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OUR BORDER NEEDS PROTECTION BUT SO DOES OUR ECONOMY!!!

HON. BOB FILNER
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. FILNER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me. I thank the Chair for bringing us this bill. I speak in favor of the bill, and I want to talk to part of the bill that has not been fully vetted yet.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. Hayworth), if he is interested in security at a time of war, let us remember that in this bill we have 1,000 extra INS inspectors authorized to help us secure the border, 200 INS inspectors and investigators each year added for the next 5 years.

I will tell my colleagues, I represent the biggest city on the southern border, San Diego. Soon I will represent the whole California border with Mexico. We are interested in securing, at this time of war; but we are also interested in making sure our economy stays strong, and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. Hayworth) ought to know, since his own State is also involved in this, that the legal crosser from Mexico, the shopper, the family member, the person going to school, the legal crosser, sustains our border economy to a great degree.

My communities in Calexico, Tecate and San Diego rely 90 percent on the legal crosser to keep our economy going. We can do both, Mr. Speaker. We can have the security that we need, and we can have the free movement that our economy also requires. That means we need more people and we need better technology to guard the borders.

That is what this bill is moving toward. We are moving toward more inspectors so we can make sure that we keep out illegal people, drugs and terrorists; but we also need for people not to have to wait 3, 4, 5, 8 hours at the border for a legal crosser to go to school legally, to shop legally, to see their family members legally. That is what the border communities are interested in. Yes, security; yes, protection. But let us have that binational culture that is so much a part of our southern border, not just cut off at this time of emergency.

We can do both, Mr. Speaker. We can keep the security. We can keep the flow for commerce that is necessary.

I support this bill.