

Congressman Steve King today issued the following statement calling on President Bush to pardon former U.S. Border Patrol agents Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean before the President exits the Oval Office on Tuesday. A photo of the Congressman speaking at a press conference this week asking the President to pardon the former agents is attached.

“President Bush presented himself to the American public as a compassionate conservative, and as he leaves office, he has an opportunity to prove his compassion,” King said. “Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean faithfully served our country as Border Patrol agents, and both are serving excessive sentences for the crimes they were accused of. The President has already pardoned an arsonist, an armed bank robber and multiple drug dealers, and Ramos and Compean deserve to be released immediately. These men are not rogue or corrupt officers who used guns in an inappropriate manner, and every day Ramos and Compean sit in prison, their families suffer. Mr. President, free Ramos and Compean and correct this gross miscarriage of justice.”

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.

- According to the Washington Times, Ignacio "Nacho" Ramos and Jose Alonso Compean were sentenced to 11 and 12 years in prison, respectively, in October 2006 in the nonfatal shooting of a now-convicted Mexican drug smuggler. Ramos and Compean have been in federal prison since January 2007.

- President Bush was asked about a pardon for Ramos and Compean during his final press conference, but he declined to discuss any issues relating to pardons.