

Rep. Ross Spano: We can delay a budget, but we can't delay a crisis



Rep. Ross Spano, a Republican, represents Florida's 15th congressional district. Rep. Spano's op-ed originally ran online at the Washington Examiner.

It has been more than two months since we entered fiscal year 2020, and not a single full-year appropriations bill has been completed. Moreover, I have yet to see evidence that we're any closer to resolving this issue. Despite my opposition to using continuing resolutions to manage our government, Congress passed another continuing resolution just before Thanksgiving to extend funding to Dec. 20 at fiscal year 2019 levels. Kicking this can further down the road hurts our military, ports, infrastructure investments, and borders.

I recently participated in a congressional delegation to McAllen, Texas, and our southern border in the Rio Grande Valley to gain firsthand knowledge of the security and humanitarian crisis. What I learned from U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Department of Homeland Security personnel is that they need more funding. The continuing resolution only exasperates the situation.

This fight is not new. Last year, as CBP reached record levels of apprehensions, Democrats insisted we faced a "manufactured crisis." Opposition to further funding a border wall resulted in the longest partial government shutdown in history.

The agreement to reopen the government included some funds for border security, but not nearly enough. By June, the obstruction and unwillingness to address the crisis in a meaningful way led to horrible conditions at detention facilities. As overcrowding and conditions worsened, and agencies exhausted their resources, Congress had to pass an emergency funding bill.

I am happy to report that the humanitarian funding we allocated made a difference. The facilities I toured had ample resources and typically transferred

children to Health and Human Services for placement after, at most, five hours. I also saw CBP and DHS personnel exercising compassion and doing the very best they could with what they had.

As we debate this year's spending bills, Democrats again insist there is no crisis and refuse to invest in border security measures. It is the pinnacle of hypocrisy to have spent the first six months of the year denying a humanitarian crisis, then passing a \$4.5 billion emergency spending bill to address it, and now returning to the same rhetoric.

For decades, drug mules, human traffickers, and terrorists have exploited vulnerable points at the southern border, and CBP and DHS are in a very tough situation. Some evil people have even used innocent children, who are not their own, to gain illegal entry. Physical barriers are an essential part of border security, and every law enforcement officer I spoke with echoed this sentiment. Mexican drug cartels have perpetrated violence and destruction, including a recent incident where a family traveling in a caravan was senselessly murdered. Drugs have flooded into our country through our porous border, and women have been taken and sold off as sex slaves. A physical border is critical to deter and ultimately end these horrific practices. Americans deserve safety and security.

The Trump administration's Migrant Protection Protocols have had a tremendous positive impact on combating loopholes in our current laws. Here's how it works: Those claiming asylum from Central and South America are processed and taken to Mexico to await their asylum hearing. As a result, those without a legitimate claim simply return home. This administration is doing everything they can to address this border crisis, notwithstanding Congress's unwillingness to act.

Immigration is a fundamental part of what it means to be American. We should welcome immigrants, but we need a vibrant and robust process that allows entry. The system needs an overhaul to remain compassionate and meet our workforce needs where the existing labor pool falls short, such as in supporting seasonal agriculture.

Overall, the border trip was eye-opening. CBP and DHS go above and beyond with little resources and do not receive the recognition they deserve. Congress owes it to them and to you to develop a bipartisan agreement to fund these agencies responsibly. I'm excited and impassioned to address this issue in Washington and

will work toward immigration reform that benefits our nation and those individuals who seek to immigrate legally.

Updated: Tue, Dec 10th 2019 @ 4:04pm EST

Source:

<https://www.numbersusa.com/news/rep-ross-spano-we-can-delay-budget-we-cant-delay-crisis>

[Disclaimer]