

# United States Senate

January 11, 2019

Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Thank you for your strong leadership to protect our country, secure our borders, and solve the humanitarian and security crisis at our southern border. Border Patrol officers know that walls work, and that physical barriers are key to stopping deadly drugs, violent criminals, vicious human traffickers, illegal immigration, and other threats to the safety of the American people. With Democrat leaders refusing to support border security and negotiate in good faith—or negotiate at all—the crisis at the border will only get worse as the Democrats' partial government shutdown continues.

As you consider the best way to fulfill your constitutional duty to protect the United States and secure the border, I urge you to issue a presidential directive ensuring the billions of dollars seized from drug traffickers by our law enforcement agencies every year are used to build the wall. This money is currently in the Department of the Treasury's Forfeiture Fund, part of which is already designated for security purposes. This fund contained \$4 billion in Fiscal Year 2017 and \$3.4 billion in Fiscal Year 2018.<sup>1</sup> Another fund, the Department of Justice's Assets Forfeiture Fund, currently holds approximately \$1.2 billion in unobligated funds.<sup>2</sup>

These funds are replenished every year as our law enforcement agents do their jobs, and can be leveraged immediately to help pay for construction of the wall. To complete construction as quickly as possible, I have proposed legislation authorizing the Treasury Department to issue bonds for the full cost. The forfeiture funds would ultimately cover the debt service of the bond issuance, ensuring the project is completed at virtually no cost to American taxpayers.

According to estimates, U.S. law enforcement currently interdicts as little of 10 percent of the illegal money, counterfeit and illicit goods, and drugs trafficked in and out of the United States. As stronger border security improves the effectiveness of our seizures, the funds generated from those seizures will increase. Essentially, this will force Mexico's drug cartels to pay for the wall. Perhaps more importantly, activist federal judges in Hawaii, California, or elsewhere would find this plan difficult to block.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.treasury.gov/about/organizational-structure/ig/Audit%20Reports%20and%20Testimonies/OIG-19-022.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2018/a1905.pdf>

I look forward to welcoming you to Louisiana on Monday. As you know, my state has overcome severe floods in recent years, and residents are still recovering. We rejoiced when your administration announced in July 2018 the allocation of \$1.388 billion in U.S. Army Corps of Engineers funding for critical Louisiana flood mitigation projects, including the long delayed Comite River Diversion and West Shore Lake Pontchartrain projects. I oppose any delays of these projects, which should not be collateral damage in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer's war against border security.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Cassidy, M.D." in a cursive, slightly slanted script.

Bill Cassidy, M.D.

United States Senator