

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 25, 2011

The Honorable Janet Napolitano  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Madam Secretary:

As representatives of our respective border states, we are concerned with the increasing level of violence occurring along our southern border. In the past six months, you and other officials in the Obama Administration have made statements that falsely characterize the U.S.-Mexico border as “safe” and “secure.” This mischaracterization has become apparent, given the recent violent conflicts that have occurred between U.S. law enforcement officers and Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) on the U.S.-Mexico border.

On January 31, 2011, you delivered a speech at the University of Texas at El Paso in which you stated, “today I say to the cartels: Don’t even think about bringing your violence and tactics across this border... You will be met by an overwhelming response.”<sup>1</sup> However, this warning has not deterred the cartels, as cartel-related violence continues to spill across the border. Recent reports have indicated that Mexican Cartels have instructed their members to fight with lethal force when they encounter U.S. law enforcement. This is a drastic change in the cartels’ tactics, resulting in increased drug-related violence and threats to U.S. law enforcement. The evidence is as clear as it is troubling. Here are just a few examples:

- On December 14, 2010, Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry was murdered by Mexican bandits in Rio Rico, Arizona. Agent Terry was shot in the pelvis by an AK-47 assault rifle while interdicting a group of armed subjects who were awaiting a drug load coming from Mexico.<sup>2</sup>
- On June 9, 2011, Texas Parks and Wildlife Game Wardens, Texas Rangers and U. S. Border Patrol agents interdicted drug smugglers who were attempting to move approximately 450 pounds of marijuana across the Rio Grande from Mexico to nearby Abram, Texas in Hidalgo County. The smugglers fled and drove their car into the Rio Grande River at the U.S. Mexico border in an attempt to transport their drugs back into Mexico. When U.S. law enforcement officers arrived at the river they were assaulted with rocks and then fired upon by Mexican cartel

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<sup>1</sup> Reuters. “U.S. warns Mexican cartels on cross-border violence.” Alejandro Martinez-Cabrera. January 31, 2011

<sup>2</sup> Foxnews.com. “America’s Third War: Agent Brian Terry, A Policy of Silence?” William Lajeunesse. February 22, 2011.

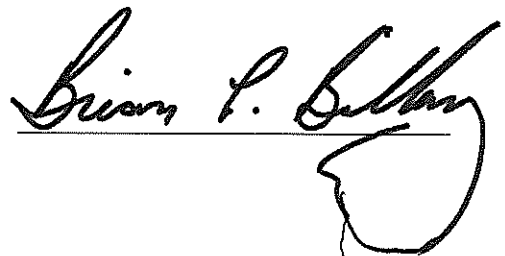
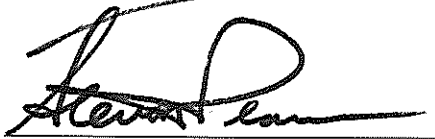
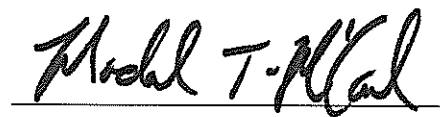
members.<sup>3</sup> Two Texas Parks and Wildlife Game Wardens were injured in the exchange as well as an estimated three cartel members.

- On June 19, 2011, a police cruiser attempted to stop a red Chevrolet pickup on Military Road in Mission, Texas. Instead of pulling over, the pickup fled and a passenger began throwing bundles of marijuana at the police cruiser. The two men inside the red pickup drove straight into the Rio Grande, directly underneath the Anzalduas bridge in Hidalgo County Texas. When U.S. law enforcement arrived, they were fired upon by cartel members waiting on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande. U.S. law enforcement officers then returned fire-- no injuries were reported.<sup>4</sup>

Madam Secretary, your remarks and those by others in the Obama Administration "that the border is more secure than ever" are not accurate and they undermine our country's efforts to secure our border with Mexico, stop the illicit trafficking of drugs, weapons, and human beings, and eradicate the cartel-related violence that consistently spills into our once safe and prosperous border communities. The Department of Homeland Security and the Obama Administration must put politics aside and acknowledge the reality of the situation occurring in the southwest border region. Our border with Mexico is not secure; violence, drugs, contraband and criminals continually cross into the United States without confrontation or detection.

We the undersigned request that you, Madam Secretary, accurately characterize the situation on the U.S.-Mexico border and implement strategies and policies to address the continual cross-border violence originating from Mexico. Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to working with you to address this serious problem.

Sincerely,



<sup>3</sup> Texas DPS Chaparral. "Public Safety Commission hears report on Mexican border incident." July 2011

<sup>4</sup> The Monitor. "Mission PD: U.S. law enforcement exchanges fire with gunmen across border." Dave Hendricks. June 19<sup>th</sup> 2011.

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Ken Brady

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Sam Johnson

K. J. Kelly

Jim Culberson

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Blake Farnthold

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Ray George

Bill Cant

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Randy Neugebauer

Ralph M. Hall

Ronie Lehman

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**Members Signed Onto Letter**

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