

July 12, 2005

Dear Senator:

We, the undersigned organizations, oppose any efforts to engage state and local police authorities in the enforcement of federal civil immigration laws. We believe such actions will damage the trust between police and the communities they aim to protect, undercut law enforcement and anti-terrorism priorities, lead to costly mistakes and civil rights violations, and make us all less safe and our nation less secure.

Proposals to deputize state and local police to enforce immigration laws can take various forms – granting state and local police the power to enforce immigration laws, including immigration data in the National Crime Information Center database, funding the training of state and local police in immigration laws, etc. But no matter the form, authorizing police to enforce federal civil immigration laws is bad public policy. Even if participation is considered voluntary, these policies would result in decreased public safety and national security, and the impact on the entire community would be devastating.

Enforcement of federal immigration laws by state and local police:

- **Undermines community policing efforts.** Police depend on relationships with and cooperation from the entire community. People will be less likely to go to the police if they fear that they or their family members could be deported. Victims of domestic violence will be hesitant to report their abusers. If crime victims or witnesses are fearful of approaching the police or reporting suspicious behavior, the entire community is less safe.
- **Undercuts effective law enforcement and anti-terrorism efforts.** Checking immigration documents and holding suspected undocumented immigrants who have committed no crime diverts law enforcement resources from responding to 911 calls and investigating real crimes. It can also fill up detention space and tie up the judicial system for years with people whose only transgression is a civil violation of the federal immigration code. Our police should be focused on the real criminals who prey on communities, not undocumented workers.
- **Results in serious mistakes and civil rights violations.** Immigration law is complex and subject to frequent changes, and someone's immigration status is not verifiable by simply checking a database. Such enforcement requires a great deal of training and experience, as well as access to case files and legal guidance which state and local police do not have. It is probable that police will attempt to determine immigration status based on physical appearance, accent, or surname. Deputizing police to enforce immigration laws is likely to lead to increased racial profiling and civil rights violations, as well as mistakes, all of which can be very costly for state and local governments. Witness the settlement of expensive lawsuits in Texas, Arizona, Arkansas, and other states over the years.

State and local police already have the ability to arrest and detain foreign nationals who are involved in criminal activities and to contact federal immigration agents. They do so every day. The new proposed policies confer no additional authority for police to arrest criminals or refer

them to the Department of Homeland Security. Instead, they target undocumented workers and their family members, pushing them further underground and giving the green light for real criminals to target immigrants with impunity.

Like all Americans, we are very concerned about national security and public safety. We want to protect our families and our communities from crime and terrorism. We also understand that serious and comprehensive immigration reform is needed to resolve our country's immigration problems. However, deputizing state and local police will not solve these problems. We urge you to move forward with comprehensive immigration reform and to oppose any efforts to involve state and local police in the enforcement of federal immigration laws.

Sincerely,

### **National Organizations**

9 to 5, National Association of Working Women  
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee  
American Immigration Lawyers Association  
American Jewish Committee  
Anti-Defamation League  
Catholic Charities USA  
Chinese for Affirmative Action/Center for Asian American Advocacy (CAA)  
Farmworker Justice Fund, Inc.  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights  
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)  
Love Sees No Borders  
National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium  
National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund  
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)  
National Immigration Forum  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC)  
National Lawyers Guild  
National Network to End Domestic Violence  
Organization of Chinese Americans  
People For the American Way  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU), AFL-CIO  
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

### **State and Local Organizations**

African Alliance of Rhode Island (AARI)  
American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts  
American Civil Liberties Union of Washington DC  
American Civil Liberties Union of the National Capital Area (Montgomery County Chapter)  
Applegate Citizens For Political Change  
Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)  
Arizona Fair Housing Center

Asian Law Alliance  
Asian Law Caucus  
Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California  
Association House of Chicago  
Ayuda Inc.  
Bill of Rights Defense Campaign (BORDC) Bandon, Oregon  
Bill of Rights Defense Campaign (BORDC) Benton County  
Bill of Rights Defense Campaign (BORDC) Durham  
Bill of Rights Defense Campaign (BORDC) Jefferson County  
Bill of Rights Defense Campaign (BORDC) Northampton, Massachusetts  
Bill of Rights Defense Campaign (BORDC) Prince George's County  
Bill of Rights Defense Campaign (PBORDC) Pittsburgh  
Bill of Rights Supporters of Fort Collins  
Carolina Peace Resource Center of Columbia S.C.  
CASA of Oregon  
Catholic Charities from Des Moines-Iowa  
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa  
Center for Battered Women's Legal Services Sanctuary for Families  
Chicano Federation of San Diego County  
Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc.  
Citizens for Peace and Justice  
Coalition for Police Accountability  
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families  
Community Alliance of Lane County  
Community Child Care Council of Santa Clara County (4C Council)  
Concilio de Inmigracion  
Coordinating Council of Community Leaders  
Corvallis, Albany Human Rights  
Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation  
Dominican Women's Development Center  
El Centro, Inc.  
El Centro for the Study of Primary and Secondary Education  
El Pueblo, Inc.  
Enlace Comunitario  
Episcopal Migration Ministries  
FaithAction  
Family Violence Prevention Fund  
Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center, Inc.  
Florida Immigrant Coalition  
Fuerza Latina from Fort Collins  
Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials  
Georgia Rural Urban Summit  
Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama  
Idaho Green Party  
Idaho Patriots  
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project  
Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC)  
Immigrant Rights Network of Iowa and Nebraska  
Independent Green Party of Virginia  
Instituto del Progreso Latino  
International Institute of Rhode Island  
Jewish Community Action  
Korean American Resource and Cultural Center (KRCC)  
Korean Resource Center  
Kurdish Human Rights Watch, Inc.  
La Clinica de La Raza  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)  
Lake County Peace Action  
Latino Family Services  
Latino Health and Community Service INC (EHCS INC)  
Latino Leadership, Inc.  
Latinos for Education and Justice, Org.  
Longmont Citizens for Justice and Democracy  
Luz Social Services, Inc.  
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy  
Michigan Democratic Hispanic Latino Caucus  
Migration and Refugee Services, Diocese of Trenton  
Muslim Civil Rights Center  
NAF Multicultural Human Development Corporation  
Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest  
Network Against Human Trafficking  
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project  
Office of Hispanic Ministry, Catholic Diocese of Jackson  
ONE Lowell  
Oregon Bill of Rights Defense Committee  
Oxford Citizens for Peace and Justice  
Peace Action Wisconsin  
Promesa Systems  
Redlands Christian Migrant Association  
Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center  
Rural Organizing Project  
Southwest Creations Collaborative  
Sweatshop Watch  
Tahirih Justice Center  
Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition  
The Westchester Progressive Forum  
Thomas Merton Center  
United Hispanic-Americans

Utah Coalition of La Raza  
Virginia Bill of Rights Coalition

Virginia Justice Center for Farm and Immigrant Workers  
Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs  
WeCount!  
Young Korean American Service and Education Center (YKASEC)