

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks on Signing the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Humanitarian Assistance and Security at the Southern Border Act of 2019 and an Exchange With Reporters

July 1, 2019

The President. Well, thank you very much, everybody. We just finished a signing, a very important signing, of the Taxpayer First bill, the IRS Taxpayer First, which is a tremendous thing for our citizens, having to do with the IRS, streamlines and so many other changes made. So, that was just done and signed, and it's been made into law. So we're all set on that.

And today I'm signing a bill to deliver \$4.6 billion in humanitarian assistance to our southern border. This includes funding for medical care, shelters, and increased housing for minors through the Department of Health and Human Services. And Secretary Azar is here with us and with our Vice President and with some of our great Congressmen. We appreciate it. Thank you very much.

For many weeks, Democrats were giving us a hard time. But I tell you, it became a bipartisan bill. And we were very happy about it. And now what we want to do is, we have to do a bill for border security, and all of this will go away.

I want to thank Mexico because Mexico is doing a lot right now. They have almost 20,000 soldiers between the two borders. They have 6,000 on their southern border by Guatemala. And they have about 16,000—15, 16,000 at our southern border. And the numbers are way down for the last week because this just took place over the last few days, over the last week. And it's way down, as you can imagine.

But we have to do a bill on border security. And we can solve the problem entirely at our border. The wall is being built. But unfortunately, we had a very bad case from the Ninth Circuit, as usual. A Ninth Circuit judge—and I say that loud and clear—very hard to win at the Ninth Circuit, if not impossible. He ruled against something that, in my opinion, was a terrible error. And it really affected the construction of part of our wall.

And much of it is being build. Most of it is being built. But it had an impact. These were contracts that were out. They were being built, and now we're supposed to stop because a judge decided, in his own whim, that he wanted to stop it. So we appealed it, and we're asking for an expedited appeal.

But again, much of the wall is being built. We had it all being built, and the Ninth Circuit, as usual, came through for the other side. And it's an incredible situation we have going. There's something wrong with this. Where something like this can happen, it's not a good situation.

Anyway, we're asking Congress to step forward on border security and help us with border security. We do that, it's going to be perfect, because the Mexicans have done a fantastic job, and I want to thank the President of Mexico. And they've done this over the last week and a half. It started at the other border, and now it's at our border, and it's had a very big impact. You'll see the numbers come out. You probably have to wait 3 or 4 weeks, but you'll see there's a tremendous difference.

And most importantly, we must eliminate all incentives for smuggling children and for smuggling women. They're smuggling women through borders and the borders that don't have the wall or the borders where you can't physically have security, because it's so many miles. You know, we have 2,000 miles of border.

So they're smuggling in women, and they're smuggling in children. And they're using the children, in particular, as pawns, who are getting other people into our country. Because when you're with a child, even if the child is not yours—which in itself is ridiculous—then it's much easier to come across and come into our country, because the laws are very bad. Our immigration laws are very bad.

And right now smugglers coach migrants to travel with minors and to send minors alone to gain easy entry into the United States. Catch-and-release must stop. DHS must have the authority to humanely return minors to be with their families in their home countries. It's, right now, a situation where nobody knows what they're doing, because our laws are so bad, and it can be changed in—I always say 15 minutes; make it an hour. It's very simple. These changes are very simple. It's changes to the asylum. If we change asylum, we can have 75 percent of it done. The rest has to be done on the loopholes.

Vast migrations out of Central America undermine the future of those countries. And these countries now, they want their children back. They're actually wanting their children back.

As you know, I stopped hundreds of millions of dollars from going to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador because they haven't been doing what they should be doing. Caravans have been forming, but now the caravans are being stopped by Mexico.

And again, we want to thank Mexico, but the caravans that formed are being stopped by Mexico, short of our southern border, and in many cases, before they even get out of Guatemala. But I'm hearing that Guatemala is starting to help us a lot. But we're not paying them all of the money. We used to pay them over \$500 million a year. I stopped that money from going to them. Some people think it should be the opposite: We should give them money. I don't think they were doing what they could do, and therefore, I stopped it. And at some point, maybe if they do a great job—and the job they're supposed to—we can be talking. But right now it's disgraceful what's happening.

And Congress and the Democrats have to step forward to provide humane solutions to put child smugglers out of business. You have child smugglers by the hundreds—and actually, probably by the thousands—and they're becoming very rich, because our laws are so bad. And they have to restore the integrity of the United States asylum system.

Without these changes, more than 1 million immigrants will arrive at the borders this year, many of them lodging frivolous asylum claims. And that's what they do to gain access into the country: they lodge claims on asylum. And they're totally bogus claims.

We apprehend these people. But because of catch-and-release, we have to apprehend them, take their names, sometimes bring them to court. Sometimes, they're criminals; oftentimes, they have to be released. But they're all coming out of the country, because that's what we do.

After July 4, a lot of people are going to be brought back out. So people that come up may be here for a short while, but they're going to be going—they're going back to their countries. They go back home. ICE is going to be apprehending them and bringing them back. And we have a very big system for that, and it's been very effective, and it will be very effective.

So they may feel—and you may read—that they came across. And because of the ridiculous laws of catch-and-release, which I call not a law; I call it a loophole. You release them, but they go back. They get caught. They come in illegally, and they go out legally. Very simple system.

Most border crossers never show up in court. They never come. About 3 percent show up. Nobody even knows why they show up. But only 3 percent show up.

But we are apprehending them, and we bring them out of the country. In some cases, they're criminals, and ideally, we want them to use the other country's criminal justice system because we don't want to load up our prisoners any—our prisons any more than they're already loaded up.

So that's it in a nutshell. It's \$4.6 billion. It was bipartisan. It was done in a bipartisan manner. We all got together. This is a humane solution to a tremendous problem that's caused because we have bad immigration laws, and we can solve that problem very, very quickly if we could get together with the Democrats. The problem is, the Democrats actually like this system, because it's open borders.

Now, we don't allow it to be open borders, because we're apprehending, and we're doing a great job. Border Patrol has been incredible. Law enforcement has been incredible. And ICE has been incredible.

But it shouldn't be this way. It shouldn't be this way. We're the only ones in the world that have a system like this. It's absolutely insane, our system of immigration.

And the reason they come up is because our economy is doing so well. I just got back, as you know, from Japan and from South Korea. Met with many of the countries—the G-20. So you had the biggest countries. And it was incredible. Everybody greeted me with congratulations on how well we're doing with our economy. We have the number-one economy in the world. And a lot of that is tax cuts. A lot of it is regulation cuts. And thank you, Kevin, and the group. I will tell you, it's—Patrick, thank you very much. And, Mike, thank you very much. And everybody.

Because of the tax cuts, our economy is the hottest in the world. If we didn't have them—we were paying up—companies were paying the highest tax rates in the world, just about. In many cases, the highest. And now we have them at the low level. Not the lowest, but we have them at the low level, at 21 percent. And because of that, they're coming in. New companies are being formed.

But we have many, many companies that left our country, and they're now coming back. Especially the automobile business. We have auto plants being built all over the country. We went decades, and no plant was built. No plant was even expanded.

And in leaving Japan, I was with Prime Minister Abe, and he was telling me they have many more companies now that are moving to the United States and building plants in Michigan and Ohio and North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida—different States all over the country. And it's pretty amazing because we didn't have any. I mean, we had no expansions, and now we have a lot of expansion.

So we are signing this now, and it's an honor to sign it. And if we could do border security along with it, or follow it up shortly, everybody would be extremely happy.

[The President signed the bill.]

I want to thank Secretary Azar who's doing an incredible job, considering that the decks are really stacked against him. The cards are not good, and yet the job your people are doing is incredible. You know, we're not in the hospital business. We're in the border security business at the border. And all of a sudden, we're forced to be in the hospital business.

And again, they're coming up because they want a piece of what's happening in this country. They want the economy. They want the jobs. They're not coming up, for the most part, for other reasons. They're coming up because they want the jobs.

And we want them, but we want them to come in legally through a process. And we want them to come in based on merit. So the merit is very important.

And there you have your bill. Thank you very much, everybody. Okay?

Iran

Q. Mr. President, any message to Iran?

The President. No. No message to Iran. They know what they're doing. They know what they're playing with. And I think they're playing with fire. So no message to Iran whatsoever.

China

Q. Any reaction to the protests in Hong Kong today?

The President. In Hong Kong? I just hope it gets solved. I was with President Xi of China. We had a great talk, a great discussion. We're talking about doing something. And we talked about it briefly, but that's very sad. I've rarely seen a protest like that. It's very sad to see.

2020 U.S. Census Citizenship Question

Q. Will you be delaying the census, Mr. President?

The President. Where?

Q. Will you be delaying the census for the Supreme Court ruling on the census question?

The President. Yes, we're looking at that. We think that a census—obviously, if you do all of this work, and you're talking about—nobody can believe this, but they spend billions of dollars on the census, and you're not allowed to ask? You don't knock on doors of houses, check houses? You go through all this detail, and you're not allowed to ask whether or not somebody is a citizen? So you can ask other things, but you can't ask whether or not somebody is a citizen?

So we are trying to do that. We're looking at that very strongly.

Q. And why—oh, I'm sorry, if I could follow up. Why do you think it's so important that that question be asked on the census?

The President. I think it's very important—to find out if somebody is a citizen as opposed to an illegal? I think there's a big difference, to me, between being a citizen of the United States and being an illegal. And you know, the Democrats want to treat the illegals, with health care and with other things, better than they treat the citizens of our country.

If you look at a coal miner that has black lung disease, you're talking about people that get treated better than the coal miner. And these people got sick working for the United States. And we treated people that just walked in better.

You look at what they're doing in California, how they're treating people, they don't treat their people as well as they treat illegal immigrants. So at what point does it stop? It's crazy what they're doing. It's crazy. And it's mean, and it's very unfair to our citizens. And we're going to stop it, but we may need an election to stop it, and we may need to get back the House.

Yes.

China-U.S. Trade

Q. Mr. President, when will the round of trade talks with China begin, after your agreement over the weekend?

The President. It's already begun.

Q. Are they meeting already?

The President. Yes, already begun. They're speaking very much on the phone, but they're also meeting. Yes, it's essentially already begun. It actually began before our meeting.

Q. But do you know when Lighthizer will sit down with Liu He?

The President. Whatever it takes. Look, if we don't make a great deal, if we don't make a fair deal—it has to be better for us than for them because they had such a big advantage for so many years. In other words, you can't make a 50-50 deal when somebody else has been absolutely—I've been talking about this for years.

China made—we had a surplus—meaning they did, on us—of \$507 billion. It's been hundreds of billions of dollars a year for many, many years. So, obviously, we can't make a 50-50 deal. It has to be a deal that is somewhat tilted to our advantage. And if we're not going to do that, we're taking in a fortune from tariffs. And unfortunately, we're hurting China by doing that because many of their companies are leaving and going to a nontariff state so they don't have to pay the tariffs.

And the other misconception about China—and I think you read an article today in the Wall Street Journal about it—our people aren't paying for those tariffs, in that case, certainly. China is paying for them, and those companies are paying for them.

China devalued their currency very substantially, and they also put a lot of money into their economy. They're pouring money. It's fake money, but it's money. And they're pouring money into their economy to take care of the tariffs. Our people aren't—you don't have increased inflation. You have no increased inflation. But I'll tell you what is happening: Our Treasury is taking in billions and billions of dollars of money that normally would be for China.

So we'll see what happens. We hope that we can make a deal, but it's got to be a fair deal. We had a deal, as far as I was concerned. And then, at the last moment, China decided they didn't like that deal, and they changed it. It's all right. Then, I said, "You're going to pay 25-percent tariffs on \$250 billion."

Q. And did President Xi say he would move on some of those issues that were disputable?

The President. Yes, sure, I'd expect him to move. And if he doesn't move, that's okay too. I'm very happy either way. But I think we have a good chance of making a deal. I think they want to make a deal. Because they're losing many companies that are leaving because of the tariffs, because they don't want to pay the tariffs. So they're losing many companies. They're moving to Vietnam. And by the way, some are moving back to the United States, where they belong.

Q. Mr. President, will you—[inaudible]?

Mexico/Guatemala/Border Security

Q. Mr. President, can I ask you about the Mexico tariffs?

The President. Sure.

Q. Are those entirely off the table now, as far as—

The President. Well, now they are, because I think the President is doing a great job. He put 16,000 people in this weekend, and they're forming, but they're getting to the border, and they're doing a great job. And he has 6,000 people at the border with Guatemala. So, I mean, it's been way down. It's cut way down. You'll start to see the numbers over the next 3 or 4 weeks.

Q. But you had indicated that you were going to continuously reassess.

The President. Well, yes, that's true. Sure.

Q. So are you absolutely taking it off the table?

The President. No, no, that's true. Yes, if they don't do it. But they're doing a good job. Right now they're doing a very good job. We're very happy with the job they're doing.

No, it was because of tariffs that they're doing it. But what—the point is, they're doing a very good job. And he's very smart to do it, because that's a tiny fraction. It sounds like a lot of soldiers, but that's a fraction of what tariffs would cost Mexico.

But I very much appreciate it. And he's doing a great job for Mexico because the Mexican people were very upset with all of these tens of thousands of people, hundreds of thousands of people walking through Mexico. And the people of Mexico are just as happy as I am with what they're doing.

U.S. Border Patrol/Border Security

Q. Can I ask you about the Border Patrol Facebook group and these derogatory and vulgar comments that they have been making about Members of Congress?

The President. Well, I don't know what they're saying about Members of Congress. I know that the Border Patrol is not happy with the Democrats in Congress. I will say, the Republicans do want border security. The Democrats want open borders. Open borders means tremendous crime.

If you look, there was a report that came out where approximately 600 people in the last caravan were serious criminals. I don't want them in our country.

So the Border Patrol, they're patriots. They're great people. They love our country. They know what's coming in.

And you know who knows it better than anybody? Hispanics. Hispanics love what I'm doing, because number one, they don't want to lose their job. They don't want to take a pay cut. And very importantly, most importantly, they don't want to have crime. They understand it.

The people that understand the border the best are Hispanics. They understand it better than anybody. And they don't want to have to suffer crime. And they don't want to take a pay cut. They don't want to lose their job. That's why my poll numbers went way up with Hispanics, because they really understand the border the best of anybody. Okay. Any other—

Fourth of July Celebration

Q. Mr. President, do you plan to have tanks out on Fourth of July at the Lincoln Memorial for your speech?

The President. We're going to have a great Fourth of July in Washington, DC. It'll be like no other. It will be special. And I hope a lot of people come, and it's going to be about this country, and it's a salute to America.

And I'm going to be here, and I'm going to say a few words. And we're going to have planes going overhead, the best fighter jets in the world and other planes too. And we're going to have some tanks stationed outside.

You've got to be pretty careful with the tanks because the roads have a tendency not to like to carry heavy tanks, so we have to put them in certain areas. But we have the brandnew Sherman tanks, and we have the brandnew Abram tanks. And we have some incredible equipment—military equipment on display—brandnew. And we're very proud of it.

You know, we're making a lot of new tanks right now. We're building a lot of new tanks in Lima, Ohio, our great tank factory that people wanted to close down until I got elected. And I stopped it from being closed down, and now it's a very productive facility. And they do—nobody—it's the greatest tank in the world, the Abrams.

Salute to America Speech

Q. Do you think that you can give a speech that can reach all Americans on July 4?

The President. I think so. I think so. I think I've reached most Americans. Most Americans want no crime. Most Americans want a strong military. They want good education. They want good health care. If you look at preexisting conditions, the Republicans are going to save preexisting conditions. The Democrats won't be able to do it. What the Democrats' plan is, is going to destroy the country and it's going to be horrible health care. Horrible health care.

And everybody's taxes are going to go to 95 percent. And by the way, that's not enough. But the taxes—if they ever did what they want to do, your taxes go to 95 percent, and that isn't nearly enough. Thank you very much, everybody.

China

Q. One last one on Hong Kong. The United States has traditionally supported democracy movements—struggles around the world. Do you have a message directly to those demonstrators who say they want more democracy and that China is not a democracy?

The President. Well, they're looking for democracy. And I think most people want democracy. Unfortunately, some governments don't want democracy. But that's what it's all about. It's all about democracy. There's never been anything better. And I think we're the best example of it right here in the United States. Okay?

Thank you very much. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:54 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Vice President Michael R. Pence; Haywood S. Gilliam, Jr., judge, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California; President Andres Manuel López Obrador of Mexico; and Reps. Kevin P. Brady and Patrick T. McHenry. A reporter referred to U.S. Trade Representative Robert E. Lighthizer; and Vice Premier Liu He of China. H.R. 3401, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Humanitarian Assistance and Security at the Southern Border Act, 2019, approved July 1, was assigned Public Law No. 116–26. He also referred to H.R. 3151, the Taxpayer First Act, which was approved July 1 and assigned Public Law No. 116–25.

Categories: Bill Signings and Vetoes : Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Humanitarian Assistance and Security at the Southern Border Act of 2019, signing remarks; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Abe, Shinzo; Azar, Alex M., II; Brady, Kevin P.; Gilliam, Haywood S., Jr.; López Obrador, Andres Manuel; McHenry, Patrick T.; Pence, Michael R.; Xi Jinping.

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Minister; Judiciary : Judicial review; Law enforcement and crime : Trafficking in persons, efforts to combat; Legislation, enacted : Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Humanitarian Assistance and Security at the Southern Border Act of 2019; Legislation, enacted : Taxpayer First Act; Mexico : Border with U.S., infrastructure and security; Mexico : Immigration enforcement, cooperation with U.S.; Mexico : President; Taxation : Corporate tax rates; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Taxation : Tax relief; White House Office : Vice President.

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