



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on May 26, 2010

More Troops, Money Needed, Says Arizona Governor

Arizona Governor Jan Brewer welcomed the news that President Barack Obama plans to send as many as 1,200 National Guardsmen to Southwest states help patrol the U.S. border with Mexico, but said more troops are needed, along with \$750 million to reimburse the state for illegal immigrants who have spent time in Arizona's jails and prisons.



"I am pleased that President Obama has now, apparently, agreed that our nation must secure the border to address rampant border violence and illegal immigration without other pre-conditions, such as passage of 'comprehensive immigration reform,'" Brewer said in a statement released yesterday. Calling the decision "a very significant and important shift in the President's immigration and border security policy," Brewer said the controversial law she recently signed prompted the White House to act. The law makes it a state crime for anyone to be in the country illegally and requires police during lawful stops to question people, "where reasonable suspicion exists" that they are in the country illegally. Obama and administration officials have criticized the law, claiming that it relies on racial profiling and undermines civil liberties.

"My signing of Senate Bill 1070 has clearly ignited the talk of action in Washington for the people of Arizona and other border states. News of the pending troop deployment did not come initially from the White House, but from Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, a Democrat from the southwest portion of Arizona who is in a competitive race for reelection. White House officials filled in the details on the condition of anonymity, the *New York Times* reported.

"The White House is doing the right thing," Giffords, said in a statement announcing the decision. "Arizonans know that more boots on the ground means a safer and more secure border. Washington heard our message."

The troops will join a few hundred National Guard members already deployed in California, New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona, to assist 20,000 Border Patrol agents along the 2,000-mile border between the United States and Mexico. The National Guard will not make arrests, but will observe and monitor



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traffic at border crossings and analyze traffic patterns in an effort to intercept drug shipments. They will be stationed in the border states for one year, White House officials told the *Times*, though they did not say when they would be deployed. Obama will also ask Congress for an additional \$500 million for federal law enforcement in the region.

The news came after Obama met in what has been described as a contentious session with Republican Senators, including several who have been demanding troops at the border. One of them, Senator John McCain, of Arizona, later said the additional troops would be welcome, but more would be needed. "I appreciate the 1,200 (troops) being sent," said McCain, "as well as an additional \$500 million." He called for another \$250 million and the deployment of 6,000 National Guardsmen, with half of them in Arizona. McCain, who lost to Obama in the presidential election of 2008, is running for a sixth Senate term. His primary opponent, former Congressman and talk-show host J.D. Hayworth has consistently hammered McCain on the issue of illegal immigration.

Obama met for 80 minutes in a private lunch with Republican Senators yesterday and heard complaints on his handling of a wide range of issues, including financial regulation and the Gulf Coast oil spill, as well as illegal immigration. Bob Corker, a first-term Senator from Tennessee was especially critical of what he said was Obama's undermining of his efforts to get a bi-partisan bill on financial regulation. "I told him I thought there was a degree of audacity in him even showing up after what happened with financial regulation," Corker told reporters, in an apparent reference to Obama's book, *The Audacity of Hope*. McCain defended the Arizona immigration law and said it had been mischaracterized by members of the administration who had not read it. Senators said Obama bristled at some of the criticisms and the exchanges were testy at times.

"He needs to take a Valium before he comes in and talks to Republicans," Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) told reporters. "He's pretty thin-skinned."

Lawmakers in Arizona passed the new immigration law in response to reports of violent crime related to drug cartels operating on both sides of the border. The killing of a prominent Arizona rancher by suspected drug smugglers in a border town earlier this year and reports that Phoenix had become "the kidnapping capital of the United States," with an average of one per day, fueled the effort to act in an area where many believe the federal government has failed to meet its responsibility.

Fourteen other states have adopted or are considering legislation similar to Arizona's. The Mexican government, which has vigorously denounced such efforts, appeared to cautiously welcome the announcement of the additional National Guard troops to help defeat the drug cartels Mexico is battling on its side of the border.

The troops will "strengthen efforts to combat transnational organized crime," the Foreign Affairs Ministry said in a statement calling for additional resources to stop arms and cash smuggling into Mexico.

Arizona's Republican governor suggested political pressures related to this year's congressional elections had something to do with Obama's decision to send the troops to the border. Brewer is herself running for a full term this year, having become Governor when Janet Napolitano, a Democrat, left to become Secretary of Homeland Security. "With the accountability of this election year, I am pleased and grateful that at long last there has been a partial response from the Obama Administration to my demands that Washington do its job," Brewer said.

Photo of Governor Jan Brewer: AP Images



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