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October 19, 2010

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The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

For the past two years, I have written to you and Secretary Napolitano making the case for more resources and greater attention to be devoted to the southern border between the United States and Mexico, specifically in my home state of Texas. Violence along the border has escalated on every front, and despite claims that your Administration has increased deportations, residents along the border repeatedly report only worsening conditions.

The fact that our border is grossly underprotected has been underscored by the recent attack on an American citizen while out on Falcon Lake along the Texas-Mexico border. Reports of attacks on American fishermen by Mexican cartels have increased over the past year, culminating in the apparent fatal shooting of David Hartley on September 30, 2010. Mr. Hartley's wife has reported that while the couple was out on the lake, several boats surrounded the couple and passengers began shooting, hitting Mr. Hartley in the head and knocking him off his water ski.

I understand that Mrs. Hartley has been working with Mexican officials, and that because the incident allegedly took place on the Mexican side of the lake, Mexico's police forces have primary jurisdiction over the investigation. However, due to the unique nature of the lake, where border issues are not as clear cut as on land, I believe it is necessary for the United States government to take a larger role in the investigation than it has to date. I respectfully request that you reach out directly to Mexican President Felipe Calderón and take an active role in this situation.

The United States has a vested interest in protecting its citizens along the southern border. To play a subservient role to Mexican officials does an injustice to the role our government must play in preventing and investigation crime along our border.

I urge you to devote more resources to the search being conducted at Falcon Lake for both the body of Mr. Hartley as well as the men who perpetrated this atrocious act. The federal government must take a more active role in this investigation. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response so that this investigation may move forward and the criminals behind the incident may be brought to justice.

Sincerely,


Michael C. Burgess, M.D.