

DHS Expands Expedited Removal Authority Along Southwest Border

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Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Michael Chertoff announced today the expansion of Expedited Removal (ER) authority from three to nine U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Border Patrol Sectors, implementing this policy across the entire southwest border. The ER administrative process is aimed at reducing the number of illegal aliens from countries other than Mexico who have spent less than 14 days in the United States and who are apprehended within 100 miles of the border.

“Expanding Expedited Removal gives Border Patrol agents the ability to break the cycle of illegal migration. The use of this authority will allow DHS the ability to gain greater control of our borders and to protect our country against the terrorist threat,” stated Secretary Chertoff. “The Expedited Removal process will rapidly return illegal aliens in the United States to their country of origin while giving those seeking protection the judicial process to pursue their claim before an immigration judge.”

Expedited Removal was created in the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. DHS has successfully implemented ER in three Sectors: Tucson, Ariz., McAllen, Texas, and Laredo, Texas. DHS also implemented ER in San Diego, Calif., El Centro, Calif., and Yuma, Ariz. Sectors, but has only used ER in those Sectors for aliens who would otherwise be subject to the reinstatement of prior orders of removal. CBP Border Patrol agents along the southwest border have been trained and are now ready to implement ER in all nine Border Patrol Sectors along the southwest border. In addition, because of strong support from the Administration and Congress, DHS will acquire additional detention capacity to support the increase in Expedited Removals.

ER provides DHS the authority to expeditiously return non-Mexican illegal aliens to his or her country of origin as soon as circumstances will allow. Individuals in ER proceedings are not released into the United States. Because there is a substantial reduction time from arrest to removal, and a decrease in the success of illegal smuggling, ER will disrupt the vicious human smuggling cycle that occurs along the southwest border.

To further our ability to apprehend illegal aliens, Border Patrol has launched a proactive recruitment campaign in preparation for newly funded positions that will be available in FY 2006. Already, more than 450 personnel have been recruited and are currently being trained for near term deployment to help manage, control and protect our borders. Having started FY 2005 with 10,817 Border Patrol Agents, CBP expects to end the fiscal year with approximately 11,275 Border Patrol Agents.