



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

May 5, 2015

Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Thomas Carper
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Carper, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the 12.5 million members of the AFL-CIO and our community affiliate Working America, I urge you to oppose the Arizona Borderlands Protection and Preservation Act, S. 750. This “enforcement-only” bill sets forth unrealistic and unattainable goals that undermine the prospects for meaningful immigration reform.

To fully repair our broken immigration system, Congress must take a comprehensive approach that creates a broad and inclusive pathway to citizenship and addresses, among other things, the “push factors” motivating flows across our Southern border. A lack of decent work, violence, and corruption in Mexico and Central America are major factors driving people from their homes. Free trade agreements such as NAFTA and CAFTA were put forward with the promise that they would bring about higher employment rates, increased stability, and improved social and economic conditions in the region—thereby reducing the need to migrate. Decades later, however, those promises remain unfulfilled. Instead, our failed trade deals have exacerbated the desperation and instability that forces people to undertake a dangerous journey north in search of a better life.

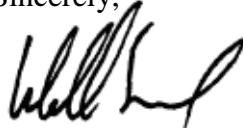
Last year, the AFL-CIO sent a delegation of labor leaders to Honduras to meet with government officials, workers, and community partners to study the impact U.S. trade and immigration policies have on Honduran workers and their families. The delegation found “children and their families will continue to flee their homes until they can live their lives without constant fear of violence, exercise their rights without retaliation, and have access to decent work.”¹ These people are not migrating because they perceive our border to be porous; they are migrating because they have no choice. Investing \$10 billion to further militarize our border will do little to deter this migration, and nothing to address the root causes motivating it.

¹ *Trade, Violence, and Migration: The Broken Promises to Honduran Workers*, AFL-CIO (2014), 16, available at <http://www.aflcio.org/content/download/147761/3770791/file/Honduras.PDF>.

The AFL-CIO continues to call on Congress to pass common-sense immigration reform with strong worker protections and a roadmap to citizenship. In addition, we are calling for more just trade and development strategies that put workers' rights and human rights at their core. A bill that focuses on the border alone is bound to fail. As we stated clearly in 2009 in our *Framework for Comprehensive Reform*² and reaffirmed in recent Executive Council statements³, "enforcement-only" policies like S. 750 will not work.

For the reasons stated above, the AFL-CIO urges members of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs to oppose the Arizona Borderlands Protection and Preservation Act.

Sincerely,



William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs Department

WS/AZ/lkr

² "The Labor Movement's Framework for Comprehensive Immigration Reform" is available at-
<http://www.aflcio.org/content/download/3135/31483/immigrationreform053111.pdf>.

³ See AFL-CIO Executive Council Statement, August 4, 2011: "The AFL-CIO reaffirms its position on comprehensive immigration reform. 'Enforcement only' is not the AFL-CIO's position because it is contrary to comprehensive reform."