

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4320

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The Honorable R. Gil Kerlikowske
Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Commissioner Kerlikowske:

It has been nearly one year since our nation experienced a humanitarian crisis along the border with an influx of women and children from Central America. In June 2014, then-Governor Perry took a military-style approach along the border to address the crisis, including directing Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to launch Operation Strong Safety (OSS). This program cost the state of Texas over \$100 million, including \$12 million a month for Texas National Guard personnel to assist in border security.

As these efforts were launched and as the state seeks an additional \$123 million for these efforts, we must examine whether this operation, at the local, state and federal levels, has had the desired effect of further protecting the Texas border, or if State officials should re-examine the use of taxpayer funds for this operation.

Additionally, we must disaggregate the state and local efforts from federal efforts to determine whether the state's use of additional funds did in fact further secure the Texas-Mexico border.

I, therefore, request that U.S. Customs and Border Protection provide the federal metrics related to OSS for the State of Texas. Please provide the federal data regarding:

1. The total number of apprehensions in Texas made exclusively by federal personnel from the launch of OSS through February 2015.
2. The total number of drug-related apprehensions made exclusively by federal personnel from the launch of OSS through February 2015.
3. The total number of drug seizures, including the number of pounds seized by federal agents and the estimated worth of the seized contraband from the launch of OSS through February 2015.
4. Additionally, please provide the total amount of federal funding the State of Texas has requested and used for border security for OSS.

Because Texas DPS has been unable to provide the metrics related to local and state efforts, the federal government's account will help elucidate the role OSS has had on Texas-Mexico border security.

Our local, state, and federal border enforcement personnel play a critical role in ensuring the safety and security of our border and, in turn, the safety of all Texans and Americans. It is incumbent on Texas officials to ensure the funds used in these efforts are utilized in the most cost-effective manner and demonstrate results. Federal data will help provide clarity on the effectiveness of the OSS operation.

I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "JOAQUIN CASTRO". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" that loops around the first part of the name.

Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress