

# Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



STATE OF ARIZONA  
DEPARTMENT OF LAW  
1275 W. WASHINGTON STREET  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2926  
[WWW.AZAG.GOV](http://WWW.AZAG.GOV)

ANNE TITUS HILBY  
PRESS SECRETARY  
PHONE: (602) 542-8019  
CELL PHONE: (602) 725-2200  
[ANNE.HILBY@AZAG.GOV](mailto:ANNE.HILBY@AZAG.GOV)

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## Terry Goddard, Homeland Security Officials Pledge Stronger Cooperation

(Phoenix, Ariz. – June 19, 2009) Attorney General Terry Goddard today received pledges of greater federal cooperation in the fight against border violence and drug cartels from senior officials of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security during a meeting in Phoenix.

Goddard met with several Homeland Security officials, including Alan Bersin, Assistant Secretary for International Affairs and Special Representative for Border Affairs, and John Morton, Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Goddard invited the group to his office to explain Arizona's efforts to combat border violence and ask for stronger federal support of successful programs developed by the Attorney General's office to stop the flow of money to drug cartels.

"This was a highly productive meeting, and I am greatly encouraged by the desire expressed in working more cooperatively. State and federal law enforcement should become a more seamless operation, and we've taken a major step in that direction today."

Bersin, who is sometimes referred to as the "Border Czar," called Arizona "the most lawless corridor on the Southwest border" and stated his commitment for increased federal and state cooperation. More specifically, he said he would push for closer collaboration among state prosecutors, U.S. attorneys, Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of Justice. Bersin also complimented Goddard and Arizona "for taking a lead among the states" in the fight against border crime.

Among the topics discussed, Goddard asked for border-wide implementation of the program pioneered by the Attorney General's Office to identify and seize smuggling proceeds sent by wire transfer services. The Arizona program successfully seized \$17 million in smuggling proceeds in Arizona and caused a dramatic drop in smuggling proceeds sent by wire transfer through Arizona each year. The program would also enable federal regulators to more quickly root out specific money transmitter locations that are complicit with smugglers who illegally send thousands of dollars at a time across the border.

Goddard also voiced the need for federal regulation and improved transparency in the use of "stored value cards." These cards, which use technology similar to retail store gift cards, are not yet recognized by the federal government as a form of currency. Because of this loophole,

smugglers are moving millions of dollars across the U.S.-Mexico border in cards pre-loaded with thousands of dollars at a time, without any penalties. Goddard wants federal regulators to classify these cards as a form of currency and require that they be formatted in a way that law enforcement can identify how much money is stored on them.

Goddard, Bersin and Morton briefly addressed the media following the closed-door meeting.

For more information, contact Anne Hilby at (602) 725-2200.

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