

*News from*  
**Congressman Christopher Carney**  
*Representing Northeast and Central Pennsylvania*

---

*For release: June 19, 2007*

*Contact: Rebecca Gale, 202 225 3731*

*Rebecca.gale@mail.house.gov*

**CARNEY STATEMENT FOR BORDER SECURITY HEARING**

**Washington, D.C.**--Congressman Christopher P. Carney, Chairman of the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Management, Investigations and Oversight, issued the following opening statement for the Subcommittee Hearing, "Ensuring We Have Well-Trained Boots on the Ground At the Border":

"For some time now, I've been listening to my constituent's concerns about immigration and potential reforms to the system. Not surprisingly, border security is one of their prime concerns.

"This conversation has gone national, and that's a good thing. All Americans should be worried about our porous borders.

"But these discussions mean nothing if we can't hire and retain the personnel we need to keep our borders secure. And personnel are only as good as their training. That's why we're holding this hearing today.

"The Customs and Border Patrol force is one of the best agencies in DHS and the federal government. Border Patrol agents train at the elite Border Patrol Training Academy, and Customs and Border Protection Officers are trained by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

"But it's no secret that CBP as a whole lacks the manpower to fulfill its crucial mission. Currently, there are about 13,500 Border Patrol officers on the ground and 18,000 Customs and Border Protection Officers, who are responsible for inspections at more than 300 official ports of entry.

"The administration urged for, and the last Congress authorized but failed to fund, an additional 10,000 Border Patrol agents. I haven't been here more than six months, but I know the money is always hard to find.

"I was happy to be able to support the FY08 Homeland Security appropriations bill last week, which provides funding for about 3,000 more Border Patrol officers and 400 to 450 more CBPOs.

"I'm hopeful that we can continue down this road in the coming years and fully fund all 10,000 of the new positions.

"My constituents are certainly fiscally conservative, and so am I, but when they talk with me about immigration reform and border security, the cost of training and retaining CBP agents is not their primary concern—they want secure borders and the peace of mind that comes with them.

"Aside from funding more boots on the ground, we must also ensure funding for our federal law enforcement training apparatus. Without adequate training capacity and infrastructure, the staffing levels needed to enforce our immigration laws and secure our border will simply be insufficient.

"Even with the best training, CBP still faces annual attrition due to retirements and transfers. This subcommittee and the full committee have been continually examining the morale problems within DHS, but CBP personnel are so good at what they do, they are being recruited to join other law enforcement agencies. We have spent enough time and money on their training that we must do everything we can in order to bring retention numbers up.

"I look forward to hearing from our distinguished witnesses."

###