

By: Guillen

H.C.R. No. 125

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Crime presents a growing threat to communities along
2 the Texas-Mexico border, and especially to those in the South Texas
3 High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area identified by the National
4 Drug Intelligence Center; and

5 WHEREAS, The South Texas HIDTA region is a principal drug
6 smuggling corridor, and associated violence is an ever-present
7 threat for its 14 counties, which include Bexar, Cameron, Dimmit,
8 Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Kinney, La Salle, Maverick, Starr, Val Verde,
9 Webb, Willacy, Zapata, and Zavala; in Mexico, entrenched drug
10 cartels have become increasingly brazen and dangerous, and United
11 States law enforcement authorities are deeply concerned about the
12 risk of this turmoil spilling over the border; and

13 WHEREAS, Criminal groups smuggle firearms as well as drugs
14 into Texas, and drug traffickers and gang members frequently commit
15 property and violent crimes to facilitate their activities and to
16 protect their operations from rivals; in addition, the ready
17 availability of narcotics in the South Texas HIDTA region presents
18 a public health threat, particularly to adolescents and young
19 adults; a recent survey conducted by the Texas Department of State
20 Health Services found that high school students in counties along
21 the border are more likely to experiment with or abuse cocaine than
22 their peers in other areas of Texas; and

23 WHEREAS, Gang members are migrating in increasing numbers
24 from urban areas to smaller communities, according to the NDIC's

1 2009 National Gang Threat Assessment; gangs in Mexico build
2 relationships with street gangs in the U.S. to expand their bases of
3 operation, recruiting from schools, prisons, and neighborhoods;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, Much of the South Texas HIDTA region is sparsely
6 populated, but influences more national-level drug trafficking and
7 drug availability than any other area along the U.S.-Mexico border;
8 such smaller border towns as Rio Grande City and Roma are
9 significant transshipment zones and distribution centers for
10 illicit cargo destined for drug markets in every region of the
11 country; and

12 WHEREAS, Smaller communities and less-populated counties in
13 this region do not have a tax base sufficient to support the level
14 of law enforcement necessary to effectively confront rising threats
15 to public safety; they have benefited, however, from federal grants
16 from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) in
17 the Department of Justice; these grants have funded salaries for
18 additional police officers and sheriffs' deputies, allowed police
19 departments to add school resource officers, and enabled law
20 enforcement agencies to employ technology that enhances
21 efficiency, communication, and information sharing; and

22 WHEREAS, An increase in COPS grants to such communities in
23 the South Texas HIDTA region would greatly assist local efforts to
24 combat the threat of transnational gangs and the crime and violence
25 that accompanies large-scale drug smuggling operations; now,
26 therefore, be it

27 RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas

1 hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to increase
2 Community Oriented Policing Services grants to smaller communities
3 and less populated counties in the South Texas High Intensity Drug
4 Trafficking Area; and, be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
6 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
7 the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the
8 senate of the United States Congress, to the attorney general of the
9 United States, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to
10 Congress with the request that this resolution be officially
11 entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of
12 the United States of America.