



Readout of Secretary Napolitano's Call with Southwest Border Sheriffs and Police Chiefs

Release Date: December 14, 2010

For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
Contact: 202-282-8010

WASHINGTON—Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano today held a quarterly conference call with sheriffs and police chiefs from 30 jurisdictions along the Southwest border to discuss the Department's ongoing support for state and local law enforcement in their efforts to keep their communities safe from violence and other threats.

On the call, Secretary Napolitano underscored the vital role played by state and local law enforcement agencies in securing the U.S.-Mexico border and emphasized DHS' commitment to working with them to confront ongoing border challenges.

Since January 2009, DHS has committed unprecedented resources along the Southwest border. The Border Patrol is better staffed today than at any time in its 86-year history, having doubled the number of agents from approximately 10,000 in 2004 to more than 20,500 today. In addition, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has doubled the number of personnel assigned to Border Enforcement Security Task Forces; increased the number of intelligence analysts working along the U.S.-Mexico border; quintupled deployments of Border Liaison Officers; and begun screening 100 percent of southbound rail shipments for illegal weapons, drugs, and cash—for the first time ever.

Secretary Napolitano also highlighted critical programs that assist state and local law enforcement in making their communities safer. In July, DHS announced more than \$47 million in fiscal year 2010 Operation Stonegarden grants for Southwest border states. Based on risk, cross-border traffic and border-related threat intelligence, 82 percent of 2009 and 2010 Operation Stonegarden funds went to Southwest border states—up from 59 percent in 2008.

DHS has also expanded the Secure Communities initiative—which uses biometric information and services to identify and remove criminal aliens in state prisons and local jails—from 14 jurisdictions in 2008 to more than 800 today, including all jurisdictions along the Southwest border.

In fiscal year 2010, ICE set a record for overall removals of illegal aliens. Half of those removed—more than 195,000—were convicted criminals. These statistics represent an increase of more than 81,000 criminal removals compared to fiscal year 2008—a more than 70 percent increase in removals of criminal aliens from the previous administration.

For more information, visit www.dhs.gov.

###

This page was last reviewed/modified on December 14, 2010.