



Bipartisan Group of Senators Seek Increased Funding to Reimburse States for Criminal Illegal Immigrant Costs
January 27, 2005

Washington, DC – A bipartisan group of U.S. Senators led by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) has introduced legislation to authorize federal funding to reimburse states and localities for the costs associated with incarcerating undocumented criminal aliens.

Co-sponsors of the bill, introduced late Wednesday, include Senators Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), Charles Schumer (D-NY), Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas), Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Jeff Bingaman (D-New Mexico), John McCain (R-Ariz.), John Conyn (R-Texas), and Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ).

“Control of illegal immigration is a Federal responsibility. When our Federal agencies fall short in this responsibility, State and local taxpayers should not have to foot the bill,” Senator Feinstein said. **“This legislation is intended to remind the Federal government to fulfill its duties and to help State and local governments deal with the burden that illegal criminal aliens have placed on their justice systems.”**

Enacted as part of the Crime Act of 1994, the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) provided states between \$500 million and \$585 million in reimbursement funding annually from 1996 to 2002.

Since 2003, however, the Bush Administration has proposed no funding for SCAAP and Congress has only provided a fraction of the amount requested by states. In the past three years, Congress has approved the following amounts for SCAAP:

- \$250 million for 2003,
- \$296.8 million for 2004, and
- \$305 million for 2005.

It is estimated that states incur approximately \$13 billion in criminal justice costs each year for housing illegal criminal aliens.

The SCAAP authorization expired in October 2004. Under the bipartisan legislation, the program would be restored and funding would be authorized at the following levels:

- \$750 million in Fiscal Year 2006
- \$850 million in Fiscal Year 2007
- \$950 million in Fiscal Years 2008 through 2011.

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