



Homeland Security

[Home](#) [News](#) [Readout of Secretary Napolitano's Remarks at the National Association of Evangelicals' Meeting](#)

News

[Blog](#)

[Comunicados de](#)

[Prensa](#)

[Data](#)

[Events](#)

[Fact Sheets](#)

[Multimedia](#)

[Press Releases](#)

[Publications](#)

[Speeches](#)

[Testimony](#)

[Media Contacts](#)

[Social Media](#)

Readout of Secretary Napolitano's Remarks at the National Association of Evangelicals' Meeting

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WASHINGTON—Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano today delivered remarks at the National Association of Evangelicals' Washington Briefing to discuss the need for comprehensive immigration reform and underscore the Administration's efforts in securing the nation's borders. Over the past four years, this Administration has dedicated historic levels of personnel, technology, and resources to the Southwest border, and undertaken an unprecedented effort to transform our nation's immigration enforcement systems into one that focuses on public safety, border security, and the integrity of the immigration system.

"In order to continue making progress in securing our southern border, we need to modernize our immigration laws," said Secretary Napolitano. "Commonsense immigration reform is the single best step we can take to enhance border security. By strengthening our ability to ensure a legal workforce and reduce the magnet for illegal migration, we can enable our officers and agents along the border to spend the bulk of their time focused on public safety and national security threats."

Secretary Napolitano highlighted the Department's work with local law enforcement to enforce immigration laws while securing our borders. The Border Patrol is better staffed than at any time in its 88-year history, having doubled the number of agents from approximately 10,000 in 2004 to more than 21,300 today. Attempts to cross the border illegally, as measured by U.S. Border Patrol apprehensions, totaled nearly 365,000 nationwide in FY 2012, representing a nearly 50 percent decrease since FY 2008 and a 78 percent decrease from their peak in FY 2000. Additionally, from FY 2009 to 2012, CBP and ICE seized 71 percent more currency, 39 percent more drugs, and 189 percent more weapons along the Southwest border as compared to FY 2005 to 2008.

During her remarks, Secretary Napolitano also discussed the Department's collaboration with the faith-based community, through the Faith-based Homeland Security and Communications Advisory Committee. This Faith-based committee is part of the larger Homeland Security Advisory Committee, which is charged with advising the Secretary and senior department leadership.

In January, President Obama [announced key principles](#) for commonsense immigration reform that would continue to build upon this progress by investing in the ports of entry, and helping our officers and agents focus on public safety threats; making it harder for transnational criminal organizations to operate, while encouraging immigrants to pursue a pathway to earned citizenship; holding employers accountable and strengthening the integrity of the immigration system overall. The passage of the President's proposal will help make sure that officers and agents along the border are better able to focus on combating public safety and national security threats.

For more information, visit www.dhs.gov.

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