



League of United Latin American Citizens

February 2, 2017

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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, I write to express our opposition to any effort to spend taxpayer money on the construction of a wall on America's US-Mexico border. Instead, we urge you to support legislation such as the *Build Bridges Not Walls Act* (Rep. Michelle Lujan-Grisham) and the *This Land Is Our Land Act* (Rep. Adriano Espaillat) that aim to ensure that Congress remains a good steward of taxpayer dollars and protects the integrity of public lands.

The narrative of a violent and insecure border has long been used by political extremists as a guise to push forward anti-immigrant, anti-border, and anti-environment legislation. This is the case, despite the fact that data show that border cities are some of the safest in the country; that immigrants are less likely to commit crime than the general born population; and that places with more immigrants are likely to be safer than places with less immigrants. As such, the wall, the militarization of the border, the criminalization of immigrants, and the destruction of habitat are all tools of radical politicians who are intent on advancing an agenda that has nothing to do with the security of our border.

The latest move is President Trump's Executive Order (EO) directing the construction of a wall. This EO is not just bad policy (that will not make us safer and squanders scarce dollars), but it is also a divisive move opposed by civil rights, border, religious, environmental, and indigenous communities that live and work along the U.S.-Mexico border. As others have noted, the wall is expected to cost between \$15 billion to \$25 billion (not including additional maintenance costs). It will harm wildlife, destroy sensitive habitat for endangered species, damage the environment, the natural flow of floodwaters, and threaten the economic, social, and cultural ties between the United States and Mexico. Latinos in particular see the wall as anti-immigrant, anti-Latino, and anti-Mexican.

Your leadership is needed to put an end to the alt-right agenda of building a wall. Your support for legislation such as the *Build Bridges Not Walls Act* (Rep. Michelle Lujan-Grisham) and the *This Land Is Our Land Act* (Rep. Adriano Espaillat) is critical. The *Build Bridges Not Walls Act* (Rep. Michelle Lujan-Grisham) would prohibit the implementation of President Trump's Executive Order to build a wall on our U.S.-Mexico border. *This Land Is Our Land Act* (Rep. Adriano Espaillat) would bar the construction of any wall or fence on Federal lands controlled by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture or Interior. LULAC strongly urges you to support these two pieces of legislation and we look forward to counting on you to help fight any legislative attempts to construct a wall. For more information, please contact Luis Torres, Director of Policy and Legislation, at latorres@lulac.org.

Sincerely,

Roger C. Rocha, Jr.
LULAC National President