

NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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### **Border committee hears real stories, shuns politics**

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX (Nov. 8, 2013) – The Joint Border Security Advisory Committee meeting Wednesday heard personal testimony from a former border patrol agent and from Arizona rancher Jim Chilton, whose family has been ranching in Arizona for more than five generations.

Chilton said that he and his wife of 50 years must remain watchful every moment of the day, sleeping with weapons near their bed and carrying them wherever they go, because there is nothing more than a four-strand, barbed wire fence separating him and his wife from drug smugglers and illegally activity.

The U.S. has ceded hundreds of square miles of Arizona to the cartels because it's focusing its efforts 100 miles inside of Arizona, Chilton said, when it should be targeting its efforts at the border.

Moreover, Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu, one of 16 members appointed to the committee, said that the national focus on giving citizenship to 11 million people who have come here illegally, instead of focusing on protecting the people who have been living here legally for generations is misplaced. Securing the border needs to come first, Babeu said, and that is not a Democrat or a Republican issue. "It's our issue as a nation."

During the meeting, committee member Rep. Steve Smith, R-Maricopa, who authored the legislation to raise private funds to help secure the border, said that it is frustrating that Congress is not focused on securing the border first.

"But it's especially frustrating to citizens who have to bear the brunt of an insecure border every day, Smith added.

"It's got to be [about] more than just political expediency," Smith said. "It's got to be about the American people."

Outside the meeting, Speaker of the House Andy Tobin, R-Prescott, said that Rep. Smith's focus on helping to secure Arizona's border, despite the political repercussions, is highly commendable.

Additionally, committee co-chairman Rep. David Stevens, R-Sierra Vista, added that he and the committee have been and will continue to be fully behind the border security project spearheaded by Rep. Smith.

“As we have done in the past, the committee will continue to discuss Smith’s project as well as other border security solutions that protect all Arizonans,” Stevens said.

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