

Congressman Steve King today issued the following statement after President Bush commuted the sentences of former U.S. Border Patrol agents Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean.

“President Bush responded to the calls for compassion that came from across the country and made the right decision in granting these two men commutations,” King said.

“Today we know the families of Agents Ramos and Compean will be rejoined, and I can only imagine the joy in their homes.”

Background:

- Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean were United States Border Patrol Agents who worked on the U.S. border with Mexico. On February 17, 2005, near Fabens, Texas, Agents Ramos and Compean, along with other Border Patrol Agents, were involved in the pursuit of Osvaldo Aldrete-Davila, a Mexican national they suspected of smuggling drugs. After a high speed vehicle chase, Aldrete-Davila abandoned the van he was driving – which was later discovered to contain 743 pounds of marijuana, worth approximately \$1 million – on the U.S. side of the border and fled on foot towards the border with Mexico. Ramos and Compean exited their vehicles and continued the pursuit on foot, with Compean attempting to intercept Aldrete-Davila while Ramos chased Aldrete-Davila directly. During the course of the effort to apprehend Aldrete-Davila, both Ramos and Compean discharged their service weapons. Ramos testified later that he believed Aldrete-Davila had a gun in his hand, while Compean testified that he saw something “shiny” in Aldrete-Davila’s hand. But no weapon was recovered presumably because Aldrete-Davila absconded to Mexico. According to forensic evidence, Aldrete-Davila was struck by a bullet from the gun of Agent Ramos. However, both Agents later testified that they did not realize at the time that he had been hit, and Aldrete-Davila fled across the border into Mexico. When the Department of Homeland Security learned of the incident – via a Border Patrol Agent who was a childhood friend of Aldrete-Davila’s – an investigation was launched in conjunction with the office of the U.S. Attorney for West Texas. Ramos and Compean were arrested and charged with multiple crimes. Months after the original charges were obtained, the Government drastically increased the charges by securing a superseding indictment pursuant to 18 U.S.C. 924 (c), “discharge of a firearm in commission of a crime of violence,” which carries a mandatory 10-year minimum sentence.