



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
JOE STRAUS
SPEAKER

June 18, 2014

Dear Members,

Today, Governor Perry, Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst and I agreed on a plan to provide additional state resources to address security concerns along the Texas and Mexico border. My office and I have been assessing this issue over the last several months and I would like to briefly explain why we are taking this action and how this will help to enhance the security of our citizens.

This is a very serious problem. Tens of thousands of young people have come into the United States, often from Mexico and Central America. This rush of young migrants has overwhelmed federal officials and could make the border region more vulnerable to criminal activity such as drug trafficking and human smuggling operations. I was in the Rio Grande Valley earlier this week and visited with border patrol officers and state and local law enforcement officials about the situation on the ground and the effect of this influx on security efforts.

Over the last six years, the Legislature has very aggressively supported law enforcement's efforts to provide safety and security along the Texas-Mexico border. The 2014-15 budget provided a \$122 million (55 percent) increase for border security over the previous biennium. These additional resources allowed for more officers, vehicles and weapons along the border, as well as better technology, while demonstrating the House's commitment to the safety of our fellow Texans. Because of the support the Legislature has provided, DPS Director Steve McCraw has been able to redeploy some of his resources to the border region as conditions have grown more severe. I recently encouraged Director McCraw to concentrate resources on the border as he saw necessary, and I was pleased to see, firsthand, that he did just that.

However, the current humanitarian crisis and ongoing security concerns require the allocation of additional resources. That is why today we directed the Texas Department of Public Safety to immediately execute an operation of increased law enforcement in Texas border counties. While the State of Texas cannot solve these issues on its own, we do have a responsibility to be responsive to the recommendations that DPS and other Texas law enforcement agencies on the front line have provided. We must ensure that these state and local law enforcement officers protecting Texans are given the tools that they need to do their job. Until the federal government fulfills its duty, it falls on the State of Texas to address these obligations.

I also want to be clear that this approach is not simply writing a blank check to DPS. We will closely monitor and evaluate the costs and results of this effort. In my conversations with Director McCraw, I

have made it clear that I would support his assessment and recommendations, while remaining prudent with taxpayer dollars. That is why I am directing the House Committees on Appropriations and Homeland Security and Public Safety to monitor and assess the cost and outcomes of this operation between now and next January.

I will continue to keep you informed about my conversations with Director McCraw and other members of the state's leadership. All of us want to find the best, most appropriate way to support law enforcement and keep Texans safe, and I appreciate your continued commitment to that effort.

Sincerely,

Joe Straus
Speaker

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Straus". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "J" and "S".

Joe Straus
Speaker