

Mitchell Votes to Boost Border Security

Monday, 17 December 2007

WASHINGTON – America's border security efforts would get a significant boost – including 3,000 new Border Patrol agents – under an appropriations bill passed by U.S. Rep. Harry E. Mitchell and the House of Representatives.

H.R. 2764 was passed late last evening with a vote of 253 to 154 to 1. It includes more than \$15.1 billion for border security efforts – more than \$1.2 billion higher than the President's request and nearly \$2 billion more than 2007 levels.

"The truth is this President and the previous Congress talked tough about the securing the border, but they failed to get the job done. Now, Arizonans are paying the price," said Mitchell. "It is time to move beyond the rhetoric and make serious and meaningful investments to secure the border."

H.R. 2764 appropriates \$9.4 million for Customs and Border Protections, \$657 million above the President's request and \$1.2 billion above 2007 levels, including

- Resources for 3,000 additional Border Patrol agents.
- \$1.6 billion for border security fencing, infrastructure, technology and facility construction.
- \$60 million for Operation Stonegarden, a grant program to assist border communities with law enforcement costs.
- \$50 million to provide Customs Officers with law enforcement officer status to improve the Department of Homeland Security's ability to recruit and retain Customs Officers.

The legislation also provides \$4.7 billion for Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, \$567 million above the President's request and \$700 million more than 2007 levels, including

- \$200 million to identify incarcerated aliens and start removal proceedings where ordered.
- \$50 million for the REAL ID Grant program to help states comply with DHS requirements for state drivers' licenses to be used for federal identification purposes. This program was not funded in the President's budget.

Mitchell has continued to fight for additional resources for the enforcement of our nation's immigration laws. In May, he hosted an interior enforcement roundtable that brought together federal, state and local law enforcement officials to discuss ways the agencies could better work together to enforce our nation's immigration laws. According to The East Valley Tribune, "Representatives from each of the agencies attending said they need more manpower and resources to confront illegal immigration." [Source: East Valley Tribune, May 29, 2007]

Mitchell expressed disappointment in the President's border security efforts.

Mitchell Votes to Boost Border Security

Monday, 17 December 2007

In addition to failing to adequately fund border security efforts, the President announced in July his plan to cut the number of National Guard troops along the U.S.-Mexico border in half. [Source: Arizona Daily Star, July 25, 2007]

Mitchell sent the President a letter urging him to reconsider the decision. "I am deeply concerned about the decision to reduce the number of National Guard troops along the U.S.-Mexico border from 6,000 to 3,000 troops," Mitchell wrote. "I believe this is the wrong time to begin such a drawdown, and I urge you to reconsider."