

August 20, 2008

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Congressman Don Cazayoux

Serving the People of Louisiana's 6th District

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Dear Friend,

This past weekend, I made a trip to the U.S-Mexico border to meet with Border Patrol agents and view our border security first-hand. It was a very informative trip, and I came back with the assurance that our Border Patrol agents are doing an extremely effective job with the resources they have.

However, our Border Patrol agents need a continued commitment from the federal government to perform their jobs. In both El Paso, TX and San Diego, CA, the agents I spoke to told me they needed three things to do their jobs effectively: more boots on the ground, better technology, and the appropriate tactical infrastructure (border fencing) in a given terrain.

The cameras used in El Paso and San Diego are 10 years old; they work, but there is modern technology that could be much more helpful in the fight against illegal immigration. They also need more cameras. Out of the over 265 miles of border patrolled by the El Paso sector, only 40 are covered by cameras.



Congressman Cazayoux speaks to a Border Patrol agent at border fencing along the border in New Mexico near El Paso, TX

The Border Patrol is set to expand by 33%, but new agents are not reaching the ground as quickly as they could and many- especially in expensive areas such as San Diego- are not compensated as well as they should be. New and improved border fencing is still in the process of

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Immigration

Immigration is a complex issue. I want to know what you think about it.

Do you consider illegal immigration to be a serious problem?

- Yes, very serious
- Yes, somewhat serious
- Unsure/Neutral
- No, not serious

Do you support or oppose amnesty for those who cross the border illegally?

- No, not under any circumstances
- Mixed feelings- would have to see a specific proposal
- Yes, there should be a way for those here illegally to have a path to citizenship

Do you think there

being built all along the border, especially in the urban areas that need it most.

Illegal immigration is a serious problem that begins at the border but affects our nation's security, infrastructure, court system, and economy. It was easy to see this in San Diego. I met with Customs and Border Security agents at the San Ysidro port of entry, where over 9% of people entering the U.S. cross the border, which amounts to 120,000 to 150,000 people a day. There was a sea of pedestrian, car, and bus traffic trying to get into the country that stretched across 24 lanes.



Congressman Cazayoux speaks with Customs and Border Security agents at the San Ysidro port of entry in California.

In El Paso, I learned that after the implementation of Operation "Hold the Line" in 1993, which essentially secured the borders for the first time, crime was reduced by 80% almost overnight. While Juarez, Mexico has seen nearly 800 murders so far this calendar year, just across the border in El Paso there have been less than 15 murders. Of all illegal immigrants apprehended at the border, 13% have criminal records in the United States.

It is easy to view the Border Patrol's job as simply stopping illegal immigration, but border security is also a national security issue. The Border Patrol's primary mission in a post 9/11 world is securing our border from terrorists and weapons of mass destruction. We cannot take our eye off of our national security as we secure the border.

The trip was an eye-opening experience and reaffirmed my belief that we need to take an enforcement first approach that utilizes all available resources in our efforts to secure the border. We should not reward people who cross the border illegally; that will only encourage future criminal activity.

I look forward to working with our Border Patrol agents and making sure they have the tools they need to be successful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald Cazayoux, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Congressman Don Cazayoux

should be some kind of guest worker program for immigrants and businesses?

- No, not under any circumstances
- Maybe, but would have to see a specific proposal
- Yes, businesses need the labor they provide

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