I am pleased to have this opportunity to testify at this joint hearing on U.S.-Mexico Security. My name is Bill McDonald and I am the fifth generation on my family's 103 year old ranch in the far corner of southeastern Arizona. The southern boundary of the ranch lies approximately 5 miles north of the Mexican border while the headquarters lie 7 miles north of the border in Sycamore Canyon which runs east-west in the Peloncillo Mountains near the New Mexico line.

Border crossers, going both ways, are not new to our area. As long as I can remember, and long before, ranch hands and cowboys from northern Chihuahua and Sonora have crossed to work in southern Arizona and New Mexico and some American cowboys periodically went into Mexico to get work as well. The border was casual and the area was peaceful for years. About 25 years ago, a highway was completed between Agua Prieta, Sonora and Janos, Chihuahua. The highway parallels the border for several miles and gives prospective border crossers much easier access to the area. Still, the numbers of crossers did not become problematic for local residents until ten years ago or so. Large amounts of trash, cut pasture fences, floats broken off in water troughs, water lines cut and precious stored water lost, trails made by humans so deep that they start gully erosion, forest fires that are started by campfires or perhaps even deliberately and the corresponding ramping up of the Border Patrol response which has caused a ten fold use of ranch two track roads and the county dirt road; all of this has cost ranchers dearly in repairs, extra cattle work , and destruction of the landscape. Still, most ranchers just continued to try to live with it.

In the last three years to five years, however, the character of the crossers has taken an ominous turn. They often wear black and paint their water jugs black. They pass by our ranch house so close at night that you can hear them talking between the barks of our dogs. We, who live in a deep east-west canyon and had never had a break-in, had two occur in 2009. Neighbors to the north who live in north-south facing canyons, or in the valley, have experienced many more. A few years ago, Congresswoman Giffords began arranging meetings between the Border Patrol and southern Arizona ranchers. The Border Patrol also began regularly attending meetings of the Malpai Borderlands Group, an organization that was formed by the ranchers and some conservationists 16 years ago to support the beautiful open space landscape of the area against subdivision and has become a model for cooperation in public and private land management. It was at one of these meetings, when the discussion turned to the fact that some crossers were now armed with automatic rifles, and were becoming increasingly brazen, that Rob Krentz, whose family has also ranched here for 103 years, made the observation that if things continued as they were, it was inevitable that someone would be killed. On March 27, Rob went out on his All-Terrain Vehicle to check the waters in one of his pastures. He never came back. His body was found late that night. The tracks of the killer were followed to the Mexican border.

Since his death, things have hardly slowed down. Recently, a bird watcher trying to enter Horseshoe Canyon in the Chiricahua Mountains, across the valley from the Peloncillos, was turned back by an armed drug smuggler who warned him to stay out. It's public land, but it's dangerous for the public to use. The number of such incidents and the actual

crimes per capita are enormous considering the small population that resides here. Forest Service employees and many others who work for government agencies now can only go out on the land in pairs. I, like most ranchers, can't afford to hire someone just to tag along, and so I mostly still work alone, although I try to be careful about who approaches me. My roots are here and I and my wife aren't going to be run off. As Rob Krentz's brother Phil said, "I'm not going to let them whip me down. I'm here until something gets done about this or I myself am killed. The question is: do I want my grandchildren to be raised here as my daughter was and all my family going back to 1907? I don't have any grandchildren yet and I'm glad I don't because, yes, I would be afraid for them. A solitary ranch, miles from the nearest neighbor, is very vulnerable.

It is our own government's policy of forcing the illegal crossers into the most rural, most formidable terrain that is responsible for the traffic we are enduring. The crossings, both drugs and people are, of course, being controlled by the Drug Trafficking Organizations and they are not deterred by high mountains, steep canyons, brush, or scarce water, and certainly not by high fences in the middle of nowhere. So what can be done?

* There is a real need for better communications. For years we have incredulously pointed out that the Douglas and Lordsburg sectors, working side by side, could not talk to each other because Douglas had digital radios and Lordsburg analog. Since the murder of Rob Krentz, a way has been found to sort of work around that issue but communication remains a challenge. The two forward operating bases that are established in the area cannot be reached by nearby residents except by physically going there. Cell phone service is patchy everywhere and nonexistent in some places. Communication between the Border Patrol and other law enforcement is a struggle and often isn't possible.

* There is a need for more technology that works and the additional necessary personnel to operate it. Especially useful have been the mobile surveillance systems. We need more of them. Months ago I signed an agreement to allow one to be set up on our private land. We still haven't seen it. What is not needed is silver bullet, pie in the sky stuff. There is no easy answer or one size that fits all.

* There is a need here for more air support. There is also a need for increased horse patrol units. Whether it's light helicopters or C-130s, air support working with the horse patrol has been a winning combination in the mountains, but it's all too rare.

* We believe the bulk of the agents should be on the border, not ten, twenty, thirty or more miles from it. Deterrence should be the goal, not capture. Until such time as an appropriate number of agents can be recruited and trained, the National Guard should be called in, and this time with bullets in their guns. The agents need the appropriate training, gear and firepower and authority to use it in order to be able to stay right on the border. In support of this we need many more forward operating bases, approximately one per every twelve miles.

* Agents who work in rural areas that are high traffic areas should draw hardship duty pay. Veteran agents should be returned often to areas where they have knowledge of the terrain. We still have too many greenhorns burning up gas just trying to figure out where they are. A few Special Forces agents who can stay out for an extended period of time (as opposed to working in shifts) are currently deployed here, but we don't know for how long. An evaluation of the Border Patrol's effectiveness in rural areas using this method, versus the traditional shift method of deployment, would probably a useful exercise.

* Funding for "Operation Stonegarden" needs to be increased. Local and state law enforcement agencies near the border have a hugely disproportionate expense in dealing with criminal aliens compared to their colleagues in other locales.

* Streamline the claims process for recovery of damages caused by illegal aliens to ranches and homes. Our neighbor to the south (still in the U.S.) has had their ranch subjected to a campaign of vandalism intended to intimidate them into quitting. In Mexico, where this has happened, it has resulted in persons with connections to drug trafficking obtaining the ranch.

* Operation Streamline, which ensures that repeat border crossers serve time in jail, needs full funding and support. Where this has been implemented, illegal crossings have been significantly reduced. To ensure timely prosecution, the funding for State and Federal Attorneys' Offices must be funded to the appropriate levels.

* It is the opinion of most ranchers here that money spent for high fences or other physical barriers would be better spent on the aforementioned items.

I certainly support the Merida Agreement and believe that working with other countries more effectively and cooperatively to address the criminal activities that plague our border is the long term approach that has the best chance for success. Some type of immigration policy reform that does not even remotely involve amnesty would also be helpful, but unfortunately appears unlikely to happen soon. For the present, the federal government's responsibility is to secure our borders and protect our citizens. We need to do it now.