



Readout of Secretary Napolitano's Remarks on Border Security at the University of Texas at El Paso

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EL PASO, Texas—Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano today delivered remarks at the University of Texas at El Paso highlighting the Department's unprecedented efforts over the past two years to secure the Southwest border by deploying historic levels of manpower, resources and technology and increasing collaboration with federal, state, local and tribal, and Mexican partners while facilitating legal trade and travel.

"The Obama administration has engaged in an unprecedented effort to bring focus and intensity to Southwest border security, coupled with a reinvigorated, smart and effective approach to enforcing immigration laws in the interior of our country," said Secretary Napolitano. "Almost two years into the Southwest Border Initiative and the verdict is in: our approach is working—illegal immigration is decreasing, deportations are increasing and crime rates have gone down."

During her remarks, Secretary Napolitano highlighted the Obama administration's efforts to strengthen Southwest border security by increasing the number of Border Patrol agents from approximately 10,000 in 2004 to more than 20,700 in 2010; doubling the number of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) personnel assigned to Border Enforcement Security Task Forces; increasing the number of intelligence analysts working along the U.S.-Mexico border; quintupling deployments of Border Liaison Officers; and beginning screening of southbound rail and vehicle traffic for the illegal weapons and cash that are helping to fuel the cartel violence in Mexico.

Secretary Napolitano also underscored the results of these investments, noting that Border Patrol apprehensions—a key indicator of illegal immigration—have decreased 36 percent in the last two years and are less than half of what they were at their peak; violent crime in border communities has remained flat or fallen in the past decade; and statistics have shown that some of the safest communities in America are along the border.

Additionally, Secretary Napolitano reiterated the Department's continued commitment to partnering with federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement to enforce America's immigration laws and prioritize the removal of criminal aliens that pose a threat to public safety. In FY 2010, ICE removed over 195,000 illegal aliens convicted of crimes, the most ever removed from our country in a single year. The continued growth of DHS programs such as Secure Communities—which has helped DHS identify and remove tens of thousands of criminal aliens in state prisons and local jails by running their fingerprints against federal immigration databases when they get booked into the system—reflects the success of these partnerships. DHS has expanded Secure Communities from 14 jurisdictions in 2008 to more than 1,000 this week—including all jurisdictions along the Southwest border.

DHS has also stepped up labor enforcement, arresting a record number of employers last year who knowingly hire illegal immigrants and strengthening the efficiency and accuracy of E-Verify, which continues to grow by more than 1,000 businesses a week, to assist employers in abiding by the law.

In the coming months, DHS will continue to deploy additional resources to the Southwest border, including two new forward operating bases to improve coordination of border activities, improved tactical communications systems and 1,000 new Border Patrol Agents, funded through the Emergency Supplemental for Border Security passed and signed into law in August 2010.

Secretary Napolitano's remarks as prepared for delivery are available [here](#). For more information about the Department's unprecedented efforts to secure the Southwest border, visit www.dhs.gov.

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