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House of Representatives

LEVEL 1 SECURITY NEEDED AT THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER!

HON. BOB FILNER
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. FILNER: Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding time to me, and I thank the chairman for bringing us this bill.

I represent San Diego, California, home of the biggest border crossing between any two nations in the world. What we need more than anything is the dual job of stopping terrorists, but allowing the legal traffic to flow in an orderly fashion. Our businesses, our families, depend on a flow of traffic that can be predictable and it is regular.

What the chairman has done, as I understand it, is put 200 more positions for INS inspectors annually for the next 5 years, which will allow us to do both the security and the flow that is absolutely necessary.

I join the chairman in his regret that a jurisdictional dispute prevented Customs inspectors from being included in this bill, and I also join the gentleman in his call to bring that bill to us as quickly as possible. I am also pleased that the extension of the laser visa boarding crossing card has been extended for a year that will allow us to

make sure that people can get that card and use it properly.

I am disappointed that at the last minute, for some reason, section 601, what was section 601, that granted law enforcement status to INS inspectors, was removed. This is an absolute necessity, not only for the INS but for Customs and for many other Federal agencies. I hope that we can bring back that long-awaited adjustment of status for these law enforcement officers. We honor them if they die on the Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington, D.C., but as they live, they are not accorded that status.

I join the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Reyes) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. Jackson-Lee) in their regret that the 245 extension has been removed, but I thank the chairman for giving us the resources over the next few years to allow us to keep the Level I alert that is so absolutely necessary to keep out terrorism, but to allow the border to have the resources necessary to have the flow of legal traffic. I thank the gentlewoman for her time.

