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THE SENATE OF TEXAS  
JUAN "CHUY" HINOJOSA

COMMITTEES  
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AGRICULTURE, RURAL AFFAIRS &  
HOMELAND SECURITY  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE

DISTRICT 20

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MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** THE HONORABLE GREG ABBOTT, GOVERNOR  
THE HONORABLE DAN PATRICK, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
THE HONORABLE JANE NELSON, CHAIR OF SENATE FINANCE

**FROM:** SENATOR JUAN J. HINOJOSA

**SUBJECT:** SENATOR HINOJOSA'S BORDER SECURITY PLAN

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 13, 2015

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Currently, the proposed Senate Budget (SB 2) adds \$815 million for border security. It is a priority to ensure the safety and security of our families living along the border. To adequately address the needs of our border communities, I will work with my Senate colleagues to carefully craft a border security plan that is effective, efficient, and transparent. We need to make better use of our taxpayer dollars by developing a plan to phase out the National Guard troops and replace them with a permanent solution.

Last summer, the Rio Grande Valley experienced a humanitarian crisis as a surge of children and families from Central America overwhelmed our communities. The thousands of immigrants detained in border patrol facilities and makeshift shelters in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions incited concerns and a critical sense of urgency to respond to this unfortunate situation. Although ultimately a federal responsibility, this was a humanitarian issue and one that our residents along the border had to manage.

To handle the humanitarian crisis, the state began a surge of DPS troopers that was soon assisted by the Texas National Guard troops. In December 2014, the Legislative Budget Board approved an additional \$86.1 million to continue the state's border security efforts through August 2015, but the funding was to be used to wind down the National Guard presence along the Rio Grande Valley border. We should utilize National Guard assets only as needed.

Over the past several legislative sessions, the legislature has dedicated increased funds and substantial resources to increase capabilities in the border region. As of January 2015, the cost of the border security operation has been \$102 million, including \$54.5 million for DPS, \$4.5 million for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), and \$43 million for Texas Military Forces. A smarter use of taxpayer dollars is required through a proposal that addresses the real needs along the border.

Therefore, I propose the following:

- **Fix the disparity between DPS commissioned officer salaries and local law enforcement.** DPS salaries need to be on par with salaries paid to our police officers in major cities. If DPS cannot compete with other law enforcement agencies' compensation levels, DPS will continue to lose troopers to these local entities.
- **Create a permanent task force of Texas Rangers in the Rio Grande Valley.** The Texas Rangers Division is the lead coordinator of DPS's border security operations. Additional Texas Rangers can assist in investigations, including public corruption, that result from illicit trafficking.
- **Establish a DPS training facility in the Rio Grande Valley.** To support the additional increase in law enforcement personnel and reduce the travel time and costs away from duty stations, the state should establish a training facility in Hidalgo County that provides troopers the opportunity to better acquaint themselves with the unique culture and traditions of South Texas while completing their training requirements. Having a familiarity with the region will better equip troops to serve and protect the community when enforcing the laws of our state.
- **Permanently increase the number of TPWD Game Wardens on the border.** Game Wardens play an important role in border security operations by conducting ground and marine patrols essential in the interdiction and deterrence of smuggling between the Ports of Entry. Funding for an additional 30 Game Wardens will increase their interdiction capabilities.
- **Enhance funding for the Border Prosecution Grant program.** Grants allow District Attorneys to hire assistant prosecutor and/or investigator whose primary responsibility is to better handle and coordinate prosecution of border crimes.
- **Provide additional funding for local law enforcement agencies.** Local law enforcement agencies in the border region play a major role in responding to border crime and corruption, but local funds are not sufficient. Law enforcement and peace officers are trained to "serve and protect." The National Guard is not trained for this type of responsibility and do not have authority to arrest and detain.
- **Additional Agents for the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC).** TABC has been ramping up its investigative and enforcement efforts to combat those engaged in criminal cartel and gang activities, such as narcotics trafficking, money laundering, fraud, and human trafficking along the border. Funding for an additional 10 agent positions for the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and Financial Crimes Unit (FCU) will help meet these objectives.

- **Provide additional funding for law enforcement equipment.** In order to effectively respond to border activity, law enforcement officials need additional technology and equipment that increases their effectiveness. This includes aircraft, patrol vehicles, marine vessels and equipment for detection capability.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to working with you on crafting a comprehensive strategy that will effectively combat crime and secure our communities.