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November 18, 2010

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Violence along the Southern Border has increased in severity significantly since you came into office in January 2009. In April of that year, Governor Rick Perry, in response to the increased violence, called upon your Administration to deploy 1,000 Title 32 National Guard soldiers and airmen to Texas' border with Mexico. In response, you gave approval for 250 Texas National Guardsmen to be deployed to the Southern Border.

In August of 2010, members of the Texas congressional delegation wrote to you explaining how woefully inadequate this approval was to the safety and security of the American citizens residing along the border. Indeed, our worst fears came true when on September 30, 2010, David Hartley was attacked and presumably killed on Falcon Lake, between the U.S. and Mexican borders. Moreover, violence in Ciudad Juarez continues to escalate. In 2009, over 2,600 men and women were killed in the Mexican border town.

Considering this increase in violence it is incomprehensible that less than 6 months after their deployment to the Southern Border, your Administration is recalling the National Guard forces under your Southwest Border Augmentation Plan. According to this plan, the 286 Texas National Guard members currently stationed along the border will be sent home by the end of February 2011. Further, this unilateral decision was made without the input of any of the states which share a border with Mexico. At a minimum, your Administration should honor the commitment you originally made to keep these troops in place for one year, redeploying them no sooner than July 2011.

I must respectfully reiterate my earlier request that your Administration approve Governor Perry's original request for 1,000 troops to be deployed to the southern Texas border, and that those troops be kept in place until the violence along the border can be safely managed. There is no greater role for the federal government than to protect the citizens of these United States from threats abroad. Removing these troops from the border is irresponsible and will put American lives at risk, and I urge you to reconsider this decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael C. Burgess".

Michael C. Burgess, M.D.