



March 19, 2009

Dear Colleague,

As the Appropriations Committee meets today, we urge committee members to provide additional funding for border security operations. In the 2008-09 biennium, \$108.1 million was appropriated (All Funds) for border security, of which \$63.7 million was appropriated from General Revenue and used for expenditures on items such as patrol equipment and communications and video technology.

As a result of this increased border security funding, Operations Laredo and Rio Grande have reduced border crossings and crime along the 1,240 mile border that Texas shares with Mexico. Operation Linebacker, initiated by the Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition, has increased border patrols and provided support to local law enforcement in order to reduce crime and enhance border security.

In order to ensure that these successes can be continued, we urge the committee to increase the All Funds appropriation for border security in the 2010-11 biennium.

Increasing funding for law enforcement agencies in Texas' border regions is imperative as they continue to address the growing threat from Mexican drug cartels. On February 8, 2009, the *Houston Chronicle* reported that:

Across Mexico, more than 5,000 people were killed last year... Some of the deaths of police and other public officials have been public and gruesome, with bodies posed in public places.

Violence associated with drug wars in Mexico is already beginning to spill into Texas. On February 13, 2009, the *Dallas Morning News* reported that:

[T]he discovery of military-grade weaponry closer to the U.S. border and in some cases in Texas are signs that the relative calm here might not hold... Most recently, U.S. investigators have linked a grenade used in an attempted attack in South Texas with other weapons in Mexico thought to belong to the Zetas, the Gulf cartel's enforcement arm. No grenades exploded in an attack on a bar in Pharr, Texas, just north of the Rio Grande, last month.

The same report highlighted the scale of the problem, pointing out that drug cartels have amassed military-style arsenals within sight of the Texas border:

Also of concern was the November discovery of the largest cache of drug cartel weaponry ever seized in Mexico – just south of the border. In Reynosa, across the river from McAllen and Pharr, Mexican authorities found 540 assault rifles, more than 500,000 rounds of ammunition, 14 cartridges of dynamite, 98 fragmentation grenades, 67 bullet-proof vests, seven .50-caliber sniper rifles and an anti-tank rocket.

Ensuring that Texas' law enforcement agencies in border regions are adequately funded will help the state address these border security challenges. In its September 2008 report to the Governor, the Texas Border Security Council, established by Senate Bill 11 (80R), recommended that the Legislature provide adequate funding for border operations at the state level. The report specifically notes that:

Because funding for state led border operations has been successful in decreasing and deterring crime, the State should continue to fund operations at the state level. Border security funding should be used to support closely-coordinated, intelligence-driven patrol operations that utilize technology to maximize their impact.

The report indicates the specific areas in which border security funding can be utilized by the state and law enforcement agencies:

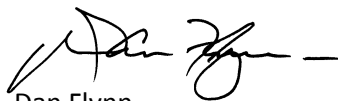
- Overtime for local and state personnel involved in border operations.
- Funding to pay reserve deputies.
- Travel costs for personnel temporarily deployed to the border region.
- Operational costs such as fuel and maintenance for patrol vehicles, boats, and aircraft.
- Technology such as video surveillance, license plate readers, information sharing, and radio.
- Communications interoperability.
- Six Joint Operations and Intelligence Centers and the Border Security Operations Center.
- Equipment used to support border operations and patrols.

We urge the Appropriations Committee to increase funding for border security operations for the 2010-11 biennium so that law enforcement agencies are able to meet the challenges posed by the increased levels of drug crime in Texas' border regions.

Sincerely,



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House District 16 – Conroe



Linda Harper- Brown
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House District 6 – Tyler



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Phil King
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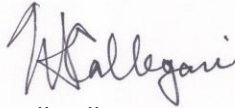
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House District 30 – Victoria



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House District 63 – Flower Mound



Bill Callegari
House District 132 - Katy



Ken Paxton
House District 70 – McKinney



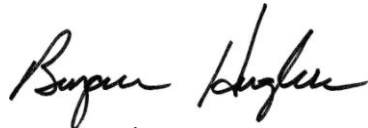
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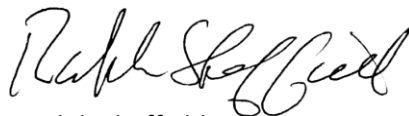
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