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## **AFGE ASKS PRESIDENT BUSH TO PARDON RECENTLY CONVICTED BORDER PATROL AGENTS**

*Punishment too harsh for on-the-job shooting, says union*

(WASHINGTON) - Representing border patrol employees across the nation, the American Federation of Government Employees last week sent a letter to President Bush asking him to pardon two border patrol agents recently sentenced to prison for an on-the-job shooting of an alien drug smuggler. AFGE is joined in its call for a pardon by members of Congress, which also will be conducting a full investigation into the case.

AFGE represents border patrol agents, as well as approximately 100,000 other employees at various agencies throughout the Department of Homeland Security.

The Feb. 9 letter from AFGE National President John Gage states, that “[Ignacio Ramos and Jose Alonso Compean] were punished for actions taken in the course of their duty. Moreover, three jurors recently signed affidavits saying they were unduly pressured to reach a guilty verdict.”

While on duty, Ramos and Compean shot Osbaldo Aldrete-Davila, a non-citizen drug smuggler who was transporting some 700 pounds of marijuana at the Mexico/U.S. border. Both were convicted and in January began their 11- and 12-year sentences, respectively. Last week, Ramos was beaten in his sleep in a planned attack by five or six inmates who saw him on an episode of “America’s Most Wanted.”

“A review of the facts has convinced us that [Ramos and Compean’s] punishment is inappropriate,” Gage stated. “This conviction ... sent the wrong message to drug smugglers.” (Aldrete-Davila, in fact, was given immunity for testifying against the agents and now is threatening to sue the U.S. for \$5 million.)

During the trial, DHS gave testimony contending that it had investigative reports proving the agents confessed guilt and “wanted to shoot some Mexicans.” However, more recently, DHS Inspector General Richard L. Skinner admitted that the agency did not have any such reports.

“This punishment has demoralized the Border Patrol and compromised the security of the nation,” Gage added. “There were three eyewitnesses to the event—Ramos, Compean, and Aldrete-Davila—and in the end, a known drug smuggler’s word was taken over those of two U.S. border patrol agents. With that precedent, other border patrol agents are going to think twice when it comes to defending our borders. And that’s not a risk worth taking.

[View the letter addressed to President Bush](#)

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*The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) is the largest federal employee union, representing 600,000 workers in the federal government and the government of the District of Columbia.*