

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 26, 2010

Mr. Gene L. Dodaro  
Acting Comptroller General of the United States  
Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

We write to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) undertake a study of the approach used by the Office of Border Patrol (OBP), within the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Customs and Border Protection, to deploy and manage Border Patrol personnel and resources to secure the U.S.-Mexico border in the state of Arizona.

The Border Patrol's National Strategy includes a "defense in depth" approach to border security operations that provides for several layers of agents who operate not only at the border, but also on public and private lands up to 100 miles away from the border. The Border Patrol's operational strategy also prioritizes border enforcement in urban and more populated areas, which has diverted drug and human smuggling activities to more remote areas.

Despite significant increases over the past five years in the number of Border Patrol agents and assets deployed to the southwest border, Border Patrol's Tucson Sector continues to be the primary entry point for illegal immigrants and drug smugglers. Ranchers and residents in rural areas in particular report an increase in burglaries, home invasions, cut fences, broken water lines and threats. Recent violence against U.S. citizens in rural areas, apparently committed by smugglers, has added to these concerns.

In response, we are requesting that GAO study the operations of CBP's Border Patrol in Arizona with a focus on Border Patrol presence in rural areas. Specifically, we request that GAO review:

- How OBP determines where it will deploy agents across locations in the state of Arizona, and how this compares to deployment strategies that have proven successful in gaining operational control of the border across other Southwest locations such as Texas and California.
- The extent that OBP deployment strategies have increased the rate of apprehensions in both urban and rural areas of Arizona, and what action or resources OBP has identified as needed to gain operational control of the border.
- How OBP determines when and at what level to redeploy staff and resources in response to changes in smuggling and related illegal activity in specific locations.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important issue. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Cherri Branson, Chief Oversight Counsel for the House Committee on Homeland Security, or Liz Berry, Legislative Director in Congresswoman Giffords' office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bennie G. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Bennie G. Thompson  
Chairman  
House Committee on Homeland Security

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "G. Giffords". The signature is cursive and stylized, with the first initial being very large and prominent.

Gabrielle Giffords  
Member of Congress