



February 9, 2011

Sheriff Paul Babeu
Pinal County Sheriff's Office
971 Jason Lopez Circle Building C
Florence, Arizona 85132

Dear Sheriff Babeu,

As Mayors of border communities from Arizona, we would appreciate it if you would not cultivate a culture of fear in our state and to start being accurate about border security. While your misstatements about efforts to keep communities along the U.S.-Mexico border may keep national media coming to Arizona, at the same time your consistent inaccuracies hurt cities and towns like ours by causing those who live and travel to the border to fear for their safety when in our communities. This damages our economy - driving visitors away and leaving our businesses and residents to suffer. The facts show that violent crime is down or remains flat in our border region as we are sure it is in your area as well. In 2002 it peaked at 742 per 100,000 residents but has since drastically dropped to 219 per 100,000 in 2009 (per the F.B. I. Uniform Crime Reports Program).

We have seen firsthand the unprecedented focus and resources that the Department of Homeland Security has brought to the border. The federal government has doubled the size of the Border Patrol, while deploying more intelligence agents, screening more shipments, and sending more state-of-the-art technology than ever before. As a result, more illicit drugs, weapons and cash are being seized along the border. Apprehensions of individuals trying to cross the border illegally have decreased by more than a third in the past two years, while the number of removals - particularly of convicted criminals- is at an all time high.

On a local level, the priority of the Department of Homeland Security has been to continuously build substantive partnerships with our communities which are palpable. This reassures our residents that together we can all enjoy a better quality of life.

We know and understand that there is more work to do. We have seen significant progress being made every day. We trust that the federal government will continue to strengthen the ways it protects our citizens from the violence we see in Mexico. What our communities do need, is for Sheriffs like you to focus on building strong relationships and partnerships with local, state and federal governments and law enforcement agencies to help the efforts on strengthening security on our border.

We say as one voice, "Creating panic where only vigilance is warranted helps nobody."

Three handwritten signatures in black ink are arranged horizontally. From left to right: Arturo R. Garino, Juan C. Escamilla, and Dr. Michael Gomez. Each signature is fluid and cursive.

Arturo R. Garino
Mayor of Nogales, AZ

Juan C. Escamilla
Mayor of San Luis, AZ

Dr. Michael Gomez
Mayor of Douglas, AZ