

I rise in support of H.R. 6080, which will provide \$600 million to bolster ongoing security efforts and to reduce violence along our nation's southern border. Like many of my constituents, I am concerned about the influx of illegal immigrants into America. The level of violence stemming from the drug trade in Mexico, which has spilled over into the Southwest, is unacceptable. The Obama administration has committed more than 17,000 border patrol agents to the southern border, a historic high, yet we must do more.

The bill will provide \$176 million for 1,000 additional Border Patrol agents to be deployed along the southwest border and \$68 million to hire 250 new Customs and Border Protection officers at ports of entry along the border. It also will fund two new unmanned aerial vehicles for Customs and Border Protection to monitor the border. The bill will provide \$80 million for Immigration and Customs Enforcement to hire more than 250 special agents, investigators, intelligence analysts, and mission support staff to investigate and reduce narcotics smuggling and associated violence.

Additional funding will go to the U.S. Marshals Service, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms' Project Gunrunner, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and to the Federal government's efforts to incarcerate criminal illegal immigrants and to reduce the backlog in the nation's immigration courts. Importantly, this bill is fully paid for by increasing fees for visas that permit foreign workers to work in the United States and by reallocating \$100 million of unspent funds at the Department of Homeland Security. These fee increases would apply only to companies with more than 50 employees with a workforce predominantly comprised of visa-holding foreign workers.

The history of America is a history of immigration and of immigrants. From the first settlers in Jamestown and Plymouth to the masses greeted by the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island fleeing poverty and persecution in the old world, millions have sought a new life in America. Immigrants continue to this day to be a vital part of our social fabric and a key contributor to economic growth. While Congress needs to address immigration reform in a comprehensive manner, our first priority must be securing our borders by providing additional tools and resources to those who patrol the border.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.