

BILL ANALYSIS

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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The State of Texas is charged with protecting more than 1,200 miles of land and some 367 miles of coastline along the Mexican border, a job that has become increasingly difficult. On September 25, 2006, Officer Rodney Johnson of the Houston Police Department was fatally shot during a routine traffic stop in Houston by a criminal illegal immigrant who had been previously deported and had once again entered the country. Two years later, on November 22, 2008, two employees from the Texas Tech Medical School were gunned down in Juarez, Mexico, while participating in a funeral procession for a family member. Less than a year after that, bullets from a gun battle in Matamoros, Mexico, grazed a campus building at The University of Texas at Brownsville, and on June 29, 2010, stray bullets from a deadly gun battle in Juarez struck the El Paso City Hall.

The Texas-Mexico border was especially violent in late summer 2010. On August 21, a portion of Highway U.S. 85 had to be shut down when gunfire from Juarez reached The University of Texas at El Paso and at least one bullet pierced Bell Hall. Then, on the 11th of September, Mexican drug cartel members brazenly shot at patrolling U.S. law enforcement officers, and on the 30th of that month, members of a Mexican cartel viciously murdered David Michael Hartley, who was skiing on Falcon Lake with his wife. Already, 2011 is shaping up to see more of the same. On January 14, an armed man from the Mexican side of the border fired a high-powered rifle at road workers in Hudspeth County, and later that month, on January 26, Nancy Shuman Davis, an American missionary, was driving with her husband about 60 miles south of the border when she was shot and killed by gunmen. In February, the United States lost an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent, Jaime Zapata, who was assigned to the ICE attache office in Mexico City. He and another ICE agent, who was injured, were attacked by unknown assailants while the agents were driving between Monterrey and Mexico City.

All of these events, as well as others that have not been cited or are not yet known, exemplify the inadequacy of federal border security efforts. The State of Texas has attempted to address the problem by adding 172 commissioned law enforcement officers to the border, purchasing five state-of-the-art helicopters, conducting border security surge operations, and paying more than \$79 million for overtime, training, equipment, and technology for local law enforcement officers in just the last four years. Since 2006, law enforcement agencies working together in Texas have seized more than \$6.8 billion in illegal drugs and more than \$128 million in cash, along with over 2,600 stolen firearms and weapons and approximately 2,230 stolen vehicles, all related to drug and human trafficking. Texas has repeatedly asked the federal government to send more border security resources to this state, requesting specifically an increase in manpower of 3,000 border patrol agents and the deployment of 1,000 Title 32 National Guard troops and at least one Texas-based and dedicated unmanned aircraft like those being used in North Dakota and Arizona.

At an average salary of \$60,000 a year, the cost of tripling the number of border patrol agents along our border with Mexico would cost the federal government less than \$2.5 billion, while the estimated costs of illegal immigration exceed that amount in Texas alone. Texas taxpayers have spent billions compensating for the lack of federal resources provided to the state. In just one example, Texas prisons house nearly 12,000 violent offenders that claim foreign citizenship, and the state bears the entire cost of housing and prosecuting those offenders. At an average cost of \$47 per day, that is over \$200 million per year that the federal government's failure to secure our border is costing Texans. At the very least, the federal government should be responsible for the

cost of housing illegal immigrants who have been convicted of committing a crime in the State of Texas and the state should be reimbursed for its recent expenses in this regard. Moreover, despite Texas' repeated requests that the federal government cease and desist transferring illegal aliens from other parts of the country to southwest Texas, the federal government continues to do so as part of the federal Alien Transfer and Exit Program. Worse yet, ICE director John Morton released a memo stating that the agency did not have enough resources to deport all apprehended illegal aliens and instructed ICE employees to prioritize the apprehension and removal of aliens, effectively giving many of them a free pass and handicapping local law enforcement. The inability of Washington to develop some form of comprehensive immigration reform that might address this border security problem puts an unfair and unreasonable burden on the entire state, but in particular on Texas border communities, which already struggle to keep their streets and neighborhoods safe from spillover gang violence. The federal government imposes immigration laws on our state while withholding both the funding and the manpower necessary to effectively enforce those laws, and this broken system has punished Texas taxpayers for far too long.

RESOLVED

That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas hereby urge the members of the Texas congressional delegation to provide to the legislature a cost analysis of the exact funding necessary for full enforcement of all immigration laws in Texas and to immediately report to the legislature as to the status of that funding.

That the lieutenant governor of Texas and the speaker of the Texas House of Representatives send a delegation of members from both chambers to meet with members of Congress and members of the executive branch to discuss the ongoing border security crisis.

That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.