

Congressman Higgins Applauds Move to Pull Bad Border Bill; Legislation Would be Harmful to Northern Border Communities, US Economy; Rep. Brian Higgins (D-NY) News Release

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Body

Congressman Brian Higgins (NY-26) spoke on the floor of the House of Representatives in support of the cancellation of this week's vote on the Secure our **Borders** First Act. The legislation included provisions, which could create long delays at already congested northern **border** crossings. In last week's Homeland Security Committee meeting, Higgins offered an amendment to ensure that any additional inspections would be matched with adequate staffing and infrastructure improvements in an effort to prevent logjams but the measure was defeated on a party line vote and the **bill** was scheduled for consideration on the House Floor this week.

New York's 26th District is home to several busy **border** crossings including: the Peace Bridge, Rainbow Bridge and Whirlpool Bridge. Second only to the Ambassador Bridge, connecting Windsor, Ontario and Detroit, Michigan, the Peace Bridge is the busiest **border** crossing between the United States and Canada. Forty billion dollars in trade crosses the Peace Bridge every year in addition to the thousands of travelers.

Implementation of the biometric exit data system at all **border** crossings, as required by the Secure our **Borders** First Act, without a full understanding of how it would impact the flow of traffic and consideration for the added capacity necessary to handle the additional inspections, would create further delays at these already congested **border** crossings.

After appearing on this week's House agenda, the Secure our **Borders** First Act was recently pulled from consideration. Higgins spoke on the House Floor urging House leadership to take into account the different needs of the northern and southern **borders**.

(To access video click above or go to: <http://youtu.be/TrhFQwFvKjg>)

"Mr. Speaker, Cancellation of this week's vote on the Secure our **Borders** Act, is a relief for northern **border** communities including my Western New York district.

"This legislation would require a biometric exit system at every **border** crossing, which would duplicate inspections and significantly slow the flow of people and goods across the northern **border**.

"The Beyond the **Border** agreement already allows for exit data to be shared between Canadian and U.S. officials, thus the implementation of this system at the Northern **border** would be redundant at least.

"Already congested **border** crossings, such as the Peace Bridge in Western New York, would see longer delays which would ultimately create disastrous economic effects and compound security concerns.

"A Peace Bridge Authority official said that implementation of this program would effectively shut down the northern **border**.

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"Investments in personnel and infrastructure should be made along our **borders** but we must take into consideration the unique needs of northern and southern **border** communities and protect the strong economic relationship essential to the United States and Canadian economies."

In a separate measure, Higgins joined Congressmembers John Katko (R-NY), Peter King (R-NY), and Candice Miller (R-MI) in introducing H.R. 455, a bipartisan **bill** requiring the Department of Homeland Security to conduct a northern **border** threat analysis.

Congressman Higgins is a member of the House Committees on Homeland Security and Foreign Affairs, serves as Co-Chair of the Northern **Border** Caucus and recently led a letter urging the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee to maintain increased staff levels along the US/Canada **border** as well as funding for the pre-inspection pilot program at the Peace Bridge.

Read this original document at: <http://higgins.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/congressman-higgins-applauds-move-to-pull-bad-border-bill>

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