ANSWERING AMERICA

QUESTION 2: DO WE NEED TO BUILD A WALL?

THE BUSINESS CASE AGAINST TRUMP’S AGENDA
QUESTION 2:

DO WE NEED TO BUILD A WALL?

ANSWER: NO.

THERE ARE BETTER, CHEAPER WAYS TO PROTECT THE BORDER. TRUMP SHOULD PAY LESS ATTENTION TO HIS WALL AND START FIXING THE BRIDGES, LEVEES, ROADS, AND RAILWAYS AMERICAN BUSINESSES NEED.
THE ARGUMENT

1. Trump’s wall, which engineers price at $31 billion, won’t work as promised because most drugs and criminals cross our borders through ports, over roads, or by air.

2. Trump’s brinkmanship over a wall has derailed bipartisan deals on infrastructure.

3. U.S. infrastructure earns a D+. In key sectors, Midwest states score even worse. Yet, we consistently invest far less than our global competitors.

4. Trump’s infrastructure proposal falls far short of the investment needed. With Trump AWOL on infrastructure, mayors and governors are left without a partner or a national plan.

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“On Day One, we will begin working on intangible [sic], physical, tall, power, beautiful southern border wall.”

- PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP
TRUMP’S WALL WON’T ACHIEVE WHAT HE PROMISES, COSTS 30X MORE THAN REPUBLICAN PROPOSALS THAT COULD

A WALL WON’T WORK

We have already installed walls where they are likely to work. Trump wants to spend $31 billion to put them where they won’t.²

One-third of our border with Mexico (654 miles of the 1,991 miles) had some kind of fabricated barrier when Trump took office.³

Nearly all the rest is mountains, desert, or river, which makes crossing difficult. Most of it is also private land, which means the USG will have to seize land for the wall.

Most drugs and undocumented immigrants cross our borders over roads, through ports, or by plane — not across the desert.

There are better ways to protect the border

ALTERNATIVE $1B “SMART” PLAN PROPOSED BY REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMAN FROM TEXAS (AND FORMER CIA AGENT)

“We need a smart wall that uses high-tech resources like sensors, radar, lidar, fiber optics, drones and cameras to detect and then track incursions across our border so we can deploy efficiently our most important resource, the men and women of border patrol to perform the most difficult task — interdiction. With a smart wall, we can have a more secure border at a fraction of the cost — that can be implemented and fully operational within a year.”

- Will Hurd

EVERY CONGRESSPERSON ALONG SOUTHERN BORDER OPPOSES BORDER WALL FUNDING.⁵

“I think building a concrete structure sea to shining sea is the most expensive and least effective way to do border security.”

- REP WILL HURD (R-TX, FORMER CIA AGENT) REPRESENTS TEXAS’ 23RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, WHICH STRETCHES ROUGHLY 820 MILES OF THE BORDER

Endnotes
TRUMP HAS DERAILED BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE PROPOSALS OVER HIS WALL

TRUMP IS DISTRACTED BY HIS WALL

DONALD TRUMP TWEETS

334
ABOUT "THE WALL"

146
ABOUT BORDER SECURITY

38
ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURE

HE WILL DO ANYTHING TO FUND IT

TRUMP’S 2018-19 SHUTDOWN COST THE ECONOMY $11 BILLION

“TRUMP AGAIN THREATENS TO SHUT DOWN GOVERNMENT”
JULY 29, 2018
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

“‘I WILL SHUT DOWN THE GOVERNMENT’ TRUMP MAKES THREAT OVER BORDER WALL FUNDING”
DECEMBER 11, 2018
TIME

“TRUMP INSISTS HE CAN USE MILITARY FUNDS AND ‘DECLARE AN EMERGENCY’ TO BUILD BORDER WALL”
JANUARY 7, 2019
Military Times

IT’S BEEN 2.5 YEARS AND HE STILL HAS NO COMPREHENSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE PROPOSAL

Despite having Republican control over the House and the Senate for his first two years in office, Trump failed to introduce a comprehensive infrastructure bill — or explain how he would pay for it.

In May 2019, he refused to submit an infrastructure bill until Congress passed his USMCA trade deal.12

The problem? He has not submitted the trade deal to Congress.
ONCE A GLOBAL LEADER ON INFRASTRUCTURE, AMERICA NOW FAILS TO INVEST AND INNOVATE

TRADITIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE SCORE: 

D+ AVIATION: D+ BRIDGES: C+ DAMS: D+ DRINKING WATER: D ENERGY: D+ HAZARDOUS WASTE: D+ INLAND WATERWAYS: D LEVEES: D 


A - EXCEPTIONAL B - GOOD C - MEDIocre D - POOR F - FAILING 

SOURCE: AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS

TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE SCORE “INCOMPLETE”

ELECTRICAL GRID RENEWABLE CAPACITY (2017-2019)

65% 41% 17% 

GERMANY U.K. U.S. 

BROADBAND ACCESS 

163M (APPROXIMATELY HALF OF THE U.S. POPULATION) AMERICANS ACCESS THE INTERNET AT SPEEDS SLOWER THAN BROADBAND SPEED, INCLUDING 24 MILLION IN MI, OH, IA, PA, AND WI.

PREDICTED ELECTRICAL GRID RENEWABLE CAPACITY (2050)

96% 87% 43% 

GERMANY U.K. U.S. 

MILES OF HIGH-SPEED RAIL

19,000 10,230 1,900 34* 

CHINA EUROPE JAPAN U.S. 

*JAPAN'S HIGH-SPEED RAIL REACHES 200 MPH; AMERICA'S 34 MILES OF SEMI-HIGH-SPEED RAIL REACHES 150 MPH.
TRUMP’S DRAFT INFRASTRUCTURE PROPOSAL WOULD INVEST ONLY $20 BILLION/YEAR IN INFRASTRUCTURE, NATIONWIDE

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, the U.S. must spend $4.5 trillion by 2025 to fix our roads, bridges, dams, broadband, and other infrastructure. Current federal, state, and local budgets cover about $2.5 trillion of that amount, creating a $2 trillion shortfall. The longer we delay these repairs and investment, the higher costs grow and the larger the shortfall becomes. As a candidate, Trump promised $1 trillion to reconstruct the nation’s roadways, waterworks, and bridges. In 2018, he outlined a plan (but did not submit a bill) with only $200 billion spread over 10 years (2019-2028).

Trump claims his $200 billion will encourage local governments and the private sector to invest another $1.5 trillion, but Penn’s Wharton School (Trump’s alma mater) calculates his $200 billion investment is unlikely to encourage more than $200 billion in new investment.
WHILE WASHINGTON GRIDLOCKS OVER TRUMP’S WALL, OUR COMPETITORS ARE INVESTING

PERCENT OF GDP SPENT ON ALL INLAND INFRASTRUCTURE BY COUNTRY

China invests nearly 12x more than the U.S. in infrastructure.

While infrastructure in the U.S. crumbles, China is implementing its Belt and Road Initiative, a massive infrastructure investment of roughly $150B per year in 68 countries along the old Silk Road, linking it with Europe and the Middle East.
INFRASTRUCTURE IS PARTICULARLY BAD IN THE MIDWEST, WHERE FEDERAL INVESTMENT MEANS THE MOST

MIDWESTERN STATES’ INFRASTRUCTURE RANKINGS

KEY FINDINGS

IA: First in the nation for number of structurally deficient bridges, 20% (nearly 5,000 of 24,000 bridges across the state).30

MI: Lowest annual state spending on highways in the nation ($172/driver) and has a score of D− from ASCE on roads.31

PA: Current wastewater systems discharge billions of gallons of raw sewage into Pennsylvania’s surface waters each year.32

OH: Only 46% of Ohioans have access to affordable wired broadband internet.33

WI: 5th highest cost per year to motorists caused by driving on roads in need of repair ($736).34

THE MIDWEST IS A TRANSPORTATION HUB

OHIO IS THE CROSSROADS OF AMERICA

Ohio is within a day’s drive of 60% of the U.S. and Canadian population.35

4TH LARGEST INTERSTATE SYSTEM36
2ND LARGEST INVENTORY OF BRIDGES37
3RD HIGHEST FREIGHT VOLUME38
6TH HIGHEST NUMBER OF VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED39

Federal Highway Administration estimates that the return on investment for each dollar spent on transportation infrastructure is $5.20, which benefits the transportation-driven Midwest the most.40
WITH TRUMP AWOL ON INFRASTRUCTURE, MAYORS AND GOVERNORS ARE LEFT WITHOUT A PARTNER OR A NATIONAL PLAN

Current proposals in Washington do not allocate enough federal funding for cities to think holistically about infrastructure — beyond just roads.

"Infrastructure projects of regional and national significance, which underpin economic revitalization efforts across the country, require a federal-state-local partnership. The local and state partners have made this a priority. What happened to the federal partner?"

- JOHN D. PORCARI
FORMER DEPUTY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

"From a local perspective, thinking about a lot of the infrastructure conversations happening today, without lots of funding from the federal government, the math is simply unsustainable for local and state governments to take a holistic view of infrastructure, especially for less visible projects such as water and sewer systems."

- NAN WHALEY
MAYOR OF DAYTON, OH

Without a strong federal partner, local and state governments are left to themselves to plan and fund infrastructure investments on their own.

Many Midwestern states have a disproportionately larger number of local governing units, making planning and coordination even more difficult.

A federal plan would create cohesion across projects and reduce bureaucratic delays.

STATE RANKINGS OF TOTAL GOVERNMENTAL UNITS

#3 PA (4,897)
#5 OH (3,842)
#10 WI (3,128)
#12 MI (2,875)
#17 IA (1,947)
CASE STUDY: PENNSYLVANIA (C-)

- 22% of state-regulated dams are at high hazard risk\(^{43}\)
- 17% of bridges are structurally deficient\(^{42}\)
- 797 hazardous dams\(^{43}\)
- 30% of public roads are in poor condition\(^{45}\)
- #7 worst infrastructure in the U.S.\(^{47}\)
- Pennsylvania bridges are on average 15 years older than U.S. avg.\(^{44}\)
- $6.95 billion in wastewater infrastructure needs over the next 20 years\(^{46}\)

For motorists statewide, traffic congestion results in over $3.7 billion per year in lost time and wasted fuel, and deficient roadway conditions cost the average motorist over $500 in operating and maintenance outlays.\(^{48}\)
CASE STUDY: IOWA’S WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

**DAMS**

ASCE REPORT CARD SCORE

**IOWA'S ECONOMY DEPENDS ON ITS RIVERS**

$4.3B IN REVENUE

26K JOBS

**D+**

INLAND WATERWAYS

ASCE REPORT CARD SCORE

490 miles of inland waterways; locks and dams are 80 years old, on average — 30 years past intended design life.

“"We are experiencing what the rest of the planet is experiencing...Wet areas are getting wetter, and dry areas are getting drier,' said Jerry Schnoor, a University of Iowa professor in civil and environmental engineering... Warming over the Gulf of Mexico is helping feed large rain events in Iowa and the Midwest, Schnoor said: 'That's why we're prone to these great downpours like Des Moines saw on June 30.'"

"WHAT A DIFFERENCE ONE DEGREE MAKES: IOWA IS GETTING HOTTER, BRINGING MORE FREQUENT AND INTENSE STORMS"

AUGUST 9, 2018

The Des Moines Register

**C**

LEVEES

ASCE REPORT CARD SCORE

2019 = WORST YEAR EVER

Iowa set a record for rain and snow over the past 12 months (6/18-5/19) with nearly 51 inches of precipitation, which is approximately 16 inches more than the 34.42 inches the state averaged from 1981 to 2010.

During the first half of this year, four levees broke in Iowa, putting 2,300 people and 1,600 buildings at risk. 70 Iowa counties were declared disaster areas. Damages estimated at $1.6 billion.

OVER 50% OF COUNTIES UNDER DISASTER PROCLAMATIONS

**ENDNOTES**
ENDNOTES


20. Ibid.


36. Oklahoma Transportation+Report+Final.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_attribute_data=3145/11667


ENDNOTES


44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.


