

## Republicans claim to want border security

Written by By Sen. Martin Heinrich  
Friday, 16 February 2024 00:00

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### What they really want is to help Trump

Why did Republicans jump to oppose a bill that would deliver exactly what they claimed to want? Because former President Donald Trump told them to.

New Mexico has a front-row seat to our country's broken immigration system. Every day, we see the real-life consequences of that broken system on families and communities. The solutions aren't easy, but they also are as clear as day.

We need to tackle the huge backlog for lawful immigration, so it doesn't take years for a person's paperwork to be processed. And we need to invest in smart border security technology that better detects and stops drugs like fentanyl before they get into our communities.

We need to better staff and support the law enforcement agencies at our border that are helping to maintain our national security and efficiently process cross-border trade with our largest trade partner, Mexico.

We need more pathways for skilled immigrants eager to fill labor shortages in industries with severe workforce shortages, like agriculture and health care. And we need to finally ensure Dreamers have a swift path to full citizenship.

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But Congress has failed, over and over, to deliver these solutions.

### ***REPUBLICANS FAILED TO DELIVER ON BORDER SECURITY***

Time and again, I have heard my Republican colleagues claim that they want to “secure the border.” Last week was their opportunity to prove that they meant it. Once again, they failed to deliver.

The Senate voted on a historic bipartisan national security, border security, and immigration reform bill that was the result of many months of negotiations.

I voted to support this bill because I, like most New Mexicans, am done with our current, badly broken system.

Nearly all of my Republican colleagues voted “No” to even starting debate on the bill.

While no compromise is ever perfect, this bill would have made our asylum process faster, delivering safety to those who legitimately need it. It also invested in smart border security to cut down on drug trafficking and unauthorized crossings at our southern border.

### ***REPUBLICANS CHOSE POLITICS OVER LEADERSHIP***

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Before even seeing what was in the bill, House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., declared that it would be “dead on arrival” in the House. Almost all Republican senators followed suit and chose political showmanship over leadership.

Republican Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa told reporters, “I am very disappointed that so many of our members came out as a hard no before the legislation was even released.”

Why did Republicans jump to oppose a bill that would deliver exactly what they claimed to want? Because former President Donald Trump told them to. Improving border security apparently wasn’t ever a real factor in their decision-making.

Trump recently told his supporters to “please blame it on me” if Republicans in Congress blocked a border security bill. That’s because, in Trump’s view, chaos at the border helps him politically.

In New Mexico, when something is broken, you don’t just go around complaining; you get to work and fix it. Republicans are doing the opposite. They are more interested in preserving their political talking points than improving border security.

Americans deserve better. We deserve decisions driven by what’s good for our country and communities, not what’s good for Trump’s campaign rallies.

As the son of an immigrant, I know the hope that our nation represents for so many people seeking to build a better life. We need to get to work fixing our immigration system so it can deliver on our foundational values. And we need border security that keeps our communities safe.

We deserve elected leaders courageous enough to get it done.

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