



March 9, 2013

Chairman

Mayor Ramsey English Cantu
City of Eagle Pass

Chairman-Elect

Mayor Pro Tem Adan Farias
City of Pharr

Vice Chairman

J.D. Salinas
Managing Partner, Advent GX

Treasurer

Eddie Aldrete
IBC Bank

Executive Committee

Nelda Ramirez
Edinburg EDC

Mayor John F. Cook
City of El Paso

Mayor Martin Cepeda
City of Hidalgo

Judge Ramon Garcia
Hidalgo County

Mayor Joe "Fito" Salinas
City of La Joya

Mayor Raul G. Salinas
City of Laredo

Mayor Richard Cortez
City of McAllen

Mayor Norberto Salinas
City of Mission

Mayor Leopoldo "Polo"
Palacios, Jr.
City of Pharr

Ben Petty, Sr.
Tax Free Shopping

Judge Laura Allen
Val Verde County

Mayor Miguel Wise
City of Weslaco

Judge John Gonzalez, Jr.
Willacy County

Judge Joe Rathmell
Zapata County

Committee Chairs

Guillermo Rodriguez
Education

Olga Gabriel
Healthcare

Monica Weisberg-Stewart
Immigration &
Border Security

Blas Castaneda
Workforce Development

Mission:

To make legislative

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mary Landrieu
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dan Coats
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Sirs:

The Texas Border Coalition (TBC) is the collective voice of border mayors, county judges, and economic development organizations along the Texas-Mexico border, representing 2.5 million people in economically disadvantaged counties from El Paso to Brownsville. We write to request your assistance in protecting the security and economic vitality of the border region as you address appropriations for the balance of fiscal 2013.

The current budget landscape, including implementation of the automatic sequestration spending cuts, has already thickened the legal border crossing points between the United States and Mexico. According to the Customs and Border Protection agency (CBP), sequestration led to a 25-40 percent reduction in the number of booths staffed by border inspectors as a result of a stark reduction in overtime. As a result, wait times have spiked, resulting in lines at the legal crossing of up to 3 hours or more.

When CBP implements the furlough program it notified employees about Thursday, suggesting full-time employees may lose "no more than 14 days or 112 hours" between April 21 and Sept. 30, delays at legal crossing points will grow more intolerable. Some predict wait times exceeding six hours. Such a situation will bring border commerce and tourism to a virtual halt.

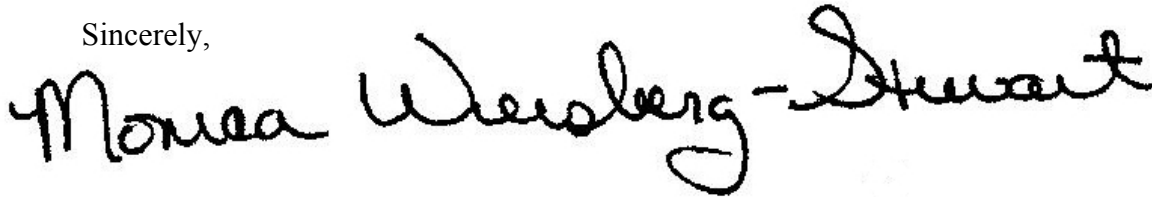
Likewise, it is predictable that these personnel reductions will erode the current level of security in the border region. While we may argue over the appropriate balance of personnel between and at the legal crossing points, nearly everyone on the border is certain that increased levels of personnel have increased border security.

In this context, we request that as you advance appropriations legislation for the balance of 2013 that include both short- and long-term provisions to protect the

security and economic vitality of the border region. We ask for short-term action that would minimize or eliminate the anticipated furloughs, such as by directing that current staffing levels be maintained on the front lines. Long-term, we ask that you include provisions agreed to by House and Senate negotiators late last year to authorize pilot alternative funding mechanisms for land ports of entry infrastructure, technology and personnel. The language would authorize the Department of Homeland Security to pilot Public-Private Partnerships at the land ports under certain restrictions.

The Texas Border Coalition appreciates your leadership in dealing with these difficult issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monica Weisberg-Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Monica Weisberg-Stewart, Chairman
Immigration & Border Security Committee