79 "mission-essential" military installations in the U.S. that could face climate change-related risks within the next 20 years.

DOD found that 53 of those bases face a current risk of repeated flooding because of storm surge fueled by sea level rise, with seven more vulnerable to being inundated in the future. Most of these are located on the East Coast.

It notes that Joint Base Langley-Eustis in Virginia has already experienced 14 inches of sea level rise since 1930.

The report also says 36 military bases are vulnerable to damage from wildfires, with an additional seven facing a future risk of blazes. More than half of the bases could be harmed by drought, which can hamper water supply.

Democrats of the House Armed Services Committee criticized the DOD's report, saying it lacks specific plans on how the military intends to respond to climate change.

"While this climate report acknowledges that nearly all the military installations it studied are vulnerable to major climate change impacts, it fails to even minimally discuss a mitigation plan to address the vulnerabilities," said Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., the committee's chairman.

DOD says the results of the study have emphasized its ongoing push to incorporate climate change

resilience as part of its planning and decision-making process for operating current bases and building new ones.

The latest NDAA for fiscal year 2019, signed by President Trump in August, directs the military to include in every installation's master plan an examination of "energy and climate resilience."

It defines climate resilience as "anticipation, preparation for, and adaptation to utility disruptions and changing environmental conditions and the ability to withstand, respond to, and recover rapidly from utility disruptions while ensuring the sustainment of mission-critical operations."

The push by Congress, and the Pentagon, to consider the risks of climate change to the military contradicts the actions of Trump.

Trump, shortly after taking office, revoked a memo that former President Barack Obama signed in 2016, directing the Defense Department to consider climate change in its decisions about where to build new installations and prepare for future threats.

Trump faces conservative backlash over push for new tariff powers (FOX News)

[FOX News](#) [1/18/2019 2:53 PM, Fred Lucas, 9216K]

An "America First" proposal to make it easier for President Trump to impose tariffs without congressional approval is meeting opposition from some Republicans and conservative groups.

The "United States Reciprocal Trade Act" was reportedly drafted by White House trade adviser Peter Navarro, who is seeking support among congressional Republicans. Trump could push the idea in his State of the Union address, though the date for the speech remains up in the air amid the shutdown standoff between him and congressional Democrats.

The bill itself would expand the executive branch's authority to levy tariffs if the president determines the target country has negative barriers against U.S. exports.

But underscoring the lingering GOP divide on trade, free-market organizations like the Competitive Enterprise Institute and Americans for Tax Reform have called on Congress to fight the policy.

Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, who previously sponsored legislation to curb executive branch authority on trade, opposes the plan.

"Congress has already given the executive branch far too much power over far too many things," Lee told Fox News. "We should be looking to take authority away from the executive branch on trade, not giving it more abilities to act unilaterally."

Bloomberg News reported the draft bill says, "The lack of reciprocity in tariff levels and disproportionate use of non-tariff barriers by United States trading partners facilitates foreign imports, discourages United States exports, and puts United States producers, farmers, and workers at a competitive disadvantage." The draft continues that the trade imbalance "contributes to the large and growing United States trade deficit in goods, which is a drag on economic growth and undermines economic prosperity."

Speaking Monday at the American Farm Bureau Convention, Trump said his administration is digging the United States out of unfair trade deals, noting the recent accord on the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement—still pending congressional approval—and continued negotiations with China.

"We are replacing one-sided, unfair trade deals," Trump said at the New Orleans gathering. "We have so many nations — it's a one-sided deal. With China, every year, for many years, we're losing \$375 billion — not million, billion dollars. We're working on that very strongly. ... We're turning all of that around with fair

trade deals that put American farmers, ranchers, and, in fact, put America first."

Under Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress has the authority to negotiate international trade deals, or, "To regulate Commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states."

Still, Trump used what statutory authority he had last year to unilaterally impose 25 percent levies on steel, 10 percent tariffs on aluminum, and tariffs of billions of dollars in Chinese imports.

Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 gave the president power to impose some tariffs without Congress for national security reasons. Sections 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 had similar loopholes to expand the president's tariff power.

Last year, a bipartisan group of 88 senators supported giving Congress a greater role in tariffs—which might indicate a tough sell for the reciprocal bill.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, whose committee would vet the reciprocal trade bill, issued a statement upon becoming chairman saying he intends to review the president's tariffs thus far.

"While I strongly agree with President Trump that we must have fair trade deals that benefit Americans, I do not believe that we should alienate our allies with tariffs disguised as national security protections," Grassley said. "And certainly not when it comes to trade in automobiles and auto parts. For this reason, I intend to review the president's use of power under Section 232 of the Trade Act of 1962, which grants the president broad legal authority to impose tariffs in the name of national security. I'm not fond of the Section 301 tariffs on products from China, but I agree with the reasons they've been applied."

If Grassley is not on board, it would give the tariff bill little chance of passing the GOP-controlled Senate. That's a relief for Ryan Young, a fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

"This bill gives [Trump] more reasons legally to impose tariffs," Young told Fox News. "He doesn't have to offer a national security rationale. He just has to decide another country has more trade barriers than the United States."

Because the administration is not only looking at tariffs in other countries, Young added that the determination could be subjective and arbitrary if trade barriers aren't strictly defined in the legislation.

While the economy has been strong under Trump's policies of lower taxes and slashing regulations, Young cites a report by ImpactEcon that projected Trump's tariff policies would reduce economic growth by 1.78 percent in 2019. So, Young said, without tariffs, gross domestic product could exceed an astounding 5 percent.

"This proposal is more symbolic from the administration, but it's important that we send the right symbols," Young continued. "This legislation grossly expands executive power."

[Russia] Russia warns US missile defense plans will fuel arms race (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/18/2019 2:20 PM, Vladimir Isachenkov, AP, 9763K]

Russia said Friday the Pentagon's new missile defense strategy will trigger an arms race in space and further undermine global stability.

The tough Russian statement came in response to the U.S. administration's Missile Defense Review released Thursday during President Donald Trump's visit to the Pentagon.

The Pentagon's new strategy calls for a new array of space-based sensors and other high-tech systems to more quickly detect and shoot down incoming missiles. It makes clear that the new defense

technologies are needed to counter advanced weapons being developed by Russia and China along with threats from North Korea and Iran.

The Russian Foreign Ministry described the new U.S. strategy as a proof of "Washington's desire to ensure uncontested military domination in the world."

It warned that the expansion of the U.S. missile defense system "will inevitably start an arms race in space with the most negative consequences for international security and stability."

"Contrary to what the Review's authors say, the implementation of its plans and approaches will not strengthen security of the U.S. and its allies," the ministry said in a statement. "Attempts to take that path will have the opposite effect and deal another heavy blow to international stability."

Trump, in a speech at the Pentagon, declared that space is the new war-fighting domain and vowed that the U.S. will develop an unrivaled missile defense system to protect against advanced hypersonic and other threats.

The Russian Foreign Ministry described the Pentagon's review as an attempt to reproduce President Ronald Reagan's 'Star Wars' missile defense plans on a new technological level and urged the Trump administration to "come to its senses" and engage in arms control talks with Russia.

Earlier Friday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov again rejected the U.S. claim of Russian violations of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, charging that Washington hasn't offered any proof.

The U.S. has accused Russia of testing and deploying a missile that violated provisions of the INF Treaty that bans production, testing and deployment of land-based cruise and ballistic missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers (310 to 3,400 miles). Washington said it will suspend its treaty obligations if Russian does not come into compliance by Feb. 2.

Lavrov insisted the Russian missile has only been launched at the range allowed by the treaty.

"If they think the range was excessive, they must have satellite images or something else, but they haven't shown anything to us," he said after the talks with visiting German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas.

Maas called on Russia to destroy the type of missile that the U.S. alleges is in violation of the treaty, saying he doesn't think "anyone in Europe would like to see the beginning of a new arms race."

Lavrov charged that the U.S. made it clear during diplomatic contacts back in October that Trump's decision to abandon the pact isn't subject to talks.

"Our American counterparts told us during official contacts ... that the decision is final and irreversible and statement on the U.S. intention to exit the INF Treaty isn't 'an invitation to dialogue,'" he said.

[North Korea] U.S. Missile Defense Review Says North Korea Remains 'Extraordinary Threat' (Breitbart)

[Breitbart](#) [1/18/2019 8:52 PM, John Hayward, 2015K]

The new version of the U.S. missile defense strategy released by the Pentagon and introduced by President Donald Trump on Thursday states that North Korea remains an "extraordinary threat" along with Iran, Russia, and China.

This seems at odds with Trump's assurances that North Korea is "no longer a nuclear threat" and potentially disruptive to Trump's diplomacy with Pyongyang, which continued with a visit from the chief

North Korean negotiator to the White House on Friday.

"While a possible new avenue to peace now exists with North Korea, it continues to pose an extraordinary threat and the United States must remain vigilant," the 2019 Missile Defense Review stated.

Reuters pointed out that Trump did not mention North Korea when introducing the report, but Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan did say Pyongyang's missiles are still a "significant concern."

This is not entirely a difference of opinion between the White House and Pentagon. Anyone who reads the sections on North Korea will see that Pyongyang's arsenal of short- and medium-range missiles will remain a concern even if complete and verifiable denuclearization is achieved and North Korea abandons its quest for weapons that can hit the continental United States:

Over the past decade, North Korea accelerated its efforts to field missiles capable of threatening deployed U.S. forces, allies, and partners in the region. Since 2015, North Korea test-launched, from numerous locations throughout North Korea, over two dozen regional missiles. It has fielded more regional missiles and diversified its already large regional ballistic missile force, including delivery systems with road-mobile and submarine launching platforms.

These wide-ranging North Korean offensive missile systems have given North Korea the capability to strike U.S. territories, including Guam, U.S. forces abroad, and allies in the Pacific Ocean. They are the tools North Korea has used to issue coercive nuclear preemptive threats, and potentially could use to employ nuclear weapons in the event of conflict in Asia.

Reuters was generally sour on the report, criticizing it for abandoning the Obama administration's subdued approach – which ostensibly prioritized keeping a low profile to "tamp down concerns by major nuclear powers about expanding U.S. missile defenses" – in favor of a bold commitment to missile defense derisively described as "a throwback to former President Ronald Reagan's 1980s 'Star Wars' initiative."

This effort to dismiss the Missile Defense Review was considerably undercut by the rest of the Reuters piece, which quoted boasts from China and Russia that American missile defenses have been made obsolete by the hypersonic weapons and satellite-killers they were eagerly developing during those quiet Obama years:

The U.S. missile defense system is just a "face-saving project" that does not scare China and Russia, the Global Times, a nationalist state-backed Chinese tabloid, wrote on Friday.

"Russia and China's progress in developing super-fast hypersonic missiles has in particular made the U.S. missile defense system less capable than desired," the newspaper said in an editorial.

The U.S. document also pointed to projects by U.S. defense industry giants including Raytheon Co, Lockheed Martin and Boeing Co.

"We are committed to establishing a missile-defense program that can shield every city in the United States. And we will never negotiate away our right to do this," Trump said.

A senior Russian legislator, Viktor Bondarev, said after Trump's announcement that the new U.S. strategy would ramp up global tensions, according to Interfax news agency.

The Pentagon review makes it quite clear that revisions to American defense strategy are necessary because the threat environment has "evolved" and become "more complex and volatile than any we have experienced in recent memory."

This is partly due to lesser bad actors gaining possession of mobile, highly accurate Russian and Chinese missiles, which are difficult to take out with preemptive strikes or even target with retaliatory actions after they launch an attack, and are covered by increasingly sophisticated air defenses that jeopardize American pilots. Furthermore, aggressors have more targets than ever to shoot, since they are developing the capability to target and destroy satellites and ground-based electronic infrastructure.

The Pentagon, therefore, sees missile defense as vital to restoring deterrence because it can "undermine potential adversaries' confidence in their ability to achieve their intended political or military objectives through missile threats or attacks."

In other words, a low-key strategy would be dangerous because it reduces the perceived cost of attacks in the minds of aggressors. It is important for them to be worried about evolving American capabilities. The technology derided by Reuters as a "Star Wars" fantasy is valuable as a deterrent precisely because potential aggressors do not understand it, cannot train their forces to deal with it, and are uncertain of its capabilities.

This strategy is also meant to reduce the threat of new and more unpredictable adversaries getting their hands on Chinese and Russian technology, as well as making American allies less anxious about the need to develop their own doomsday arsenals. The Pentagon review noted that missile defense tends to reduce the perceived value of aggressive weapons, which makes potential adversaries less eager to take risks and invest exorbitant resources in developing them.

Democrats immediately slammed President Trump's speech and the Missile Defense Review for being too expensive and too provocative to enemy states. Top Senate Armed Services Committee Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) even threw in a snide remark about how Trump's remarks indicate "an effective high-tech missile defense system is a higher national security priority than building a wall across the southern border," right after Reed made it clear he is no more eager to fund missile defense than border security.

Criticizing the report from the other direction, Defense One quoted experts who found the specific proposals made by the Pentagon were not equal to its grand strategic vision:

"They deferred all of the hard things," said Thomas Karako, a missile defense expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "They could still do something pretty substantial, but the significance of the pivot here is kind of at the level of theory and declaratory policy," he said. "The department could go do some more things, but there has to be some active decision to do that and they haven't done that yet."

Most of the initiatives touted in the report are already in the works — and some have been for years. The Obama administration boosted the number of missile interceptors in Alaska from 36 to 40. (There are also four Ground Based Interceptors in California). Congress approved an additional 20 interceptors in Alaska in 2017, bringing the total number of US interceptors to 64.

The Missile Defense Review notes that the Alaska missile field at Fort Greely "has the potential for up to an additional 40 interceptors," but it stops short of calling to install them. It also alludes to creating a third base of missile interceptors in the continental United States to fight off future Iranian ICBMs, but said a "decision to do so, and site selection, will be informed by pertinent factors at the time, particularly emerging threat conditions."

Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, whose home state houses these interceptors and a radars that would detect and track missiles, said he was surprised the administration did not move ahead with a third missile interceptor site.

"To be honest, I thought they were going to announce it today," he said. "I don't think that that means

they're not interested. I think that that work is ongoing."

Defense One mentioned that American defense planners are increasingly concerned about the prospect of major adversaries attacking Washington, DC, with cruise missiles, which are more difficult to detect or counter than intercontinental ballistic missiles that must rise to the edge of outer space before descending on their targets. One of the major initiatives for cruise missile defense has been equipping American fighter jets with systems that can track and engage incoming short- and medium-range weapons.

[China] Senators urge Metro to guard against Chinese spying in new subway cars (Washington Post)

[Washington Post](#) [1/19/2019 6:00 PM, Robert McCartney, 9763K]

U.S. senators representing the Washington region want Metro to take stronger steps to guard against the risk that buying subway cars from China would allow Beijing to use the vehicles to conduct electronic spying on the nation's capital.

In a letter to Metro General Manager Paul J. Wiedefeld, the lawmakers say the transit agency should get approval from the Defense Department, Department of Homeland Security and Transportation Department before awarding the contract for its next-generation rail cars to a foreign adversary.

The letter adds pressure on Metro to take more extensive precautions than it has done so far in light of the possibility that the state-owned China Railway Rolling Stock Corp. (CRRC) could win the deal to build up to 800 of Metro's 8000-series rail cars.

CRRC has used low bids to win four of five large U.S. transit rail car contracts awarded since 2014. The company — which critics say benefits from state subsidies — is expected to be a strong contender for the Metro contract, which is likely to be worth more than \$1 billion.

Some analysts say resistance to CRRC in Congress, the Pentagon and the U.S. rail-car industry may force Metro to award the contract to a different company. Doing so would probably lead to legal challenges and cost Metro hundreds of millions of dollars, given CRRC's bargain prices. No U.S. company makes subway cars, so China competes in that market against companies from Asia, Europe and Canada.

The letter, delivered Friday, was signed by Sens. Mark R. Warner (D) and Tim Kaine (D) of Virginia, and Ben Cardin (D) and Chris Van Hollen (D) of Maryland. Warner is vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Metro's response was mixed. Wiedefeld issued a brief statement saying the agency was strengthening its protections against cyberespionage, while Metro Board Chairman Jack Evans criticized the senators.

"If indeed the federal government wants us to buy from other vendors at a higher cost, then they need to subsidize the difference," Evans said. He faulted the federal government for failing to pay part of Metro's operating costs, when federal workers make up an estimated 40 percent of Metro's rush-hour ridership.

"I note that the federal government still pays zero, nothing, for Metro on the operating side," Evans said. "I would instruct the four senators to focus their efforts on getting federal funding for Metro."

The senators' letter did not mention China by name, but it was unmistakably aimed at Beijing. The draft of an accompanying news release said the missive aired "safety and security concerns" regarding the possibility that the contract would go "to a Chinese manufacturing company."

The news release also referred to a Jan. 7 front-page story in The Washington Post reporting concerns that China could install malware in the subway cars' electronic systems to conduct video surveillance,

monitor conversations or cause a crash.

The Washington region's senators aren't the only ones uneasy about the Metro contract. On Jan. 11, Sens. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) wrote Wiedefeld expressing "deep concerns" about CRRC's efforts "to displace rail manufacturers in the United States." Crapo and Brown are, respectively, the chairman and ranking Democrat on the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, which oversees public transportation.

The apprehensions arise partly from broader disquiet over charges of Chinese, state-sponsored cybertheft of business secrets and hacking of critical U.S. infrastructure such as telecommunications networks.

The local senators' letter said technologies in the rail cars that are vulnerable to "hacking or other forms of interference" include "automatic train control; network and trainline control; video surveillance; monitoring and diagnostics; and data interface with [Metro]."

It asked several questions aimed at pressing Metro to take precautionary measures, including: "Will Metro consult with the Department of Defense prior to awarding a contract to confirm whether the Department would permit railcars built by certain foreign governments to operate through the Pentagon?" and "Will Metro . . . seek the concurrence of USDOT and DHS in its cybersecurity evaluations before making any final contract award?"

Wiedefeld said Metro would respond directly to the senators as soon as possible.

"We recognize the important national security concerns being raised, and we are working to strengthen this procurement and others with new cybersecurity requirements," Wiedefeld said. "While we have a fiduciary responsibility with all procurements, safety and security is always our first priority."

In picking the winner of the 8000-series contract, Metro is legally required to follow guidelines it set in a lengthy request for proposals (RFP) it issued in September. The agency said in December that it would revise the specifications in the RFP in light of worries about CRRC. Bids are due April 4.

Metro acted to strengthen its cybersecurity program in the fall by hiring Kyle Malo, a former head of information security at the FBI, as its chief information security officer.

A Japanese company, Kawasaki, is building Metro's latest series rail car, the 7000 series. But Evans and others said Kawasaki is so busy with a new contract with the New York transit system that it is unlikely to compete aggressively, if at all, for the 8000-series cars.

"It is my understanding that Kawasaki might not be able to bid, leaving us with fewer options," Evans said.

Other Metro board members had differing reactions to the senators' letter.

David Horner, who represents the federal government, said he hoped Metro would go further than the senators asked by reviewing whether bidders received financial subsidies "from a non-allied government." Horner has been airing concerns about CRRC since the fall.

"When procuring critical infrastructure, it is necessary for authorities to understand the extent to which proposers act as the alter egos of our country's rivals," Horner said.

Board member Michael Goldman was concerned that Metro was being unfairly singled out given that CRRC already has contracts with transit agencies in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and Philadelphia. He noted that CRRC has built manufacturing plants in the United States to assemble subway cars, although

many of the components are made in China.

"This is a broader national issue," said Goldman, who represents Maryland. "What's needed is some broad guidance from the federal government as to what the nature of the problem is, and how transport properties can take steps to protect their infrastructure against cybersecurity intrusions."

CRRC has not responded to emails requesting comment. However, a Jan. 13 article in the Chinese publication Global Times, which reflects the views of the Beijing government, quoted "a Chinese railway expert" as saying concerns about espionage "are groundless and could delay progress in US rail transportation."

Presidential Tweets

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet1](#) [1/18/2019 8:22 AM] Border rancher: "We've found prayer rugs out here. It's unreal." Washington Examiner People coming across the Southern Border from many countries, some of which would be a big surprise.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet2](#) [1/18/2019 9:00 AM] Why would Nancy Pelosi leave the Country with other Democrats on a seven day excursion when 800,000 great people are not getting paid. Also, could somebody please explain to Nancy & her "big donors" in wine country that people working on farms (grapes) will have easy access in!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet3](#) [1/18/2019 9:08 AM] "It's the Democrats keeping everything closed." @JimInhofe So true!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet4](#) [1/18/2019 9:13 AM] Another big Caravan heading our way. Very hard to stop without a Wall!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet5](#) [1/18/2019 10:02 AM] Kevin Corke, @FoxNews "Don't forget, Michael Cohen has already been convicted of perjury and fraud, and as recently as this week, the Wall Street Journal has suggested that he may have stolen tens of thousands of dollars...." Lying to reduce his jail time! Watch father-in-law!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet6](#) [1/18/2019 10:58 AM] Never seen the Republican Party so unified. No "Cave" on the issue of Border and National Security. A beautiful thing to see, especially when you hear the new rhetoric spewing from the mouths of the Democrats who talk Open Border, High Taxes and Crime. Stop Criminals & Drugs now!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet7](#) [1/18/2019 10:59 AM] MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet8](#) [1/18/2019 11:00 AM] AMERICA FIRST!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet9](#) [1/18/2019 11:58 AM] Thank you to our law enforcement! [Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet10](#) [1/18/2019 5:51 PM] I will be making a major announcement concerning the Humanitarian Crisis on our Southern Border, and the Shutdown, tomorrow afternoon at 3 P.M., live from the @WhiteHouse.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet11](#) [1/18/2019 8:12 PM] Just a son who loves his Dad. Nice! [Editorial note: consult retweet of @DonaldJTrumpJr at rouse link]

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet12](#) [1/18/2019 10:02 PM] Remember it was Buzzfeed that released the totally discredited "Dossier," paid for by Crooked Hillary Clinton and the Democrats (as opposition research), on which the entire Russian probe is based! A very sad day for journalism, but a great day for our Country!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet13](#) [1/18/2019 10:24 PM] Fake News is truly the ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet14](#) [1/19/2019 6:29 AM] Will be leaving for Dover to be with the families of 4 very special people who lost their lives in service to our Country!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet15](#) [1/19/2019 7:11 AM] .@newtgingrich just stated that there has been no president since Abraham Lincoln who has been treated worse or more unfairly by the media than your favorite President, me! At the same time there has been no president who has accomplished more in his first two years in office!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet16](#) [1/19/2019 7:51 AM] The Economy is one of the best in our history, with unemployment at a 50 year low, and the Stock Market ready to again break a record (set by us many times) - & all you heard yesterday, based on a phony story, was Impeachment. You want to see a Stock Market Crash, Impeach Trump!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet17](#) [1/19/2019 8:50 AM] Many people are saying that the Mainstream Media will have a very hard time restoring credibility because of the way they have treated me over the past 3 years (including the election lead-up), as highlighted by the disgraceful Buzzfeed story & the even more disgraceful coverage!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet18](#) [1/19/2019 9:09 AM] Mexico is doing NOTHING to stop the Caravan which is now fully formed and heading to the United States. We stopped the last two - many are still in Mexico but can't get through our Wall, but it takes a lot of Border Agents if there is no Wall. Not easy!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet19](#) [1/19/2019 2:08 PM] I will be live from the White House at 4:00 P.M.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet20](#) [1/19/2019 4:24 PM] President Trump Delivers Remarks on the Humanitarian Crisis on Our Southern Border and the Shutdown [Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet21](#) [1/20/2019 7:40 AM] Always heard that as President, "it's all about the economy!" Well, we have one of the best economies in the history of our Country. Big GDP, lowest unemployment, companies coming back to the U.S. in BIG numbers, great new trade deals happening, & more. But LITTLE media mention!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet22](#) [1/20/2019 7:59 AM] Be careful and try staying in your house. Large parts of the Country are suffering from tremendous amounts of snow and near record setting cold. Amazing how big this system is. Wouldn't be bad to have a little of that good old fashioned Global Warming right now!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet23](#) [1/20/2019 8:11 AM] Nancy Pelosi and some of the Democrats turned down my offer yesterday before I even got up to speak. They don't see crime & drugs, they only see 2020 - which they are not going to win. Best economy! They should do the right thing for the Country & allow people to go back to work.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet24](#) [1/20/2019 8:23 AM] No, Amnesty is not a part of my offer. It is a 3 year extension of DACA. Amnesty will be used only on a much bigger deal, whether on immigration or something else. Likewise there will be no big push to remove the 11,000,000 plus people who are here illegally-but be careful Nancy!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet25](#) [1/20/2019 8:35 AM] Nancy Pelosi has behaved so irrationally & has gone so far to the left that she has now officially become a Radical Democrat. She is so petrified of the "lefties" in her party that she has lost control...And by the way, clean up the streets in San Francisco, they are disgusting!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet26](#) [1/20/2019 8:51 AM] Nancy, I am still thinking about the State of the Union speech, there are so many options - including doing it as per your written offer (made during the Shutdown, security is no problem), and my written acceptance. While a contract is a contract, I'll get back to you soon!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet27](#) [1/20/2019 9:03 AM] Wow, just heard that my poll numbers with Hispanics has gone up 19%, to 50%. That is because they know the Border issue better than anyone, and they want Security, which can only be gotten with a Wall.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet28](#) [1/20/2019 9:20 AM] Don't forget, we are building and renovating big sections of Wall right now. Moving quickly, and will cost far less than previous politicians thought possible. Building, after all, is what I do best, even when money is not readily available!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet29](#) [1/20/2019 1:16 PM] The Media is not giving us credit for the tremendous progress we have made with North Korea. Think of where we were at the end of the Obama Administration compared to now. Great meeting this week with top Reps. Looking forward to meeting with Chairman Kim at end of February!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet30](#) [1/20/2019 10:43 PM] Congratulations to Bob Kraft, Bill Belichick, Tom Brady and the entire New England Patriots team on a great game and season. Will be a fantastic Super Bowl!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet31](#) [1/20/2019 11:08 PM] Curt Schilling deserves to be in the Baseball Hall of Fame. Great record, especially when under pressure and when it mattered most. Do what everyone in Baseball knows is right!
@marklevinshow

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet32](#) [1/21/2019 12:03 AM] "No President in modern times has kept more promises than Donald Trump!" Thank you Bill Bennett @SteveHiltonx

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet33](#) [1/21/2019 10:22 AM] Last year was the best year for American Manufacturing job growth since 1997, or 21 years. The previous administration said manufacturing will not come back to the U.S., "you would need a magic wand." I guess I found the MAGIC WAND - and it is only getting better!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet34](#) [1/21/2019 10:39 AM] Today we celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for standing up for the self-evident truth Americans hold so dear, that no matter what the color of our skin or the place of our birth, we are all created equal by God. #MLKDay [Editorial note: consult article at source link]

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet35](#) [1/21/2019 10:40 AM] Democrats campaigned on working within Washington and "getting things done!" How is that working out? #2020TAKEBACKTHEHOUSE

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet36](#) [1/20/2019 8:25 PM] To all of the great people who are working so hard for your Country and not getting paid I say, THANK YOU - YOU ARE GREAT PATRIOTS! We must now work together, after decades of abuse, to finally fix the Humanitarian, Criminal & Drug Crisis at our Border. WE WILL WIN BIG!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet37](#) [1/21/2019 12:46 PM] Today, it was my great honor to visit the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial with @VP Mike Pence, in honor of #MLKDay [Editorial note: consult video at source link]

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet38](#) [1/21/2019 4:57 PM] China posts slowest economic numbers since 1990 due to U.S. trade tensions and new policies. Makes so much sense for China to finally do a Real Deal, and stop playing around!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet39](#) [1/21/2019 5:08 PM] If Nancy Pelosi thinks that Walls are "immoral," why isn't she requesting that we take down all of the existing Walls between the U.S. and Mexico, even the new ones just built in San Diego at their very strong urging. Let millions of unchecked "strangers" just flow into the U.S.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet40](#) [1/21/2019 6:37 PM] Four people in Nevada viciously robbed and killed by an illegal immigrant who should not have been in our Country. 26 people killed on the Border in a drug and gang related fight. Two large Caravans from Honduras broke into Mexico and are headed our way. We need a powerful Wall!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet41](#) [1/21/2019 6:45 PM] Democrats are kidding themselves (they don't really believe it!) if they say you can stop Crime, Drugs, Human Trafficking and Caravans without a Wall or Steel Barrier. Stop playing games and give America the Security it deserves. A Humanitarian Crisis!

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

[Tweet42](#) [1/21/2019 9:46 PM] Looking like Nick Sandman & Covington Catholic students were treated unfairly with early judgements proving out to be false - smeared by media. Not good, but making big comeback! "New footage shows that media was wrong about teen's encounter with Native American" @TuckerCarlson

{End of Report}