Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–4302

April 28, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

As you know, violence in the vicinity of the U.S.-Mexico border continues to increase at an alarming rate. We believe that this violence represents a serious threat to the national security of the United States as well as a serious threat to U.S. citizens that live along the 1,969 mile long border. We strongly believe that it is imperative for your Administration to promptly take the necessary steps to prevent this violence.

We urge the Administration to take action to address this growing national security threat on our southern border. Without swift and decisive action, it is our fear that this violence will only increase in severity and scope. We urge you to deploy the National Guard to the U.S.-Mexico border, as has been requested by a number of border state Governors and Members of Congress. We ask that any National Guard troops that are deployed should be provided with very clear guidance of proper rules of engagement and should be armed and allowed to defend themselves if fired upon or attacked.

As you know, the level of violence along the border continues to increase. Since January 2008, nearly 5,000 homicides have been committed in Juarez, Mexico, making it one of the most violent cities in the world. In 2009 alone, 79 U.S. citizens were killed in Juarez, Mexico. On March 13th of this year, Lesley Enriquez, a U.S. Consulate employee, and her husband Arthur Redelf, a ten year veteran of the El Paso Police Department, were killed when Mexican drug gang members fired a number of rounds at their vehicle. That same day, Jorge Alberto Salcido, the husband of a U.S. Consulate employee, was killed when cartel members shot at his car at a separate location.

On March 27, 2010, Robert Krentz, a longtime Arizona rancher, was found shot dead and slumped over in his all-terrain vehicle with the engine still running. Following the murder of Mr. Krentz, his assailant was tracked to the U.S.- Mexico border and there is evidence that he crossed the border into Mexico. The day before the killing, Mr. Krentz's brother had called the Border Patrol to report a caravan of illegal immigrants who were ultimately caught carrying 280 pounds of marijuana.

Additionally, our Border Patrol and law enforcement agents along the border are facing a growing threat to their safety. Assaults against Border Patrol agents increased 46 percent from 752 incidents in 2007 to 1,097 incidents in 2008. Recent analysis from the El Paso Sector Border Intelligence Center warns that retaliatory actions against law enforcement officers could occur in the border region.

At the same time, we urge the Administration to provide the Border Patrol with the support it needs, both in terms of tangible resources such as state-of-the-art technology and equipment, as well as ensuring that agents are not disciplined or prosecuted for performing their duties or defending themselves against attacks.

We stand ready to work together with you and your Administration on these important issues to ensure the safety and security of all Americans in the border region and throughout our country.

Sincerely,

Rep. TED POE
Member of Congress (TX-02)

Rep. Gabrielle Giffords
Member of Congress (AZ-08)

Rep. Dan Burton
Member of Congress (IN-05)

Rep. Edward Royce
Member of Congress (CA-40)

Rep. Harry Teague
Member of Congress (NM-02)

Rep. Michael McCaul
Member of Congress (TX-10)

Rep. Kay Granger
Member of Congress (TX-12)

Rep. Brian Bilbray
Member of Congress (CA-50)

Rep. John Carter
Member of Congress (TX-31)

Rep. Sam Johnson
Member of Congress (TX-03)

Rep. Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress (TX-01)

Rep. John Culberson
Member of Congress (TX-07)

Rep. Joe Barton
Member of Congress (TX-06)

Rep. Michael Burgess
Member of Congress (TX-26)

Rep. John Shadegg
Member of Congress (AZ-03)

Rep. Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress (CA-52)

Rep. Ralph Hall
Member of Congress (TX-04)