

JOINT STATEMENT OF  
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AND  
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U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION  
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
BEFORE THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
REGARDING  
U.S. NORTHERN BORDER SECURITY OPERATIONS  
SELFRIDGE AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE  
MICHIGAN  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2006

Good morning Chairman Hunter, Ranking Member Skelton, Distinguished Members of the Committee. It is our pleasure to appear before you today to discuss how U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), one of the agencies of the Department of Homeland Security, is working to secure our Nation's borders, both at and between our ports of entry.

Every day, thousands of people try to enter our country illegally, many to work and provide a better life for their families. After all, in their home countries, they make only a fraction of what they could make in the United States. Our strong economy creates the demand for these workers, places tremendous pressure at the border and makes our job of securing the border, both at and between the ports of entry, very difficult.

To most effectively secure the border, we must reform our immigration system to relieve this pressure. We need comprehensive immigration reform that increases border security, establishes a robust interior enforcement program, creates a temporary worker program, and addresses the problem of the estimated 11 to 12 million illegal immigrants already in the country.

We are taking significant steps to secure the border – more than any other time in our Nation’s history. As America’s frontline border agency, CBP employs highly trained and professional personnel, resources, expertise and law enforcement authorities to discharge our priority mission of preventing terrorists and terrorist weapons from entering the United States. In fulfilling this priority mission, we are also able to fulfill our traditional missions, including apprehending individuals attempting to enter the United States illegally; stemming the flow of illegal drugs and other contraband; protecting our agricultural and economic interests from harmful pests and diseases; protecting American businesses from theft of their intellectual property; regulating and facilitating international trade; collecting import duties; and enforcing United States trade laws.

CBP is responsible for protecting more than 5,000 miles of border with Canada and 1,900 miles of border with Mexico, while operating 325 official Ports of Entry. On an average day in 2005, CBP personnel: processed 1,181,605 passengers and pedestrians, 69,370 containers, 333,226 incoming privately owned vehicles and \$81,834,298 in fees, duties and tariffs; executed 62 arrests at the ports of entry and 3,257 apprehensions between the ports for illegal entry; seized 5,541 pounds of narcotics and 1,145 prohibited plant materials or meat or other animal products at and

between the ports of entry; refused entry to 868 non-citizens at the ports of entry; and intercepted 146 smuggled aliens and 206 fraudulent documents while rescuing 7 illegal immigrants in distress or dangerous conditions between the ports of entry.

CBP's enforcement efforts are carried out in the field by CBP Officers and Agricultural Specialists within the Office of Field Operations, and Border Patrol Agents within the Office of Border Patrol. CBP Officers perform their enforcement duties at the 325 official ports of entry that include airports, seaports, and land ports. Border Patrol Agents monitor over 6,900 miles of border between the official ports of entry in the Northern, Southern, and Coastal areas of the United States.

As part of CBP's "layered approach" to border security at the official ports of entry, CBP uses sophisticated detection technology to rapidly screen high-risk cargo for weapons, radiation, and other contraband. Additionally, CBP Officers receive antiterrorism training to better enable them to recognize, identify, and interdict individuals who pose a terrorist risk. To facilitate the crossing of low-risk, frequent travelers and commercial truck drivers, CBP uses "trusted traveler" programs such as the Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI), Free and Secure Trade (FAST), and NEXUS programs. To date, approximately 225,000 SENTRI, NEXUS, and FAST cards have been issued to these "trusted travelers," who undergo a background investigation and interview, among other requirements, to qualify for these programs. Developed in partnership with the governments of Canada and Mexico, these programs enable CBP to focus its limited resources on high-risk travelers and cargo.

Since 2001, funding for border security has increased by 66 percent. DHS, working in conjunction with its Federal partners has apprehended and sent home more

than 6 million illegal aliens. On May 15, 2006, President Bush announced his plan to increase the number of CBP Border Patrol Agents to 18,000 by the end of 2008, thereby doubling the number of agents since he took office in 2001. These additional agents will serve as a tremendous resource in our mission of securing the border.

CBP's effort to gain operational control of our border is a central component of the Secure Border Initiative (SBI), which is a broad, multi-year initiative that looks at all aspects of securing the border. SBI is taking a comprehensive approach to securing the border through an integrated systems approach and strategic policy and planning. It is an effort to think about border security nationally, to include building a systematic approach to disrupt, dismantle, and deter all cross-border crime and balance legitimate travel and trade into and out of the United States. SBI, as envisioned by the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Commissioner of CBP, addresses the challenges we face at every segment of our Nation's borders to integrate the correct mix of increased staffing, greater investment in detection technology and infrastructure, and enhanced coordination.

Each day, the men and women of CBP enforce our borders and protect the Homeland, with the utmost vigilance, dedication to service, and integrity. We thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony today, and would be happy to respond to any questions you might have.