



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on May 6, 2011

Napolitano Proposes New “Immigration Index”

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced a new “immigration index” that would measure Southwest border security beyond the conventional way of observing state and local statistics, which focus mainly on data such as arrests and drug seizures. The new index, Napolitano claims, will look beyond bare crime statistics and focus more on environmental damage, economic impacts, and concerns of personal safety of Americans residing near the Mexican border.



Napolitano [told](#) the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs during a hearing on Wednesday that her new initiative, for example, may “include calls from hospitals to report suspected illegal aliens, traffic accidents involving illegal aliens or narcotics smugglers, rates of vehicle theft and numbers of abandoned vehicles, impacts on property values, and other measures of economic activity and environmental impacts.”

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Many Southern Arizona officials have welcomed the new plan, as some parents are concerned to let their kids walk only a quarter mile to their bus stops. Others congratulate the plan, but are skeptical because of the administration’s lax historical record of dealing with crime along the Mexican-American border. “If they’re going to start looking at quality of life and what’s actually happening on the ground, I applaud that, but it’s hard to believe,” said Patrick Bray, vice president of the Arizona Cattle Growers Association. “It will paint a completely different picture from what this administration and the secretary have been saying.”

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) has criticized the Obama administration’s anemic attempts to protect the Southern U.S. border, and on Wednesday he expressed his frustration to Napolitano, specifically in regard to mountaintop “spotters” that assist Mexican smugglers in sneaking across the Arizona border. “There’s between 100 and 200 spotters sitting on mountains in southern Arizona, inside the borders of the United States of America, spotting for drug cartels who then get the drugs up to Phoenix,” the Senator [asserted](#). “And the answer that I receive is that there are a couple of hundred tops from which a spotter could act, but there are not sitting there 200 drug spotters.” Napolitano countered, saying she has visited the border several times in the past few months and Border Patrol officials have verified his statement as false.

As McCain continued to censure Napolitano’s lack of dedication in fighting illegal immigration,



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Napolitano [fired back](#), “Senator, with respect, there is no one who has spent more time working on this Arizona issue that I have over the past two years and we will continue ... “

“There is no one who has spent more time on the issue than I have, Madam Secretary — long before you were governor and you were Secretary. I am told from the law enforcement people from the sheriffs up to the U.S. attorney that there are between 100 and 200 spotters sitting on mountains in Arizona,” McCain interjected. “And for you to dispute that is a big problem you have between yourself and them. And that should be clarified.”

Many Republicans condemn the Obama administration’s push for amnesty legislation. And Secretary Napolitano is at the forefront of granting U.S. citizenship to some of the 11 million illegal immigrants currently residing in the U.S.

Napolitano is a passionate supporter of the [DREAM Act](#), a proposal intended to grant citizenship to illegal alien students who graduate from U.S. high schools. Furthermore, she said in a [2007 speech](#) to the National Press Club that the only realistic way for dealing with the 11 million immigrants currently in the U.S. “is to create a strict, stringent pathway to citizenship.”

Though many Republicans support some form of citizenship process for illegal aliens, most believe the border must be secure before any legislation should be discussed. Despite McCain’s history of supporting “comprehensive immigration reform,” his main concern appears to be cleaning up a Southern border that is littered with drugs and violence. And unless Napolitano’s new initiative produces favorable results, his affirmative stance on amnesty may go on hiatus.



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