



FIREBRANDS BLAZING A FOREST FIRE IN WASHINGTON

In the Trump era, partisanship plays a more prominent role than ever before in the theatrics we call American politics. Recently, outlandish campaign positions concerning immigration that divide the country have been left totally deserted. However, the promise of a wall along the southern border has remained common thread throughout the Trump campaign and has translated into the presidency.

Republican demagogues spread hatred and bigotry about immigrants while Democrats propose ineffectual policies that don't address the core of the immigration issue. The constant, bitter rebuttals and counters between the two parties led to numerous ramifications—the most catastrophic being the government shutdown that lasted 35 days. And both parties are missing the point when it comes to the evolving debate about immigration and the border wall.

It's about the people. It's about the 380,000 workers furloughed and the additional 420,000 government employees forced to work without pay. It's about the employees who are unable to provide for themselves after missing 3 paychecks. It's about the thousands of immigrants migrating north in Central America and Mexico struggling through starvation and thirst, fleeing gang violence and murder threats.

Even when President Trump proposed concessions to reopen the government, it was a culmination of deception to continue the fight for a massive physical display of racism designed to keep out legal and illegal immigrants alike.

Not to mention the fact that the wall is impossible to build stretching over vast bodies of water and mountainous terrain. This debate isn't truly about the impractical, imaginary wall at all. It's

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about Donald Trump posturing and spreading a hateful ideology to play to his base.

In the US political system, many wealthy people dictate legislation and dominate the conversation, unaccountable to anyone or anything for years at a time until election season comes around. Ultimately, the majority of the American electorate and the values of immigrants are

not central to the policies created in DC. That needs to change. While both parties are flexing their muscles, children are dying of malnutrition in cages and the lives of government employees have been damaged in the months to come.

Democracy was never meant to be about financial and political gain—rather a reflection of the values of its constituents. Many constituents don't want children locked up like animals in a zoo. Many constituents don't want a small vocal minority of racists to dictate policy positions for the entirety of the country. Many constituents don't want the US military on the border on a hair-trigger.

Business executives and Republican congressman do.

In fact, 58% of Americans view the wall extremely unfavorably and lack confidence in Trump's ability to enact immigration policy according to the Pew Research Center.

Sadly, when it comes to this debate, however, the public loses out. Demagoguery will quell politicians lurking in the shadows. It's time for a change where US policy truly depends on the values and lives of its voters—like a democracy.