



Pinal County Sheriff's Office

Paul Babeu
Sheriff

April 5, 2011

To: U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs,

Pinal County, Arizona is the fastest growing county in all of America. Located between Phoenix and Tucson we also have another not so favorable title. Pinal County is the "Number One Pass Through County for Drug and Human Trafficking in all of America." Over half of the illegals entering America come through Arizona. According to U.S. Border Patrol, last year alone they captured 219,300 in the Tucson sector. U.S. Border Patrol has acknowledged this number does not take into account another conservative estimate of 2.7 illegals that made it into the United States undetected. Of those illegals that were caught, 17 to 30 percent of them already have a criminal record in the United States.

According to the latest GAO report, 56% of the border is NOT under "Operational Control." In my opinion, and the opinion of most people, 44% is a failing grade. Arizona has four counties which share the border with Mexico. Yuma County is under operational control at this time. The other three border counties (Pima, Santa Cruz and Cochise County) are not. America can secure the border if we replicate the success of what was accomplished in the Yuma Sector. The Yuma Sector has now attained a 96% reduction of illegal border crossings. The Senator McCain/Kyl 10-Point Border Security Plan is developed largely from the learned successes of the Yuma Sector during Operation Jump Start. The Senator McCain/Kyl 10-Point Border Security Plan needs to be implemented to attain a secure border with Mexico.

The short coming of recent plans by DHS cannot be sustained without three key elements of the Senator McCain/Kyl Plan. Immediately deploy 6,000 armed soldiers for a period of two years to immediately secure the border. While armed soldiers are deployed, the double barrier fence is completed with the supportive surveillance platforms, lighting, sensors and supportive roads to support rapid deployment of US Border Patrol. Thirdly, fully enforce the law without any diversion option for illegals. This compromise of "catch and release" has undermined the rule of law.

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While we keep hearing information from Washington, D.C. that the “Border is More Secure Than Ever” I would strongly disagree. Statistics in Pinal County during the past two years have shown dramatic increases in totals tied to drug and human trafficking. Our calls to U.S. Border Patrol to turn over illegal aliens have increased, 2007-(188), 2008-(169), 2009-(270) and 2010-(370) Vehicle Pursuits have increased, 2007-(142), 2008-(140), 2009-(289) and 2010-(340) and Marijuana Seizures have also surged, 2008-(19,619 pounds), 2009-(44,963 pounds) and 2010-(45,500 pounds). Just last year, we had a cartel member executed in a quiet Casa Grande, AZ neighborhood. We have had two other cartel members killed during the middle of the night in Vekol Valley after they were shot each with a single bullet. Below is a photo of one of the 15 billboard signs which had been erected in Pinal County. The signs were recently taken down and replaced with “Visitor Information” signs.



Citizens of Pinal County are now met with “Normandy” style barriers which are located 70 miles north of the U.S. - Mexico Border. According to U.S. Homeland Security they have identified approximately 100 Scout Locations in Pinal County, Maricopa County and on the Tohono O’Odham Reservation. These locations are used by the Drug Cartels of Mexico to support their 40 billion dollar a year industry.

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During the past two multi-agency enforcement details (four days each), worked in this drug and human trafficking corridor, more than 200 suspects were arrested. This clearly shows the border is not secured. We need immediate help to protect our citizens. We can no longer wait for action. Until we get Federal support and the U.S. - Mexico border is secured, I have directed my deputies to take cartels on directly. In order to protect our citizens, it has now become the job of my office to directly engage those responsible for drug and human trafficking. We are conducting operations on a weekly basis to dismantle, and disrupt drug and human trafficking operations and reduce the crimes associated with their activity.

Respectfully,



Paul Babeu, Sheriff
Pinal County