



United States Congress

NEWS RELEASE

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Craig, Crapo Help States Cover Costs for Undocumented Criminals

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Idaho Senators Larry Craig and Mike Crapo helped introduce legislation yesterday, sponsored by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), expanding and improving the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP). S. 2587 would amend the Immigration and National Security Act to compensate States for incarcerating undocumented immigrants charged with serious crimes. S. 2588 would ensure that States receive reimbursement no later than 120 days after the application period.

SCAAP was intended to cover the costs of incarcerating undocumented people in this country. However, because of a reinterpretation of the program by the Department of Justice, states today only receive money for costs of housing illegal immigrants who have been *convicted* of a crime. Costs to arrest and keep illegal immigrants who have been *charged* with a crime are currently up to the State to pay.

A problem States are also having is the time between applying for reimbursement and receiving it. Counties throughout the country have waited as long as two years for compensation.

“Controlling immigration is the federal government’s responsibility,” Craig and Crapo said. **“If States have to deal with undocumented aliens who commit crimes within their borders, the federal government has a responsibility to help out with the costs.”**

Similar legislation is pending in the U.S. House of Representatives (HR 1512, which was unanimously passed by the House Judiciary Committee in October; and HR 3836).