State of California et al v. Trump et al

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INTEREST OF AMICI CURIAE¹

Amici curiae, listed in the Appendix to this brief, are sixty-two former officials in the U.S. government who have worked on national security and homeland security issues from the White House as well as agencies across the Executive Branch. They have served in senior leadership roles in administrations of both major political parties, and collectively they have devoted a great many decades to protecting the security interests of the United States. They have held the highest security clearances, and participated in the highest levels of policy deliberations on a broad range of issues. These include: immigration, border security, counterterrorism, military operations, and our nation's relationship with other countries, including those south of the U.S. border.

Amici respectfully submit this brief because, in their professional opinion, there is no factual basis for the declaration of a national emergency for the purpose of circumventing the appropriations process and reprogramming billions of dollars in funding to construct a wall at the southern border, as directed by the Presidential Proclamation of February 15, 2019.

ARGUMENT

On February 15, 2019, the President declared a "national emergency" for the purpose of diverting appropriated funds from previously designated uses to build a wall along the southern border. *Amici* are aware of no emergency that remotely justifies such a step. The President's actions are at odds with the overwhelming evidence in the public record, including the administration's own data and estimates. *Amici* have lived and worked through national emergencies and support the President's power to mobilize the Executive Branch to respond quickly in genuine national emergencies. But under no plausible assessment of the evidence is there a national emergency today that entitles the President to tap into funds appropriated for other purposes to build a wall at the southern border, which will take many years to complete. To *Amici*'s knowledge, the President's assertion of a national emergency here is unprecedented, in

¹ Amici affirm that no counsel for any party authored this brief in whole or in part; no party or party's counsel contributed money intended to fund preparing or submitting the brief; and no person, other than amici, their members, and counsel, contributed money that was intended to fund preparing or submitting this brief. The views expressed by Yale Law School's legal clinics are not necessarily those of the Yale Law School.

that he seeks to address a situation: (1) that has been enduring, rather than one that has arisen 1 suddenly; (2) that in fact has improved over time rather than deteriorated; (3) by reprogramming billions of dollars in funds in the face of clear congressional intent to the contrary; and (4) with 3 4 assertions that are rebutted not just by the public record, but by his agencies' own official data, documents, and statements. 5 I. Illegal border crossings have been near historic lows. 6 7 According to the administration's own data, the numbers of apprehensions at the southern border through the end of fiscal year 2018 were near forty-year lows.² There was a modest 8 increase in apprehensions in 2018, but that total was in line with the number of apprehensions only two years earlier,³ and the overall trend continued to exhibit a dramatic decline over the last 10 fifteen years in particular. The number of undetected unlawful entries at the southern border also 11 fell from about 851,000 to nearly 62,000 between fiscal years 2006 to 2016, the most recent year 12 for which data are publicly available. The United States hosts what is estimated to be the 13 smallest number of undocumented immigrants since 2004.⁵ And, in recent years, the majority of 14 currently undocumented immigrants entered the United States legally, but overstayed their visas,⁶ 15 a problem that will not be addressed by a declaration of an emergency along the southern border. 16 II. The recent increase in crossings does not present a national emergency. 17 The last couple of months have seen a sharp rise in the number of individuals apprehended 18 19 20 ² U.S. Border Patrol, Southwest Border Sectors, https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2019-Mar/bp-southwest-border-sector-21 apps-fy1960-fy2018.pdf. ³ *Id.* (noting 396,579 southwest border apprehensions during FY 2018, 408,870 during FY 2016, 22 and 479,371 in FY 2014); see also U.S. Customs & Border Protection, Total Illegal Alien Apprehensions by Month, https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2019-Mar/bp- total-monthly-apps-sector-area-fy2018.pdf (466,623 southwest border apprehensions during CY 2018, 442,940 during CY 2016, and 458,745 during CY 2014). 23 24 ⁴ U.S. Dep't of Homeland Security, Dep't of Homeland Security Border Security Metrics Report 13 (May 1, 2018), 25 https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/BSMR OIS 2016.pdf. ⁵ Jeffrey S. Passel & D'Vera Cohn, U.S. Unauthorized Immigrant Total Dips to Lowest Level in a 26 Decade, Pew Res. Ctr. (Nov. 27, 2018).

Crossings, NPR (Jan. 16, 2019, 7:02 PM) (noting "that from 2016-2017, people who overstayed

their visas accounted for 62 percent of the newly undocumented, while 38 percent had crossed a

⁶ Richard Gonzales, For 7th Consecutive Year, Visa Overstays Exceeded Illegal Border

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border illegally").

a. This administration's own most recent Country Report on Terrorism, released only five months ago, found that "there was no credible evidence indicating that international terrorist groups have established bases in Mexico, worked with Mexican drug cartels, or sent operatives via Mexico into the United States." Since 1975, there has been only one reported incident in which immigrants who had crossed the southern border illegally attempted to commit a terrorist act. That incident occurred more than twelve years ago, and involved three brothers from Macedonia who had been brought into the United States as children more than twenty years earlier.

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⁷ U.S. Customs & Border Protection, United States Border Patrol Southwest Family Unit Subject and Unaccompanied Alien Children Apprehensions Fiscal Year 2016,

https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-border-unaccompanied-children/fy-2016 (last visited Apr. 9, 2019); U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Southwest Border Migration FY 2019, (https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration) (last visited Apr. 9, 2019).

⁸ U.S. Dep't of State, Country Reports on Terrorism 2017, at 205 (Sept. 2018).

⁹ See Alex Nowrasteh, Trump's Wall Will Not Stop Terrorism, Cato Inst. (Dec. 18, 2018).

1	b. Although the White House has claimed, as an argument favoring a wall at the
2	southern border, that almost 4,000 known or suspected terrorists were intercepted at the southern
3	border in a single year, 10 this assertion has since been widely and consistently repudiated,
4	including by this administration's own Department of Homeland Security. 11 The overwhelming
5	majority of individuals on terrorism watchlists who were intercepted by U.S. Customs and Borden
6	Patrol were attempting to travel to the United States by air; ¹² of the individuals on the terrorist
7	watchlist who were encountered while entering the United States during fiscal year 2017, only 13
8	percent traveled by land. 13 And for those who have attempted to enter by land, only a small
9	fraction do so at the southern border. Between October 2017 and March 2018, forty-one foreign
10	immigrants on the terrorist watchlist were intercepted at the northern border. ¹⁴ Only six such
11	immigrants were intercepted at the southern border. ¹⁵
12	IV. There is no emergency related to violent crime at the southern border.
13	Nor can the administration justify its actions on the grounds that the incidence of violent
14	crime on the southern border constitutes a national emergency. Factual evidence consistently
15	shows that unauthorized immigrants have no special proclivity to engage in criminal or violent
16	behavior. According to a Cato Institute analysis of criminological data, undocumented
17	immigrants are 49 percent <i>less likely</i> to be incarcerated nationwide than are native-born citizens. 16

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¹⁰ See Congressional Border Security Briefing: A Border Security and Humanitarian Crisis, White House (Jan. 4, 2019); Holly Rosenkrantz, Sanders Repeats Claim on Terrorists at the Border Refuted by Administration's Own Data, CBS News (Jan. 7, 2019, 3:28 PM). Vice President Mike Pence made similar statements during his appearance on ABC the next week. See Betsy Klein, Pence Misleadingly Cites Some Statistics to Push Trump Border Wall, CNN (Jan. 8, 2019, 5:46 PM).

¹¹ See U.S. Dep't of Homeland Security, Myth/Fact: Known and Suspected Terrorists/Special Interest Aliens (Jan. 7, 2019); see also, e.g., Brett Samuels, Conway: Sarah Sanders Made 'Unfortunate Misstatement' About Terror Suspects at Border, Hill (Jan. 8, 2019, 10:30 AM).

¹² See U.S. Dep't of Homeland Security, supra note 11.

¹³ See Press Release, Dep't of Homeland Security, DOJ, DHS Report: Three Out of Four Individuals Convicted of International Terrorism and Terrorism-Related Offenses were Foreign-Born (Jan. 16, 2018).

¹⁴ See Julia Ainsley, Only Six Immigrants in Terrorism Database Stopped by CBP at Southern Border from October to March, NBC News (Jan. 7, 2019, 4:10 PM).

¹⁵ See id.

¹⁶ Michelangelo Landgrave & Alex Nowrasteh, *Criminal Immigrants: Their Numbers, Demographics, and Countries of Origin*, Cato Inst. (Mar. 15, 2017).

A recent longitudinal study across all fifty states and the District of Columbia that examined the period between 1990 and 2014 found a "generally negative" relationship between the presence of undocumented immigrants and violent crime.¹⁷ And in Texas, the state with the best data availability, undocumented immigrants were found to have a first-time conviction rate 32 percent below that of native-born Americans,¹⁸ and the conviction rates of unauthorized immigrants for violent crimes such as homicide and sex offenses were also below those of native-born Americans.¹⁹ Meanwhile, overall rates of violent crime in the United States have declined significantly over the past 25 years, falling 49 percent from 1993 to 2017.²⁰ And violent crime rates in the country's 30 largest cities decreased on average by 2.7 percent in 2018 alone, further undermining any suggestion that recent crime trends currently warrant the declaration of a national emergency.²¹

V. There is no human or drug trafficking emergency that can be addressed by a wall at the southern border.

The administration has claimed that the presence of human and drug trafficking at the border justifies its emergency declaration. But there is no evidence of any such sudden crisis at the southern border that necessitates a reprogramming of appropriations to build a border wall.

a. The overwhelming majority of opioids that enter the United States across a land border are carried through legal ports of entry in personal or commercial vehicles, not smuggled through unauthorized border crossings.²² A border wall would not stop these drugs from entering

¹⁷ Michael T. Light & Ty Miller, *Does Undocumented Immigration Increase Violent Crime?*, 56 Criminology 370 (2018).

¹⁸ Michaelangelo Landgrave & Alex Nowrasteh, *Criminal Immigrants in 2017: Their Numbers, Demographics, and Countries of Origin*, Cato Inst. (Mar. 4, 2019).

¹⁹ Alex Nowrasteh, Criminal Immigrants in Texas: Illegal Immigrant Conviction and Arrest Rates for Homicide, Sex Crimes, Larceny, and Other Crimes, Cato Inst. (Feb. 26, 2018).

John Gramlich, 5 Facts About Crime in the U.S., Pew Res. Ctr. (Jan. 3, 2019).

²¹ Ames Grawert & Cameron Kimble, *Crime in 2018: Updated Analysis*, Brennan Ctr. for Just. (Dec. 18, 2018).

²² 2018 National Drug Threat Assessment, U.S. Dep't of Just. Drug Enforcement Admin. (2018). Ninety percent of heroin seizures at U.S. borders and more than 85 percent of cocaine and methamphetamine seizures occur at ports of entry, where drugs can be smuggled in personal vehicles or hidden among legal commercial goods in tractor trailers. Joe Ward & Anjali Singhvi, Trump Claims There Is a Crisis at the Border. What's the Reality?, N.Y. Times (Jan. 11, 2019).

the United States. Nor would a wall stop drugs from entering via other routes, including smuggling tunnels, which circumvent such physical barriers as fences and walls,²³ and international mail (which is how high-purity fentanyl, for example, is usually shipped from China directly to the United States).²⁴

b. Likewise, illegal crossings at the southern border are not the principal source of human trafficking victims. About two-thirds of human trafficking victims served by nonprofit organizations that receive funding from the relevant Department of Justice office are U.S. citizens, and even among non-citizens, most trafficking victims usually arrive in the country on valid visas. None of these instances of trafficking could be addressed by a border wall. And the three states with the highest per capita trafficking reporting rates are not even located along the southern border.

VI. This proclamation will only exacerbate the humanitarian concerns that do exist at the southern border.

There are real humanitarian concerns at the border, but they largely result from the current administration's own deliberate policies towards migrants. For example, the administration has used a "metering" policy to turn away the families fleeing extreme violence and persecution in their home countries, forcing them to wait indefinitely at the border to present their asylum cases, and has adopted a number of other punitive steps to restrict those seeking asylum at the southern border. These actions have forced asylum-seekers to live on the streets or in makeshift shelters and tent cities with abysmal living conditions, and limited access to basic sanitation has caused outbreaks of disease and death. This state of affairs is a consequence of choices this administration has made, and erecting a wall will do nothing to ease the suffering of these people.

²⁵ $\sqrt{23}$ See Gustavo Solis, Drug Smuggling, and the Endless Battle To Stop It, USA Today.

²⁴ 2018 National Drug Threat Assessment, supra note 22, at 33.

²⁵ Jenna Krajeski, *The Hypocrisy of Trump's Anti-Trafficking Argument for a Border Wall*, New Yorker (Feb. 5, 2019).

²⁶ Holly Yan, *The Deadly Toll of Human Smuggling and Trafficking in the U.S.*, CNN (July 28, 2017, 3:45 PM).

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VII. Redirecting funds for the claimed "national emergency" will undermine U.S. national security and foreign policy interests.

In the face of a nonexistent threat, redirecting funds for the construction of a wall along the southern border will undermine national security by needlessly pulling resources from Department of Defense programs that are responsible for keeping our troops and our country safe and running effectively.

- Repurposing funds from the defense construction budget will drain money from critical defense infrastructure projects, possibly including improvement of military hospitals, construction of roads, and renovation of on-base housing.²⁷
- b. The proclamation will divert resources away from military priorities in a manner that is likely to degrade troop readiness and effectiveness.²⁸ In fact, in a March 2019 memorandum, General Robert Neller, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, warned that the "Marine Corps faces fiscal challenges without precedent" and that the transfer of troops and funding to the southern border was contributing to "unacceptable risk to Marine Corps combat readiness and solvency." General Neller warned that fiscal pressures would cause the Marine Corps to cancel or scale back training exercises "at a time when we are attempting to double down on strengthening alliances and attracting new partners." As "Marines rely on the hard, realistic training provided by these events . . . the experience lost by these units at a critical time in their preparation cannot be recouped."²⁹
- In addition, the administration's unilateral, provocative actions are heightening tensions with our neighbors to the south, at a moment when we need their help to address a range of Western Hemisphere concerns. These actions are placing friendly governments to the south

²⁷ Claudia Grisales, Trump Declares Emergency on Southern Border, Opens Battle Over Use of Military Funds To Build Wall, Stars & Stripes (Feb. 15, 2019).

²⁸ Leo Shane III, Democrats Want To Know Why Active-Duty Troops Are Still on the Southern US Border, Mil. Times (Jan. 29, 2019); Thomas Gibbons-Neff & Helene Cooper, Impact of Border Deployments Is Felt by Troops at Home and Away, N.Y. Times (Dec. 24, 2018); Ashley Roque, Readiness Questions Abound, the Pentagon Prepares To Send Thousands of Additional Troops to Border, Jane's Defence Wkly. (Jan. 29, 2019).

Memorandum from Gen. Robert Neller, Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps, to Richard V. Spencer, Sec'y, U.S. Navy (Mar. 18, 2019), https://www.latimes.com/nation/politics/la-marinecorps-commandant-memos-20190321-story.html.

under impossible pressures and driving partners away. They have especially strained our diplomatic relationship with Mexico, a relationship that is vital to regional efforts ranging from critical intelligence and law enforcement partnerships to cooperative efforts to address the growing tensions with Venezuela. Additionally, the proclamation could well lead to the degradation of the natural environment in a manner that could only contribute to long-term socioeconomic and security challenges.

d. Finally, by declaring a national emergency for domestic political reasons with no compelling reason or justification from his senior intelligence and law enforcement officials, the President has further eroded his credibility with foreign leaders, both friend and foe. Should a genuine foreign crisis erupt, this lack of credibility will materially weaken this administration's ability to marshal allies to support the United States, and will embolden adversaries to oppose us.

VIII. The situation at the border does not require the use of the armed forces, and a wall is unnecessary to support the use of the armed forces.

Amici understand that the administration is also claiming that the situation at the southern border "requires use of the armed forces," and that a wall is "necessary to support such use" of the armed forces. These claims are implausible.

- a. Historically, our country has deployed National Guard troops at the border solely to assist the Border Patrol when there was an extremely high number of apprehensions, together with a particularly low number of Border Patrol agents. But currently, even with retention and recruitment challenges, the Border Patrol is at historically high staffing and funding levels, and apprehensions—measured in both absolute and per-agent terms—are near historic lows.³⁰
- b. Further, as noted above, the composition of southern border crossings has shifted such that families and unaccompanied minors now account for the majority of immigrants seeking entry at the southern border; these individuals do not present a threat that would need to be countered with military force.
 - c. Just last month, when asked what the military is doing at the border that couldn't

³⁰ Alex Nowrasteh, <u>Sending Troops to the Border Is Unnecessary and Dangerous</u> Cato Inst. (Apr. 4, 2018).

be done by the Department of Homeland Security if it had the funding for it, a top-level defense official responded, "[n]one of the capabilities that we are providing [at the southern border] are combat capabilities. It's not a war zone along the border." Finally, it is implausible that hundreds of miles of wall across the southern border are somehow necessary to support the use of armed forces. *Amici* are aware of no military- or security-related rationale that could remotely justify such an endeavor.

IX. There is no basis for circumventing the appropriations process with a declaration of a national emergency at the southern border.

Amici do not deny that our nation faces real immigration and national security challenges. But as the foregoing demonstrates, these challenges demand a thoughtful, evidence-based strategy, not a manufactured crisis that rests on falsehoods and fearmongering. In a briefing before the Senate Intelligence Committee on January 29, 2019, less than one month before the Presidential Proclamation, the Directors of the CIA, DNI, FBI, and NSA testified about numerous serious current threats to U.S. national security, but none of the officials identified a security crisis at the U.S.-Mexico border. In a briefing before the House Armed Services Committee the next day, Pentagon officials acknowledged that the 2018 National Defense Strategy does not identify the southern border as a security threat.³² Leading legislators with access to classified information³³ and the President's own statements³⁴ have strongly suggested, if not confirmed, that there is no evidence supporting the administration's claims of an emergency. And it is reported that the President made the decision to circumvent the appropriations process and reprogram money without the Acting Secretary of Defense having even started to consider where the funds

³¹ Heather Timmons, *The US Border Situation Isn't a National Emergency, Pentagon Officials Tell Congress*, Quartz (Jan. 29, 2019).

³² See id.

See, e.g., Press Release, Sen. Lamar Alexander, Statement on National Emergency Announcement (Feb. 15, 2019); Press Release, Sen. Susan Collins, Statement on Reports President Trump Will Declare National Emergency To Fund More Border Walls (Feb. 14, 2019); Press Release, Sen. Mitt Romney, Statement on Spending, Border Security Deal (Feb. 14, 2019).

³⁴ Remarks by President Trump on the National Security and Humanitarian Crisis on our Southern Border, White House (Feb. 15, 2019) ("I didn't need to do this. But I'd rather do it much faster.").

1	might come from, ³⁵ suggesting an absence of consultation and internal deliberations that in
2	Amici's experience are necessary and expected before taking a decision of this magnitude.
3	CONCLUSION
4	For the foregoing reasons, <i>Amici</i> respectfully submit that there is no factual basis for the
5	declaration of a national emergency for the purpose of circumventing the appropriations process
6	and reprogramming billions of dollars in funding to construct a wall at the southern border, as
7	directed by the Presidential Proclamation of February 15, 2019.
8	Dated: May 2, 2019 Respectfully Submitted,
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22	Telephone: (212) 277-8173
23	Email: ps@messingspector.com
24	Attorneys for Amici Curiae Former U.S. Government Officials
25	Government Officials
26	
27	
	35 Noah Gray, Acting U.S. Defense Secretary Will Review Programs To Cut for Wall Funding,
28	CNN (Feb. 17, 2019).

APPENDIX - List of Amici Curiae

- Madeleine K. Albright served as Secretary of State from 1997 to 2001. A refugee and naturalized American citizen, she served as U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations from 1993 to 1997. She has also been a member of the Central Intelligence Agency External Advisory Board since 2009 and of the Defense Policy Board since 2011, in which capacities she has received assessments of threats facing the United States.
 Jeremy B. Bash served as Chief of Staff of the U.S. Department of Defense from
 - 2011 to 2013, and as Chief of Staff of the Central Intelligence Agency from 2009 to 2011.
 - 3. John B. Bellinger III served as the Legal Adviser to the U.S. Department of State from 2005 to 2009. He previously served as Senior Associate Counsel to the President and Legal Adviser to the National Security Council from 2001 to 2005.
 - 4. Daniel Benjamin served as Ambassador-at-Large for Counterterrorism at the U.S. Department of State from 2009 to 2012.
 - 5. Antony Blinken served as Deputy Secretary of State from 2015 to 2017. He previously served as Deputy National Security Advisor to the President from 2013 to 2015.
 - 6. John O. Brennan served as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency from 2013 to 2017. He previously served as Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism and Assistant to the President from 2009 to 2013.
 - 7. R. Nicholas Burns served as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs from 2005 to 2008. He previously served as U.S. Ambassador to NATO and as U.S. Ambassador to Greece.
- 8. William J. Burns served as Deputy Secretary of State from 2011 to 2014. He previously served as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs from 2008 to 2011, as U.S. Ambassador to Russia from 2005 to 2008, as Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs from 2001 to 2005, and as U.S. Ambassador to Jordan from 1998 to 2001.
- 9. Johnnie Carson served as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs from 2009 to 2013. He previously served as the U.S. Ambassador to Kenya from 1999 to 2003, to Zimbabwe from 1995 to 1997, and to Uganda from 1991 to 1994.

2009 to 2013 and as National Security Advisor to the President from 2013 to 2017.

1	and Senior Director for Inter-American Affairs at the National Security Council from 1999 to
2	2000, and as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Mexican Affairs from 1994 to 1996.
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