Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 10, 2012

Mr. Michael J. Fisher
Chief
U.S. Border Patrol
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20229-0001

Dear Mr. Fisher,

We are writing about your memo dated July 2, 2012, related to closing nine interior Border Patrol stations, including the Amarillo, Lubbock, San Angelo, and Abilene stations that are located in our congressional districts.

We strongly agree that it is important to gain better control of our borders. We also strongly believe that removing the border patrol agents from this interior region of Texas will leave our area vulnerable and undermine the overall effort to enforce our laws and secure our nation.

As you know, the Amarillo and Lubbock stations are among the top apprehenders of illegal aliens in the Big Bend Sector. In fiscal year (FY) 2011, these stations apprehended an average of 142 illegal aliens by each agent. So far this year, 638 apprehensions have been made by the Amarillo and Lubbock stations. Additionally, with the U.S. Interstates 10 and 20 corridors, the Abilene and San Angelo stations are very important in the Del Rio Sector.

In your Q&A section in the memo, you state that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has previously closed stations in the Livermore Border Patrol Sector in California "due to overlapping enforcement responsibilities." In an area the size of West and North Texas with the sparse population density, we see no reason why these stations would be closed "due to overlapping responsibilities."

Additionally, it is our understanding that your agency has not coordinated with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to develop an active plan to assist local authorities after the closures. Without Border Patrol or ICE agents available, how can the western half of Texas be adequately covered by federal officials? Also, if federal agents are unable to come to the scene to take the illegal aliens into custody, will these violators have to be released back into the general population?

Within your rules and regulations, we first ask that you reconsider the proposal to close these border patrol stations in Texas. If you still intend to move forward with the closures, we respectfully ask that you delay doing so until your agency is able to detail in writing how it will assist local law enforcement address hundreds of immigration violations a year without immediate federal support.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Mac Thornberry (TX-13)
Member of Congress

Randy Neugebauer (TX-19)
Member of Congress

Michael Conaway (TX-11)
Member of Congress

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