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Dear Friends,


You know as well as I do that illegal immigration affects Arizona more than it affects any other state, and many of you share my frustration in the federal government's inability to secure our borders. More than half of all illegal crossings over the U.S.-Mexico border happen here in Arizona, and we are often left footing the bill.

You may remember that [I introduced an amendment](#) that successfully blocked cuts to the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP). SCAAP is a program which helps to defray the costs associated with arresting, processing and incarcerating criminal illegal immigrants. I am proud that we passed the amendment and blocked the cuts from happening.


[Click here](#) to read more about the amendment to block cuts to SCAAP.



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Last week, I introduced [another successful bipartisan amendment](#) with my Republican colleague, Rep. Brian Bilbray of California, to the FY 2010 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill to ensure that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection has the resources it needs to make critical security improvements to our border crossings and ports of entry as it implements the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

The [Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative](#) was the result of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, following the recommendation of the 9/11 Commission to strengthen border security which, as of June 1, 2009, requires travelers entering the United States by land or sea to present a passport or other approved document establishing their identity and citizenship.

Unfortunately, the FY 2010 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill fell \$4.9 million short of the President's request for funding to help implement the new border crossing requirements. Our amendment will avoid any increase in overall spending by providing the necessary funds by reducing the amount allocated to the Office of the Under Secretary for Management and shifting them to the border patrol for inspections.

Before the new rules requiring passports took effect last year, U.S. Border Patrol agents [inspected more than 396 million travelers](#), including 32 million inspections at the 6 ports of entry along the Arizona-Mexico Border. Without this important funding, we may see huge log jams, backups, and confusion at the border.

I'm proud to report that we've scored another victory for Arizona. On Wednesday, the amendment was adopted as part of the Fiscal Year 2010 Homeland Security Bill.

For more information about the Mitchell-Bilbray amendment, [click here](#).

These amendments are a good start and a step in right direction. Be assured I will continue to work across party lines and redouble efforts to fix our broken system to keep Arizona safe and our border secure.

Sincerely,

Harry



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If you wish to contact me, please do so at <http://mitchell.house.gov>. Please **do NOT reply** to this message.
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