

# The Border is Closer Than We Think

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This session I will submit legislation calling on Congress to fully and expeditiously implement the Secure Fence Act of 2006. This federal bill authorized the construction of double-layered fencing separated by a road for Border Patrol vehicles, extending over 700 miles of land border. To date, we've built just 70 miles, and of that, only five miles is double-layered as the bill stipulates. The rest is single layered.

Without a fence our open border is no longer hundreds of miles away as we might imagine – it's at our doorstep. It's not dramatic to suggest that this creates a dangerous situation for Colorado's residents.

According to local law enforcement officials, the Denver area is the fourth largest methamphetamine hub in the United States. The Highway 285 corridor and C-470 serve as key avenues of distribution. It is important to note two things about the meth trafficking taking place on those, and other Colorado roadways: 80-90% of all meth, by one estimate, comes into the US and then Colorado, through our wide open southern border; and, many crimes, including – by one estimate – six in ten of all identity fraud crimes, are directly related to methamphetamine usage. It's truly a three-dimensional problem in Jeffco and Colorado, and it is one of the major under-reported problems associated with sharing an open border with our neighbor to the south.

To complicate matters, recent intelligence gathered from law enforcement suggests that human smuggling across our southern border may also be connected to meth trafficking. When a person who wishes to be smuggled into Colorado does not have the cash needed to pay the Coyote, they are apparently being offered a trade: "Carry this backpack full of meth into the US, and we'll get you in for free!" Meth is a horrifyingly addictive drug. Addicts will often stop at nothing to get their next fix: they'll assault others, they'll steal cars, rip off mail, acquire credit card numbers—you name it.

The state legislature can only go to Congress with carrots and ask them to do what the majority of Americans want to have done: Secure our border! But we can and must do more to protect the lives, livelihood and rights we enjoy in our blessed state by addressing the crimes associated with illegal immigration.

To that end, I've submitted a bill that:

- Raises bail bond amounts for meth traffickers to a high statewide minimum;
- Keeps the bond if the person was known to be in the US illegally and then fails to appear in court;
- The forfeited funds will be split 50:50 between the local jail in the county where the bond was posted, and the Department of Corrections to offset the price of building new beds.

It is true that many—certainly most—of those who have come in the country illegally are not engaged in serious crimes like meth trafficking. Yet, that does not remove the obligation our government has to the people of the United States to create a secure border along with an intelligent and secure process to control who is coming and going. It also doesn't let state lawmakers off the hook simply because the problem begins (but doesn't end) hundreds of miles to the south.