

United States Senate

The Honorable Lloyd Austin
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

December 13, 2024

Dear Secretary Austin,

I am writing to demand that you immediately cease the auctioning off of border wall materials. Senate Republicans, including the incoming Chairman, as well as my colleagues on the Senate Armed Services have raised the absurdity of selling border wall materials through letters, nomination hearings, and through the National Defense Authorization Act legislative process. Public reports indicate hundreds of tons of valuable border wall construction material being sold for pennies on the dollar. These sales are occurring on the heels of President Trump's historic victory in November, an election in which a vast majority of Americans overwhelmingly supported strengthening our Southern Border security.

A representative sale on December 11, 2024 concluded with four sections of border wall, accounting for almost 16,000 pounds worth of steel, selling for \$105.¹ If purely sold for scrap metal at the average cost of \$694 per metric ton, the value of this lot is worth \$5,219.² While recouping less than 0.02% of taxpayer money used to secure these materials, the Biden Administration is sabotaging the incoming Trump Administration just weeks ahead of President Trump's inauguration. These border wall materials will cost tens of thousands of U.S. taxpayer dollars to replace and will be critical to stem the record flow of millions of illegal immigrants who were welcomed across our border during the Biden Administration.

Our nation is one built on the principles of law, order, and fairness. Legal immigration pathways exist to ensure that those who seek opportunity in this country do so through transparent, lawful processes. A physical barrier reinforces respect for these principles and sends a message that immigration must be orderly and lawful. Those who follow the process should not be undermined by those who attempt to bypass it. A well-constructed wall promotes fairness, strengthens public trust, and supports the integrity of our immigration system.

The construction of a border wall is not a political statement but a practical solution to a complex problem. It serves as a force multiplier for our Border Patrol agents and National Guardsmen, reduces the flow of dangerous drugs, prevents human trafficking, protects American jobs, and

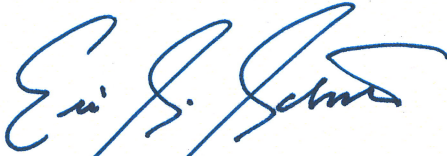
¹ <https://www.govplanet.com/for-sale/Construction-Materials-%284%29-32.91%E2%80%99-X-7.91%E2%80%99-Steel-Bollard-Wall-Sections-w%2FGrout-Arizona/12560586?h=5000%2C12%7CUSA-AZ%2Csm%7C1%2Ck%7Csteel%2Csort%7Cad+desc%2Cmf%7C1&rr=0.125&hitprm=&pnLink=yes>

² <https://www.focus-economics.com/commodities/base-metals/steel-usa/>

upholds the integrity of our immigration system. While a wall alone is not the sole answer to border security, it is a vital component of a comprehensive strategy.

For the sake of our safety, sovereignty, and economic well-being, I, once again, urge the Department of Defense to halt the sale of border wall material immediately. Together, we can protect our communities, restore the rule of law, and ensure a brighter, more secure future for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eric S. Schmitt". The signature is stylized with large, sweeping loops and a prominent "E" at the beginning.

Eric. S. Schmitt.
United States Senator