



# Durbin: President Trump Is Building His Wall at the Expense of the Military

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Vice Chairman of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, today questioned Mark Esper, Secretary of the U.S. Army, and General Mark Milley, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, about President Trump’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 budget request. In today’s hearing, Durbin pressed the Defense Department about President Donald Trump’s efforts to divert defense funds to the border wall so that he can fulfill a campaign promise. On Monday, Congress [learned](#) that \$1 billion in military personnel funding will go not toward top military priorities, but to build part of the border wall that Congress never agreed to fund. The President also wants to cancel \$3.6 billion in military construction projects that the Army and the other services asked for last year so that he can fund other portions of the wall.

**“Meanwhile, we have no answers on how the Armed Forces are going to pay for pressing readiness issues this year, like repairing bases from natural disasters, or paying the cost of deploying soldiers and the National Guard to the border. It would appear the President is really building his wall at the expense of America’s military,”** Durbin said. **“This should be extremely concerning to all of us – every American – each of whom is asking for clear answers to who is being held accountable for spending tax dollars and is the military still the President’s top priority?”**

Last week, the *Los Angeles Times* [published](#) a memo from the Marine Corps regarding the danger being created by diverting excess Department of Defense funding to President Trump’s border wall rather than Marine Corps priorities, such as repairs at Camp Lejeune and training.

Earlier this month, the Senate voted to reject President Trump’s emergency declaration by a bipartisan vote of 59-41.