



35 Border Patrol Agents Died Since 2003. How That Compares to Other Law Enforcement Officers

Steve Neavling

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Border Patrol Agent Robert Hotten died in the line of duty on Sunday after authorities say he likely fell on rugged terrain in a remote part of the Arizona border.

His death highlights the dangers facing Border Patrol agents. Since 2003, 35 Border Patrol agents have died in the line of duty.

Cato Institute ran an analysis of the deaths to determine how agents are dying and whether their jobs are more dangerous than other law enforcement officers.

About half of the Border Patrol agents died in car accidents. Another 34% died in other kinds of accidents, including drownings and from health issues. An additional 17% died from being assaulted or murdered.

Compared to other law enforcement officers, Border Patrol agents compared favorably. About one in 4,680 law enforcement officers died each year between 2003 and 2018. For Border Patrol, it's one death for every 8,628 agents per year.

“Border Patrol agents volunteered for a job that routinely places them in danger. However, that heightened danger does not translate into a higher chance of dying in the line of duty compared to other police officers,” Cato Institute concluded. “Every unnecessary death is a tragedy, but it’s important to keep them in perspective when forming public policy.”