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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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May 24, 2010

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Capitol Building – H 218
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey:

As you know, Arizona and other border states continue to pay a heavy price for the federal government's failure to secure our international border with Mexico.

Last week, Rep. Dana Rohrabacher and I introduced a bipartisan bill, H.R. 5357, to deploy additional National Guard troops to the border to assist with U.S. Customs and Border Protection. I respectfully urge you to include H.R. 5357, and appropriate funding for it, in the upcoming Supplemental Appropriations Act.

Operation Jump Start, which concluded its mission in 2008, proved remarkably effective. According to the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, the Yuma Sector experienced a 68 percent decrease in apprehensions between October 1, 2006, and July 31, 2007, compared with the previous year. Border-wide, the National Guard helped seize more than 1080 vehicles used to transport drugs and/or illegal immigrants, more than 300,600 pounds of marijuana, and 5060 pounds of cocaine.

The lack of effective border security is not just a problem at the border. The effects are being felt in the interior--in places like Phoenix, where smugglers and Mexican drug cartels have set up vast networks of drop houses, which operate as way stations for their illegal activities. The crime and violence associated with these drop houses is horrendous. Phoenix has become a kidnapping capital.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Harry E. Mitchell
Member of Congress