



Fact Sheet: Smart, Effective Border Security and Immigration Enforcement

Release Date: October 5, 2011

Secretary Napolitano's Remarks on Smart Effective Border Security and Immigration Enforcement

DHS is focused on smart and effective enforcement of U.S. immigration laws in a manner that best promotes public safety, border security, and the integrity of the immigration system.

Fact: Our Southwest Border is Safe and Open for Business

Protecting the nation's borders—land, air, and sea—from the illegal entry of people, weapons, drugs, and contraband is vital to our homeland security, as well as economic prosperity. Over the past several years, DHS has deployed unprecedented levels of personnel, technology, and resources to the Southwest border.

Mayors, police chiefs, community leaders, and recently an array of publications including *USA Today*, *The Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal* have reiterated—security along the US border with Mexico is at an apex and those who live and work along it continue to say it is safe and open for business.

- Along the Southwest border, DHS has increased the number of boots on the ground from approximately 9,100 Border Patrol agents in 2001 to more than 18,000 today;
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has deployed a quarter of all its personnel to the Southwest border region—the most ever—to dismantle criminal organizations along the border;
- Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has deployed dual detection canine teams as well as non-intrusive inspection systems, Mobile Surveillance Systems, Remote Video Surveillance Systems, thermal imaging systems, radiation portal monitors, and license plate readers to the Southwest border;
- Illegal immigration attempts have decreased 36 percent in the past two years, and are less than one third of what they were at their peak;
- Over the past two and a half years, DHS has seized 75 percent more currency, 31 percent more drugs, and 64 percent more weapons along the Southwest border as compared to the last two and a half years during the previous Administration.

Implementing an Effective Immigration Enforcement Strategy

DHS is working to make sure that our limited resources are applied in a way that enhances public safety, border security, and the integrity of the immigration system, while respecting the rule of law. As part of that process, ICE has adopted new policies, including a new process that ensures that those enforcing immigration laws make appropriate use of the discretion they already have in deciding the types of individuals we prioritize for removal from the country.

DHS has implemented common sense policies that govern the allocation of our enforcement resources by:

- Establishing as a top priority, the identification and removal of public safety and national security threats;
- Expanding the use and frequency of investigations and programs, like Secure Communities, that track down criminals and gang members;
- Deterring individuals from illegally crossing the southwest border, by prioritizing the apprehension of recent border crossers;
- Eliminating worksite raids that did nothing to enhance public safety. Instead, we focused on targeted worksite enforcement programs like I-9 audits and criminal prosecutions of employers who egregiously violate employment laws;
- Prioritizing the removal of those that repeatedly violate our immigration laws and immigration fugitives.

AILA InfoNet Doc. No. 11100563. (Posted 10/05/11)

Over the past few years, DHS has achieved significant results in implementing an effective immigration enforcement strategy:

- In FY 2010, ICE removed over 195,000 convicted criminals-- more than had ever been previously removed by ICE and 81,000 more than removed in FY 2008.
- For the first time in decades, in FY 2010, 50% of the aliens removed by ICE had been convicted of a criminal offense. In FY 2011, ICE will again remove a record number of convicted criminals from our country.
- Similar results have been achieved with regard to setting priorities for the removal of those termed "non-criminals." More than two-thirds of those removed in 2010 were either recent border crossers or repeat violators.

This page was last reviewed/modified on October 5, 2011.