

The Society of Indian Psychologists (SIP) Statement on the Proposal to Build a Wall between what is Known as the US and what is Known as México

Approved by the SIP EC January 27, 2017

The Society of Indian Psychologists strongly opposes President Trump's proposal to build a wall between what is known as the United States of America and what is known as México. Except for the Native North Americans and their descendants who dwell in the area, everyone else is an immigrant. For children of immigrants, including the 45th President, to build a wall in order to discourage immigration is hypocrisy at its highest level. History teaches us that nations who build walls do so out of fear, and that walls historically have been symbols of perceived national weakness. As Native people, we believe fear is an internal (within person) problem requiring an internal (often spiritual) intervention. We do not support activities that externalize fear as this particular proposal does. We also do not see the U.S. as a weak entity as would be suggested by building a wall. Furthermore, SIP views the wall proposal for what it is at its very core, an act of symbolic racism toward particular people, which we cannot support.

In particular, we believe the following truths speak to our opposition to the proposed wall:

1. The border between these "countries" is an arbitrary border that was created by colonial powers. In fact, the land in question was not given to either nation, and was in fact taken away forcibly from the Native North American people in the area.
2. The proposal does not acknowledge the history of the people that live in the region. Native North Americans predate these colonial boundaries, and in fact many families, communities, and nations have relatives dwelling on both sides of this arbitrary border. Building a wall will create a true division of people who have historically dwelled together, and will perpetuate and intensify the psychological harm that the arbitrariness of borders has created in the first place.
3. The funds that will be used to build the wall would be put to better use to address the amazing array of health, mental health, and educational disparities in the U.S. today. We believe very strongly that building the wall is an unnecessary waste of financial and human resources. A wall will not strengthen the U.S., but addressing educational injustices, poverty, social injustice, and psychological and social well-being for citizens would most certainly strengthen it.
4. We stand with our Latino/a citizens and marvel at the injustice of the symbolic message being sent to that community. We abhor the stereotyping of this population that has occurred in order to justify this thinly veiled act of symbolic racism. We see the wall as an act of intimidation and bullying that is meant to convey aspects of white privilege and supremacy that are not welcomed among a nations of immigrants. As the ones who dwelled in this land first, we do not accept the flawed rationale for its construction by its supporters.