



Official Testimony Presented by:

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The Honorable Ed Royce, Chairman

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Good morning Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Sherman, members of the committee, distinguished fellow panelists, and guests.

I am Andy Ramirez, Chairman of Friends of the Border Patrol, and we would like to thank Chairman Royce and the committee for inviting me to testify today on behalf of our organization. I would also like to thank you for calling these important hearings, as terrorism is the foremost topic on many Americans minds.

Our organization has been investigating border security for two years. We have strived to investigate from the perspective of the following: Border Patrol manager and line agent, local law enforcement, and border resident. Over this time we have compiled information from a number of U.S. Border Patrol Sectors protecting both borders and the soft underbelly of national security known as the Ramey Border Patrol Sector on the Island of Puerto Rico. The irony is that while our elected officials may not be aware of the details I am presenting today, I guarantee that the Mexican Government, illegal aliens and criminal aliens alike, as well as terrorists all know our weaknesses. If we are to begin correcting this problem, as is the purpose of convening this hearing on "Border Vulnerabilities and International Terrorism," which is why I am here today then we need to discuss many issues and problems.

I am going to touch on a few points during my presentation and would be happy to respond to any questions you may have. For those I am unable to answer, I would be happy to submit responses to the committee and questioning member within the next week.

One key aspect of terrorism I do not hear anyone speak about publicly whether it be our elected officials or government agencies is what terrorists do when crossing our borders, and the response from agents within the U.S. Border Patrol.

Let's say terrorists are using the wide-open southern border to cross. They can do it one of two ways:

1. They can blend in. This won't be very difficult as the BP itself admits that it only catches 2 out of 5, though more than one publication quoted Tucson Sector Chief Patrol Agent Michael Nicley at 1 out of 8. Most entrants are poor people crossing the border in a relatively unsophisticated manner and we are not even stopping the majority of them. One fact I was informed by a source, just prior to providing this statement to the committee by the Friday deadline, is that "it was a no-no to give numbers to anyone outside of the Border Patrol." I am certain this policy would include Members of Congress among those considered to be outsiders.
2. Terrorists could attempt to cross alone and bring their weapons with them. If only we had some idea of what the U.S. does when an organized, armed force crosses our borders with their guns and equipment often escorting narco-trafficantes. Oh wait we do have this sort of thing happening. The fully equipped Mexican Military has crossed hundreds of times with impunity and we haven't done anything, other than parrot statements from their government that shirts are sold by

street vendors, or that American citizens were impersonating Mexican Military personnel. If a terrorist does decide to bring his missiles or a nuclear warhead with him in say, a Humvee, I hope our response is a little better than what we do now against armed incursions. Maybe we need a SALUTE card for terrorist incursions now, since in the Tucson Border Patrol Sector we are already providing them to Border Patrol agents for incursions by Mexican Military personnel.

Mr. Chairman if I may, I would like to present an original to the committee of the very card presented to Border Patrol agents to my understanding by Tucson BP Sector since 1997 (see Item-1).

David V. Aguilar, Chief of the Border Patrol claims we have not had Mexican Military incursions, other than by accident or impersonators (testimony before Chairman McCall's Homeland Security Subcomm), and that the Southwestern border is secure. But that is a blatant falsehood and this is well known within the Border Patrol. Otherwise, how does one explain the incursion cards when they continue to be provided to agents in Tucson Sector, the very sector that Mr. Aguilar was the Chief Patrol Agent of, prior to ascending to his current appointment as national chief? We must keep in mind, that if we cannot admit to the Mexican Military incursions, though we provide agents instructions in the event of an incursion, and we cannot prevent millions of illegal aliens consisting of Mexicans, and OTMs (or Other Than Mexican), I guarantee we cannot prevent Special Interest Aliens, which potentially include terrorists who have obtained IDs and are portraying themselves as Mexican or other aliens from Latin American nations.

I would be remiss if I did not bring to your attention the following information, which numerous sources have provided during the course of our investigation.

“We cannot get a straight answer when it comes to how many Special Interest Aliens have been apprehended by CBP or ICE, other than a standard response of “Pending Investigation.” Yet, the Border Patrol knows how many teddy bears it gives away, how many cheese crackers it has in reserve (I would bet down to the individual cracker), diapers, etc., so the fact that it keeps absolutely no statistics on the people caught from terrorist countries as a mere accident defies all credibility. Obviously, the BP does not keep these statistics as a matter of policy and the reason is pretty transparent. Let me also add that the media has attempted to gain those very figures as well as the dispositions of apprehensions of SIAs that they learn about through sources. However, those results are seldom, if ever released, so the public has no way to learn if there is any information beyond what has been reported by sources.”

Here are some facts about a few Border Patrol Sectors from well-placed sources who asked me to present this information to the committee today on their behalf. The reason that those sources are unable to do so themselves would be to place their careers at risk for retribution by Border Patrol and DHS managers at Headquarters in Washington, DC.

The Congress and the American public have been completely misled by Border Patrol's managers at Headquarters in DC. The northern border is nowhere near secure though

Chief of the Border Patrol David Aguilar would inform you otherwise. Chief Aguilar was quoted in several newspapers, both Canadian and U.S. that "measures have been taken to bolster agent strength in the affected areas to include overtime payments." According to my sources, the statement by Mr. Aguilar was inaccurate and never happened. There was no high alert, no overtime and no additional bodies. It is nothing but business as usual.

As a matter of fact, several networks, both cable and broadcast, stated that there are 1,000 agents on the Northern Border. Wrong again. No detailers, nada. One Sector on the northern border has not received agent attrition replacements in about 2 years now. This same sector is currently authorized at 147 agents and, because of details (mandated), sick leave, maternity leave, rubber guns, etc. etc. this sector is at an actual strength of 102. Though, as I understand it, this sector has been traditionally ignored for agent and support personnel staffing. If you want to put this in percentage terms, this sector's personnel, agent-wise is down 31%.

Let me add that at one particular station in this sector bordered by water, they are lucky to have two agents on during a 24-hour period. It takes two agents to run a boat. They have a total of 5 agents, with 8 vacancies, obviously not enough to monitor boat traffic. Keep in mind that a major Canadian city recently named as a possible terrorist target is on the other side of that very station's area of responsibility.

Furthermore, Mr. Aguilar was personally and repeatedly warned about potential threats, and ignored such information. Of course that would not be the first time he has ignored intel, requests, or challenges to his inaccurate public statements. This type of action is not unprecedented when one recalls that earlier this year, DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff stated that reports on Mexican Military incursions were being overblown when they continue to this day, one occurring as recently as Saturday, July 1, 2006 at 13:10 hours, according to a civilian source in Tucson Sector. This incursion included a drug load.

In 2004, I personally challenged a statement Chief Aguilar made to The Daily Sentinel on August 31, 2004, regarding border security, in which he declared the southwest border to be secure. His statement was countered by numerous sources including Michael Shelby, U.S. Attorney from the Southern District of Texas.

Additionally, in a Washington Times article published October 13, 2004, entitled "Chechen terrorists probed." The article stated, "U.S. security officials are investigating a recent intelligence report that a group of 25 Chechen terrorists illegally entered the United States from Mexico in July.... Members of the group, said to be wearing backpacks, secretly traveled to northern Mexico and crossed into a mountainous part of Arizona that is difficult for U.S. border security agents to monitor, said officials speaking on the condition of anonymity."

I have provided the letter I submitted to Chief Aguilar (please review Item-2). Agent Stephanie Monk informed me by telephone in November 2004, that Mr. Aguilar had

received my letter and would be replying within the next two weeks. Twenty months later, I still await his response to my inquiry.

Mr. Chairman I would also like to address an item known in the Border Patrol as Project Athena. In this project the Border Patrol would be able to monitor shipping traffic as it approaches the U.S. coastline. The cost was minimal compared to other systems currently being utilized such as “remote video surveillance” (RVS) cameras and other items providing a “virtual wall” that has been proven to be a bottomless, and ineffective money-pit. To see what a sham the fancy name labeled “virtual fence” really is, please refer to Item-3, which addresses RVS and tunnel detection, or more accurately, the inadequacy of both.

Local Border Patrol Sector Chiefs have written to headquarters requesting that “Project Athena” or subsequent generations of similar capabilities be funded and provided to meet the goal of securing our coastlines, lakes and waterways. Yet, this program, which can monitor maritime traffic, while still on life-support, is certain to not be implemented.

The Border Patrol Sector Chiefs have also been informed that they would receive additional agents to fill their numerous vacancies and technology holes. I understand that the agents and technology often mentioned is to be used to implement a “virtual wall” and would be provided by Secure Border Initiative funding. It is our opinion that this is yet another empty promise, or if you will, “fool’s gold” to those sector chiefs.

They know as we do how the 30:1 ratio it takes to come up with one recruit for the Border Patrol, screening process, academy capacity, which is grossly inadequate, and difficulties of graduating due to the Spanish language requirement, and the ten-month exam that takes place after the academy. They also know the actual attrition rate. The reports of the high numbers of agents throughout the service seeking employment opportunities elsewhere are not just rumors but are fact.

Mr. Chairman, if we are to discuss vulnerability along our borders, we must not forget the clearly forgotten Ramey Border Patrol Sector, located at Aquadilla, Puerto Rico. As badly undermanned as the northern border is, our greatest strategic weakness is Ramey.

The Inland Valley Daily Bulletin of Ontario, CA has published a number of reports indicating the vulnerability of this strategic island, which has regular sea incursions using Yola boats. Their manpower level is so grossly under-strength that it defies all logic. They have 21 agents, with three more soon to leave the island for other duties or agencies, and regularly see their agents detailed to southwestern border sectors or the academy, without being replaced. Yet, the irony is that they have nearly as many managers as agents. Their manpower is so under strength that they are limited to one corner of the island, and has to completely eliminate one shift for lack of available personnel. One thing agents have reported is that OTMs, or Other Than Mexican illegal aliens actually self-report with their flight tickets already in their possession for CONUS (Continental U.S.) destinations as the word is out in the region that after receiving their documents requesting a return for court appearance they will be free to leave the island

for other destinations. For the record, the USBP agents do not have access to San Juan, where illegal aliens, which could include Special Interest Aliens, acquire phony identification documents. That is ICE-turf.

On the northern border, numerous sources have reported that ICE regularly requests Border Patrol assistance, as they do not have the manpower or resources to apprehend or detain on their own. It is to the degree that the Border Patrol is often requested to provide transport for illegal aliens detained, and that the Border Patrol can provide agents depending on availability due to operations and on a priority level.

Mr. Chairman, it is well documented as to the level of compliance by Border Patrol managers in Washington, DC with the policies and requests by the Mexican Government. Consider the parrot-like statements of our own government when it comes to Mexico. For anything and everything, Mexico provides a declaratory conclusion to a matter before even convening more than a surface investigation followed by concurrence by our own government. After that, come the so-called investigation and more discrediting info.

Consider that Tucson Sector agents represented by Local 2544 of the National Border Patrol Council has gone on record by posting on their website as to the level of access and control by the Mexican Government, which has placed agents along the southwestern border often in dangerous, compromised situations. Also, consider that Border Patrol Headquarters continues to deny that Mexican Military incursions regularly occur, and that Sector Chiefs provided information about civilian border observation locations to the Mexican Government though clearly lacking Congressional authority, and clearly exceeding the Vienna Convention Treaty. While the Border Patrol denied the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin's published report, and attempted to discredit reporter Sara Carter after Agent Mario Martinez, their PIO who responded to her inquiry, after he initially admitted that such info was shared.

I met with a Border Patrol Sector Chief who took responsibility, and apologized for the disclosure of a property our organization used as a base-camp for border observations last summer as he understood my outrage, that our "secret" location I had personally provided to law enforcement, was provided to the Mexican Government. Our meetings have been the only ones between civilians and the Border Patrol managers to my knowledge. However, the Mexican Government and DHS have both expended great energy in attempting to discredit the news coverage in their denials and by stating that such locations were self-provided on websites, which was not the case of our location.

It is interesting to note, considering we are discussing border vulnerability today that Chief Griffen, a person that I consider to be a personal friend, was the sole chief patrol agent mentioned on their website though I understand several sectors provided similar information about activities and locations of lawful civilian border observations to Mexico. The Mexican Government endangered U.S. citizens by publishing such information on their website where drug cartels, their enforcers, military personnel, and violent gangs could have gathered such intel and plotted to harm, or even murder concerned citizens, including me.

The Mexican Government also attempted to undermine the chief personally by solely publishing his name and no others, as he has been quite proactive in the fight to secure our portion of the border and quite creative. I am certain that by damaging his name and reputation, they felt Congress would have seen him removed or reassigned. To me, this action demonstrates the level of cooperation by the Border Patrol managers at HQ, which undermines their very mission to secure America's borders; especially considering that the Mexican Government is long identified by its corruption.

When did the Congress relinquish authorization or control of the Border Patrol to Mexico City? Is this why Grupo Beta, previously an effective Mexican agency, was reduced to less than security guards, as they have been replaced by our own taxpayer financed Border Patrol? These are questions that must be answered before we even think to consider reconciling bills. Consider that I've scarcely even mentioned the failure known as ICE, a completely ineffective agency that should be absorbed into the Border Patrol, or Customs whose managers believe the best way to secure the border is by securing the ports of entry, which has been the mentality of CBP while leaving the borders wide open to incursion by violent terrorists, smugglers, and Mexican Military personnel.

Mr. Chairman, it is outrageous that there is such coordination and cooperation, lest any of us forget about the maps and comic books they provide to illegal aliens, which include terrorists. Perhaps the Members are unaware but the State Department provided the funding for our Border Patrol to train personnel of Grupo Beta and other Mexican Government entities along their southern border such as sign-tracking and other tactics used by the patrol. With Mexico's record, how can this government continue to see them as a partner, when they have done absolutely nothing to prevent terrorism?

Mr. Chairman, I would be completely remiss if I did not mention to the committee today that such behavior by the Mexican Government would not be unprecedented as border residents for years have been terrorized for years by violent gangs, bandits, drug cartels, smugglers, local Mexican law enforcement officials and even personnel of the Mexican Military who assist with smuggling operations.

Allow me to share a couple of stories with you today about local border residents, who are our fellow U.S., citizens. Victoria Hope lived in San Diego's East County region. She did what many of us do for our neighbors. She was looking after her neighbor's property while her neighbors were away. When you live in the border region, it is imperative that you work with your neighbors as livestock gets out, or bandits and smugglers often trespass your property, which endangers one's family and neighbors. Mrs. Hope was viciously murdered by illegal aliens who, as if this heinous crime was not nearly enough, these same individuals stole her car.

Mr. Bob Maupin is a longtime community leader in San Diego's East County. Mr. Maupin is a second generation border resident having lived a stone's throw from the border. He was surrounded and disarmed 100 yards north of the border on his property by the Mexican Military and through negotiation convinced them to go to his home to

contact law enforcement in Boulevard, CA (noted for it's high narcotic traffic). The reason this happened is the day before he reported a meth lab to the DEA and that was the response the following day of the Mexican Military and cartels. Mr. Maupin has assisted me today with providing photos that have been taken of humans and narcotics being smuggled across the border. You'll find this as Item-6 following my testimony.

Ed and Donna Tisdale also live close to the border in East County, and one year alone counted over 12,000 individuals by observing footprints that crossed their property. They have experienced a number of incidents involving individuals who smuggle humans and narcotics across their property and while not easily intimidated have been threatened and given reason to fear for their lives. They have found markings of violent gangs on their property. In fact, one year ago, a man was arrested in connection with the attempted murder of a Border Patrol agent near Red Shank Ranch last year during an interrupted drug deal that was connected to the cartels. The agent's vehicle was riddled with holes from an automatic weapon (23 to be exact). The Tisdale's saw the patrol vehicle and have informed me that it was a chilling site. The suspect fled through their ranch road at a high rate of speed and back onto the reservation, adjacent to their property, which I understand has a high amount of trafficking.

Mr. Chairman, my friends who live along the border and face this form of terrorism 24/7 have long concluded that due to the presence of the organized crime cartels and gangs who orchestrate the majority of the smuggling of drugs, people and contraband here in San Diego, that they do not believe that such individuals would hesitate to smuggle items that would be used to cause harm to America and her citizens--especially if the price was right. A concern that many law enforcement agencies concur with, as do we.

However, this is not an isolated story. Over the past 14 months, I have met with and earned the trust, support, and friendship of many San Diego border area residents, which is not given, but earned. They have dealt with wrong-way drivers of load vehicles, which involve narcotic, or human smuggling loads, sometimes both. The load drivers when spotted, or they think they've been spotted by law enforcement officers including Border Patrol agents cross to the wrong side of the road. This practice utilized to evade and escape Border Patrol agents, CHP officers, and Deputy Sheriffs happens often along the border. This is yet another type of terrorism our fellow citizens face. Imagine the day that the load vehicle hits a busload of school children on the way to or from school. Deaths have occurred as a result of wrong-way drivers and it is completely avoidable if we secure our borders and protect our citizens.

That's a critical point we hope everyone here today considers. Terrorism is not limited to people that are members of violent terrorist organizations with bombs, sniper rifles, or detonators. Terrorism includes those very types of groups and individuals I mentioned above that have not been dealt with for far too long. We have no business calling groups gangs when they bring chaos, mayhem, violence, mayhem, and murder to our cities, neighborhoods, parks, and schools. It is pure and simple, they are terrorists, too, and must also be broken up and brought to justice for those are the most obvious people to recruit here within our own nation and entering our Swiss-cheese borders. Or does calling people

that are terrorizing and murdering our fellow citizens terrorists not happen because of the propaganda that the War on Terror is in Iraq and Afghanistan and does not include our own borders?

That is something that this committee and the House of Representatives must recognize as fact, publicly acknowledge. The supporters of open borders in the House and Senate as well as the Bush Administration know this, which is why we are inundated with fancy slogans or politically correct terminology, the dog and pony press events, and the smoke and mirrors about willing workers doing jobs Americans won't, which continues to exclude Americans being displaced from the labor force. By campaigning in such a way, this is why our borders remain vulnerable and why we get such absurd proposals from Washington. It is why many people in Southern California today, and within the Border Patrol felt it imperative that I appear as a witness, to discuss these items publicly that are being hidden from the Congress and public. As a civilian, I have nothing to lose, except my country as I am the only non-government employed witness past or present testifying.

Far too many people today are in this nation, and we do not know who they are, or their backgrounds, and Mexico will never cooperate with U.S. law enforcement requests, though they'll make every demand on us to adhere to their demands though they continue to plan protests, monitor civilians and public figures alike, and undermine our sovereignty. Furthermore, too many people are now at large within this nation and trying to establish lives in our nation, plus having anchor babies, which has made it difficult to enforce our immigration laws. Until the United States Supreme Court and the Congress address this identified issue the problem will continue.

Many children of illegal aliens, including those considered to be Special Interest Aliens have mixed loyalty. Some are being bred and brainwashed to hate America. Groups like MECHA among others do not believe in U.S. sovereignty, and openly protest against anyone who disagrees with them. I have personally witnessed their usage of violence and intimidation as primary tactics. Such individuals are targets for recruitment by terrorist organizations. As long as our government ignores them, such individuals and groups will continue to recruit and flourish, while continuing to plan or operate.

This happens because our government does not tell the Mexican Government to back off, and mind their own store. Instead, our government parrots their lies, endangers law enforcement officers and civilians alike, and allows such behavior to continue, which I consider to be open espionage against the United States.

My active duty sources in the Border Patrol have risked their careers and futures in order to provide me the truth, which I, in turn, have forwarded to Congressional leaders, and shared with other law enforcement agencies or Members of Congress. Each of them deserves an opportunity to tell their facts, and expose the truth, which is how this administration through DHS has ordered agents to stand down, and even lie in order to prevent Congress from learning the truth. But their voices, outside of my fellow panelist Mr. Bonner and few others are being squelched as this administration and Chief Aguilar rules his fiefdom with an iron fist. All statements and tours Members take are pre-

scripted and approved by his office. He is the ultimate micro-manager. Any Sector Chief you speak with, including my friend Chief Griffen knows as I do that he has to answer to Mr. Aguilar, as he is the top agent in the chain of command. I am certain you would hear the reality if they were authorized to provide it, on their own without retribution from Mr. Aguilar. Yet, the fact is, under the new rules and regulations implemented since 2004 by the Department of Homeland In-Security, you will never get anything that strays from the official approved script. That is why it is important you have witnesses who do not have to worry about being retired by DHS or detailed from what is considered a good managerial detail to an outpost such as Ramey.

Many Americans feel that these hearings are to be nothing more than staged dog and pony shows, with a sell-out by Congress agreeing to amnesty following these hearings. This is why so many Border Patrol agents just simply have refused to talk. They cannot make themselves vulnerable to what our sources and many news outlets have reported as the “culture of corruption” at BP Headquarters that has led to such fear and retribution within the agency. As a result, the Mexican Government continues to undermine our nation, and people, while assisting terrorists. This is how the Chief of the Border Patrol continues to put his agents at risk, because nobody under his command trusts our Congress to step forward and tell the truth, beyond my fellow panelist Mr. Bonner who has enough media spotlight that he has a little more wiggle room.

Instead, agents have to depend on civilians staging publicity stunts to take cameras out to the desert under horrible conditions in the hopes that something will happen in front of the news media so that the truth gets out. As I was informed during meetings along the northern border, it is a shame that civilians have to provide technology that DHS can easily provide for themselves, but refuse to do. But someone has to do it, and this particular official as well as numerous others were pleased that someone was willing to step forward and do so.

If you do not believe the extent of the mistrust that many law enforcement agencies with the federal government and the Border Patrol, then you must not be paying attention to what many border sheriffs have been stating for months. Only, like me, they’re not doing it for publicity or electoral reasons, they are telling the truth and standing by it because they are concerned about our nation’s being compromised and vulnerable to terrorists entering our borders. Please review an interview I have attached published in May 2006 by the New American Magazine (Item-5) in which I discussed an incident that took place in El Paso Texas during a break between meetings of the Border Sheriffs Coalition and Border Patrol. It underscores and exemplifies the mistrust many have with the Border Patrol. Also, read a letter I submitted to committee member Mr. Poe regarding our request for a GAO investigation of the Border Patrol (see Item-4). It will shed much light on the problems within the Border Patrol.

Until this happens, the invasion of our nation will continue without anyone to stop it. The quality of life of our fellow Americans residing along the borders will continue to deteriorate as will the threat against our lives.

I want to mention what a bad idea it will be if the House of Representatives assents to the Senate version of amnesty after DHS certifies that the border is under control. This is really the fox guarding the henhouse and would be akin to having to consult with Mexico on the need for a border fence. Sources of ours report that DHS and CBP have been informing the public through the media that the Border Patrol has achieved "operational control" of the borders and that crossers had a "substantial probability of apprehension". If the House falls for this type of conditional provision, DHS will immediately certify that the border is secure, which ensures that amnesty can go ahead. DHS is, after all, run by the most incompetent group of handpicked bureaucrats our government has ever seen rise to such positions. In one case, one such agency head is the most unqualified choice of them all whom could not even pronounce Nuevo Laredo at her first press conference. Of course she recommended herself to the president though my fellow panelist Mr. Kobach was eminently qualified and available.

It is our position after investigating the insecurity of our nation and regular contact with our law enforcement sources that we are vulnerable to Mexican Military incursion, smugglers, drug cartels, and violent gangs. To be perfectly honest, the only thing that DHS and the Border Patrol have excelled at is convincing America that the border is secured and they certainly wouldn't suddenly decide to tell the truth with so much at stake. Hopefully Congress recognizes what a con game this would be and declines any amnesty provision beginning with rejecting the Senate Amnesty as authored by S-2611 aka Hagel-Martinez as well as a recent House proposal by Mr. Pence.

I respectfully will remind the committee that it is impossible to even talk about such things as amnesty/guest worker programs or reconciling the House and Senate bill as neither bill addresses the greater problem. I am declaring the Border Patrol to be a broken organization in dire need of an overhaul. This was an agency whose headquarters motto used to be "serving the field." Now you have over 200 personnel at HQ, when we need boots in the field. It is imperative that Congress overhauls the Border Patrol, remove the manager who rules by fear and you'll find countless witnesses who will appear before you and provide the facts, upon which you'll know the truth and begin to win the war on terror. Want to stop terrorists? Fix DHS and the USBP first and tell Mexico to fix their own house and stop exporting terrorists, criminals, and narcotics illegally across our borders while conducting espionage in our house.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity to appear as a witness today and look forward to not only answering the questions of you and your fellow committee members, but also working with the committee in the future.

Respectfully submitted by:
Andy Ramirez, Chairman
Friends of the Border Patrol & FriendsOfTheBorderPatrol.com

In keeping with clause 2(g)(4) of House Rule XI regarding grant or contract disclosures, Friends of the Border Patrol has not received any contract or grant award since our inception in 2004, including our inception.