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Mission:

***To make Legislative
recommendations to help
the Texas Border Region
grow and prosper
economically.***

January 18, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Texas Border Coalition recently released a white paper explaining that the federal government needs to provide another \$6 billion in funding for infrastructure and technology and an additional 6,000 customs inspection agents to protect America's borders and promote legitimate trade and tourism with Mexico. We ask you to adopt these recommendations in your February budget submission to Congress.

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. TBC is working closely with state and federal government officials to educate, advocate, and improve transportation, immigration, border security, education and health care. Our paper is titled, "*Without Strategy: America's Border Blunders Facilitate and Empower Mexico's Drugs Cartels,*" and is available online at www.texasbordercoalition.org.

As residents of the border, we know all too well the importance of securing the frontier. We must define and execute a strategy to make our border safe and defeat the Mexican drug cartels without impeding legitimate trade and travel. Without a strategy, America will continue to lose the security war to the better financed, equipped, more mobile and agile drug cartels. Our study shows that with apprehension rates of 90 percent for undocumented persons seeking to cross the frontier, we have won the border security fight between designated U.S.-Mexico border crossings. We are losing the battle at the legal border crossings, where the drug cartels are smuggling their drugs, cash and firearms because apprehension rates are only 28 percent caused by underfunding infrastructure and technology, and not hiring the appropriate amount of Custom and Border Protection inspectors.

Correcting this border security imbalance is a win-win for America: in addition to reducing our nation's vulnerability to the Mexican drug cartels, increasing efficiency at the legal border crossings will generate more revenue by increasing our trade with Mexico. We cannot fix our budgetary or security problems simply by cutting expenses; improved commerce with Mexico is an important first step. One out of 24 jobs in the United States depends on trade with Mexico.

Needless to say, closing the final security gap will depend on reforming immigration policies to provide sufficient visas for the workers our economy demands and that foreign nationals are supplying.

Please join with the Texas Border Coalition and our partner advocates across the spectrum of trade, labor, immigration and environmental groups by including in your fiscal 2013 budget proposal an emergency program to provide an additional \$6 billion in funding for infrastructure and technology and 6,000 new customs and border inspectors that will protect America's borders and boost legitimate trade and tourism with Mexico.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ramsey Cantu', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ramsey Cantu

cc: Members of Congress