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Mr. Chairman, members of this committee, I want to thank you allowing me to speak, and for your willingness to come here to identify where the problem is.

I am a fifth generation resident of Cochise County, with both sides of my family ranching and raising families here for over 100 years. I am a rancher within the border region, and recently retired law enforcement. Over my lifetime in Cochise County, and my tenure with the Cochise County Sheriff's Office, I have seen ebbs and flows of illegal immigration, and the effects it has on those of us that live in rural Arizona. This is the worst I have ever seen.

Growing up there were always those wanting to come to America for a better life, the "American Dream" as it were. Those folks would pass through, maybe stop and ask for water or food, and be on their way. Then larger groups started coming through, cutting holes in fences, draining water tanks, leaving trails of trash in their wake. I have ranched throughout Cochise County and have dealt first hand with border related issues. The environmental impact caused by millions of people coming through have devastated ranchlands in Cochise County, making it more difficult for ranching families to continue their legacy and heritage. Several multi-generational ranches have sold over the last decade to large corporations or absentee owners, in part if not all due to the increasing pressure felt by the ongoing border issues. Cochise County has been on the front lines of this crisis for decades, and I had the privilege of serving those who were affected on a daily basis, Cochise County citizens and ranchers.

During the last 10 years of my career, I was a part of the Ranch Patrol and SABRE team, which consists of a handful of guys dedicated to identifying threats from international smuggling organizations, and doing everything we could to stop them. SABRE stands for the Southern Arizona Border Region Enforcement Team, and in a collaborative effort with other law enforcement partners, live feed cameras were set up in the rural areas between the ports of entry to detect illegal activity. Prior to 2020, the border issues in Cochise County were what has been called controlled chaos, in that law enforcement agencies, working together, were able to respond and address issues as they were detected. The traffic here, and the majority of southern Arizona, is not the "give-up" or asylum seekers, as seen on limited media coverage. What comes across the Arizona desert are generally males, ages 18-40, wearing camouflage from head to toe, including wearing carpet over their shoes to make it harder to detect and track them. Since 2021, the detected flow of "military aged" males has increased over tenfold from the years prior.

In drug smuggling or events where a state crime was committed, deputies would take disposition of the case, but in cases involving immigration violations, coordination is made with the corresponding Border Patrol station for apprehensions. Of all the suspected illegal entries documented by the SABRE program since it's inception, less than 35% of all detections were apprehended and identified.

Since 2021, when I would encounter these individuals, conversation would turn to where they were going, where they came from, and why? On multiple occasions I was told of television commercials in their home country, advising them if they came to ...New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Chicago,

Anywhere USA...there were companies looking for workers, and that they could have a job, no questions asked. Landscaping, pool services, agriculture, hospitality, the jobs weren't always the same, nor the destination, but the same story of television commercials was ever present. Who is advertising and why? These same people would also tell me that they had to pay the cartel for crossing the border, costing them anywhere from \$6,000-\$8,000 or more. Most of the people I had contact with did not have that kind of money to pay the cartel, telling me they would "owe" that amount to the cartel once they reached their final destination, wherever that may be.

As the traffic increased, so did the need for transportation of the cartel's chattel. The cartels use social media platforms to recruit drivers to pick up these folks and transport them to the larger transportation hubs such as Tucson or Phoenix. These "load drivers" are told by their handlers where to go, and when to run from law enforcement. These drivers come from all walks of life, ranging in age from age 13 to 70, drug addicts to suburban grandmothers, but all have one thing in common. They all work for transnational human trafficking organizations. Offers to pay cash money for drivers entice people from all over the country to come to southern Arizona and transport illegal aliens to further the cartel's operation.

This operation comes at a cost for residents in Cochise County, with over a dozen deaths from high speed collisions over the last couple of years, all tied to human smuggling incidents. Daily instances with loads of human "cargo" being put at risk for a fast dollar, in furtherance of the cartel's human smuggling operation. These incidents have become so common place that even when a light turns green, residents of Cochise County wait to see if a high speed load driver is going to run the red light before proceeding into an intersection. When one of these "load drivers" does stop or evade law enforcement, a common response is to have every occupant of the vehicle run in a different direction, lessening the chance of capture. This puts not only the criminal, already fleeing from law enforcement onto our ranches and into our neighborhoods, but also the unknown aliens, who are literally in a foreign country, who will do anything to avoid capture and have to try to find a way to survive.

I again thank you for being here today and allowing me to speak, but as of today, we as a country have no control, nor knowledge, of who or what is coming across our border. Our southern border is being controlled by the cartels, and we need to find a way to regain that control. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Respectfully,

Jacob Kartchner