

Bill funds ICE, Border Patrol, Aviation Security and Includes Funding for Emergency Ops Center Requested by the City of Scottsdale

WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell scored another legislative victory on immigration and border security today when his amendment to secure critical funding for security improvements at the border was adopted as part of the Fiscal Year 2010 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill. The bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives with a bipartisan vote of 389 to 37.

"This amendment, along with the overall Homeland Security Bill, is particularly important to states like Arizona that overwhelmingly bear the burden of a failed immigration system," Mitchell said. "From fighting drug houses and crime by Mexican drug cartels to increasing inspections at the border we need to take proactive steps to keep Americans safe. This bill will also improve aviation security and emergency preparedness."

Mitchell's amendment, which he offered with Rep. Brian Bilbray (R-Cal.), will ensure that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection has the resources to make critical security improvements to border crossings and ports of entry as it implements the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). It 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 is offset by a reduction in the Office of the Under Secretary for Management, so the amendment would not result in any increased spending.

WHTI 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]

Also approved as part of the bill was an earmark requested by the City of Scottsdale for \$500,000 to move its current Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to a safer and more accessible location and equip the facility to meet Department of Homeland Security standards. According to the City of Scottsdale, "the Emergency Operations Center is in need of significant enhancements in order to best protect the residents and visitors of the area and meet the EOC capabilities standards of the federal Department of Homeland Security." [Source: [City of Scottsdale](#), FY2010 Appropriations Funding Request]

The FY 2010 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill also includes funding for 20,019 Customs and Border Protection border patrol agents which is double the number from 2001, as well as \$26 million for the Southwest Border Initiative, a joint effort between Justice Department, Homeland Security and State Department to attack resources of the Mexican drug cartels. The cartels have been cited as the reason why Phoenix now ranks second in the world in kidnappings for ransom, behind Mexico City. [Source: [Arizona Republic](#) , 2/24/09]

It also includes \$732 million for Customs and Border Protection fencing, infrastructure and technology, \$692 of which is for Southwest border investments and \$804 million for Customs and Border Protection and the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office to screen cargo at ports of entry for weapons or nuclear precursor materials as well as funding for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to fight drop houses and do what the federal government has failed to do in Arizona: enforce the nation's immigration laws.

The bill also enables employers to verify the work eligibility of new hires by extending the federal internet based E-Verify system for 2 years. Additionally, it provides \$1.1 billion for explosive detection equipment for baggage screening at airports, and \$123 million for air cargo inspection.

Last week, Mitchell was successful in another effort to address immigration and border security issues when he joined fellow U.S. Reps. Ann Kirkpatrick and Gabrielle Giffords in blocking cuts to the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) in the FY 2010 Commerce Justice Science (CJS) Appropriations bill and ensure the program receives \$400 million. [Source: [Arizona Capitol Times](#) , June 18, 2009].