



OCTOBER 26, 2006

**Today, President Bush Signed The Secure Fence Act – An Important Step Forward In Our Nation's Efforts To Control Our Borders And Reform Our Immigration System.** Earlier this year, the President laid out a strategy for comprehensive immigration reform. The Secure Fence Act is one part of this reform, and the President will work with Congress to finish the job and pass the remaining elements of this strategy.

### **The Secure Fence Act Builds On Progress Securing The Border**

**By Making Wise Use Of Physical Barriers And Deploying 21st Century Technology, We Can Help Our Border Patrol Agents Do Their Job And Make Our Border More Secure.** The Secure Fence Act:

- Authorizes the construction of hundreds of miles of additional fencing along our Southern border;
- Authorizes more vehicle barriers, checkpoints, and lighting to help prevent people from entering our country illegally;
- Authorizes the Department of Homeland Security to increase the use of advanced technology like cameras, satellites, and unmanned aerial vehicles to reinforce our infrastructure at the border.

**Comprehensive Immigration Reform Begins With Securing The Border.** Since President Bush took office, we have:

- More than doubled funding for border security – from \$4.6 billion in 2001 to \$10.4 billion this year;
- Increased the number of Border Patrol agents from about 9,000 to more than 12,000 – and by the end of 2008, we will have doubled the number of Border Patrol agents since the President took office;
- Deployed thousands of National Guard members to assist the Border Patrol;
- Upgraded technology at our borders and added infrastructure, including new fencing and vehicle barriers;
- Apprehended and sent home more than 6 million people entering America illegally; and
- We are adding thousands of new beds in our detention facilities, so we can continue working to end "catch and release" at our Southern border.

### **This Act Is One Part Of Our Effort To Reform Our Immigration System, And We Have More Work To Do**

**Comprehensive Immigration Reform Requires That We Enforce Our Immigration Laws Inside America.** It is against the law to knowingly hire illegal workers, so the Administration has stepped up worksite enforcement. Many businesses want to obey the law, but cannot verify the legal status of their employees because of the widespread problem of document fraud, so the President has also called on Congress to create a better system for verifying documents and work eligibility.

**Comprehensive Immigration Reform Requires That We Reduce The Pressure On Our Border By Creating A Lawful Path For Foreign Workers To Enter Our Country**

**On A Temporary Basis.** A temporary worker program would meet the needs of our economy, reduce the appeal of human smugglers, make it less likely that people would risk their lives to cross the border, and ease the financial burden on State and local governments by replacing illegal workers with lawful taxpayers. Above all, a temporary worker program would add to our security by making certain we know who is in our country and why they are here.

**Comprehensive Immigration Reform Requires That We Face The Reality That Millions Of Illegal Immigrants Are Here Already.** The President opposes amnesty but believes there is a rational middle ground between granting an automatic path to citizenship for every illegal immigrant and a program of mass deportation. Illegal immigrants who have roots in our country and want to stay should have to pay a meaningful penalty for breaking the law, pay their taxes, learn English, work in a job for a number of years, and wait in line behind those who played by the rules and followed the law.

**Comprehensive Immigration Reform Requires That We Honor The Great American Tradition Of The Melting Pot.** Americans are bound together by our shared ideals, an appreciation of our history, respect for the flag we fly, and an ability to speak and write the English language. When immigrants assimilate and advance in our society, they realize their dreams, renew our spirit, and add to the unity of America.

**REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
AT SIGNING OF  
SECURE FENCE ACT OF 2006**

The Roosevelt Room

**THE PRESIDENT:** Thank you all. Thanks. Please be seated. I'm pleased that you all are here to witness the signature of the Secure Fence Act of 2006. This bill will help protect the American people. This bill will make our borders more secure. It is an important step toward immigration reform.

I want to thank the members of Congress for their work on this important piece of legislation. I welcome you here to the White House. I'm looking forward to signing this bill.

I appreciate the Vice President joining us today. I thank the Deputy Secretary, Michael Jackson, of the Department of Homeland Security. Rob Portman -- he happens to be the Director of OMB. I want to thank Ralph Basham, who is the Commissioner of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. David Aguilar is the Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol.

I appreciate the fact that Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist has joined us, as well as House Majority Leader John Boehner. I appreciate them coming in from their respective states as I sign this piece of legislation. I want to thank Congressman Peter King, who's the Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee in the House of Representatives. I appreciate you being here, Peter.

Ours is a nation of immigrants. We're also a nation of law. Unfortunately, the United States has not been in complete control of its borders for decades and, therefore, illegal immigration has been on the rise. We have a responsibility to address these challenges. We have a responsibility to enforce our laws. We have a responsibility to secure our borders. We take this responsibility seriously.

Earlier this year, I addressed the nation from the Oval Office. I laid out our strategy for immigration reform. Part of that strategy begins with securing the border. Since I took office we have more than doubled funding for border security -- from \$4.6 billion in 2001 to \$10.4 billion this year. We've increased the number of Border Patrol agents from about 9,000 to more than 12,000, and by the end of 2008, we will have doubled the number of Border Patrol agents during my presidency.

We've deployed thousands of National Guard members to assist the Border Patrol. We've upgraded technology at our borders. We've added infrastructure, including new fencing and vehicle barriers. We're adding thousands of new beds in our detention facilities so we can continue working to end catch and release at our southern border. During the course of my administration we have apprehended and sent home more than 6 million people entering our country illegally. And I thank the Border Patrol for their hard work.

The Secure Fence Act builds on this progress. The bill authorizes the construction of hundreds of miles of additional fencing along our southern border. The bill authorizes more vehicle barriers, checkpoints and lighting to help prevent people from entering our country illegally. The bill authorizes the Department of Homeland Security to increase the use of advanced technology, like cameras and satellites and unmanned aerial vehicles to reinforce our infrastructure at the border. We're modernizing the southern border of the United States so we can assure the American people we're doing our job of securing the border. By making wise use of physical barriers and deploying 21st century technology we're helping our Border Patrol agents do their job.

The Secure Fence Act is part of our efforts to reform our immigration system. We have more to do. Meaningful immigration reforms means that we must enforce our immigration laws in the United States. It is against the law to hire someone who is here illegally. We fully understand that most businesses want to obey that law, but they cannot verify the legal status of their employees because of widespread document fraud. So we're creating a better system for verifying documents and work eligibility, and in the meantime, holding people to account for breaking the law.

We must reduce pressure on our border by creating a temporary worker plan. Willing workers ought to be matched with willing employers to do jobs Americans are not doing for a temporary -- on a temporary basis.

We must face the reality that millions of illegal immigrants are already here. They should not be given an automatic path to citizenship; that is amnesty. I oppose amnesty. There is a rational middle ground between granting an automatic pass to citizenship for every illegal immigrant and a program of mass deportation. And I look forward to working with Congress to find that middle ground.

The bill I'm about to sign is an important step in our nation's efforts to secure our border and reform our immigration system. I thank the members of Congress for joining me as I sign the Secure Fence Act of 2006.