



Senator Feinstein Calls for Judiciary Committee Hearing on Convictions and Sentencing of Border Patrol Agents

August 18, 2006

San Francisco, CA – *Concerned about the circumstances surrounding the convictions and upcoming sentencing of Border Patrol Agents Jose Alonso Compean and Ignacio Ramos, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today sent a letter to Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Senator Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) requesting a hearing on the case.*

“It appears that the facts do not add up or justify the length of the sentences for these Agents, let alone their conviction on multiple counts,” Senator Feinstein said. ***“Border Patrol Agents have a difficult and often dangerous job in guarding our nation’s borders. Undue prosecution of Border Patrol Agents could have a chilling effect on their ability to carry out their duties.”***

The following is the text of Senator Feinstein’s letter to Senator Specter:

August 18, 2006

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Arlen:

I write to request a full Judiciary Committee hearing on the case of Border Patrol Agents Jose Alonso Compean and Ignacio Ramos, who were convicted in March of 8 and 6 criminal counts, respectively. Each of the Agents faces at least 10 years in prison for the shooting of Osvaldo Aldrete-Davila, a known drug smuggler who had driven a van containing 743 pounds of marijuana.

After reading the August 11th statement of U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton on the convictions and news reports regarding this case, I have significant concerns that there may have been a serious miscarriage of justice. On August 15, I sent a letter to Attorney General Gonzales requesting that he personally review the case. The statement, news reports, and the letter are attached.

Agents Compean and Ramos face minimum 10 year prison sentences and the Federal government is asking the judge to sentence each Agent to a 20 year prison term. It appears that the facts do not add up or justify the length of the sentences for these Agents, let alone their conviction on multiple counts. It is my belief that the circumstances do not justify the verdict and that these convictions are already having an adverse impact on the Border Patrol.

Border Patrol Agents have a difficult and often dangerous job in guarding our nation's borders. Undue prosecution of Border Patrol Agents could have a chilling effect on their ability to carry out their duties.

As the circumstances surrounding the prosecution of Agents Compean and Ramos are highly unusual, I would urge the Judiciary Committee to hold a hearing to explore these irregularities and ensure fair treatment of our Border Patrol Agents.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

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