

# Handout A: The Modern Immigration Debate

## Document 1: President Donald Trump, address to the nation on immigration, January 8, 2019

### Source:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trumps-address-nation-crisis-border/>

Text
My fellow Americans: Tonight, I am speaking to you because there is a growing humanitarian and security crisis at our southern border. . . .
America proudly welcomes millions of lawful immigrants who enrich our society and contribute to our nation. But all Americans are hurt by uncontrolled, illegal migration. It strains public resources and drives down jobs and wages. Among those hardest hit are African Americans and Hispanic Americans. . . .
My administration has presented Congress with a detailed proposal to secure the border and stop the criminal gangs, drug smugglers, and human traffickers. It's a tremendous problem. Our proposal was developed by law enforcement professionals and border agents at the Department of Homeland Security. These are the resources they have requested to properly perform their mission and keep America safe. . . .
The proposal from Homeland Security includes cutting-edge technology for detecting drugs, weapons, illegal contraband, and many other things. We have requested more agents, immigration judges, and bed space to process the sharp rise in unlawful migration fueled by our very strong economy. Our plan also contains an urgent request for humanitarian assistance and medical support. . . .
This is a choice between right and wrong, justice and injustice. This is about whether we fulfill our sacred duty to the American citizens we serve. . . .
When I took the Oath of Office, I swore to protect our country. And that is what I will always do, so help me God.
Thank you and goodnight.

### Questions:

1. How does President Trump frame the argument that illegal immigration undoes the good that comes from immigration?
2. Besides the economic consequences, in what other ways does President Trump assert there are serious problems that come from illegal immigration?

## Document 2: Response to the president's address on immigration, January 8, 2019, by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer

### Source:

<https://www.npr.org/2019/01/08/683230863/transcript-trumps-address-on-border-security-and-democrats-response>

Text
Sadly, much of what we have heard from President Trump throughout this senseless shutdown has been full of misinformation and even malice.
The President has chosen fear. We want to start with the facts. . . .
The fact is: We all agree we need to secure our borders, while honoring our values: we can build the infrastructure and roads at our ports of entry; we can install new technology to scan cars and trucks for drugs coming into our nation; we can hire the personnel we need to facilitate trade and immigration at the border; we can fund more innovation to detect unauthorized crossings.
The fact is: the women and children at the border are not a security threat, they are a humanitarian challenge—a challenge that President Trump's own cruel and counterproductive policies have only deepened. . . .
Most presidents have used Oval Office addresses for noble purposes. This president just used the backdrop of the Oval Office to manufacture a crisis, stoke fear, and divert attention from the turmoil in his Administration.
My fellow Americans, there is no challenge so great that our nation cannot rise to meet it. We can re-open the government and continue to work through disagreements about policy. We can secure our border without an expensive, ineffective wall. And we can welcome legal immigrants and refugees without compromising safety and security.
The symbol of America should be the Statue of Liberty, not a thirty-foot wall.

### Questions:

1. What is it about President Trump's characterization of the situation at the border that the Democrats object to?
2. How do the Democrats see this as an issue that reflects on the national character of the United States?