

U.S. Sen. Johnson: Democrats block amendment to secure the border

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WASHINGTON — On Wednesday, the United States Senate voted on U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) [amendment](#) that called for completing the approximately 285 miles of unfinished border wall that is already paid for. All Republican senators present voted in favor of this amendment, but Democrats blocked its passage. Only one Democrat put partisan politics aside to vote in favor of the amendment.

A video of the senator's remarks can be found [here](#) and [here](#), and transcript is below.

“Mr. President, I rise to speak to my amendment that is completely germane to the discussion of infrastructure. I can't think of more important infrastructure that would actually secure our homeland from a variety of threats, but as I've always said, coming from a manufacturing background, the first step in solving a problem is admitting you have one, and right now this administration is in a complete state of denial regarding the crisis that is on the border. This crisis has been growing. This is not a seasonal surge. This is a growing problem. This has been a growing problem and I have my [chart](#) here that demonstrates that. Here's January - this is when President Biden came into office. You can see the enormous surge of the crisis he created.

“Vice President Harris went down to Central America looking for the root cause of this crisis. She only would have had to walk into the Oval Office and look at President Biden, because President Biden is the root cause of this crisis. It's his policies: the dismantling of successful policies from the previous administration that had stemmed the flow, that had largely secured our border until this president took office and reversed all that progress. But let me just give you the numbers because you have to describe the problem. This has been growing for the

last four or five months in particular. We have been averaging first almost 6,000, and now over 6,000 apprehensions per day — 6,000.

“In June it was 6,249. In July it will probably be over 6,500. There have been weeks where we believe it’s been over 7,000 per day coming in and being apprehended at the border. That doesn’t even count 750 to 1,000 known gotaways. DHS has now—or CBP at least has now—estimated that’s going to result in at least 269,000 people coming into this country, that we know that came in; we just can’t catch them. This also doesn’t even describe or enumerate how many unknown ‘gotaways.’ So again, the fact is, from January thru July, approximately 1.3 million people have been apprehended coming into this country without documentation. About 173,000 of those individuals have been released into the interior, either with notice to appear, or, even worse, a notice to report.

“If you multiply that times two, that’s 346,000 people dispersed to all points of America. DHS—this administration—is not notifying the states, it’s not notifying the cities that these individuals, apparently claiming asylum, are coming into communities near you. You add that to the 269,000 estimated known ‘gotaways,’ that’s over 600,000 people this year. That’s larger than the population of the state of Wyoming. It’s approaching the population of the state of Vermont. And again, this is why we have the Title 42 restrictions in place. Probably about 900,000 people in the first seven months have been returned under Title 42. If the administration ends that program, imagine the surge.

“Now, there once was a time when securing the border was a nonpartisan issue. Senator McCain led the charge. In 2006, this body passed, on a vote of 80-19, the Secure Fence Act, which was going to build about 700 miles of fence. In the end, only 36 miles was double-layer fencing. The rest was pretty ineffective, as we’ve seen. But voting for that bill was President Biden, President Obama, Senator Carper, Secretary Of State Clinton, Senator Feinstein, Senator Schumer, Senator Wyden, Senator Stabenow. This is a bipartisan effort to secure our border, but somewhere between 2006 and 2021 this has become a partisan issue. Now, what’s absurd is, in the last administration — again, pretty well solved the problem — had allocated about \$10 billion dollars to build the fence. It’s all been contracted. It’s all been paid for. We’ve built about 453 miles of the 738 miles that was contracted for. Two-hundred eighty-five miles remain unbuilt.

“An excellent report by Senator Lankford shows that we’ve spent about \$2 billion dollars getting out of those contracts! Two billion dollars to not build the wall! It’s

costing us \$3 million dollars a day just to guard the steel fencing lying there, not being used. So my amendment is very simple. It's very common sense. It says: Please, let's recognize fences work — and certainly Congress recognized it when we put a double layer around the people's house for a number of months, spent hundreds of millions of dollars on that security effort — so let's not waste the taxpayers' money. Let's recognize walls work.

“We need to complete the 285 miles of wall that helps secure our border, that'll help secure our homeland, that'll help keep Americans safe. It's a very simple amendment. Let's hope it's not a partisan result. With that, Mr. President, I'll yield the floor.”

...

“The root cause of the instability, the primary cause of violence in Central America is America's and Americans' insatiable demand for drugs. If you can solve that problem, you can solve the root cause of the problem — you won't have the violence. But the root cause of this current crisis, because it was already solved, the root cause of this current crisis is President Biden's policies. President Biden is the root cause. So if you want to fix this, we can fix it. Secure the border, go back to the policies that worked. We're not going to be able to fix Central America until we end our insatiable demand for drugs. With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.”