



JOSÉ R. RODRÍGUEZ
EL PASO COUNTY ATTORNEY
500 EAST SAN ANTONIO
ROOM 503, COUNTY COURTHOUSE
EL PASO, TEXAS 79901

NO. 200719

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday March 13, 2007

Visit the Press Releases Archive at:

<http://www.epcounty/CA/releases.htm>

For More Information Contact:

Elhiu Dominguez

Public Affairs Officer

Phone: (915) 546-2016

Fax: (915) 546-2133

Elhiu.dominguez@ca.epcounty.com

**El Paso/Southern New Mexico Delegation
Travels to Washington to Advocate for Immigration Reform.**

El Paso County Attorney José R. Rodríguez informed today that a delegation of El Paso/Southern New Mexico residents and community leaders will be holding meetings with members of the U. S. Congress in Washington DC. today Tuesday March 13, Wednesday, March 14, and Thursday, March 15, 2007.

The delegation, comprised of members of the US-Mexico Task Force, is part of a group of more than 500 pro-immigrant advocates from across the United States that will meet in Washington this week to educate members of congress about the need for a comprehensive immigration reform that incorporates humane border security policies.

It is widely believed that later this year the US Congress will adopt new immigration legislation. The US-Mexico Border Task Force wants to ensure that the introduced legislation takes into consideration the experience and needs of border residents. During the next 3 days, members of the task force will meet with democratic and republican members of the House and the Senate to advocate for the insertion of several initiatives in the bipartisan immigration bill that will be introduced in the coming weeks in the Senate by Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA), and in the House of Representatives by congressmen Luis Gutierrez (D-IL) and Jeff Flake (R-AZ).

Jose R. Rodríguez, the newly elected Co-Chair of the US-Mexico Border Task Force, explained some of the initiatives suggested to members of congress for inclusion into the new immigration legislation:

Creation of an Independent Review Commission:

A federal agency independent of the law enforcement agencies established to oversee the implementation of federal policies, projects, and programs. The commission should have the

authority to review the activities of law enforcement agencies at the border and to hold the federal immigration agencies accountable when complaints are made. The commission should further be able to provide recommendations regarding immigration and security policy, enforcement and complaint procedures.

Implementation of civil and human rights standards in border law enforcement operations:

Adoption of new guidelines by the Border Patrol and by Immigration and Customs Enforcement that produce new rules of engagement, detention, apprehension and use of force towards suspected undocumented immigrants, that are in compliance with civil rights and human rights standards.

Reduction of waiting times at existing ports of entry:

Approval of the necessary funds to improve the infrastructure at the existing ports of entry and transportation facilities to significantly reduce the waiting times for border crossers. Also, improve operations at such ports of entry with the same purpose.

Decriminalization of immigration policies:

Adoption of legal language that distinguishes immigration policies from criminal policies, for law enforcement purposes. State and local law enforcement agencies have no inherent authority to enforce civil immigration law.

“Representatives of the US-Mexico Border Task are visiting with members of congress, and will continue to do so in the upcoming weeks, to make sure that the vision of border residents is incorporated in the proposed legislation,” said County Attorney José R. Rodríguez.

“Task force participants will be giving key members of Congress suggested language for proposed immigration legislation, and it is likely that many of those proposals will end up in the main bills,” concluded Rodríguez.

###

For those interested members of the media, a copyright-free audio recording of the press conference (03/05/2007) is available in MP3 format in the web page of the El Paso County Attorney at: <http://www.epcounty.com/CA>

The participants in the press conference, in chronological order, are:

- José R. Rodríguez (El Paso County Attorney)
 - Sister Kathleen Erickson (Sisters of Mercy, New Mexico)
 - Susie Byrd (El Paso City Representative District #2)
 - Josiah Heyman (Chairman Sociology and Anthropology Dept. at UTEP)
 - Fernando Garcia (Executive Director Border Network for Human Rights)
-

For an update on the meetings with members of congress, please call Border Network for Human Rights Executive Director Fernando García, at (915) 204-0337 (Cell)

