

Reaction Mixed to Plan Sending to Troops to Border

**By John Roszkowski**

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President Bush's plan to deploy thousands of National Guard troops to protect the border and overhaul the nation's immigration system is meeting with mixed reactions from area politicians and congressional candidates.

U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-10th, of Highland Park, said Bush's plan to send 6,000 troops to the United States-Mexican border to prevent illegal immigrants from crossing the border is "a good first step."

"I appreciate the emphasis on strengthening the border," said Kirk. "I believe we've got to dramatically upgrade our administration and control of the border."

Kirk, however, said the deployment of National Guard troops is only a temporary fix.

"I think in the long term we've got to dramatically increase the size of the U.S. Border Patrol and

the civilian law enforcement agencies that have primary jurisdiction," he said. "We'd like to see many more border patrols than he (the president) has proposed."

Bush has proposed allocating an additional \$1.9 billion to beef up the border patrol, increasing the number of agents by nearly 6,000 agents by 2008.

Dan Seals, the Democratic candidate for the 10th District seat, questions whether the deployment of the National Guard to monitor the border is the answer.

"It's just not a long-term solution," said Seals. "I don't know how the National Guard, which is already stretched thin by the war in Iraq and (Hurricane) Katrina, can continue to do that as well."

**U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-9th, of Evanston, said the president's plan to send thousands of National Guard troops to the border is about "politics, not policy."**

**"The Republican Party is divided over how to address our nation's broken immigration system, and President Bush is suggesting a policy that would further divert National Guard troops without adequately funding or staffing our Border Patrol," Schakowsky said in a statement released Monday. "Militarizing our border is President Bush's election season window dressing."**

Rich Carter, a spokesman for U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo, R-16th, of Egan, said the congressman supports temporary use of the National Guard to secure the border and the hiring of more border patrol agents.

"More than anything, we need to secure our border," said Carter. "It's not just an immigration issue, it's a national security issue."

Carter said increased patrols are needed to prevent potential terrorists from coming into the

country as well as illegal drug smuggling across the border.

Carter said Manzullo also agrees with the president's plan for an improved identification card for employers to determine if immigrant workers are in the country legally. "Right now, it's too easy to present fraudulent documents," he said.

U.S. Rep. Melissa Bean, D-8th, of Barrington released the following statement about the president's speech late Tuesday:

"I support using advanced technology to strengthen our southern border and I share the president's opposition to blanket amnesty. I'm glad the president is encouraging debate on comprehensive immigration reform, which will be necessary as Congress works to address the details."

Barrington Hills resident David McSweeney, Republican candidate for the 8th Congressional District, said overall he thought Bush's speech was "very positive" in terms of addressing border security.

"I support the focus on increased border patrols and using the National Guard to assist in helping secure the border," he said.

However, McSweeney said he opposes the president's call for a guest worker program, which he says would "create a path for citizenship for people in this country illegally."