

# The Wall (by Hodey Johns)

- The Details of the Wall itself
  - in last year's budget, Congress set aside \$20 million for prototypes
    - Any wall design must meet the following requirements
      - Walls need to be at least 18 feet tall, however, 30 feet is considered ideal.
      - A person should not be able to climb to the top of the wall unassisted. Walls should include anti-climbing features that prevent scaling, even with the use of climbing aids.
      - Any exposed fixtures need to be on the U.S. side to shield from possible tampering.
      - The U.S. side of the wall should also be visually pleasing in color, texture, and fit into the general surrounding environment.
      - No hole larger than a foot can be made through the wall in under an hour of trying with the use of hand-held tools.
      - Wall designs must be cost effective to construct, maintain and repair. The designs should also accommodate Border Patrol-approved pedestrian and vehicle sliding gates.
      - Wall designs must also be able to prevent tunneling from below for at least 6 feet.
      - Walls must accommodate surface drainage and also be constructible on slopes of up to 45 percent.
  - The Next Step
    - Six companies, based in Alabama, Arizona, Mississippi and Maryland, won contracts to build a prototype with

concrete or “alternate materials.” Two of the companies won bids to construct two versions.

- With about \$3.3 million contracted on the prototypes, the Border Patrol will use what it learned from the test walls toward a final design for the nearly 2,000-mile-long Southwest border.
- The agency might consider a final wall that uses a hybrid of different features from the prototypes. Or, there’s a chance it might not use any of the designs it contracted out at all.
- Funding for the Wall
  - Democrats told Republicans that if they think the wall is a public good, they should fund it themselves
    - Is that really a good idea for Democrats to start telling people to pay for public services privately?
    - Brian Kolfage answers the call... kind of
      - Raised \$20 million of the \$1 billion requested
  - The White House is “demanding \$5.7 billion for construction of a barrier as the partial government shutdown heads into its third week after weekend talks”
  - As it stands, Democrats have earmarked \$800 million to address urgent humanitarian needs
    - Still, that has not swayed enough Democrats to agree to the funding.
  - Official response from Democrats suggested possible funding for a steel instead of a concrete wall.
- The Land Along the Border
  - Challenges
    - The Rio Grande
      - near the Rio Grande, the wall would have to be built farther in, due to a treaty that prohibits any construction near the river. This would force people to move out of

their homes. Most challenging of all, the Rio Grande is a natural feature — not a man-made boundary. Rivers erode the land they pass. They flood. They dry up. They sometimes change course. A completed border barrier would have to navigate these natural challenges.

- Much of the land is privately owned, so a wall would have to cut through ranches, forcing land owners to lose land to the government, or to the other side of the border and/or sell their land even if they don't want to or the money they are offered in return is too little.
  - Trump has said the he is willing to use "the military version of eminent domain" to build his proposed wall on the U.S.–Mexico border. It's not exactly clear what he means by that.

## The Shutdown

## Sources

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