



## **FAITH & FREEDOM COALITION**

January 22, 2019

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the more than 1.8 million members and supporters of the Faith & Freedom Coalition, I urge you to end the current budget impasse by enacting legislation that provides funding previously authorized by Congress for the construction of additional miles of border barrier and other critical aspects of border security while ending the legal purgatory of Dreamers by affording legal status to those brought to the United States as children.

Bipartisan majorities in Congress have repeatedly voted for funds for border security far beyond President Trump's request for \$5.7 billion. For example, the Secure Fence Act of 2006 and the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 both had solid bipartisan support. There was \$8 billion in the 2013 Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act sponsored by Senate Minority Leader Schumer, to build 700 miles of barrier. His bill passed out of the Senate by a vote of 68 to 32 with every Democratic member of the Senate voting in support.

President Trump has previously proposed legal status and a path to citizenship for 1.8 million young people who entered the country illegally as children before 2012, far in excess of the 690,000 covered by the DACA program. The President proposed a similar solution for the DACA population last week. Ending the legal ambiguity of these young people is a moral imperative. A foundational principle of Judeo-Christian teaching is that "a child will not share the guilt of the parent," and those who obey the law should be credited for their conduct, not punished as criminals. (Ezekiel 18:20) There is broad bipartisan support in Congress for allowing those brought to our country illegally through no fault of their own to fully participate in the life of our nation, provided they pass a criminal background check, pay taxes, enroll in school or join the military.

Securing the border and enforcing the law against entering the U.S. illegally is entirely consistent with Biblical principles. The ancient Israelites built walls not to keep out the law-abiding alien and sojourner, but as an act of self-defense, protecting the innocent and defending against threats to their security. (1 Kings 3:1) The precise mix of physical barriers, double-fencing, additional border patrol agents, and increased electronic surveillance is a matter of prudential judgment. Indeed, where physical barriers currently exist with the right mix of personnel and technology on the U.S. Southern border, they have led to a 90 percent drop in illegal crossings.



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We are currently experiencing a humanitarian crisis at the border that requires action. According to the *New York Times*, “A record number of families have tried to cross the border in recent months, overwhelming officials at the border and creating a new kind of humanitarian crisis.”

In November alone, 25,172 people traveling in families arrived at the border plus an additional 5,283 unaccompanied minors. (*New York Times*, January 11, 2019) The Department of Homeland Security has requested FY 2019 funding for 52,000 beds, including 2,500 beds in special housing to keep families together so children are not separated from parents, and 750 additional border patrol personnel. The Department of Justice has also requested 75 additional immigration judges. It is imperative that these critical funding requests are included in any compromise legislation.

Failure to act will expose thousands of women and children to continued exploitation by “coyotes,” human traffickers and sexual predators. An astonishing 68 percent of migrants report suffering violence along the journey. One out of three women report they have been sexually abused and assaulted. These are children and young people who will suffer trauma and emotional scars for the rest of their lives unless Congress acts now.

For the sake of our national security as well as the humane and just treatment of those arriving at our border, Faith and Freedom Coalition urges you to support a compromise that combines border security with legal status for those brought to the country illegally as children.

Thank you for considering the views of our millions of members and supporters,

Sincerely,

Ralph Reed  
Chairman

Sincerely,

Timothy R. Head  
Executive Director