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Washington, DC 20515

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WESTERN CAUCUS

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July 3, 2007

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Meaningful immigration reform is a goal that most Americans share. Overwhelmingly, the American people believe that the solution to illegal immigration begins with border security but does not end there. The various proposals put forward to address this issue, including the Administration's latest initiative, are worthwhile contributions to the debate and are a step toward achieving reforms the American people can support. However, often, actions speak louder than words.

From the phone calls I am receiving and conversations with constituents, it is clear that many have lost confidence that the government is doing all it can to implement the various border security measures Congress has already enacted. Put simply, the American people do not trust government to keep its word. Before any new reform proposals can gain the support of the American people, the government must demonstrate that the actions Congress has already mandated for border security are, in fact, being carried out. No act of Congress demands such transparency more than the Secure Fence Act.

Giving the American people mechanisms to monitor the progress of the fence will go a long way toward restoring confidence, and helping us move forward with needed reforms. Securing our borders is a fundamental responsibility, and it is worth devoting some modest resources to let people see what is being done. When millions map their trips online or view their own neighborhoods on GoogleEarth®, making it possible for concerned citizens to see for themselves where the fence has been completed, where it is being built, and where it is scheduled to be built, updated in real time, is not a Herculean task. In addition, webcams at construction sites would allow Americans to see the progress with their own eyes.

When you and I traveled to the Yuma sector last February to see the progress of the border fence, what we saw and heard show that the fence is beginning to work. With information so readily available, and technology so inexpensive, there is no reason the American people should not be able to view the progress being made toward securing the border. The men and women who patrol everyday deserve their efforts to be known and the American people deserve to see what they are paying for.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Cannon", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chris Cannon