



Corruption makes securing America's borders even harder

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It is hard enough to secure America's land borders given the sheer length of both our southern and northern borders, the diverse terrain of those borders, and the resources available to monitor and guard them. To make matters worse, a recent [investigation found that our border agents](http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/mexico-cartels-us-border-patrol-corruption) (<http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/mexico-cartels-us-border-patrol-corruption>) are being bribed by drug cartels and human trafficking groups. When these compromised border patrol agents are discovered, the cases are ignored or their punishment is weak.

With so much of the national debate on border security focused on building a fence, these instances of corruption go largely unnoticed. That omission needs to change.



<http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01>

[/RTR45NH1_us_border_patrol-e1453912976548.jpg](#))

A US Border Patrol surveillance tower looms over a border fence near outside Brownsville, Texas September 2, 2014. REUTERS/Rick Wilking.

Most border patrol agents are honest, hardworking Americans who do the best they can to secure our borders. These men and women work closely with state and local law enforcement, local community leaders, and landowners along the border to keep criminals and their goods out and slow the flow of illegal immigrants coming to the US to work. The hard work done by these border patrol agents is undermined by the bad apples who accept bribes, look the other way, or participate in the movement of illegal goods and people.

Part of the problem is that the [number of border patrol agents](#) (<https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/BP%20Staffing%20FY1992-FY2015.pdf>) has more than doubled from 9,821 to 20,273 since 2001. The vast majority of those border patrol agents are on the southern border where the illegal activity is the highest. With so many new border patrol agents, getting them screened for potential problems — and then, hired, trained, and integrated into the mission — has presented a big lift for US Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Subsequently putting in place the anti-corruption measures necessary to detect and to stop infiltration by the drug cartels and other criminal groups requires even more work.

The borders are already filled with security gaps. We can't afford to allow compromised border patrol agents to add gaps in places we thought we plugged. CBP must find the corrupt border patrol agents and fire them. If the National Border Patrol Council (the union representing border patrol agents and support personnel) puts up the typical obstacles Big Labor uses to thwart management action, then Congress should give CBP the power to fire corrupt border agents with proper due process but without labor union interference. Too often, labor unions zealously defend the bad apples (see [Rubber Rooms](#) (<http://nypost.com/2013/01/27/one-year-on-the-job-13-years-in-rubber-room-earns-perv-teacher-1m/>)) even when doing so is against the interest of the vast majority of its other members.

This border problem is one we can and must solve.

This article was found online at:

<http://www.aei.org/publication/corruption-makes-securing-america-borders-even-harder/>