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**Official Report on the  
Friends of the Border Patrol  
2008 National Conference**

**Presented by:**

**Andy Ramirez, Chairman  
Friends of the Border Patrol**

**June 8, 2008 – Houston, TX**

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## Official Report on the FOBP National Conference

Our 2008 National Conference was dedicated to the legacy of El Paso Sheriff Leo Samaniego who passed away in December 2007 after a prolonged illness. Sheriff Samaniego was remembered as a man of unquestionable integrity in an area long recognized and exposed for corruption and compromises in security. We recognize his 50 years of dedicated service to America and his example of honesty and integrity for every law enforcement officer to emulate.

FOBP appreciates the support of Sheriff Tommy Thomas and the Harris County Sheriff's Honor Guard which presented colors during the pledge of allegiance and invocation.

FOBP especially thanks former ASAC Ruben Gonzalez, his family and General Counsel Mark Conrad for their hospitality and for providing our special dinner and conference lunch.

On Sunday, June 8, 2008, Friends of the Border Patrol held our Second Annual National Conference at the Humble Civic Center in Houston, Texas. Our guests came from across the nation—Boston, MA, Detroit, MI, Iowa City, IA, Dothan, AL, Los Angeles and Oakland, CA, Virginia (just outside of Washington, D.C.), and from the Houston area itself. Our guests served in law enforcement agencies such as the Border Patrol, Customs, DEA, ICE, and even included a former assistant U.S. attorney. Also present were board members of the Federal Hispanic Law Enforcement Officers Association.

The purpose was to discuss a variety of issues such as the Bush War on Law Enforcement, which involves Nifong-like federal prosecutions—Bush crony Johnny Sutton, for example. These cases, such as BP Agent David Sipe, represented by his attorney Jack Wolfe, are noted for suborning of perjury, falsification of materials and statements, abuse of immunity, suppression of evidence, and the protection of narcotic and human traffickers at the expense of our law enforcement officers. Also included are the trumping-up of charges against federal agents for doing their job by incompetent managers more interested in trade and commerce than national security.

Our board of directors arrived in Houston on the evening of June 6, 2008, and the following morning began a series of meetings that did not conclude until just prior to leaving Houston on Monday afternoon, June 9, 2008. Over the course of those four days we met with numerous CBP Officers and special guests from around the nation.

At the conference, we discussed the phony War on Drugs, and the deadly, infamous House of Death that has resulted in numerous murders in Juarez, Mexico and compromised DEA operatives and their families, leaving them at the mercy of drug cartels. Former El Paso DEA Special Agent-in-Charge Sandalio Gonzalez had confronted both his SAC counterpart at the Immigrations and Customs Enforcement Agency and U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton. Instead of launching a thorough investigation into the numerous murders, the United States government engaged in a massive cover-up and forced SAC Gonzalez into premature retirement.

Former ICE Associate Special Agent in-Charge Ruben Gonzalez discussed what he called “ICE Melting.” This is in reference to dog & pony press conferences where Assistant Secretary of ICE Julie Myers has announced raids, which resulted in numerous apprehensions of illegal aliens. However, while ICE continues the publicity shows, that are based solely on placating Congress and the nation’s demand that ICE do its job and enforce immigration laws, serious questions remain to be answered by Assistant Secretary Myers, Marcy Forman, and other senior ICE officials. How many of those enforcement raids and apprehensions resulted in prosecutions of aliens and slave-labor employers, and how many illegal aliens were voluntarily released shortly after the dog and pony press conferences?

He also discussed how our law enforcement officers need genuine support from Congress—not sound-bites or appearances. Far too often over the course of his years in federal law enforcement, Congress gave Law Enforcement Officers just that, and little else. Our officers deserve more.

Additionally, ASAC Gonzalez also disputed CBP’s publication, *Frontline Magazine*. In its Spring 2008 issue, regarding border security at the soft-underbelly of U.S. National Security, the Island of Puerto Rico, about which I testified about before a Congressional Committee in 2006. Specifically discussed in the magazine were Mona Island and the Mona Passage northwest of Puerto Rico. As a former senior officer with Customs, Gonzalez stated that the article was a blatant fabrication because operations had been successfully conducted back in the 1990s. He addressed the agency’s numerous misrepresentations—security remains compromised, despite the agency’s claims.

Because of its key strategic location—its proximity to Colombia and Venezuela—Puerto Rico is the primary strategic location for maintaining operational security in the Caribbean. Many people think that Guantanamo is the primary strategic location. In fact, the “Gitmo” based garrison is solely responsible for Cuba and the detention of suspected terrorists, unlike Puerto Rico.

Attorney John Cavicchi discussed his brother’s discrimination and retaliation cases, where he has taken on dishonest federal court judges in Miami and DHS Customs and Border Protection management. Included in his statement was how Bush federal district court judges have the audacity to ignore U.S. Supreme Court rulings and ignore facts, thus violating their oaths of office. One judge failed to reveal apparent conflicts or disqualify himself from cases where there are apparent conflicts of interest. These judges rule against honest officers being persecuted by CBP regardless of the facts, even when perjury is apparent.

Mr. Cavicchi and Attorney Mark Conrad, a retired Resident Agent-in-Charge of Legacy Customs Internal Affairs discussed cases where a high ranking Customs manager tampered with evidence and “placed” marijuana on civilians. Instead of being fired, this official was ultimately promoted to Port Director. Others engaged in acts of discrimination and condoned physical violence including assaults and battery against

fellow Customs Officers. Mr. Conrad revealed a sex ring involving some of the highest-ranking officials in the agency. One incident involved a female officer who was sexually assaulted while on duty by a fellow officer. The agency's investigation consisted of simply asking the male employee whether he committed the offense. Although the female officer has subsequently passed a polygraph, no action was taken against the abusive officer—he was promoted. Additionally, two Miami CBP officials were caught in a sex act, during work in a government car and in a government garage—one was transferred, the other was promoted.

The culture at Customs is a practice called “Screw Up, Move Up.” Officers are told they can move up by engaging in sexual acts with superior officers. I have previously testified to this practice before the House Homeland Security Committee's Subcommittee on Border, Maritime, and Global Counter-Terrorism and officers have also alluded to this as “put out or get out” as well as “to get along, you have to go along.” Is CBP a law enforcement agency or a drunken, frat party from John Belushi's *Animal House*?

CBP Officers personally substantiated their allegations with case files and documents.

In truth, the stories were too shocking to believe. On several occasions, experienced attorneys, active duty, retired law enforcement officials, and military veterans repeatedly exclaimed, “This is true, we have proof of all these activities, and you just can't make shit like this up!”

The officers recounted stories of corruption and incompetence at the highest levels of CBP. They informed us of professional bureaucrats who believe they are above the law and care nothing about human dignity.

There was a litany of reports and stories of threats and intimidation against officers for speaking up when our national security has been compromised and the retaliation that resulted from reporting incidents to superiors. Rather than do their job and pursue an investigation, supervisors protected their buddies and retaliated against honest officers trying to do their job and keep America safe.

As our brave, experienced officers, many of whom were veterans of our armed services, talked about the injustices and vile acts against them, including the trumped up charges, they were brought to tears.

CBP Officer Oscar Trevino was ordered in Brownsville, TX to inspect a container. He did so without a Hazmat suit. Inhaling toxic gas, he went into convulsions and collapsed. His supervisor did nothing, and later took him to the hospital. The agency claimed his injury was not work-related and claimed he was an epileptic. Officer Trevino has lost 40% of his lung capacity and suffered irreversible brain damage. As his coworker described the event, she wept and said that the injured officer's primary concern was for his two young daughters because the prognosis for a full recovery is grim.

CBP Officers also reported stories of intimidation for merely attending our conference, and were told that annual leave (vacation time), and sick leave would not be honored unless the officer had a doctor's note. Officers wanted to come and seek support at the conference, but were threatened, violating the US Constitution's Right to Assemble.

In their own words the officers told us:

- “They don't want us to talk, if we do, we could be in serious trouble.”
- “I knew I'd have been in trouble and messed with if I'd have come to the conference, so we are meeting with you off-duty because we are scared of what they'll do to us.”
- “Since we merged into DHS, we have no rights whatsoever.”
- “When a position opens up, I don't put in for anything so I don't humiliate myself.”
- “Knowledge, capability, and seniority is no longer the criteria for promotion, even for specialty teams.”
- “CBP is sucking the life out of the Legacy personnel so we'll quit. They want to erase institutional memory.”
- “CBP is about ass-kissing and backstabbing! It is like watching the next episode of Survivor. CBP has created a culture of mistrust.”
- “They (CBP) make us feel like criminals.”
- “I only have a few years until retirement and I don't want to live in sheer hell until then.”

It is no wonder that so many believe that the situation is hopeless and are quitting at an alarming rate. According to sources, fifty-seven law enforcement officers quit every two weeks. Training costs approximately \$1 million per officer. Thus, the agency is losing an alarming \$28.5 million weekly. These are experienced officers of 10, 15, and 20+ years—not rookies. Standards have been lowered at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (academies).

Local CBPOs repeatedly told us they want Congress to assist them and to stop agency witch-hunts where charges are fabricated in order to cover-up managerial incompetence, in order to protect the managers from whistle-blowers who report national security compromises. Security does not stop at the borders. Interior ports and coastlines are equally as important to national security as the Mexican and Canadian borders.

Despite DHS's sham press conferences, barnstorming, traveling road shows, and endless false testimony by DHS officials—at taxpayers' expense, America's borders and ports of entry are compromised. I submit that it is no coincidence that DHS Secretary Chertoff, CBP Commissioner Basham and Assistant CBP Commissioner Winkowski were in Houston on the days immediately preceding our conference.

In the presence of a senior legislative staff official from a local Congressional office, I asked whether the various officers would risk losing their jobs by testifying in Washington before Congress. They unanimously replied in the affirmative, stating that

they would happily take that risk—to remain silent and to let our nation to be compromised would be worse. One year ago such a statement would have been unimaginable and not one CBP officer or agent, except a union official, would have stood in contradiction to the stream of misinformation coming from DHS senior officials.

We must have Congressional investigations and hearings into the agencies that have compromised our security, and have endangered our first responders and civilians. The Bush Administration has compromised national security in exchange for trade and commerce. Criminal negligence is committed at the expense of national security. Congress must explore the assaults, sex rings, and other acts of misconduct against officers perpetrated by and covered-up by senior managers at CBP and other agencies. Congress must appoint an independent special prosecutor who will report to Congress and the American people without partisanship. This is the only way to clean up dirty, corrupt agencies, and courts, which operate beyond oversight and the law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andy".

Andy Ramirez