

PRINCIPLES FOR A BETTER BORDER WITH MEXICO

Congress and the President Can Help Create a Better Border with Mexico:

- Congress and the President should seize this moment for immigration reform to reform border enforcement, which is inhibiting bilateral trade, hampering bilateral relationships, and undermining the civil and human rights of border residents and border crossers:
 - Ports of entry have become bottlenecks with crossing wait times reaching as much as 5 hours, acting as a deterrent for legitimate crossers, choking border communities with air pollution, and costing billions of dollars in lost revenue.
 - Abuse of authority by border agents has become a significant problem leading to the daily harassment of crossers, the violation of civil and human rights, and the killing and serious injury of an average of 1 person a month.
- It's time to shift away from an enforcement-only paradigm and toward a common-sense approach that includes improved port infrastructure, personnel training, community consultation, and public accountability in border enforcement.
- It's also the time to assess the effectiveness of costly enforcement practices and reign in irresponsible spending, including halting further construction of the costly and largely ineffective border wall.

Mexico is a Critical Trade Partner and Neighbor:

- Mexico is the third largest trading partner for the United States: bilateral trade is now close to \$500 billion (half a trillion dollars).
- Mexico is the second largest market for U.S. exports: in 2010, Mexico spent \$163 billion on U.S. goods.
- Much of that trade happens across the 2,000 miles of border shared by both countries through the 25 land-ports of entry in southern border communities.

Border Communities are Gateways for Bilateral Trade and Bilateral Relationships:

- The U.S.-Mexico border region encompasses 4 states on the U.S. side and 6 states on the Mexican side: it includes 44 counties in the U.S. and 80 municipalities in Mexico.
- The border region is home to more than 6 million people living on the U.S. side alone.
- Many more cross through the region to shop, visit family, and do business across the border that fuels not only border economies but our national economies as well.
- Over 400,000 people and 13,000 cargo trucks cross daily into the United States through the southern ports with roughly an equal number crossings southbound.
- Recent studies show that the majority of people crossing are border residents from both sides of the border who cross to do business, shop, and visit friends and family.
- The trucks crossing into the United States are bound for destinations throughout the country and to places such as Kansas, Ohio and New York.

Border Communities are Safe, Thriving and Contributing to U.S. Economic Prosperity:

- U.S. border cities are among the safest in the nation.¹
- They are a vital component of the nearly half a trillion dollars² in trade between the United States and Mexico.
- One in every 24 workers in the United States depends on the commerce between the two countries.

Although Migration Flows and Apprehensions are Down, the CBP Budget is Ballooning

- Over the last decade, apprehensions by the U.S. Border Patrol have declined more than 72 percent (2000-10).
- The downward trend is due in part to a steadily improving Mexican economy and fewer Mexican migrants seeking to enter the United States. In fact, there is now a net outflow of Mexicans from the United States.
- CBP's spending runs directly counter to data on recent and current migration trends and severely detracts from the true needs of border security.
- Despite a downward trend in migration flows and apprehensions, CBP costs have ballooned. Each apprehension at the border now costs five times more what it cost in 2005 (from \$1,400 to over \$7,500).

Current CBP Operations are Draining Taxpayers:

- Border enforcement is not an exception to fiscal responsibility.
- From FY2004 to FY201, the budget for CBP increased by 94 percent to \$11.65 billion. By way of comparison, this jump in funding represents more than quadruple the growth rate of NASA's budget and almost ten times that of the National Institutes of Health
- The Border Patrol, an agency within CBP, is the largest law enforcement agency the United States. Since 2003, the Border Patrol has doubled in size and now employs more than 21,000 agents, with about 85 percent of its force deployed to the 2,000-mile southern border. There are now enough agents on the border that they can stand the length of the border and be in sight of each other.
- In addition to the other enforcement strategies deployed, DHS has also deployed unmanned drones that cover the Southwest border from California to Texas.
- Additionally, DHS has completed 649 miles of fencing, including 299 miles of vehicle barriers and 350 miles of pedestrian fence.
- An independent study on the effectiveness of CBP's bloated budget in a time of fiscal prudence is in order.

¹ Johnson, Kevin and Gomez, Alan. "Violent crime drops overall in U.S. Border Cities." USA TODAY, published Nov. 4, 2012.

² O'dowd, Peter. "Trade Between U.S., Mexico Nears \$500 Billion." Fronteras, published June 6, 2012.

Accountability and Oversight of Border Agencies are Essential to the Integrity of Border Operations and the Quality of Life of Border Communities:

- Incidents of excessive use of force are on the rise on both the Southwest and Northern border with at least 22 border residents being killed or seriously injured by CBP officials since January 2010.
- Cases of racial profiling, illegal searches and seizures and sexual assault are also on the rise.

It's Time to Invest in a Better Border, to Modernize Ports of Entry and Improve Treatment of Border Communities:

- As essential gateways, the ports of entry along the southern border require additional resources, personnel, infrastructure and improvements to facilitate the flow of traffic and ensure the safe and dignified treatment of all border crossers.
- Border enforcement strategies must include consultation with state, local, and tribal authorities along the international land and maritime borders of the United States; and appropriate private-sector entities, non-governmental organizations, and affected communities that have expertise in areas related to border management.
- Border communities should be viewed as national assets rather than venues for enforcement-only treatment. When border communities thrive, they drive economic growth on both sides of the border.

Legislative Reform that Improves the Border Should Include:

- 1. Improvements to Ports of Entry to facilitate the flow of bilateral trade and traffic.**
- 2. Clear and enforceable standards for treatment of border crossers and residents.**
- 3. Measures for enhancing oversight and accountability of CBP to guard against abuse of authority.**
- 4. Limiting the role of law enforcement and the military in border enforcement.**

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