



### [House Approves Resolution to Overturn Border Wall Emergency](#)

One of the major policy issues during the 116th Congress has been the construction of President Donald Trump's desired border wall. After much stonewalling from Congressional Democrats, the President declared the situation on the southern border a national emergency back on February 15th of this year. This allowed him to take advantage of a legal loophole that gives the President permission to re-allocate funds for projects previously approved by Congress. A couple of weeks later on February 26th, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution blocking the emergency declaration, with their colleagues in the Senate passing a similar resolution a month later in March. Consequently, President Trump vetoed the resolutions, and as neither of the chambers were able to attain a 2/3 majority to override the veto, construction of the wall went ahead as planned.

This past week, Congressional Democrats forced another vote on the same resolution, attempting to block construction of the border wall. Since the votes in February and March, the Pentagon has released information on which projects would have funding cut in order to release funds for the wall. Democratic leaders were hopeful that the new information, which revealed that funding would be cut from schools, fire stations, military bases, and health care centers in primarily Republican-held districts, would force elected officials to reconsider their votes. The resolutions once again passed in both the House and the Senate, but with only 11 Republicans voting against the President in each body, they failed to achieve the necessary 2/3 majority required to override the inevitable veto. It is expected that Democrats will continue to force votes on the issue even with the knowledge that the President will veto the resolutions, in order to put pressure on Republicans who they accuse of putting the President's campaign promise ahead of constituents.

Some Republicans have broken with President Trump, and voted with their Democratic colleagues, although not necessarily for policy purposes. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) voted in support of the resolution, arguing that declaring the situation a national emergency in order to redistribute funds is unconstitutional and that only Congress has the power of appropriation. Additionally, Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) has previously said that while he supports border security, declaring a national emergency is "the wrong way to do it." Senator Mitt Romney (R-UT) had similar concerns, saying that he would like the President to focus on border security but to use "the appropriate channels in Congress" instead of undermining military readiness by diverting funds from much-needed projects.

On the other side of the aisle, Minority Leader Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) accused President Trump of "pilfering funds" from 23 states, three territories, and military installations in 20 countries. Overall, 127 projects have currently been delayed, as \$3.7 billion has been redirected to construction of the wall. The area hardest hit by this is Puerto Rico, which would have \$403 million in hurricane relief funds diverted. Senator Martha McSally (R-AZ) voted against the resolution, but has introduced a bill which would mandate lawmakers writing the next government budget to reimburse the projects that have been delayed.

Current law permits Congressional Democrats to force a vote on this issue once every six months, so it is likely that there will be a third vote in March 2020. Democrats will want their Republican colleagues on the record multiple times over where they stand on President Trump's border wall as election season ramps up.