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PROMPT: Carefully read the articlesand and answer the following question – should the US build a fence along its southern borders? Support your answer with the text. Your written response should at minimum be a page and a half.

**Should the U.S. Build a Fence Across the Entire Border with Mexico to Slow Illegal Immigration?**

**In a Nutshell**

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| --- | --- |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| 1. With a skyrocketing national debt and annual deficits, the country can't sustain the drag on our economy and the entitlement cost increases that follow illegal immigration.
2. We are a nation of laws; we can't choose which laws to enforce and which ones to ignore.
3. Amnesty and other proposed fixes to the current illegal immigration problem can't even be considered until the border fence is in place, since a change in laws for a scheduled date could trigger a massive inflow of illegals like no other in history.
4. A country that built a transcontinental railroad and put a man on the moon shouldn't have a problem building a simple fence, especially with billions of dollars of government "stimulus" funds available.
5. It would cut off vehicle transport of illegals, forcing those who want to enter the country to pursue legal channels or cover potentially hundreds of miles on foot and overcome other difficult obstacles.
6. It would create thousands of construction jobs while the fence is being built.
7. In addition to discouraging or stopping much of illegal immigration, it would increase the number of apprehensions of illegal immigrants.
8. It would help contain the illegal drug trade pouring into the country from Mexico and help keep the bloody drug wars outside the United States.
9. The wall would provide additional protection from terrorist entry into the country.
 | 1. The materials and labor cost necessary to build the border fence are something we can't afford right now.
2. It damages the international view of the U.S., giving a propaganda weapon to our enemies, who may compare the fence to the Berlin Wall.
3. A fence covering that long of a border will take a very long time to build and may not be very effective.
4. The fence would disrupt the environment and wild life, as it may potentially cross rivers, sanctuaries, preservations, parks, etc.
5. The costs and risks to humans crossing the border, including elderly and children, will dramatically increase.
6. It might strain relations between Mexico and the United States.
7. Because of the increased costs and risks of crossing, illegal immigrants that previously pursued seasonal work and then returned home may have to bring their families and live permanently in the country.
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# Protect Our Border: Build a Fence

by [Greg Hirshman](http://stanfordreview.org/article/author/greghirshman/) on June 11, 2010

With more than 12 million illegal immigrants residing in the United States and more than a million more coming each year, our country must act to curb the continuing flow of undocumented immigrants, especially across our southern border. Many pay no taxes yet reap the benefits of taxpayer dollars. In California alone, the estimated annual burden for providing education, health care, and incarceration for undocumented immigrants is over $10 billion. Illegal immigrants comprise more than half of the members of the notorious gangs of Los Angeles, and constitute over 20% of the inmates of California jails. Similar statistics are found in other states in the Southwest. Furthermore, illegal immigrants pose a national security threat. Each year, over 100,000 undocumented immigrants come from countries other than Mexico, and 450 of these are from countries of “special interest,” such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen. While it is clear that the vast majority of illegal immigrants, even those from countries of “special interest,” are not terrorists, it would only take a few perpetrators to cause a cataclysmic terrorist attack. Three of the September 11th hijackers were in the United States illegally. Two had previous immigration violations. Our nation simply cannot take risks with illegal immigration.

Now that we understand both the burden and the threat that illegal immigrants pose to our nation, we must tackle the difficult problem of how to cope with the vast illegal immigration problem. The nineteen hundred miles of our border with Mexico are very hard to control, especially when people are willing to risk their lives to reach this land of freedom and opportunity. Although the United States employs 11,000 border patrol agents, these agents cannot possibly control such an extreme border. To use manpower alone, we would need more than 100,000 agents, but such a force would be extremely expensive and completely impractical. Fortunately, however, we have a cheaper and more rational alternative: a border fence.

Such a fence would not solve the problem of the illegal immigration by itself, but it would surely help the situation greatly. We need only to look at Israel. After building its own border fence in the West Bank, Israel experienced a 95% reduction in terrorist attacks and a drastic reduction in the number of illegal intruders within its borders. Surely there will be illegal aliens who will successfully penetrate our fence, as they do in Israel, but the number of successful illegal border crossings would be much smaller than it is now. The cost of a state-of-the-art fence is less than $10 billion, and once it is built, the maintenance cost will be nominal. If the government tried to improve border security by hiring more agents, it would be forced to pay them year after year, and the costs of these men would greatly exceed the cost of building a fence. Furthermore, a wall can provide as many legal border-crossing points as desired, so that it would not hinder legitimate commerce, tourism, or commuting.

Support for a border fence to inhibit illegal immigration is by no means equivalent to opposing legal immigration. Since its inception, our nation has been built and developed by legal immigrants. Legal immigration is beneficial to our economy, and we should welcome the lawful ingress of people from diverse cultures, but we simply cannot allow illegal immigration. Such law-breaking does not only cause an extra burden on taxpayers, but it also insults the millions of Americans who immigrated legally to the United States. Why did they struggle to gain legal entrance to the United States? Why did they not try to smuggle themselves into our country? Unlike the illegal immigrants, they abided by the laws and regulations of the nation into which they entered so that they could rightfully reside there.

As American citizens, we face a major dilemma today. Should we continue to allow the incursion of millions of illegal aliens across our southern border, or should we take the necessary action to strain this flow? As a nation built by immigrants, we cannot and should not shut the door on lawful immigration, but we must enforce our laws and insist that those who enter our nation initiate their American experience by respecting the law of the land. Building a border fence is absolutely essential to preserve justice and promote public safety in our nation.

## Reasons not to build a wall on America's border with Mexico to deal with immigration problem**Created on**: March 28, 2010 (by Alan Fernald)

 In the argument over a Southern fence, many people use foolish and misleading arguments to justify their opposal to the building of a barrier between the United States and Mexico.

I agree that there should be no wall, however, I prefer to base my opinion upon something other than rhetoric and fallacious statements.

Before I can explain why there should be no wall, let me first debunk some of the more twisted myths that have been developed:

Myth #1: A border fence would be racist!
Reality: A wall between countries has nothing to do with race, it has everything to do with National Sovereignity. When Saudi Arabia announced it's plan to build a wall on it's Northeastern border with Iraq, did anybody consider it racist? The fact is, the largest percentage of people entering our country illegally are crossing our Southern border. Common sense would dictate that this is the area that requires the highest levels of security.

Myth #2: A border fence would be like the [Berlin wall](http://european-history.helium.com/topic/8462-berlin-wall) that we wanted torn down!
Reality: The [Berlin wall](http://european-history.helium.com/topic/8462-berlin-wall) was built to keep people in, not out. This argument is similar to comparing a fence around your house with a fence around a prison. One is to keep people out, the other is to keep people in. A wall built to keep people from escaping is in essence, a denial of liberty and freedom.

Myth #3: A border fence will do no good
Reality: When the first fences were constructed on the US/Mexican border many years ago, the impact on illegal crossings for the purpose of trafficking in illicit drugs dropped to near zero.

As far as valid reasons why we should not build a fence, there are many.

#1: The amount of money spent to build a fence could more constructively be used to purchase additional sensor systems and to hire more personnel. Detection, capture and return to home country should be the goal of our [border patrol](http://www.helium.com/topic/6991-border-patrol). Physical barriers are appropriate for certain locations, however, they should not be depended upon to stop all illegal crossings, but rather, utilized to deter people from crossing in certain particular areas.

#2: Utilization of [National Guard](http://www.helium.com/topic/4339-national-guard) (after all, they are supposed to guard our nation, correct?) units capable of defending themselves and providing a protection force to our [border patrol](http://www.helium.com/topic/6991-border-patrol) units would improve our border control for a significantly lower incremental cost. The [National Guard](http://www.helium.com/topic/4339-national-guard) is already being paid for, the border patrol is already being paid for, why not use them in a productive manner?

#3: The wall, as proposed, would require those wishing to cross our border illegally to perform their crossings at locations that are physically inhospitable. Despite my desire to stop illegal immigration and drug smuggling, unless the threat of force is indicated by those crossing illegally, we should not be forcing them to risk their lives to make the crossing through the deserts/mountains along our Southern border.

I agree that building a wall is not the way to resolve the issue of illegal immigration, though it has proven effective in combatting the smuggling of drugs. However, there are many other ways to spend this money which would have a much greater impact on the free flow we currently have on our Southern border.