



Just the FACTS...

...about Border “Security” and Immigration Reform

Immigration reform is a perennial topic at the forefront of the political discourse in Washington. The media reports that there is movement in the House of Representatives to craft a bill they can pass. Last year, when the immigration reform policy bill (S.744) was on the Senate floor, a strange thing happened. It was amended to add a laundry list of security hardware systems that seemed out of place in the bill language of an immigration policy bill. TCS has analyzed this list of programs:

Fact: The list added \$12 billion to the cost of the bill, in addition to \$30 billion for the deployment of additional Border Patrol agents.

Fact: Of that \$12 billion, \$7.5 billion is to build 350 more miles of fencing.

Fact: The remaining \$4.5 billion is to carry out the so-called “Comprehensive Southern Border Security Strategy.”

Fact: This “strategy” in reality is a Department of Homeland Security wish list of hardware that was included in its “Report on the Assessment of the Secure Border Initiative Network (SBI*net*) Program.”

Fact: SBI*net* was cancelled in 2011.

Fact: In February DHS awarded a \$145 million for one project on the wish list – the Integrated Fixed Towers (IFTs.)

Our take: This IFT contract looks like the camel’s nose under the tent of this \$4.5 billion list. The House should have a full debate on the value of funding this enormously expensive list of programs in these times of fiscal austerity. At Taxpayers for Common Sense we don’t think this is true immigration reform, or that it will contribute to border “security.” And we certainly don’t think it’s good policy.

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