



Congress Passes "Emergency" Spending Bill for Border Security

On August 12, the Senate, convened in a special "pro forma" session, passed by acclamation a bill ([H.R. 6080](#)) providing for \$600 million dollars for "emergency supplemental appropriations for border security." The House passed the bill on August 10 in a special session convened for an unrelated matter.

An identical bill passed the Senate earlier, on August 5, just before the Senate left for its August recess. However, since the Senate was proposing to pay for the enforcement resources with new fees on certain companies and the House is supposed to originate revenue-generating legislation, the House took the Senate bill, put a new House Resolution number on it, and sent it back to the Senate.

This latest enforcement-only proposal began as a request from the President for supplemental funding of \$600 million submitted in June. The House, just before leaving Washington at the end of July, upped the ante, providing \$701 million, an amount the Senate reduced.

Content: The bill will provide \$253.9 million for Customs and Border Protection personnel, including \$175.9 million for 1,000 new Border Patrol agents and \$29 million for new CBP officers to staff border ports of entry.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement will get \$80 million, including \$50 million for additional agents, investigators, intelligence analysts and support personnel, and \$30 million for law enforcement efforts to reduce violence along the border.

\$8.1 million will be allocated to train the new ICE and CBP hires.

The bill provides \$32 million for new unmanned aerial drones.

The Department of Justice will get \$196 million, including \$37.5 million for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to beef up that agency's capacity to target firearms trafficking, and \$33.7 million for the Drug Enforcement Agency for operations targeting drug trafficking.

In all, \$23.1 million will go to federal courts and for federal prosecutions to handle increased workload due mainly to the fact that persons crossing the border illegally are being prosecuted as criminals rather than being deported.

The extra enforcement resources will be paid for in part by a new fee charged to certain companies that employ persons here on H-1B and L visas (if the

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companies employ 50 or more employees and more than 50% of those employees are here on H-1B or L visas).

For more detailed commentary and a listing of the contents of the bill, see the Forum's summary [here](#).

Reaction: Democrats are touting this as a "building block for comprehensive reform." (See [this press release](#) from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.) In theory, with extra resources allocated to the border, Democrats and Republicans will now launch into comprehensive reform. More likely, the bill was passed (in record time, for this Congress) so that members can go back to their districts and states over the summer recess and show how tough they've been on enforcement. With the exception of Rep. Gutierrez's CIR ASAP, there is no comprehensive reform legislation yet introduced in Congress and, while touting this enforcement-only bill, Democrats did not set out any sort of time-line for moving on with other elements of reform.

While the Democratic leadership may suggest that the additional enforcement resources will satisfy the clamor for more enforcement from Republicans, that is not likely to be the case. As we have commented several times in ImmPolitic ([here](#), for example), when demands for more resources are met, restrictionist members of Congress make new demands. This pattern has been playing out for years now.

For their part, Republicans are already asking for more. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) offered three amendments during debate on this bill to add more resources. When it was all done, according to [Politico](#), Senator McCain said that he believes "we have a lot more to do." Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) said the bill is "a step in the right direction."

For more reaction, see the [Forum's press release](#).

Congress is now out of session for August. When they return in September, there will be very few legislative business days remaining before they leave Washington to campaign for re-election.

Announcement: Job Opportunities with the National Immigration Forum

The Forum is seeking to hire regional organizers for the Southeast and the West. Organizers will drive the Forum's work in building strength in the field, and will play a key role in the Reform Immigration FOR America Campaign.

For a complete job description, including requirements and duties, [download this job description](#).

Candidates are encouraged to apply on or before **August 31**.

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