



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on June 14, 2021

## Biden Halts Use of Defense Funds for Border Wall. Here's Where the Money Is Going Instead

The fate of America's border wall is uncertain as the Biden administration pursues a markedly different course on immigration than that of former president Donald Trump.

Biden is reportedly [giving back](#) more than \$2 billion that had been redirected from Defense Department projects in order to fund the border wall long sought by President Trump. Furthermore, the Biden White House is asking Congress to cancel other remaining border wall funds.

On the campaign trail, Biden vowed not to build "another foot" of the wall along the southern U.S. border. One of the president's first actions in the Oval Office was to pause the wall's construction. He also called for a plan for use of the wall funds to be submitted within 60 days, a deadline that lapsed in March.

"Building a massive wall that spans the entire southern border and costs American taxpayers billions of dollars is not a serious policy solution or responsible use of Federal funds," read a release from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

The Department of Defense (DoD) has already started ending border wall construction projects that used diverted funds. The Biden administration has said they are halting expansion of the wall wherever legally possible.

The monies that had been allocated for the wall will now go to 66 different defense projects, including for military housing, on-base schools, and training facilities.

Additionally, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is reviewing land that was acquired by eminent domain over the past year for the border wall. If DHS deems tracts of land not to be needed, it "will work to return the land to its prior owners."

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Yet the administration is required to use an estimated \$1.9 billion in funds on border barriers because they were directed to do so by Congress. For this reason, the White House is "reiterating its call for Congress to cancel funds it previously appropriated for border barrier projects so that these resources can instead be used for modern, effective border management measures to improve safety and security."

The Biden DHS seeks to use those funds to prioritize "urgent life, safety, and environmental issues



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resulting from the previous Administration's wall construction," as well as for clean-up of DoD-funded construction sites.

Earlier this year, the Biden administration said it would resume construction of a flood wall in the Rio Grande Valley area of south Texas and address soil erosion on the U.S. border along San Diego, California.

Under President Trump, the federal government built 52 miles of new slatted structures where no barrier had previously existed and added hundreds of miles of replacement fencing.

Supporters of the wall argue that using defense funds for the wall is not "diverting" at all because a border barrier that repels foreign invasion is a core national defense activity.

In the absence of presidential initiative on border security, some Republicans are seeking to stop illegal immigration at the state level.

Texas Governor Greg Abbot, a Republican, has [announced](#) that he will build a wall along the southern border.

"Long term, only Congress and the president can fix our broken border," Abbott said in Del Rio. "But in the meantime, Texas is going to do everything possible, including beginning to make arrests, to keep our community safe, to keep the cartels and smugglers out, and to keep your community safe."

Earlier this month, Abbot moved to close more than 50 shelters in Texas that house approximately 4,000 migrant children, arguing that the federal government cannot legally force the state to continue issuing licenses in reaction to a federal problem. The Biden administration has threatened to sue unless that order is rescinded.

Even Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the agency whose purpose it is to enforce federal immigration law, has taken a softer approach under Biden. The agency has [terminated](#) a Trump-era office that focused on victims of crimes linked to illegal immigration.

Notably, Texas Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, Biden's pick to lead ICE, [opposed](#) ICE raids to deport illegal aliens during the Trump administration.

"I do not support #ICERaids that threaten to deport millions of undocumented immigrants, the vast majority of whom do not represent a threat to the U.S.," Gonzalez tweeted in July of 2019. "The focus should always be on clear & immediate safety threats. Not others who are not threats."



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