



## AP Texas Politics

### Sen. Hutchison unveils Texas border security plan

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HOUSTON — Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison said Tuesday her plan for security along the Texas-Mexico border includes expanding state participation in Homeland Security programs that let local law enforcement enforce some federal immigration laws and that verify whether a person can legally work in the country.

While unveiling her plan, Hutchison also criticized Gov. Rick Perry's efforts to promote border security. Hutchison is battling Perry for the GOP gubernatorial nomination in the March 2 primary.

"We have a governor who talks a lot about border security but hasn't really done anything effective," Hutchison said.

If elected, Hutchison plans to expand participation by Texas law enforcement agencies in the federal 287(g) program, which trains state and local officers in immigration law enforcement and enables them to identify and detain illegal immigrants. Critics have argued the program can lead to racial profiling.

The senator also said she would push to change state policy to require the eligibility of new state employees be checked through E-Verify, a federal government program that checks a person's work eligibility in the country.

Hutchison said she also would work with the Legislature to end so-called "sanctuary cities" in the state — cities with policies restricting police officers' ability to inquire about people's immigration status until they have arrested a suspect on criminal charges.

Her plan also calls for the creation of a volunteer border force made up of retired police and military officers to assist in border security efforts.

Perry's campaign criticized Hutchison's plan, saying she has not upheld the federal government's responsibility to secure the border.

"Because of Gov. Perry's leadership and his work with the law enforcement community

and state lawmakers, our border is safer now than it has ever been," said Perry campaign spokesman Mark Miner. "Sen. Hutchison has spent 17 years in Washington and has not done one thing to effectively secure our border with Mexico."

Miner cited Perry's plan that sent special teams of Texas Rangers to the border to deal with security and deter a spillover of the drug-war violence plaguing Mexico as an example of the governor's success in securing the border.

Perry's campaign also praised a program that has placed cameras along the border and cited the more than \$220 million the Legislature has allocated since 2007 to boost border security efforts.

But many ranchers, sheriffs and politicians along Texas' 1,200 mile border with Mexico say talk of spillover violence is overblown and they have questioned the use of the Texas Rangers.

The border camera program also has fallen short of its goals in arrests, reports of illegal crossings and the number of cameras installed.

Earlier Tuesday, Debra Medina, the third GOP gubernatorial candidate, unveiled her border security plan. It includes deploying Texas National Guard troops to the border and seeking legislation to stop the use of state funds for the benefit of illegal immigrants.

All three candidates are taking part in the governor's race debate Thursday in Denton.