

Dr. Burgess Weekly Address June 21, 2019

Stewarding Americans' Tax Dollars

Hello, this is your Congressman Michael Burgess.

As outlined in our nation's Constitution, the U.S. House of Representatives is responsible for appropriating Americans' tax dollars to fund critical services provided by the federal government – including ensuring domestic tranquility, providing for the common defense, and promoting the general welfare of the American people. Throughout the appropriations process, it is important that Members of Congress serve as responsible stewards of our nation's resources.

Over the past week, Congress considered two appropriations bills for fiscal year 2020 that included nearly \$1 trillion in discretionary spending. While this legislation includes important provisions that serve the American people, unfortunately it was sidetracked with a number of partisan poison pills – effectively ensuring that these funding bills have zero chance of becoming law.

Not only is this approach irresponsible and a disservice to the American people, but it also has the potential to be devastating for our men and women in uniform. As drafted by House Democrats, the 2020 appropriations bills cut billions of dollars for defense funding and billions of dollars for defense research. At this moment, it is more important than ever for our military to be a trailblazer in the world. Congress simply must not allow investment in our Armed Forces to fall behind nations such as China or Russia.

Notably, these appropriations bills also fail to address the humanitarian crisis on the southern border. Last month, I traveled to the Lower Rio Grande Valley area to see this situation firsthand, and it was clear that American resources are being strained by the enormous number of migrants crossing into the United States each day.

Let me be clear: This unprecedented crisis necessitates action and Congress must deliver strong border security and humanitarian aid. I am disappointed that House Democrats have failed to recognize this reality in their funding plan, and I am even more concerned that they omitted border security provisions as well as critical humanitarian support to care for the unaccompanied minor children who cross into the United States without legal status. It is not just wrong, but it is inhumane to allow this crisis to go unchecked.

I cannot support legislation that endangers our military, wastes taxpayer dollars, and kicks solutions to a humanitarian crisis further down the road, particularly if the legislation has no chance of becoming law – not because I don't like it, but because the Senate will not pass it and the President has issued a veto threat. Now, if House Democrats want to reconsider their appropriations bills, then I would be happy to work together on real ways to serve the American people.

As always, I appreciate your comments and your questions on this issue or any other issue. May God bless you and your family, may God bless those who protect our border, and as the song says, God bless you Texas.