

WASHINGTON - U.S. Reps. Harry Mitchell and Brian Bilbray (R-CA) today introduced a bipartisan amendment to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill to ensure that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection has the resources it needs to make critical security improvements to our border crossings and ports of entry as it implements the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

"The Travel Initiative is an important change that will help keep our country safe, however as a large number of travelers adjust to the new rules we may see huge log jams at U.S. border crossings," Mitchell said. "We need to be ready and being ready means that the Customs and Border Protection has to have the appropriate resources at the border."

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative was the result of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, following the recommendation of the 9/11 Commission to strengthen border security which, as of June 1, 2009, requires travelers entering the United States by land or sea to present a passport or other approved document establishing their identity and citizenship. [Source: [U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#), February 2009]

The FY2010 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill falls \$4.9 million short of the President's request to help implement the new border crossing requirements. The Mitchell-Bilbray amendment adds \$4.9 million to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Border Security Inspections and Trade Facilitation specifically for Inspections, Trade, and Travel Facilitation at Ports of Entry. The addition would be offset by a reduction in the Office of the Under Secretary for Management, so the amendment would not result in any increased spending.

Last year, before the new rule went into effect, U.S. Border Patrol Agents inspected more than 396 million travelers, including 32 million inspections at the six ports of entry along the Arizona-Mexico border. [Sources: [U.S. Customs & Border Protection](#), July 11, 2009; [Arizona-Mexico Commission](#)

,
2015: Arizona's New Border
]

So far, to help ease the transition Customs and Border Protection has been issuing warnings. However, soon travelers who lack the appropriate documentation will be detained.