

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 5, 2014

The Honorable Ash Carter
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
Washington, DC 20301

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretaries Carter and Johnson:

We write regarding cooperative recruiting efforts to fill open positions at land ports of entry.

As you are aware, the fiscal year 2014 consolidated appropriations legislation (P.L. 113-76) provided funding to hire a minimum of 2,000 new Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers by the end of fiscal year 2015. Although the Department of Homeland Security has strong recruitment practices already in place, it is our understanding that the hiring process has been moving forward at a pace slower than anticipated with challenges related to the administration of polygraph tests and background checks.

In recent years, Mexico has been the third-largest trade partner of the United States and the second-largest export market. According to the Arizona-Mexico Commission, Arizona's ports of entry serve as gateways for \$41.6 billion in U.S.-Mexican trade annually, of which nearly \$16 billion is attributed to Arizona's bilateral trade with Mexico. Given the importance of cross border trade to Arizona's economy, adequate staffing at our ports of entry is critical.

It is our understanding that our military branches have various transition assistance programs that aid separating service members returning to civilian life and reentering the civilian workforce. For example, Arizona's Davis-Monthan Air Force Base has partnerships with various organizations and employers looking to recruit separating service members. These partnerships allow representatives of those companies to attend events centered on preparing service members for civilian life. We believe that separating service members could represent a good opportunity for finding qualified candidates for CBP's Office of Field Operations. In many cases, they are likely to have already undergone a rigorous vetting and clearance process.

Toward ensuring that the staffing needs of the ports of entry are met in a timely fashion, we urge you to explore allowing local CBP field offices the opportunity to partner with military bases in their region. We hope that you will consider employing any direct hiring authorities within your control to assist with timely transitions to fill vacancies that are highly important to trade relations and national security. This would offer the dual benefits of providing separating service members the opportunity to gain employment while aiding CBP's staffing deficiency. We would appreciate learning of instances in which this is being pursued as well as any

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The Honorable Jeh Johnson
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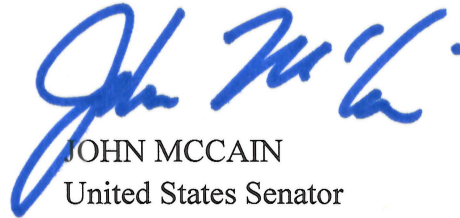
impediments in progress toward this goal. We appreciate your attention to this issue and ask that this request be handled in strict accordance with agency rules, regulations, and ethical guidelines.

Sincerely,



JEFF FLAKE

United States Senator



JOHN MCCAIN

United States Senator