



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

WEDNESDAY, May 21, 2003

House of Representatives

ARMING THE BORDER IS NOT THE ANSWER

HON. BOB FILNER
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. FILNER: Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment. The Goode amendment is bad, and I will tell the Members that evaluation comes from those folks who represent the Texas and the California border. I represent all of the California-Mexico border. One of my crossings is the busiest border crossing in the entire world. In the various border crossings in my district, a quarter of a million people per day cross the border legally. So I think I have some experience with border crossings. And, yes, we have to get better control of our border, and we have reorganized our government and established a Department of Homeland Security to do just that, and we hope they will get the proper resources to do that.

Yes, we have a lot to do, but it is not arming the border that is the answer. As has been pointed out, we have the best military in the world. We just proved it in Iraq. They are trained to kill.

I will tell Members, the people who live in my district, 55 percent of whom are Americans of Mexican descent, do not like this idea. They are worried about the idea.

I would say to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. Tancredo), the kind of training mission that the gentleman mentioned actually killed an American citizen of Mexican descent, an 18-year-old, ironically, who wanted to be a Marine. It was an accident. They could not tell the illegal from the legal. That is what we want to make sure does not happen on the border with Mexico.

I want to remind my friends that Mexico is a friendly nation. I do not think they have made any attempts at invasion since the Alamo. So this proposal would make a very fragile relationship right now even worse, and that is not what we ought to be doing.

If you want to help us control the border, all you folks from North Carolina and Virginia and Colorado and New Jersey, give us some technology. Ninety-five percent of the people who cross every day in my district cross frequently. With technology we can give them smart cards, they can cross the border, and we can focus our attention on the illegal crossings. This is the wrong way to go.