

## November 16, 2005- Sanchez Sponsors Bipartisan Bill for Strong and Fair Border Security

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Washington, D.C. — Rep. Loretta Sanchez today announced the introduction of H.R. 4312, the bipartisan Border Security and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2005. The bill, co-authored with House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Peter King (R-NY), lays out a comprehensive national strategy for border security.

As the Ranking Democrat on the Economic Security, Infrastructure Protection and Cybersecurity Subcommittee, under which border security jurisdiction falls, Sanchez worked closely with the majority to develop a moderate, substantive and effective bipartisan bill. Sanchez has long been an advocate for comprehensive immigration reform, and is hopeful that this bill will be Congress's first step in taking up a long-term solution to the larger issue of unauthorized immigration.

"The truth of the matter is we must do everything possible to secure this country's ports of entry. Although enforcement-only initiatives will not solve the immigration problems in the United States, border security is a critical aspect that Democrats in Congress feel very strongly about. It's important that we work together to put real reform packages in place that protect the nation," said Sanchez about the importance of the bill.

Democrats have long called for many of the provisions included in H.R. 4312, and have placed particular emphasis on bettering DHS coordination, and assuring adequate funding and resources be given to the department to carry out the federal government's role to ensure border security.

Highlights of the bill include:

- The creation of a comprehensive national strategy for border security
- Operational coordination and integrity of all border security divisions
- Expanded access to equipment such as unmanned aerial vehicles and other surveillance equipment and increased inspection personnel
- Implementation of cross-border security agreements
- Increased congressional oversight of DHS border security initiatives
- Financial accountability reporting for contracts greater than \$20 million
- Enhanced biometric technology and communication interoperability

"We've learned through the course of many congressional hearings that there has been a real lack of coordination between pre-existing agencies within DHS," said Sanchez. "It is critical that we ensure that cohesion and oversight are in place, not only to determine clear roles, but also to guarantee financial accountability in contracting and other Department spending; and, above all, to ensure the safety and security of all Americans."

H.R. 4312 is expected to be taken up by the Committee on Homeland Security for consideration on Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2005.