



Sheriff Paul Babeu  
Pinal County, Arizona

June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**H.R. 2278**

**“Strengthen and Fortify Enforcement Act”**

**SAFE ACT**



# Pinal County Sheriff's Office

June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

To: *Committee Hearing on H.R. 2278 "Strengthen and Fortify Enforcement Act"*

Pinal County, Arizona is always listed among the fastest growing counties in America. Located between Phoenix and Tucson we also have another not so favorable title... Pinal County is the "*Number One Pass Through County for Drug and Human Trafficking in all of America.*" Over half of the illegals entering America come through Arizona. According to U.S. Border Patrol, last year alone they captured 123,285 in the Tucson sector which is the busiest and deadliest of any of the nine southwest sectors. U.S. Border Patrol has acknowledged this number does not take into account another conservative estimate of double this number of illegals that made it into the United States undetected. Of those illegals that were caught, 17 to 30 percent of them already have a criminal record in the United States.

According to a recent GAO report, 56% of the border is NOT under "*Operational Control.*" In my opinion, and the opinion of most people, 44% is a failing grade. Arizona has four counties which share the border with Mexico. Yuma County is under operational control at this time. The other three border counties (Pima, Santa Cruz and Cochise County) are not. America can secure the border if we replicate the success of what was accomplished in the Yuma Sector. The Yuma Sector has now attained a 97% reduction of illegal border crossings. The Senator McCain/Kyl 10-Point Border Security Plan is developed largely from the learned successes of the Yuma Sector during Operation Jump Start. The Senator McCain/Kyl 10-Point Border Security Plan needs to be implemented to attain a secure border with Mexico.

There are three key elements of the Senator McCain/Kyl Plan. Immediately deploy 6,000 armed soldiers for a period of two years to immediately secure the border. While armed soldiers are deployed, the double barrier fence is completed with the supportive surveillance platforms, lighting, sensors and supportive roads to support rapid deployment of US Border Patrol. Thirdly, fully enforce the law without any diversion option for illegals. This compromise of "*catch and release*" has undermined the rule of law, since there are no consequences.

I strongly oppose the proposed immigration reform offered by the so called "*Gang of Eight*". Officially titled the "*Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013*" or the "*Schumer-McCain Immigration Bill.*"

We must secure the border first, prior to any discussion of green cards and a path to citizenship offered to nearly 20 million illegals and their families. This plan gives everything to President Obama upfront, while border security is promised once again on the backend. We are about to repeat history, when in 1986 President Reagan gave amnesty to 2 million illegals. Now, the stakes are far higher, yet it seems that we haven't learned our lesson. The failure to secure the border after the Reagan amnesty got us where we are today with 11 to 20 million illegals in our Country.....this plan will repeat history.

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Secretary Janet Napolitano almost daily proclaims that our US/Mexican border is already secure in an effort to pave the way to amnesty. One year ago, the Tucson sector alone had 123,285 illegals apprehended and now the Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol recently testified that this number is up more than 13%. Additionally, our Sheriff's Office recently led a multi-agency investigation which busted the largest drug smuggling operation in the history of Arizona, valued between \$2-\$3 Billion, arresting 76 individuals of the Sinaloa Mexican Drug Cartel and seized 108 of their firearms. In law enforcement, we call these clues; the border is NOT more secure than ever.

This immigration reform plan gives Secretary Napolitano six months to come up with a border security plan. What has she been doing for the past four years? She deceptively proclaims border security in order to convince the American people that the border is secure and yet she tells law enforcement officials that the border can't be secured. In Nogales, Arizona on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Secretary Napolitano personally told me and several law enforcement officials that "*we are never going to seal the border, and since the beginning of time, we've always had contraband and smuggling going through it.*" I along with most Americans wonder how the person in charge of securing the border can say we can't do it. The border can and must be secured. It has already happened in the Yuma Sector where border crossings have been reduced by 97%.

Most agree that we need to reform our immigration system, yet logic and history should demand that our border must be secured first. I applaud this effort to add significant resources to build fencing, add needed staff, and improve security. This has to be done first. What is the justification to not secure the border first and then start on reform? I do not trust that the border will be secured under this plan, since the very people in charge already believe we have security. We are asked to trust the very people who recently released 2,228 criminal illegals to our streets and continue to refuse to provide me their names, criminal history, their individual threat assessment, and location of their supervised release. We are asked to trust the very people who covered up Benghazi and gave over 2,000 high powered weapons (AG Holder's Fast & Furious) to the Mexican Drug Cartel that we are fighting. The only failsafe of this plan is if the border is not 90% secure, the plan calls to establish a commission years later to study what went wrong. Border security is a grave national security concern.

H.R. 2278 "*Strengthen and Fortify Enforcement Act*" is the best plan I have seen presented to protect America. The bill if approved will give law enforcement agencies across the United States clear direction so immigration enforcement can be consistent throughout all communities.

On a daily basis in Pinal County, law enforcement and citizens are forced to live with the results of an unsecured border. H.R. 2278 the "*Strengthen and Fortify Enforcement Act*" will give our deputies and law enforcement members across the nation, the authority they need to arrest and detain with those involved with drug and human trafficking who come freely through our open border. The citizens of Pinal County have elected and given me their sacred trust to ensure they are safe. Almost daily, deputies of my office are involved in vehicle pursuits with cartel members smuggling drugs or humans, we have had executions, warnings from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that the cartels members from Mexico were going to be sending assassins to Pinal County to execute other cartel members, we have had cartels send "*Rip Crews*" who have been involved in gun battles with other cartel members, "*Rip Crews*" have conducted traffic stops on individuals and committed robberies, we have seen homicides, home invasions, kidnappings, shootings, sexual assaults, burglaries and thefts. Deputies have confronted armed individuals both in the desert and in vehicles and have been involved in shootings and physical confrontations.

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I urge this committee to give your full support to H.R. 2278 the "*Strengthen and Fortify Enforcement Act*" as it will give law enforcement and communities the power we need to keep our citizens safe. This legislation also makes it more difficult for terrorists and other aliens who pose national security concerns to enter and remain in the United States, protects the American public by facilitating the removal of criminal aliens, improves our nation's first line of defense - the visa issuance process, and provides additional assistance to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers in carrying out their jobs of enforcing Federal immigration laws.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul R. Babeu". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "P".

Paul Babeu, Sheriff  
Pinal County