

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW MEXICO

IMMIGRATION STUDY

Federal Agencies oversee immigration and naturalization, customs, and the borders were reorganized into the Department of Homeland Security in March 2003. This paper will attempt to provide a brief description these agencies and of their responsibilities. This information was obtained from the Web sites of these bureaus in the Department of Homeland Security.

The Border and Transportation Security Directorate, authorized the creation of two bureaus, the **U.S. Customs and Border Protection:** includes the Border Patrol (CBP), the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), Customs, and Agricultural Quarantine Inspectors.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement: includes the enforcement and investigative components of the former INS, Customs and the Federal Protective Services.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is to implement the Secure Border Initiative (SBI), a multi-year plan to secure America's borders and reduce illegal migration. Increases in funding in 2006 (for a total of more than \$12B) are to hire an additional 1,000 border patrol agents, increase criminal investigators, detention beds, fugitive operations teams and immigration enforcement agents. The vision for SBI includes:

- Increase by 1000 the number of border agents.
- Expanded detention to add 2,000 new beds, for a total of 20,000, expanding new partnerships with state and local governments. Deportation and "expedited removal of certain classes of aliens if apprehended nationwide within 2 years of entry." Now migrants apprehended within 100 miles of the southwest border are deported.
- Upgrading of technology along the borders including the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UVAs), aerial assets, and remote video surveillance camera systems and sensors.
- Sharply reduce illegal border crossings by expanding infrastructure systems where appropriate, exemplified by Sec. Chertorff's announcement to waive certain legal requirements necessary to ensure expeditious completion of the 14 mile system near San Diego, CA.
- Increase interior enforcement of immigration laws by implementing an employer self-compliance program that will link government and business in specific industries in the use of "best practices" to minimize the employment eligibility verification process. Employers will be asked to assist DHS by using their leadership to influence competitors, vendors, and contractors to adopt these methods to ensure compliance.

Additional information about the functions of Immigration and Customs Enforcement can be found at their Web site.

The **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)** performs the duties of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Their responsibilities focus on immigration and citizenship services and is to fundamentally transform and improve the delivery of immigration and citizenship services. Through a network of local offices, local area immigration services, and the internet, USCIS processes all immigrant and non-immigrant benefits provided to visitors of the U.S. The regional field office for NM is in El Paso, there is a service center in Albuquerque.

For additional information about the services of USCIS visit the Web site: uscis.gov

U.S. Customs and Border Protections (CBP) Protection of the borders by the United States started 75 years ago with the first border agents assigned to control illegal entry at the borders. Today CBP has a work force of 11,000 controlling 7,000 miles of land border between Mexico and Canada and 2000 miles coastal water surrounding Florida and Puerto Rico.

The CBP's top priority is to keep terrorists and their weapons from entering the U.S. The primary mission remains to detect and prevent the entry of illegal aliens into the U.S. The CBP prevents narcotics, agricultural pests and smuggled goods from entering, and identifies and arrests those with outstanding criminal warrants. On a typical day last year, CBP agents welcomed 1.2 million people at the nation's 314 land, air and seaports and denied entry to more than 3,000.

The CBP participates in the Secure Border Initiative (SBI).

In addition to patrolling the borders the CBP is responsible for inspection of imported agricultural products, containerized cargo security and enforcing Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) by targeting shipments to the U.S. of IPR goods.

In FYI 2005 border patrol agents made almost 1.2 million arrests of people entering the country illegally and seized more than 12,300 pounds of cocaine and 1.2 million pounds of marijuana with an estimated street value of \$1.4 billion.

To learn more about the Customs and Border Patrol go to cbp.gov

Controversy

“ICE and CBP perform similar functions regarding the enforcement of federal law relating to the border. Some in Congress and the public, feel ICE would be most efficient if merged with CBP. Most of the cases ICE investigates originate with a referral from CBP. These cases include the smuggling of narcotics, goods, weapons, and humans into the U.S.” If the border inspectors, deportation officers, and special agents are merged, the Border Patrol should be separated from the CBP and be elevated to an independent agency reporting directly to the Secretary of DHS. (www.ice.gov)