



Another Brick in the Wall? DHS Considers Restarting Border Wall Construction

In what appears to be a major departure from President Joe Biden's initial immigration plans, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is [reportedly](#) considering restarting some border wall construction amid the escalating immigration crisis.

The news comes as an unprecedented surge of migrants flood into the country from Mexico in anticipation of lenient treatment under the Biden administration.

On January 20, on day one of his presidency, Joe Biden ordered the halt of border wall construction projects and redirected the project's \$10 billion funds from the Defense Department. "Like every nation, the United States has a right and a duty to secure its borders and protect its people against threats," says a [proclamation](#) issued by President Biden, "But building a massive wall that spans the entire southern border is not a serious policy solution. It is a waste of money that diverts attention from genuine threats to our homeland security." The order reflected then-candidate Biden's firm stance on canceling the wall construction for good: "There will not be another foot of wall constructed in my administration," he [pledged](#) in August 2020.

Photo: grandriver / E+ / Getty Images Plus

Biden's executive order paused work on each construction project on the southern border wall within seven days and paused the obligation of funds related to the construction of that wall. He also rescinded former President Donald Trump's national declaration of emergency at the southern border from February 2019.

The initial reports [estimated](#) some \$2.6 billion would be saved due to the border wall construction halt, but in reality, the halt is costing taxpayers \$6 million per day. The expenditures are required for materials orders placed before the pause and for expenses by the cost of the equipment sitting idle. When the issuance of a stop-work order causes a contractor to idle equipment, they are entitled to be compensated for rental expenses or costs of ownership.

The wall stoppage, not only imposes tremendous burdens on [local](#) and [federal](#) budgets and increases



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on April 8, 2021

the influx of northbound migrants (which keeps on growing), it [boosts](#) international crime, [pollutes](#) the environment, and [endangers](#) public health. Biden's approval ratings [tanked](#) over the border crisis, and Biden's "most qualified" person to handle the challenge, [Kamala Harris](#), still hasn't visited the southern border ([stopping by](#) a Chicago bakery instead). So far Biden administration efforts have achieved no results other than attracting even more migrants into the country. The administration is facing growing bipartisan criticism over its inability to take the situation under control, and its apparent lack of a working plan.

As time is of the essence, the Biden administration decided to resume the border wall construction "in particular areas." Speaking to Immigration and Customs Enforcement staffers last week, DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas revealed that Customs and Border Protection officials had submitted a plan for construction projects to move forward, according to notes from the meeting [reviewed](#) by the *Washington Times*.

"The president has communicated quite clearly his decision that the emergency that triggered the devotion of DOD funds to the construction of the border wall is ended," the DHS secretary reportedly said. "But that leaves room to make decisions as the administration, as part of the administration, in particular areas of the wall that need renovation, particular projects that need to be finished."

The *Times* noted that those parts included "gaps," "gates," and areas "where the wall has been completed but the technology has not been implemented."

On April 7, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki [said](#) regarding plugging in holes in gaps: "Wall construction remains paused. There is a review under way, taking a look at the funds that had been allocated.... There are some components of the wall that had already been allocated, the funding to continue building by Congress, so we're working within what is allowable." She underlined the administration's central message — "Walls don't address the challenges at the border," and "we never believed the wall is an answer." To translate from the political into English, the administration that has been unequivocally opposed to the idea of a border wall and already redirected funds from its construction, now is trying to patch what it views as the most critical sections of the wall.

What may be viewed as a glimpse of common sense in managing the crisis that spirals out of control day by day was met with outrage among some. The first to slam Biden was Representative Ilhan Omar: "It's shameful and unacceptable for @POTUS to continue the construction of Trump's xenophobic and racist wall," she [tweeted](#). How a wall that keeps out all races and groups is either xenophobic or racist she didn't explain. Oh well, you can never please everyone.



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