



Tohono O'odham Nation  
Office of the  
Chairman and Vice Chairwoman

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### SHADOW WOLVES EXPANSION BILL PASSED BY U.S. SENATE

#### *Legislation will ensure future of elite Native American tracking unit on the border*

SELLS, Ariz. – On April 5, 2022, the U.S. Senate passed legislation that will improve recruitment and expand operations for the Shadow Wolves, the country's only Native American tracking unit. H.R. 5681 previously passed the U.S. House on March 10, 2022 and will now go to President Joe Biden's desk to be signed into law.

The Shadow Wolves are an all-Native American tactical patrol unit within U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operating on the Tohono O'odham Nation's reservation, which shares 62-miles of international border with Mexico. These law enforcement officers utilize traditional tracking methods to assist in disrupting and dismantling drug trafficking organizations. Established in 1974, the Shadow Wolves have helped protect the U.S. homeland and the Nation for nearly 50 years.

The Shadow Wolves have increasingly taken on investigative responsibilities, but under current law they are currently classified as tactical officers rather than special agents. This classification has hampered the effectiveness and viability of the Shadow Wolves program.

But that will change thanks to the extraordinary leadership of a bipartisan group of legislators, including Arizona's own Senator Kyrsten Sinema, Senator Mark Kelly, and Congressman Ruben Gallego. H.R. 5681 will reclassify the Shadow Wolves as ICE special agents as well as encourage recruitment and expansion of the program. This will ensure that this unique unit will continue to secure the border for decades to come.

Tohono O'odham Nation Chairman Ned Norris, Jr. said *"The Tohono O'odham have inhabited these lands since time immemorial and we know them best. The Shadow Wolves utilize traditional indigenous knowledge and skills to protect our O'odham citizens and the United States from cartels and other criminal activity in the region. The Nation is grateful to the Congressional leaders who worked together to ensure that the Shadow Wolves receive the proper classification they need to continue protecting our communities."*

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