

# Lockup of immigrants to expand along Texas

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By: News 8 Austin Staff

SAN ANTONIO -- U.S. agents plan to expand to a second part of the Texas border a program to criminally prosecute and jail all illegal immigrants.

Border Patrol spokesman Ramon Rivera says it sends a strong message that they're not letting illegal border crossers have what he calls a "free ride."

Customs and Border Protection in late 2005 began sending nearly all illegal immigrants caught in its Del Rio sector for federal prosecution.

The immigrants are charged with illegal entry. They can be sentenced for two weeks to six months in jail.

Rivera says the program that expanded late last year to western Arizona will start in Laredo next Wednesday.

In Del Rio, the increased prosecutions meant cases were running through a magistrate's courtroom at a pace of one per minute.