

Mexican American Legislative Caucus

Texas House of Representatives

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Mexican American Legislative Caucus opposes legislation on armed militias Calls on Governor Perry to withdraw support for anti-Hispanic legislation

Austin, Texas// The Mexican American Legislative Caucus - Texas House of Representatives - today called on Governor Perry to withdraw his support for legislation that would allow vital Homeland Security dollars to be spent on armed militia. Such an anti-Hispanic piece of legislation is counterproductive. The Mexican American Legislative Caucus asks Governor Perry to retract his support of this legislation.

"This is an unnecessary, divisive and discriminatory piece of legislation," stated State Rep. Pete P. Gallego, Chairman of the Mexican American Legislative Caucus. **"I am happy to have an open debate about immigration policy, but armed militias hunting Hispanics on the border is not the answer. Immigration policy is more complex than using Hispanics for target practice."**

The "Border Protection Corp Act," by Texas Cong. John Culberson, would divert taxpayer dollars currently being used to wage the war on terrorism from the Dept. of Homeland Security to state Governors. The Governors would then have the discretion to spend those dollars allowing armed militias, with little immigration experience and knowledge, to enforce U.S. immigration laws.

"An entire federal agency is already responsible for immigration, and a separate one is responsible for our borders." said Gallego. **"I do not see how the Governor can support siphoning off taxpayer dollars in this manner. If the Governor wants to apply this standard to immigrants entering the U.S. from Mexico, the same standard should apply to Canadians. We all know, however, that this piece of legislation is about singling out Hispanics, not Canadians."**

The bill invokes the militia language of the United States Constitution and allows border-state Governors to fund volunteer militias that could search for and detain individuals suspected of being in the United States without documentation. In addition, the bill proposes to divert funds from the United States Border Patrol.

"My House District covers 1/2 of the Texas-Mexico border," said Gallego. **"The law enforcement officers that I know at the U.S. Border Patrol are properly-trained professionals who take their jobs seriously and nobly serve our country. We should not cede the duty of protecting our borders to civilians."**

Finally, this bill promotes an unprecedented level of lawlessness and disrespect for the very Constitution it cites. **"Governor Perry's support for this bill only fans the flames of intolerance and xenophobia,"** said Gallego. **"By supporting this discriminatory piece of legislation, the Governor does a great disservice to our ongoing efforts to nurture positive ties with Mexico. There is simply no need for such an anti-Hispanic piece of legislation. I am disappointed in the Governor and call on him to remove his support from this discriminatory bill."**

To read the legislation, go to <http://www.culberson.house.gov/media/pdfs/hr3622.pdf>.