



Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

Texas Press Release

Contact:

Claudia Ordaz

(915) 544-1990

Claudia.ordaz@senate.state.tx.us



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SENATOR SHAPLEIGH CALLS ON RICK PERRY TO FOCUS ON TEXAS, NOT OBAMA

"Rick, there you go again. Giving a letter to President Obama at the Austin airport is just another gimmick to move the focus off your failed record at DPS. Quit blaming Obama for Border security—El Paso is safer than ever. Get over to DPS and fix it now. That's one responsible thing you can do on your watch."

EL PASO - Senator Eliot Shapleigh called on Rick Perry to quit using gimmicks on Border security. Today, at the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, while President Obama was here in Texas for a luncheon fundraiser, Perry handed Obama a letter on "Border security."

Here is what Senator Shapleigh had to say:

"Rick, there you go again. Giving a letter to President Obama at the Austin airport is just another gimmick to move the focus off your failed record at DPS. Quit blaming President Obama for Border security—El Paso is safer than ever. Get over to DPS now and fix it. That's one responsible thing you can do your watch."

Last week, Senator Shapleigh pointed out how Rick Perry uses fear to drive people to the polls. Increasingly, Perry is stepping up attacks on Obama to move attention off Perry's own record of virtual cameras and a dysfunctional DPS. Last week, Perry stated twice, once on Fox News that "car bombs went off in El Paso." Perry was lying; in fact, car bombs never went off in El Paso. Despite serious consequences to El Paso convention business, Perry never apologized. Before that, Governor Jan Brewer of Arizona [made the bogus claim that "beheadings happened in Arizona."](#)

Senator Shapleigh's El Paso district is closer to Phoenix than it is to Austin. Here is what Senator Shapleigh said about Brewer's false claims:

["Beheadings never happened in Arizona. The only bombs we have to deal with in El Paso are the political bombs Rick Perry uses on Fox News."](#)

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“What Rick Perry is doing is the same thing that Bush and Cheney did—tell a lie, then tell it again; and sooner or later, people believe the lie. And be sure to tell it a few weeks before an election. Tea Party Republicans are conflating Hispanics with drug dealers and cartel violence to create fear. That tactic is as old as Lee Atwater—and is still just as reprehensible.”

Since 1997, Senator Shapleigh has served on the Senate Committee on Transportation, which is now the Transportation and Homeland Security Committee. Shapleigh also chaired the Ten State Border Legislative Conference, and is the only Texas Border Senator to have held both positions. Over the last few months, as Perry has used fear over Border security to boost himself onto the national stage, Senator Shapleigh has covered Perry’s real record on Border security:

- A. *Virtual Cameras:*** On June 1, 2006, Perry announced a new three-part Border security plan that included the expansion of Operation Rio Grande and requested \$100 million in the next legislative session to finance long-term Border security operations and create a virtual Border watch program, wherein hundreds of hidden cameras would line the Border along with private property at a cost of \$5 million.

Shortly after, Senator Shapleigh wrote Rick Perry telling him that the cameras would only exacerbate the very problem they were intended to solve and could result in civil rights violations. The program would further deplete scarce resources as Border Patrol officers would be forced to check the reports often over a vast and rough terrain. Persons watching the Border over the Internet simply don't have the training or the skills to recognize immigration or any other federal law violation. He also told him that he needed to consider that angry viewers could decide to take the law into their own hands and confront immigrants or drug traffickers, which would be dangerous, or monitor the images for their own nefarious purposes.

An *El Paso Times* review of the Virtual Cameras program in November 2006 revealed that the program had resulted in the [apprehension of 10 undocumented immigrants and one drug bust](#).

In 2009, a review of the program revealed that it failed to meet nearly all of the law enforcement goals initially set out for the program. [Reports from the camera viewers led to 11 arrests and about 300 immigration referrals. Original goals for the program were about 1,200 arrests and 4,500 illegal immigrant referrals.](#)

- B. *Gutting the Department of Public Safety (DPS):*** DPS is spinning its wheels in the aftermath of a pileup that saw the Governor's Mansion burn, two directors fired, and an 18-month-old statewide reorganization plan that is still nowhere near completion. In the middle of all that, the state's top law enforcement agency has been tasked to keep Mexico's drug violence from rampaging across the Border.

[Things started breaking down with the still unsolved June 2008 arson at the mansion guarded by DPS troopers and then Director Thomas Davis' resignation two months later. Successor Stanley Clark resigned in May last year amid sexual harassment allegations](#) and was replaced by former FBI Agent Steve McCraw, who cut the number of DPS regions from eight to six. Last September, McCraw announced the commissioning of Texas Rangers Company K in El Paso. [Today, El Paso is still waiting for a DPS headquarters building and the Rangers Company.](#)

According to DPS, short-term needs would include funding to lease additional office space in the area for an undetermined timeframe to accommodate the current overcrowded staff and anticipated additions to staffing in El Paso.

Long-term needs would include funding to purchase land and construction of a new regional headquarters to accommodate DPS' current staff and projected staff for 30 years.

Currently, DPS is undertaking a manpower study to determine DPS' "body" needs in the El Paso area to address the gang/criminal enterprise/DTO threat. It is almost certain that DPS will have their manpower increased to some degree.

With the transition of the El Paso office from a district office to regional headquarters, DPS has proclaimed to have inadequate space to accommodate their current staffing at all levels, much less additional personnel that is expected to be placed in El Paso investigative or otherwise. With the expectation of DPS dramatically increasing its footprint in El Paso, these infrastructure needs are critical.

C. *Sending State Border Money to Austin:* According to a 2009 State Auditor's report, Perry spent more than \$79 million in state and federal Border security money from September 2005 through November 2008. According to the report, [not all of the money went to the Border, and DPS failed to build a \\$1 million Border security training center that legislators authorized for the Rio Grande Valley.](#) The audit shows that [DPS used \\$15 million to buy four helicopters that were supposed to be stationed along the Border.](#) Three of the new helicopters went directly to the Border, including one in El Paso County; the fourth helicopter, which cost \$7.4 million, remained in Austin while DPS sent an older aircraft to Laredo. In addition, DPS bought 105 new cars using about \$2.2 million in Border security money. But, instead of putting those vehicles on the Border, DPS sent 106 older cars to Border counties and assigned the new ones to other places across the state.

D. *Sending Federal Border Money away from Border Counties:* Recent reports indicate that Perry has directed less than ten percent of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grant funding to the Border region each year. Perry's own rhetoric indicates that he considers the Border a critical region, and he contends that the federal government has failed in its duty to fund sufficient resources and secure our homeland along the Texas-Mexico Border. As Governor, he has discretion on how to spend some of those federal monies.

In April, a group of Border Congressmen called on Perry to send more of the federal funds given to Texas to Border communities. [The Congressmen noted that Texas has received an average of \\$125 million annually in DHS funding since 2006. And yet, Perry has consistently sent less than ten percent of those funds to Border law enforcement agencies where they are most needed.](#)

Senator Shapleigh has stated that immigration is a federal issue. "America cannot have 50 separate immigration systems." His report on immigration has been utilized by lawmakers for the last two sessions as S.B. 1070-type legislation came to Senate and House committees.

“Violent transnational cartels are a real issue,” said Shapleigh. “That is one area that Rick Perry can do some good.” Senator Shapleigh then covered [six things that Rick Perry can do to help](#), not hurt, Border communities:

1. Direct a much greater percentage of Department of Homeland Security grant funding to the Border region for on the ground patrolling in known crossing areas;
2. Take the Texas Border security appropriations that DPS and Perry's emergency management division have and apply it in the Texas counties adjoining Mexico to help Border prosecutors who carry the load for all of Texas in prosecuting bridge, street gang and other drug-related cases;
3. Turn DPS into a 21st century crime fighting agency with a new mission built around "fighting transnational crime enterprise" in Texas;
4. Increase investigative staff in El Paso, McAllen, Brownsville, and related trade corridors based on objective analysis of cartel activities and threats. DPS should work closely with local law enforcement on affiliated street gang activities and kingpin investigations. [DPS](#) should assist Mexican states in training judges and prosecutors in how to collect and use evidence at trials; Arizona's AG is already doing such trainings;
5. Strengthen DPS' forensic capacity in the nineteen Border counties immediately. What works best to take down cartels is capturing cartel leaders, forfeiting cartel assets, and sharing information across crime fighting teams. DPS does not have the resources to do this in Texas today. [According to DPS, the agency has experienced an increased turnover rate in specific critical staff and support positions, including research specialists/crime analysts.](#) But, on February 2010, DPS proposed slashing almost half the \$22 million set aside to fund overtime hours for local law enforcement agencies and recommended eliminating money to purchase 41 new squad cars for the Border region. [The suggestions come under a mandate from Perry for all state agencies to come up with ways to slash their budgets by five percent.](#) However, cutting back on Border spending could drastically impact the resources available to many of the region's rural police agencies that depend on state and federal grant money to fund their operations. Right now is not the time to cut DPS' Border budget.
6. Create a prison intelligence unit at DPS immediately. In recent years, criminal street gangs have become an increasing problem all across Texas. Gang activity has grown in cities and rural areas, and cartel affiliated street gangs, which were based along the border with Mexico in the past, have moved into Texas. Today, there are at least nine “well established” gangs in the U.S. that work from inside prisons, with operators in the streets and links with local and Border police who facilitate their drug trafficking. Prison intelligence is not being delivered to law enforcement through coordinated use of cartel-related intelligence at area fusion centers, which have been the subject of negative GAO reports. Creating such a unit at DPS will deliver actionable intelligence to law enforcement on the street.

“In each area, we have proven models on what works to take down cartels. What Rick Perry needs to do is get off Fox News and get back to work. Under Rick Perry, DPS is a wreck,” said Shapleigh.

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