

Congress must fund every part of DHS and stop playing politics with our safety

By Patrick Yoes

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The failure of Congress to provide funding to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and, specifically, to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) had real world consequences — our country and its borders were less safe during a time of war, and the men and women in law enforcement were left to wonder if they would receive a paycheck while their lives were on the line.

The fact is that protecting our nation's homeland doesn't stop, and neither should DHS' officers' paychecks. Were it not for the extraordinary measures taken by President Donald Trump and his administration to pay these employees, this crisis would have been even greater. These officers, and our country, are fortunate we averted any disaster or lasting damage.

Finally, Congress has voted to end the shutdown after a grueling and agonizing 76 days. It is thanks to the continued efforts of President Trump and his administration that the spending measure reached his desk and was signed into law. However, this bill still leaves immigration enforcement agencies like ICE and CBP unfunded because of partisan policy disputes. In order to rectify this issue, Congressional leaders are turning to budget reconciliation, a process that began with the Senate's recent passage of a budget resolution, S. Con. Res. 33. This is the first step in the reconciliation process that will allow Congress to fund our immigration enforcement agencies.

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The appropriations process has been wrecked by partisan policy fights, which is a grave disservice to our nation. If the House can pass the Senate resolution, we would be on track for President Trump to sign it into law by June 1. Any changes to the bill as written would require it to be returned to the Senate, creating an unacceptable delay and putting the entire process at risk. We are calling on every single member of Congress to pass this reconciliation bill and fund every part of DHS as soon as possible. Delay is unacceptable.

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It is said that we must learn from history or we are condemned to repeat it. We must remember this lesson — leaving DHS unfunded for over 70 days is unprecedented and frankly, shameful. It was also dangerous and should never happen again.

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