



***RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF
COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM***

WHEREAS, the El Paso area was originally discovered by Spanish explorers in 1581, commencing over 400 years as a border community;

WHEREAS, in 2003, trade through the land ports along the U.S.-Mexico Border represented about 83 percent of the trade between the countries. Together, the top 10 ports of entry account for 98 percent of trade passing through the border. El Paso had approximately 20.2 percent of the exports, which put the city only behind Laredo in volume. As to numbers of overall inspections of people, El Paso surpasses all ports of entry in Texas. With \$152 billion in land trade with Mexico, Texas surpassed other states by far: California (\$30 billion), Arizona (\$12 billion) and New Mexico (\$1.1 billion);

WHEREAS, the balance of the facilitation of trade with the need to make our community secure has long been of principle importance;

WHEREAS, the El Paso community has worked with representatives and agencies in Mexico and the United States for many years to create secure trade and traffic programs, including the first Dedicated Commuter Lane (“DCL”) and Fast and Secure Trade (“FAST”) in Texas;

WHEREAS, current immigration law does not have timely legal alternatives to allow companies or individuals to employ such essential workers as those needed in the construction, healthcare, restaurant, transportation, hotel, elder care, and child care job sectors, among others; and

WHEREAS, on December 16, 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 4437, which fundamentally proposes an enforcement only approach to the complex issue of the control of illegal immigration and the improvement of border security.

THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY:

RESOLVED, that the complex issues of illegal immigration and a porous border cannot be fixed by an enforcement only approach. Any solutions must take a multi-layered approach to multi-layered issues created over decades of neglect.

RESOLVED, that rational enforcement of immigration policies should include increasing the number of federal enforcement personnel along the border and utilization of the new technologies that are being used by branches of the military and other law enforcement agencies.

RESOLVED, that the construction of a fence along the entire southern border or the militarization of the border are not solutions.

RESOLVED, that a solution must address allowing the undocumented in the United States who are filling legitimate employment needs a means to obtain legal status without placing them ahead of those who applied to enter the U.S. legally.

RESOLVED, that immigration processing backlogs must be reduced for those with valid pending applications.

RESOLVED, that new legislation must address document fraud and include severe penalties for those who prey upon undocumented aliens.

RESOLVED, that people offering to “assist” an undocumented person in the U.S. by providing food, shelter, counseling, or transportation must not be exposed to criminal penalties, if they are not engaged knowingly in smuggling or aiding said individuals to enter into the United States.

RESOLVED, that employers should be provided with a transition period to comply with new document verification processes.

RESOLVED, that any reform of current immigration laws that will have meaningful, long term impact must include active involvement by the Mexican Government.

Approved by the Governing Board of The Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce on March 21, 2006.