

HOUSE PASSES BILL TO HELP STATES RECOVER COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH INCARCERATING ALIENS -- May 8, 2008

Castle: Focus Should be on Deporting Criminal Aliens

Washington, DC - Rep. Michael N. Castle (R-DE) supported H.R. 1512, which today passed the House by a voice vote. This legislation will allow the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program to award grants to states for costs associated with incarcerating illegal aliens who have been charged with one felony or more than one misdemeanor. Current law only allows grant funding to cover the costs of incarcerating aliens who have been convicted of such crimes.

"Whereas the issue of illegal immigration presents many complex challenges, we should all be able to agree that public safety has to be our top priority. Persons who come to our country illegally and commit crimes present a real challenge to local law enforcement. These individuals are often detained in state jails and prisons, which in the case of Delaware costs the state more than \$200,000 annually," said Rep. Castle.

In April of this year, Rep. Castle introduced legislation that would provide incentives to make certain that criminal aliens are expeditiously returned to their home countries rather than released in the U.S. This legislation, entitled The Accountability in Immigrant Repatriation (AIR) Act of 2008, would suspend visa issuances to countries that refuse to accept deported aliens from the U.S. Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), introduced the AIR Act (S. 2720) in the Senate in March.

"While the legislation passed in the House today helps states pay for incarcerated criminal aliens, we are missing the mark," continued Rep. Castle. "Last month I introduced a bill to improve the deportation process so American taxpayers aren't simply paying to keep dangerous criminals off our streets when they should be deported back to their home country. My bill would help close our government's credibility gap on immigration enforcement and free substantial state and federal resources. Congress should follow passage of today's legislation by acting expeditiously to bring my proposal to a vote on the House floor."

For more information on this and more on Congressman Castle's immigration policy, please visit: www.castle.house.gov.

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