



Homeland Security

September 23, 2010

The Honorable John McCain
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCain:

Thank you for your questions regarding border security and interior immigration enforcement at yesterday's Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee hearing on the current terrorism threat environment facing our Nation. I want to take this opportunity to follow up on our discussion and clarify any confusion about how the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is approaching both issues.

As the Secretary of Homeland Security, I am responsible for and committed to securing our Nation's borders, and have worked to ensure that we use our limited resources to do so in a smart and effective manner. Over the past 20 months, I have directed an unprecedented increase in federal resources toward the Southern Border, and I have re-focused our immigration enforcement priorities to ensure the apprehension, detention and removal of criminal aliens. This combination, in my view, represents a common sense approach to our shared goal of ensuring the safety of all Americans.

I believe facts and numbers tell the most accurate story. The Border Patrol is better staffed and equipped than at any time in its history, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has deployed record numbers of agents and the President has called up the National Guard to the Southwest Border. We have expanded the use of DHS's Predator drone fleet and our fixed and rotor-wing aircraft coverage. We have also increased the number of canine teams, intelligence officers, and technology, such as mobile surveillance units, thermal imaging systems, and Z-Backscatters along the border. Secure Communities has been expanded from 14 jurisdictions in 2008 to 617 today, including every county along the Southwest Border. Through this program, we have identified and initiated removal proceedings against more than 300,000 aliens, including more than 47,000 charged with or convicted of major violent crimes such as murder, rape and the sexual abuse of children. Since January 2009, DHS has also audited more than 3,200 employers suspected of hiring illegal aliens, compared to just 500 in 2008, leading to the debarment of 200 companies and individuals, \$40 million in financial sanctions and more employer arrests than at any point in history. Finally, more resources will be deployed to the border in the coming months as a result of the bi-partisan supplemental appropriations legislation that President Obama recently signed into law. This includes,

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1000 new Border Patrol agents, 250 ICE special agents, investigators and analysts, 250 Customs and Border Protection Officers, two Predator drone systems, two Forward Operating Bases, and enhanced tactical communications capability. Your support for the legislation funding these enhancements was critical and I thank you for it.

DHS is in regular and recurrent contact with law enforcement along the Southwest border, including prosecutors, sheriffs and chiefs of police. My office conducts quarterly calls where we provide the latest intelligence and coordinate on operational priorities. DHS law enforcement officials in the field, moreover, are in daily contact with their state and local partners, serving together on task forces and regularly conducting joint operations. We have also increased the funds that state, local and tribal law enforcement can use to combat border related crime through Operation Stonegarden. Indeed, in the last two years, DHS provided \$124 million in these funds to Southwest border law enforcement entities, a record amount. Through all of our efforts, and by constantly monitoring intelligence, patterns, flows and FBI crime statistics, we are more prepared than ever before to respond to emerging threats.

The impact of these efforts has been substantial. Seizures of illicit goods such as narcotics, weapons, and bulk cash have all increased. Apprehensions by the border patrol are down 23%, indicating that fewer illegal aliens are attempting to cross. Last year, ICE removed more aliens than ever before and expects to surpass this record in 2010. In 2010 alone, ICE increased its criminal removals by 64% over 2008. As I have stated consistently and shown through departmental policy, DHS will continue to aggressively enforce our Nation's immigration laws and take every action within our authority to ensure that our borders are safe and secure.

It would be my pleasure to come to your office and brief you personally on our ongoing efforts, particularly as they relate to Arizona, should you wish me to do so. Thank you, once again, for your engagement on these issues and I look forward to continuing our work together on these critical national security matters.

Yours very truly,



Janet Napolitano