



NATIONAL BORDER PATROL COUNCIL

of the

American Federation of Government Employees

Affiliated with AFL-CIO



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FRONT-LINE AGENTS HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN BORDER PATROL CHIEF

In an unprecedented move, the leadership of the National Border Patrol Council and its constituent locals cast a unanimous vote of “no confidence” against David Aguilar, the Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol at their recent meeting in Corpus Christi, Texas. More than 100 union leaders, the vast majority of whom are still active Senior Border Patrol agents, participated in the vote. They represent about 11,000 non-supervisory Border Patrol employees from the southern and northern borders, as well as the southeastern coastal areas and Puerto Rico.

This measure reflects the growing frustration among front-line employees with the misguided policies and politics of the Border Patrol and the refusal of its top managers to speak out against them. Some of the more troubling reasons for this dissatisfaction include the following actions:

- Shamelessly promoting amnesty and a greatly expanded guest worker program as key elements of the solution to the illegal immigration crisis despite intense opposition to those concepts from the front-line Border Patrol agents who risk their lives enforcing our Nation’s immigration laws.
- Declaring our borders to be secure while millions of people illegally slip across them every year.
- Perpetuating the “strategy of deterrence” despite clear and convincing evidence that it does not deter **anyone** from illegally crossing the border. (This strategy requires Border Patrol agents to remain in fixed positions along the border, and in many cases prevents them from leaving those positions to pursue people who are spotted crossing illegally.)
- Prohibiting Border Patrol agents from enforcing immigration laws in “interior” towns and cities, including many that are only a short distance away from the border.
- Preventing Border Patrol agents from pursuing vehicles that flee from them, even those that are carrying tons of narcotics or other dangerous contraband.
- Believing the perjured allegations of criminals over the sworn testimony of innocent Border Patrol agents.
- Forbidding front-line Border Patrol agents from working Congressionally-funded overtime — at the same time the Administration is trying to double the size of the workforce.
- Forcing all Border Patrol stations across the country to adopt uniform shift hours, making it easier for smugglers to evade apprehension during shift changes.

- Drastically shortchanging the funding for transfers of front-line Border Patrol agents in order to fund unnecessary transfers of management cronies.
- Cutting corners in the hiring and training processes in order to meet recruitment goals, including the elimination of two weeks of instruction at the Border Patrol Academy.

T.J. Bonner, the President of the National Border Patrol Council, issued the following statement today:

“The U.S. Border Patrol has a long and proud history. Since its inception in 1924, tens of thousands of dedicated and courageous individuals have honorably served this country as Border Patrol agents, working in conditions that are often arduous and dangerous. To date, more than 100 of these agents have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

Until recently, these men and women labored in relative obscurity, protecting our borders day and night while other Americans went about their daily business or slept. Although the Border Patrol has never had enough personnel or equipment to accomplish its mission of securing our borders, it has always done the best that it could with those limited resources.

As the public has demanded that more attention be focused on border security, our elected leaders have responded by introducing hundreds of legislative proposals, as well as by providing a modest amount of additional resources. Unfortunately, this has been accompanied by the politicization of the top ranks of the Border Patrol. Instead of maintaining their traditional neutral advisory role, these high-level managers have become advocates for the administration’s ill-conceived political agenda that includes amnesty for millions of illegal aliens.

Front-line Border Patrol agents who risk their lives protecting our borders have every reason to expect that the leadership of their own agency will support them. When this does not occur, and instead they are undermined by their so-called leaders, no one should be surprised that they express a loss of confidence in those managers. True leaders have the vision to see what needs to be done, the character to inspire others to follow them, and the integrity to do the right thing regardless of the amount of pressure to do otherwise.

It is important to understand that this vote of no confidence has nothing to do with the normal tensions between labor and management. Those have existed for decades, and have involved a number of other Border Patrol Chiefs. Despite those occasional differences of opinion, the front-line agents respected those leaders and believed that everyone in the organization shared the common goal of securing the borders. Sadly, that is no longer the case.

This lack of leadership has caused morale to plummet, which in turn has accelerated the attrition rate among experienced agents. Unless drastic changes are made soon, the goal of securing our borders will remain as elusive as ever.”

The National Border Patrol Council represents approximately 11,000 non-supervisory Border Patrol employees nationwide. For further information, contact T.J. Bonner at (888) 583-7237.