

**WASHINGTON (12 March)** – U.S. Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis (R-Fla.), Member of the Homeland Security Committee’s Subcommittee on Border, Maritime, and Global Counterterrorism, today released the following statement after the subcommittee’s hearing on southern border violence:

“The escalating violence stemming from Mexico’s drug war is making the border increasingly dangerous for our border personnel and citizens living in border communities. I am concerned that our brave Customs officers and Border Patrol agents may be under-armed and out-gunned in the fight to stop this violence and protect lawful border crossers.

“I am going to demand that those who are on the front lines of this battle get the training, resources, and support they need to do their jobs as safely and effectively as possible. We must act decisively to speed completion of the border fence, better equip our border officers and agents, and return the use of National Guard troops to the border to support and enhance our border security and enforcement efforts. To do anything less would be a disservice to our border personnel and leave open a door through which criminals, drug smugglers, human traffickers, and terrorists can go to destroy the fundamental fabric of our society.”

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has reported that since the beginning of Fiscal Year 2009 (through February 28 of this year) there have been 338 acts of violence against Border Patrol Agents and 123 acts of violence against Customs and Border Protection Officers (CBPOs) at the ports of entry.