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**THE NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION RECOGNIZES THE CURRENT  
PUBLIC SAFETY CHALLENGES OF A BORDER COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, generally speaking, public safety and politics should not meet; and

**WHEREAS**, political debates over border security policies should instead be clear public safety discussions; and

**WHEREAS**, there are three clear and unimpeachable reasons to secure our international border with the Republic of Mexico:

- Public Safety,
- National Security,
- and Human Rights; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a compelling public safety interest in securing our border. The trafficking of drugs and humans through our southern border is an undeniable reality and clearly degrades public safety in border counties. The violence associated with drug trafficking impacts both sides of the border. The opioid crisis has led to the overdose deaths of thousands in the United States. Our deputies must now carry lifesaving NARCAN on their utility belts, because we are so often first on the scene and well trained in the use of the lifesaving medicine. The trafficking of humans results in higher crime in border communities and is facilitated by the drug cartels as another source of revenue. There is a clear public safety nexus to securing our international border; and

**WHEREAS**, due to the lack of security on the border we do not know who is crossing. Clearly, this could be exploited by foreign bad actors wishing to do harm domestically. It matters not whether it is one terrorist or dozens, as this is a strawman argument to detract from the reality of the terror threat in the U.S. One lone wolf foreign terrorist is a significant threat due to the changing nature of the terror threat we now face. We have seen ample evidence of this abroad with a lone terrorist using vehicles or crude weapons to inflict injury, death, and fear. There is a clear national security nexus to securing our international border; and

**WHEREAS**, the lack of security on the border serves as an incentive for undocumented immigration. This is not a harmless activity. Border Sheriffs recover hundreds of bodies a year in the remote areas of their counties. These are the result of migrant deaths at the hands of bandits or coyotes, or due to the harsh environmental conditions in the southwest. No matter how compassionate policy might be on the north side of the border, we will not impact the conditions

on the south side of the border. Undocumented persons wishing to cross must interact with the drug cartels who control the plazas (entry points to cross the border). This interaction results in the financial, sexual, and criminal victimization of migrants. There is a clear human rights nexus to securing our international border; and

**WHEREAS**, politics should not, but unfortunately has, gotten in the way of thoughtful discourse on this issue and has done so at the detriment of public safety for border counties; and

**WHEREAS**, the rest of the Nation may see the issues along the border as being far removed from their communities and even fodder for political debate. However, the border impacts the entire Nation; and

**WHEREAS**, drugs not interdicted near the border infect communities across the Country, leading to increased criminality, addiction, and overdose deaths. Criminals exploiting the lack of security on the border engage in criminal behavior in communities across the Nation. We have seen many tragic results of this, resulting in murders, sexual assaults and other major crimes devastating our families. We all should fear the possibility of a lone terrorist infiltrating our Country to opportunistically wait to engage in a terror attack; and

**WHEREAS**, significantly complicating the challenges we face on the border is the COVID-19 pandemic. Estimates are that between 5 and 50% of the persons crossing without documentation are COVID positive. In any other construct, infection rates that high would be cause for alarm by public health officials. Yet, we are currently engaging in policies that have potentially opened, rather than restricted, undocumented traffic into the U.S. We are already seeing strains to the public health system of border communities. The suspension of deportations has led to the release of undocumented persons into border communities. We then have an affirmative responsibility to provide medical care for them if they are infected with COVID. This at a time when our communities are already grappling with this public health emergency and desperately trying to roll out the vaccines. We now face a serious potential public health crisis along the border; and

**WHEREAS**, public safety issues along the border are complicated and dynamic. The threat environment often changes faster than we can adapt. Politics only serves to exacerbate the conditions we face. We need to remind our fellow Sheriffs that what happens in a border Sheriff's backyard, inevitably will impact public safety in his/her front yard. We need more resources directed to border Sheriffs. An investment here benefits public safety on a national level; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Sheriffs' Association supports the unity of America's Sheriffs in regard to public safety, human rights, and national security on our Southwest border. The priority of government at all levels is the safety and security of all citizens. It is the position of the National Sheriffs Association that all efforts be made by the federal government to secure our Nations border to prevent harm to our Nation and to her citizens.