

**Rep. Juan Ciscomani Testimony**  
**House Judiciary Committee, 2023 Member Day**  
**Friday November 3, 2023**

*As Prepared for Delivery:*

Thank you, Chairman Jordan and Members of the Judiciary Committee for allowing me to come before you and testify.

I come before the committee today to discuss my bill, H.R. 5585, the Agent Raul Gonzalez Officer Safety Act. I introduced this bill last month after consistently hearing from my constituents and local leaders about the detrimental impact that high-speed chases have in southeastern Arizona, specifically in Cochise County.

The bill is simple: it makes it a federal crime to evade law enforcement within 100 miles of the border. To me, it is simply commonsense that this should be a federal crime. If you are engaging in a high-speed chase and evading CBP or local law enforcement, you are clearly not a good actor. Unfortunately, the current law does not make this a crime in and of itself, and it leaves the burden of prosecuting and charging these individuals to our local communities.

The bill is named in honor of Border Patrol Agent, Raul Gonzalez, who tragically lost his life in a high-speed chase last year while pursuing a group of illegal immigrants in Texas. Sadly, he is not the only person who has lost his life as a result of these bad actors' actions. In my community, we have seen bicyclists injured, countless hospitalizations, and tragically a 65 –year-old, named “Wanda”, who was struck and killed by a 16-year-old smuggler while driving to her own birthday party.

Drug cartels recruit individuals from across the country to drive down to the border, pick up migrants, and transport them north. The bottom line is that we need to change the calculus for those who endanger all of us when failing to yield to law enforcement. By making these actions federally punishable, we are sending a strong message to these bad actors that this type of reckless endangerment is NOT okay.

At a time when it is arguably the easiest to cross our southwest border and be granted entry by this administration, we all should be asking ourselves why these

people are fleeing law enforcement? The answer is: these are the bad actors who the cartels want to evade arrest.

In August, I was proud to host members of the Oversight and Judiciary Committees for a border tour and hearing at Cochise College in Sierra Vista. There, Cochise County Sheriff Mark Dannels, testified before us that in the first five months of 2023, there were 121 failures to yield just in Cochise County. He added in southeastern Arizona the cartel groups have “dramatically increased in size and become more reckless, aggressive, and violent, bringing unrest and fear to the citizens living on the border”.

I am proud to have the support of 10 of our Republican colleagues. Additionally, my bill is supported by many local communities and supported at the federal level by the National Border Patrol Council, the Western States Sheriffs’ Association, and the National Sheriff’s Association. These law enforcement groups and local communities are forced to deal with this problem daily and Congress must prioritize supporting our law enforcement officials by moving on this legislation.

Thank you again for allowing me to come before you today. I look forward to your questions and hope you can all join me in supporting this much needed legislation.