

The United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce Urges Immediate Passage of the Merida Initiative

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Washington, DC (**CapitalWirePR**) June 11, 2008 -- The U.S. Mexico Chamber of Commerce urges immediate passage of the Merida Initiative to combat Narco-Terrorism and Criminal Organizations. While Mexico is fighting this threat with the commitment of its own financial and institutional resources, the Merida Initiative aims to assist and support in their efforts of Counternarcotics, Counterterrorism and Border Security in the region by providing additional technology, equipment and training resources. The Merida Initiative also aims to strengthen Public Safety and Security capabilities of our neighbors to the south by putting an end to the unacceptable level of lawlessness and violence that is crossing our mutual borders.

On October 22, 2007, the United States and Mexico issued a joint statement announcing the Merida Initiative, a multi-year plan for U.S. assistance to Mexico and Central America aimed at helping those governments combat drug trafficking and other criminal organizations. The Administration requested \$500 million for Mexico and \$50 million for Central America in the FY2008 supplemental appropriations request. The Administration requested another \$450 million for Mexico and \$100 million for Central America in the FY2009 budget request. The increasing violence perpetrated by drug cartels, youth gangs and other criminal groups, is not only threatening the citizens of the border regions, but also the free flow of people and commerce along the U.S.-Mexican Border. The U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce, with its 10 offices in the U.S. and 10 offices in Mexico, represents many of the U.S. and Mexican companies doing business across our mutual border, thus a secure and safe border region is imperative.

The valiant efforts undertaken by the administration of Mexico's President Felipe Calderon against the narco-terrorists shipping deadly drugs into the United States have shown great promise, but urgently needs our support. This is the United States' front line of defense against this deadly scourge and it is being fought by Mexican law enforcement and military, who are paying with their lives on a daily basis. The American people and their representatives in Congress need to step up and help shoulder the burden with our neighbor to the south. Our Presidents agreed in October of last year on how to fight this Narco-terror, it is now time for our Congress to appropriate the necessary funding and commit to be part of the solution.

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