



Sequester Cuts Hitting Home

By: Cliff Saunders – March 29, 2013

The automatic spending cuts that went into effect a few weeks ago have finally hit the agency that guards our borders.

Furlough notices went out to US Customs and Border Protection agents this month. Under the plan, they could be out of work for up to 14 days between now and September. Alex Nowrasteh of the Cato Institute says this is big.

“It is big in terms of a percentage,” Nowrasteh told KTRH. “We have 18,000 officers now, but in recent memory we were at 13,000.”

So what is the impact?

“It would take us back to about the staff level that they had in 2007,” Nowrasteh said.

Texas Senator John Cornyn has called those cuts “outrageous and reprehensible,” but Nowrasteh says illegal border crossing isn’t the problem it used to be.

“The number of border crosses is the lowest it’s been in about 40 years. We haven’t seen numbers this low since the 1970’s,” Nowrasteh explained.

And why is that? Nowrasteh says it’s all about the economy.

“The notion that border patrol is the reason why immigrants aren’t coming is wrong. The reason that they aren’t coming is that the job market isn’t very good for them,” he explained.

That said, Arizona Senator John McCain Tweeted this week he watched a woman enter the country illegally as he and other Senators were visiting the Arizona border on a fact finding tour.