



Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 89 Senate Finance – August 30, 2021

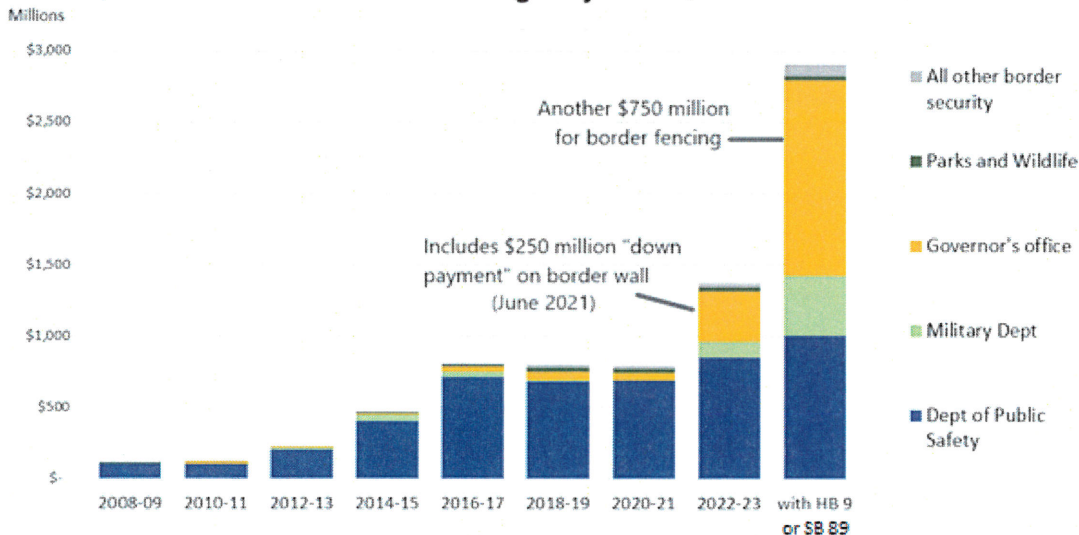
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Every Texan opposes SB 89 because -- as the House Research Organization summarized in its analysis of the House version -- it would use "state funds to channel economic migrants or those who may be trying to reach immigration authorities [i.e., asylum seekers desperate to escape violence] into the state criminal justice system." Though described by supporters as a state response to a humanitarian crisis, aimed at helping local officials deal with the costs they incur as a result of federal failures to secure the border, it directs an even greater amount of state resources to further militarize the border, and potentially earmarks only \$100 million in direct local grants to counties. Every Texan is also concerned about the issues raised by the Texas Fair Defense Project, ACLU of Texas, Grassroots Leadership, and other advocates – not just about the treatment of detainees, but also residents of border communities.

With SB 89, state spending on border security operations would more than triple, from just under \$800 million in 2020-2021, to \$2.9 billion in 2022-2023. Every Texan does not consider this the best use of scarce state resources – resources which could instead go towards long-standing budget challenges such as (to name a few)

- a livable wage for community care attendants,
- adequate foster care capacity and more manageable workloads for Child Protective Services,
- a cost-of-living-allowance increase for Teacher Retirement System retirees

State spending on border security would go from \$797 million in 2020-2021 budget cycle to \$2.9 billion in the next



Too many unanswered questions remain about how this tremendous increase in state resources will be deployed, and how long it will continue. A better, immediate use of \$1.8 billion in General Revenue in border communities would address health care and shelter needs.

SB 89 proposed General Revenue uses (million \$)

