



THE  
GREATER  
EL PASO  
CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE  
SINCE 1899

***RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF  
COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM***

**WHEREAS**, the El Paso area was originally discovered by Spanish explorers in 1581, commencing over 400 years as a border community;

**WHEREAS**, in 2003, trade through the land ports along the U.S.-Mexico Border represented about 83 percent of the trade between the countries. Together, the top 10 ports of entry account for 98 percent of trade passing through the border. El Paso had approximately 20.2 percent of the exports, which put the city only behind Laredo in volume. As to numbers of overall inspections of people, El Paso surpasses all ports of entry in Texas. With \$152 billion in land trade with Mexico, Texas surpassed other states by far: California (\$30 billion), Arizona (\$12 billion) and New Mexico (\$1.1 billion);

**WHEREAS**, the balance of the facilitation of trade with the need to make our community secure has long been of principle importance;

**WHEREAS**, the El Paso community has worked with representatives and agencies in Mexico and the United States for many years to create secure trade and traffic programs, including the first Dedicated Commuter Lane (“DCL”) and Fast and Secure Trade (“FAST”) in Texas;

**WHEREAS**, current immigration law does not have timely legal alternatives to allow companies or individuals to employ such essential workers as those needed in the construction, healthcare, restaurant, transportation, hotel, elder care, and child care job sectors, among others; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 16, 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 4437, which fundamentally proposes an enforcement only approach to the complex issue of the control of illegal immigration and the improvement of border security.

**THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY:**

**RESOLVED**, that the complex issues of illegal immigration and a porous border cannot be fixed by an enforcement only approach. Any solutions must take a multi-layered approach to multi-layered issues created over decades of neglect.

**RESOLVED**, that rational enforcement of immigration policies should include increasing the number of federal enforcement personnel along the border and utilization of the new technologies that are being used by branches of the military and law enforcement agencies.

**RESOLVED**, that the construction of a fence along the entire southern border or the militarization of the border are not solutions.

**RESOLVED**, that a security solution must address allowing the undocumented in the United States who are filling legitimate employment needs a means to obtain legal status, which does not grant them permanent residence in advance of those with pending applications to immigrate to the United States lawfully and requires them to pay taxes owed to the United States.

**RESOLVED**, that close family members, such as parents, spouses and children of United States citizens and legal permanent residents, should all be treated as immediate relatives under the Immigration and Nationality Act and not be subject to numeric restrictions.

**RESOLVED**, that any immigration reform solution must prepare for the future by providing a better mechanism to allow employers to fill legitimate temporary labor needs, while providing appropriate labor protections and oversight.

**RESOLVED**, that the immigration of those meeting identified critical labor shortages (e.g. physicians and other healthcare professionals, critical researchers, etc.) and immigration via foreign investment in the United States should be encouraged and expedited.

**RESOLVED**, that immigration processing backlogs must be reduced for those with valid pending applications.

**RESOLVED**, that new legislation must address document fraud and include severe penalties for those who prey upon undocumented aliens.

**RESOLVED**, that people offering to “aid” an undocumented person in the U.S. by providing food, shelter, counseling, or transportation must not be exposed to criminal penalties, if they are not engaged knowingly in smuggling or assisting said individuals to enter into the United States.

**RESOLVED**, that employers should be provided with a transition period to comply with new document verification processes.

**RESOLVED**, that any reform of current immigration laws that will have meaningful, long term impact must include active involvement by the Mexican Government.

**RESOLVED**, that this resolution should not be viewed as any action, advertent or inadvertent, that supports illegal activity.

Approved by the Governing Board of The Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce on February 23, 2010.