

Newsmaker Transcript

White House News Briefing on Budget Shutdown and Immigration Issues, as Released by the White House

Thursday, January 3, 2019

SANDERS:

Good afternoon. I'll give a few of my friends a minute to get in. Thank you all for coming on short notice. And certainly, Happy New Year. Welcome back. It's good to be back.

We're going to kick 2019 off just slightly differently. And I'd like to welcome a very special guest for an appearance here in the briefing room, our very great President, Donald J. Trump.

TRUMP:

Hello, everybody. This is a beautiful place. I haven't seen it. Beautiful place.

QUESTION:

Happy New Year, sir.

TRUMP:

Happy New Year. Happy New Year to everybody.

QUESTION:

You're welcome here anytime, Mr. President.

TRUMP:

Well, thank you very much. I appreciate that. Thank you.

I just want to start off by congratulating Nancy Pelosi on being elected Speaker of the House. It's a very, very great achievement, and hopefully we're going to work together and we're going to get lots of things done, like infrastructure and so much more. I know they want to do that very badly, and so do I. So, hopefully, we're going to have a lot of things that we can get done together. And I think it's actually going to work out. I think it'll be a little bit different than a lot of people are thinking. So I congratulate Nancy. Tremendous, tremendous achievement.

And I just wanted to explain the folks that I'm with (inaudible) - people I've known very well over the last two years; people that have been extremely supportive of what we're doing on the border. They're tough. They're smart. They think. They love our country. They have every quality.

And I'll tell you what: I really know them well, and they have the kind of qualities that we need in our country. And they've done a fantastic job at the border. It's ICE and it's Border Patrol.

And a man who's really become a friend, in a sense - Brandon. I will say this: Brandon Judd has been a stalwart in terms of justice for people, in terms of fairness, and in terms of the toughness you need. You have some pretty tough situations. It doesn't get much tougher. So I just want to thank Brandon and all of the folks.

I'm going to have them introduce themselves right now and also say a few words about the wall, about - you can call it a barrier. You can call it whatever you want. But essentially, we need protection in our country. We're going to make it good. The people of our country want it. I have never had so much support, as I have in the last week, over my stance for border security, for border control and for, frankly, the wall or the barrier. I have never had anything like it in terms of calls coming in, in terms of people writing in and tweeting, and doing whatever they have to do. I have never had this much support. And we've done some things that, as you know, have been very popular.

So I'm going to ask Brandon Judd to just step forward and say a few words. This group has apprehended, last year, 17,000 criminals trying to get across the border. Seventeen thousand. And that's one category. There are plenty of others. The other thing that has been so incredible is what they've done in terms of drugs and stopping drugs. And with that - and with everything else - plenty, unfortunately, come through our southern border.

But I'm going to ask Brandon to come up, say a few words, and maybe introduce our friends and some very brave people.

Brandon? Please. Thank you.

JUDD:

Thank you, President.

TRUMP:

Thank you.

JUDD:

We really appreciate all the support that you've given the Border Patrol. We appreciate the support that you've given ICE.

My name is Brandon Judd. I'm the president of the National Border Patrol Council. I've been a Border Patrol agent for 21 years. I can personally tell you, from the work that I have done on the southwest border, that physical barriers, that walls actually work. You hear a lot of talk from the

expert that - you hear a lot of talk that there are experts that say that walls don't work. I promise you that if you interview Border Patrol agents, they will tell you that walls work.

I worked in Naco, Arizona for 10 years. We didn't have physical barriers in Naco, and illegal immigration and drug smuggling was absolutely out of control. We built those walls, those physical barriers, and illegal immigration dropped exponentially. Anywhere that you look, where we have built walls, they have worked. They have been an absolute necessity for Border Patrol agents in securing the border.

We need those physical barriers, and we appreciate President Trump and all of his efforts in getting us those physical barriers. There's also a lot of talk on this shutdown, that federal employees do not agree with the shutdown. I will tell you that's not true.

And with that, I'd like to introduce Art Del Cueto. He is the vice president of the National Border Patrol Council. He's also a longtime Border Patrol agent out of the Tucson Sector. And he'd like to say a few words about the shutdown.

DEL CUETO:

Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Once again, my name is Art Del Cueto. I am vice president with the National Border Patrol Council.

And I want everybody to take the time to understand what's going on. We are all affected by this shutdown. We have skin in the game. However, it comes down to border security. And we are extremely grateful to President Trump, and we fully support what he is doing to take care of our nation's borders, to take care of the future of this United States. It has nothing to do with political parties. You all got to ask yourself this question: If I come to your home, do you want me to knock on the front door, or do you want me to climb through that window?

We fully support the President and all his efforts to secure our nation's borders.

TRUMP:

Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

GARZA:

Hello, everyone. My name is Hector Garza. I'm the vice president of the National Border Patrol Council. I am also a Border Patrol agent on the Texas border.

I just want to talk about some of those criminals that Border Patrol agents apprehend on a daily basis. We're talking about murderers, rapists, people that commit very serious crimes in this country.

ICE has been doing an amazing job in deporting a lot of these people back to their countries. Unfortunately, once we deport these people, these people will not stay in their country. These

criminal aliens that have been released from jail, that have been deported, will come right back into the United States. However, if we had a physical barrier, if we had a wall, we would be able to stop that.

Again, we want to thank President Trump for advocating for Border Patrol agents. And again, we ask our congressmen to fund border security and fund the border wall. Thank you.

TRUMP:

So this meeting was set up a long time ago. It just came at a very opportune time. And I thought - we were all sitting in the Oval Office, working on different plans and different ways of stopping the problems that we have in our country. And other countries have problems, but nobody like ours. The economy makes it even more so. The economy is bringing people in because we're doing so well with the economy. Unemployment is now 3.7 percent, and that's among the lowest we've ever had. The lowest in 50 years. And among certain groups, it's the lowest, historically.

So I just appreciate them being here. I said, let's go out, see the press. You can tell them about the importance of the wall. They basically said - and I think I can take the word "basically" out: Without a wall, you cannot have border security. Without a very strong form of barrier - call it what you will - but without a wall, you cannot have border security. It won't work.

You see what's just been put out on social media, where thousands of people are rushing the border. Having a drone fly overhead - and I think nobody knows much more about technology, this time of technology certainly, than I do. Having drones and various other form of sensors, they're all fine, but they're not going to stop the problems that this country has.

We've never had more people wanting to come to the United States. And that has to do with the economy and it has to do with a lot of other things. We're doing great as a country. But the better we do, the more people want to come in.

So, folks, I just want to thank you very much. It's an honor to be with you. And I'm glad you came, and I'm glad we came out here. And first time I've ever done this. This is the first time I've done it. I've done it for you, and I'm very proud of that, because you've done a fantastic job. And I want to thank you all. Chris, thank you very much.

Thank you all very much. Appreciate it. Thank you.