

The State of Texas
House of Representatives



RICK NORIEGA
DISTRICT 145

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The Honorable Rick Perry
Governor of Texas
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Perry:

Last Friday, I received a letter from your Director of Homeland Security clearly implying that I favored policies that allowed terrorists free entry through our borders. This accusation is both insulting and irresponsible, particularly directed toward someone who has served the State of Texas at the border.

There is too much at stake here to play politics. Further, these irresponsible statements contribute to concerns that the state has placed the trust of our homeland security in the hands of staff in a political office, without the accountability and supervision we require of law enforcement agencies. The letter was written on official *Office of the Governor* letterhead, but I am going to assume that this letter went out without your knowledge or approval. The purpose of this letter is to ask that your office retract this statement immediately.

You will recall that when the President of the United States announced last spring that he would send 6,000 National Guard soldiers to the border, I volunteered. I served as the Laredo Border Sector Commander for over 300 Texas Military Forces. We assisted in the seizure of thousands of pounds of drugs, while working jointly with federal, state, and local law enforcement officials to secure our border. Along with our fellow soldiers and airmen, we once again spent months away from family because of our belief that it was *our duty* to protect our state and homeland.

The Guard worked hand-in-hand with U.S. Border Patrol and the local law enforcement because securing our borders requires cooperation between all levels of government. Equally important is the disciplined adherence to tight security protocols. Lack of cooperation with the Texas Department of Public Safety on the part of your political security entity, as well as documented security leaks and lack of consistent procedure, has contributed to the concern of some in the legislature about the command and control of this entity.

I and several other representatives have questioned, as a matter of policy, whether our state would be better served having the Office of Homeland Security in a law enforcement reporting structure, such as DPS or the National Guard. What felt like a personal attack by your staff further reinforces the thinking that an office such as Homeland Security, which is critical to our safety, should be free of political overlay. After a career of service as a citizen soldier, most recently fighting the war on terror as a member of *Operation Enduring Freedom* before my service on the border, I find it astounding that a member of your staff would impugn my character.

It would be my hope that you and I would agree that border and Homeland Security are far too important to our state to be politicized. I thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rick Noriega".
Rick Noriega

