

[The Associated Press](#)

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MESA - Federal, state and local authorities on Tuesday said that to truly crack down on violent crimes associated with human and drug smuggling, they'll need more resources.

The officials, who included investigators with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Arizona Department of Homeland Security, spoke about their resource troubles with U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell at a round-table discussion in Mesa.

Leesa Morrison, director of the state Homeland Security Department, said the last thing the state needs to do is take resources off the border.

Morrison said the federal government needs to reverse cuts to the state's Homeland Security funding. She said funds have been cut by 60 percent from \$60 million in 2003 to \$20 million last year.

Alonzo Pena, chief of investigations for Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Arizona, said his agency needs more agents as the Border Patrol expands and as state and local agencies are increasingly enforcing immigration law.

Pena said the biggest problems agents are dealing with include homicides, rapes, hostage situations and bajadores, a Spanish word for groups of smugglers who steal human cargo from other smugglers.

Mitchell, a Democrat representing Scottsdale, Tempe and parts of Chandler, Mesa and Phoenix, said he hosted the discussion because he wanted to be informed as Congress works to draft comprehensive immigration reform.