

SCAAP funds facing a 25% cut for fiscal year 2010

WASHINGTON - With the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) funding facing a 25% cut, U.S. Rep Harry Mitchell [took to the floor of the House of Representatives](#) today to express his outrage and urge his colleagues to oppose it.

"This cut is wrong, and as legislation moves to the floor next week, I urge my colleagues to help me fight this," Mitchell said on the House Floor. "If we are serious about immigration enforcement, we must restore SCAAP funding, and reimburse Arizona for keeping criminal illegal immigrants behind bars."

The SCAAP program received \$400 million in fiscal year FY 2009 but President Obama's budget included no funds for the program for FY 2010. Last month, Mitchell called on appropriators in Congress to restore funding for the program that reimburses state and local law enforcement agencies for the cost of arresting and jailing criminal illegal immigrants.

Heeding pressure from lawmakers, the Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Subcommittee moved a bill forward that restores \$300 million for SCAAP in FY 2010, yet it falls 25 percent short of this year's funding levels. Mitchell has renewed his call for at least \$400 million in funding for the 15-year old program calling it a critical source of funds for cash-strapped state and local agencies that are forced to divert resources from public safety services to deal with illegal immigrants.

In 2008, the Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC) received \$12.8 million from the federal government to house the 5,600 criminal illegal immigrants who were in state prisons. That is only 10 percent of the \$124 million Arizona spent to house illegal immigrant inmates that year. ADC estimates it will spend \$128 million in 2009 to house, clothe, feed and provide medical care to illegal immigrant inmates. That is over 10 percent of the Department's \$978 million budget. Currently, Arizona's state prisons hold 6,100 illegal immigrants, which is 15 percent of

the total inmate population.

Last week, Mitchell and other Arizona lawmakers wrote to Reps. David Obey and Jerry Lewis, the top Democrat and Republican on the House Appropriations Committee in opposition of the cuts. *Below is the full text of [Mitchell's speech on the floor](#) :*

Madam Speaker I rise today to protest the 25 percent cut proposed this week to the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, otherwise known as "SCAAP".

SCAAP reimburses states and localities for the arrest, incarceration and transportation of undocumented immigrants who commit crimes in our communities.

When state and local governments are forced to step-in and do the federal government's job, it is only fair that they be reimbursed.

Last year, the Arizona Department of Corrections received \$12.8 million from the federal government to house 5600 criminal illegal immigrants in state prisons.....only 10 percent of what Arizona spent to house illegal inmates that year.

This cut is wrong, and as legislation moves to the floor next week, I urge my colleagues to help me fight this cut.

If we are serious about immigration enforcement, we must restore SCAAP funding, and reimburse Arizona for keeping criminal illegal immigrants behind bars.