

**IMMIGRATION RAIDS: IMPACTS AND AFTERMATH
ON MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITIES**

FIELD HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

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IMMIGRATION RAIDS: IMPACTS AND AFTERMATH ON MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITIES

Wednesday, November 7, 2019

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Tougaloo, MS.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in Holmes Hall Auditorium, Tougaloo College, 500 County Line Road, Tougaloo, Mississippi, Hon. Bennie G. Thompson (Chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Thompson, Jackson Lee, and Green of Texas.

Also present: Representative Cohen.

Chairman THOMPSON. May I have your attention?

We are just about to start our hearing and Natalie, where are you? Natalie needs to make a couple of announcements before we start.

Ms. NIXON. Good morning, everyone. Before we get started if I can just ask everybody to check your phones and other electronic devices to make sure that they are on silent or vibrate.

Thank you very much.

Chairman THOMPSON. Most of these people here have heard that every Sunday morning in church just before the minister gets up and bring that dynamic sermon.

So let me welcome all of you here to historic Tougaloo College. What we would like to do in convening this meeting is we have some vacant seats, and I would ask those Michelle Obama students who want to sit down, absolutely, we would love to have you to take a seat. All of the people that we invited are here. So there are some vacant seats. For the other young people, I know you can last a little while for this hearing.

Let me formally bring our Committee on Homeland Security to order. The committee is meeting today to receive testimony on immigration raids' impacts and aftermath in Mississippi communities.

I am very proud to welcome my colleagues today, not only to my home State and the 2d Congressional District of Mississippi, but I am also glad to welcome you to my alma mater, Tougaloo College, where I got started 1 or 2 years ago, involved in voter registration, civil rights, and doing a lot of things throughout Mississippi Delta.

Tougaloo was at the center of the civil rights movement in Mississippi and helped set the stage for activism that changed the direction of our country.

The college is a fitting venue for the Committee on Homeland Security to meet today to examine the recent immigration raids and their effect on Mississippi families, children, and communities.

Three months ago on August 7, 2019, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement sent hundreds of agents to Mississippi to arrest nearly 700 workers at 7 chicken processing plants across the State.

It was the largest State-wide workplace raid in the U.S. history with 680 community members arrested. Far from being hardened criminals or posing a public safety hazard, those arrested were trying to provide for their families, send their children to school, and build a life free from violence, crime, and poverty at home.

But perhaps the most troubling aspect of these raids is the way ICE failed to take into account that children would be left without one or both parents. As a result, hundreds of children, by some estimates, over a thousand children were directly affected by the raids.

Children finished their first day of school only to find that there was no one to pick them up or no one waiting for them at home. Schools, social service, and entire communities had to scramble to try to find separated children.

In the town of Forest, Mississippi, strangers and neighbors brought crying children to a community gym where the owner had offered them a place to sleep. Bedding and food was donated until children could be united with their parents or, in some cases, extended families.

The day after the raids, ICE believed that all children were reunited with at least one parent. Sadly, we know this is not the case. We know of a single mother who remained in ICE custody even though her 3 minor children are being cared for by an unrelated neighbor.

In some cases it appears both parents or single parents could be deported. But what happened to the children? Will families be forced to send children back to a country they had never seen or speak the language or grow up without any parents?

What happens when the children are U.S. citizens? Because of the way this operation was carried out, our communities are living in fear. People are afraid to leave their homes. Children are terrified to go to school because they may return home to find their remaining parent gone, and local businesses are suffering.

I want to take a moment to share a few words recorded by a girl whose father was arrested in the raids.

[Audio played.]

Chairman THOMPSON. Well, we got a little technical difficulty. We are going to move forward.

Adam, it is hard to understand so we will just—but that is a 15-year-old young lady who is describing the impact of what the raids did to her and how she is still suffering personally from it.

The other relatives—adult in the home is afraid to come out of the home for fear of being picked up. So it is a real challenge a lot of families are facing.

Clearly, families are still suffering from these recent raids. However, none of the employers have experienced any legal consequences yet.

Mike Hurst, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi, has stated, “To those who use illegal aliens for a competitive advantage or to make a quick buck, we have something to say to you. If we find you have violated criminal law, we are coming for you.”

Yet, not one employer or person from management has been arrested. No one has been charged. In fact, prosecution of companies who hire undocumented workers have declined compared to previous administration numbers.

The selective way the administration is enforcing our laws is disappointing. Today, we are joined by witnesses from all walks of life who will share their perspectives about what happened on August 7, what has happened in the aftermath of the raids and what can be done to help those who are still suffering as a result.

I hope to also hear from our witnesses about how we can help ensure the mistakes ICE made during the recent raids are not repeated here in Mississippi or elsewhere in the country.

I support immigration reform to ensure that employers can hire the workers they need and good people who want to work to support their families will have a way to do so.

In the mean time, I am committed to ensuring that the Department of Homeland Security enforce the laws and keeping our values and exercise discretion where necessary to protect children and other vulnerable populations.

Again, I want to thank Tougaloo College for hosting us and look forward to this productive hearing.

[The statement of Chairman Thompson follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BENNIE G. THOMPSON

NOVEMBER 7, 2019

Tougaloo College—Mississippi

Tougaloo College is where I started to get involved in politics and civil rights, organizing voter registration drives throughout the Mississippi Delta. Tougaloo was at the center of the civil rights movement in Mississippi and helped set the stage for activism that changed the direction of our country. The college is a fitting venue for the Committee on Homeland Security to meet today to examine the recent immigration raids and their effect on Mississippi families, children, and communities.

Three months ago, on August 7, 2019, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement sent hundreds of agents to Mississippi to arrest nearly 700 workers at 7 chicken processing plants across the State. It was the largest State-wide workplace raid in U.S. history, with 680 community members arrested. Far from being hardened criminals or posing a public safety hazard, those arrested were trying to provide for their families, send their children to school, and build a life free from the violence, crime, and poverty at home.

But perhaps the most troubling aspect of these raids is the way ICE failed to take into account that children would be left without one or both parents as a result. Hundreds of children, by some estimates over a thousand children, were directly affected by the raids. Children finished their first day of school only to find that there was no one to pick them up or no one waiting for them at home. Schools, social services, and entire communities had to scramble to try to find separated children.

In the town of Forrest, Mississippi, strangers and neighbors brought crying children to a community gym where the owner had offered them a place to sleep. Bedding and food was donated until children could be reunited with their parents, or in some cases with extended family.

The day after the raids, ICE believed that all children were reunited with at least one parent. Sadly, we know this is not the case. We know of a single mother who remains in ICE custody even though her 3 minor children are being cared for by an unrelated neighbor.

In some cases, it appears both parents or single parents could be deported. But what happens to the children? Will families be forced to send children back to a country they have never seen or speak the language of, or grow up here without any parents? What happens when these children are U.S. citizens?

Because of the way this operation was carried out, our communities are living in fear, people are afraid to leave their homes, children are terrified to go to school because they may return home to find their remaining parent gone, and local businesses are suffering.

Of note, none of the employers have suffered any criminal consequences. Mike Hurst, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi has stated, "To those who use illegal aliens for a competitive advantage or to make a quick buck, we have something to say to you: If we find you have violated Federal criminal law, we are coming for you."

And yet, not one employer or person from management has been arrested. No one has been charged. In fact, prosecutions of companies who hire undocumented workers have declined compared to the previous administration's numbers. The selective way the administration is enforcing our laws is disappointing.

Today, we are joined by witnesses from all walks of life who will share their perspectives about what happened on August 7, what has happened in the aftermath of the raids, and what can be done to help those who are still suffering as a result. I hope to also hear from our witnesses about how we can help ensure the mistakes ICE made during the recent raids are not repeated here in Mississippi or elsewhere around the country.

I support immigration reform to ensure that employers can hire the workers they need and good people who want to work to support their families will have way to do so.

In the mean time, I am committed to ensuring that the Department of Homeland Security enforce the laws in keeping with our values and exercises discretion where necessary to protect children and other vulnerable populations.

Chairman THOMPSON. Other Members of the committee are reminded that under committee rules, opening statements may be submitted for the record.

Let me introduce my colleagues who are here. To my right—your left—is Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee from Houston, Texas.

[Applause.]

Chairman THOMPSON. To my left is Congressman Al Green from Houston, Texas.

[Applause.]

Chairman THOMPSON. To his left and from—I call South Mississippi, sometime known as Memphis, Tennessee, my colleague, Congressman Cohen, from Memphis, Tennessee.

[Applause.]

Chairman THOMPSON. So I welcome our first panel of witnesses.

Our first witness, Mr. Cliff Johnson, is director of the Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center and a member of the faculty at the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Our next witness, Reverend Odel Medina, is the pastor of St. Anne's Catholic Church in Carthage, Mississippi. In response to raids, Father Odel turned his parish into a makeshift legal and counseling center for affected families.

Our next witness, the Honorable Constance Iona Slaughter-Harvey, is the founder and president of the Board of the Legal Education and Community Empowerment Foundation. She is a native of Forest.

She is also a judge, a graduate of Tougaloo College who also has the distinction of being the first African-American female to graduate from the University of Mississippi Law School. So—

[Applause.]

Chairman THOMPSON. Our last witness is Ms. Lorena—you are going to have to help me out now—Quiroz-Lewis is the lead organizer for the Mississippi Immigrant Coalition and Working Together Mississippi, which was instrumental in providing support and aid to families affected by the Mississippi ICE raids.

Without objection, the witnesses' full statements will be inserted in the record.

I now ask each witness to summarize his or her statement for 5 minutes, beginning with Mr. Johnson.

STATEMENT OF CLIFF JOHNSON, DIRECTOR, MACARTHUR JUSTICE CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL OF LAW

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Congressman Thompson.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the committee, I first want to thank you for this opportunity to talk about these unprecedented raids that occurred on August 7 here in Mississippi.

I have practiced law here for 27 years. I have represented thousands of clients. Nothing I have ever done has impacted me like the work I have been involved on behalf of the more than 1,000 people impacted by the largest workplace raids in United States history.

I have sat face-to-face with dozens and dozens of people who have told me, often through tears, about their fears, their concerns, the dreams they had for their families, and I am struck repeatedly by the extent to which they are vulnerable and confused and scared, and I am left to ask the question, why—why this, why here, why in Mississippi, and I want to focus my remarks on two areas today.

One, I want to make clear that these raids were not carried out in response to any outcry from people here in Mississippi. We did not ask for this.

Second, I want to address the fact that more than 100 of the people detained in those raids have been charged criminally. They have been indicted by the United States Department of Justice and this United States Attorney for felonies.

In addition to the other administrative matters that they face, the immigration court cases, the civil fines that have been imposed, they now must run the gauntlet of Federal felony prosecution at the hands of this Department of Justice.

First I will say Latino immigrant workers have been involved in the poultry industry in Mississippi for more than 20 years. We know our neighbors and friends. We know them from public schools and from soccer fields and from our places of business and from shared places of worship.

If you talk to local law enforcement officials—and you will hear from one today—you will learn that these people are not a threat to our communities. They are certainly not a threat to National security.

They have become vital parts of the community. They are people who we know and they are people about whom we care.

I think it is important to note that even under the regime imposed by the Trump administration where the focus is said to be on those people who present a threat, that this group of people de-

tained on August 7 come nowhere close to meeting the objectives or the criteria identified for enforcement.

I do not know how this State, where immigrants make up less than 2 percent of the population, where there has been no outcry from the community, was chosen as the epicenter of enforcement action.

But I can tell you that Mississippi is not better off as a result of what has happened here. I must, as a former Assistant United States Attorney, also focus on the actions of the United States Attorney here in prosecuting nearly 120 people.

Prosecutorial discretion is at the heart of our system. Prosecutors must make decisions about how to use the resources made available to them—the substantial resources made available to them in deciding who should be prosecuted and who should not.

It is such an important part of our system that the Department of Justice discusses it at length in its Justice Manual, and in my written remarks that you have received you can see my analysis as to why the prosecutorial discretion exercise in this case, in my opinion, is terribly flawed.

This does not serve a substantial Federal interest and there certainly are alternative means of remedy in this context.

It is important to note that this U.S. Attorney's office recently, in response to another raid that involved almost 600 people, criminally prosecuted only 9 people and the U.S. Attorney at the time said this prosecution of employers, as Congressman Thompson highlighted, is in line with the Department's emphasis on prosecuting employers, not employees.

Prosecuting employees is hardly a deterrent to companies bent on ignoring the law. That is from the same United States Attorney's office. U.S. Attorney Hurst was an assistant U.S. Attorney in this case.

Former Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly, speaking of President Trump's Executive Order in 2017, assured us that just being in the United States isn't enough. In his words, it has got to be something else.

In Mississippi in these raids there was nothing else. These people are not criminals. There is no record of violent behavior.

Of the people being prosecuted, many of them are young mothers with a third-grade education or less who have themselves been victimized by crimes. There are only a handful that have even a misdemeanor conviction.

These prosecutions are wrongheaded and they are a wrong use of our resources, and I would encourage the committee to look hard at the prospect of duplication of these types of raids and prosecutions as a misuse of resources at the Department of Justice and is unfair and inhumane piling on, in the context of people who are here, working hard, being law-abiding neighbors and friends.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Johnson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CLIFF JOHNSON

NOVEMBER 7, 2019

Mr. Chairman and Members of the committee, I first want to thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about the unprecedented ICE raids of August 7, 2019.

I have practiced law in Mississippi for 27 years, and I have represented thousands of vulnerable and marginalized clients. Nothing I have ever done has impacted me like working on behalf of the more than 1,000 people affected by these raids. I have spoken to dozens of people who are scared, desperate, and confused, many of them telling their stories through tears, and I am struck time and again by how vulnerable they are and by their lack of resources and options.

I would like to focus my remarks today on two primary areas. First, I want to make clear that the raids of August 7 were not a response to any outcry from Mississippians regarding the presence of immigrant workers in our communities. Second, I want to address the fact that more than 100 of the 680 people detained in the raids have been charged with felonies by the local U.S. Attorney's Office and explain my position that this aggressive use of the criminal justice system is inconsistent with the policies of the Department of Justice as set forth in its *Justice Manual*.

For more than 20 years, Latino immigrants have been employed in the poultry business in Mississippi. Whether working in chicken houses or processing plants, Latinos living in Mississippi have been vitally important to this industry that generates nearly \$3 billion in revenue each year. Since arriving here, our Latino neighbors and friends have proven to be hardworking, law-abiding, and family-oriented.

While matters of immigration policy and enforcement are hotly debated around the country, conversations with local residents of communities like Canton, Morton, Forest, and Carthage reveal that Mississippi is not a place where the presence of immigrants has resulted in resentment and fear. To the contrary, we have developed relationships over the years, and we know one another through our places of business, children's activities at public schools and soccer fields, and interactions at shared worship space. Since August 7, local law enforcement officers repeatedly have confirmed that immigrant residents of our small towns are not involved in criminal activity and do not present any threat to local or National security. Indeed, the sheriff of Scott County informed me just last week that of the 125 people currently in his jail only one is a local Latino immigrant.

I do not know how this State where immigrants make up only 2 percent of the population was chosen to be the epicenter of ICE enforcement action, but I know that it was not the result of any plea from Mississippians for the government to take action. We did not ask for these raids. We do not think our immigrant friends and neighbors are dangerous. We do not complain that our immigrant friends and neighbors are taking jobs for which life-long Mississippians are clamoring. Mississippi is not better off as a result of what ICE has done here.

In addition to questioning the motivation behind bringing 600 ICE agents to Mississippi for the purpose of conducting the largest single State enforcement action in our country's history, I am compelled to question the decision of the Department of Justice and the local United States Attorney to criminally charge approximately 120 of those people detained on August 7. As a former Assistant United States Attorney, I am familiar with the central role that prosecutorial discretion plays in our criminal justice system and the guidance provided to Federal prosecutors regarding when it is appropriate to bring Federal felony charges. It is my opinion that the criminal prosecution of those detained on August 7 is unwarranted because prosecution does not serve a substantial Federal interest and because there exists an adequate non-criminal alternative to prosecution. (*DOJ Justice Manual* 9–27.220).

The 680 individuals detained in the August 7 raids have cases pending against them in United States Immigration Courts. In addition, dozens of those detained also received a Notice of Intent to Fine. The civil administrative proceedings in Immigration Courts may result in deportation and a permanent bar from reentry into the United States, and, likewise, the administrative fine process also may result in deportation and a permanent bar from reentry. Despite the seriousness of these matters, the Department of Justice has sought and obtained felony indictments against approximately 120 people detained on August 7. It is unclear how many, if any, additional people will be criminally prosecuted. Charges brought thus far include illegal reentry and fraudulent use of documents, and those indicted face potential imprisonment of several years.

The *DOJ Justice Manual* makes clear that “the attorney for the Government’s belief that a person’s conduct constitutes a Federal offense and that the admissible evidence will probably be sufficient to obtain and sustain a conviction is not sufficient standing by itself to commence or recommend prosecution. The prosecution must also serve a substantial Federal interest, and the prosecutor must assess whether . . . there exists an adequate non-criminal alternative to prosecution. It is left to the judgment of the attorney for the government to determine whether these circumstances exist.” (Comment to *DOJ Justice Manual* 9–27.220). The description of what constitutes a “substantial Federal interest” in section 9–27.230 and the

analysis of whether a non-criminal alternative to prosecution is adequate under section 9–27.250 mitigate against subjecting those detained on August 7 to criminal charges. As set forth in the comment to section 9–27.250, “[w]hen a person has committed a Federal offense, it is important that the law respond promptly, fairly, and effectively. This does not mean, however, that a criminal prosecution must be commenced.”

The argument that criminal prosecutions should not be undertaken and constitute undue “piling on” in these circumstances is supported by both the prior conduct of prosecutors in the Southern District of Mississippi and the focus of Executive Order 13768 issued by President Trump on January 25, 2017. In a December 9, 2009, press release regarding the guilty plea of the human resources manager for a Mississippi facility at which more than 550 immigrant workers were detained, the United States Attorney for the Southern District at that time proclaimed, “This prosecution is in line with the Department’s emphasis on prosecuting employers, not employees. Prosecuting employees is hardly a deterrent to companies bent on ignoring the law.” Current United States Attorney Mike Hurst was one of the Assistant United States Attorneys responsible for prosecuting that case. (DOJ Press Release attached hereto). In that instance, criminal charges were brought against only 9 of the nearly 600 immigrant workers detained.

In Executive Order 13768, President Trump identified the purpose of his emphasis on immigration enforcement as pursuing those who “engage in criminal conduct in the United States” and those who “have served time in our Federal, State, and local jails.” Consistent with this emphasis, then-Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly stated on the April 16, 2017, episode of “Meet the Press” that “[o]f course, ICE operate [sic] more or less in the interior and do targeted actions against illegal aliens plus. What I mean by that is, just because you’re in the United States illegally doesn’t necessarily get you targeted. It’s gotta be something else.” (Transcript at <https://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/meet-press-april-16-2017-n747116>).

My analysis of the intake forms collected by the Mississippi Immigration Coalition reveals that almost none of those detained in these raids had any criminal record prior to being rounded up and taken into custody on August 7. As for the approximately 120 people who have been indicted criminally, many of those individuals are young mothers with no more than a third-grade education who themselves have been the victims of sexual crimes. The majority of the Latino workers in Mississippi’s poultry processing plants have held their jobs for years without incident. To the extent that the goal of this administration’s enhanced immigration enforcement efforts is to ferret out those who actually do “present a significant threat to National security and public safety” as described in Executive Order 13768, those detained and criminally charged in Mississippi do not fit that profile. Again, Mississippi is not better off as a result of these raids, and it is hard to imagine how criminal prosecution of this collection of individuals already embroiled in serious civil administrative cases furthers any substantial Federal interest.

Much will be said today about the staggering human cost being paid by those detained in the raids and their families. I will comment only briefly. While our Coalition has been able to provide direct financial assistance over the last 3 months, we will not be able to sustain our support for the hundreds of families who will be subjected to legal proceedings for months and years to come without any means of working and earning money. I am not an expert in immigration policy, and I will leave the complexities of immigration enforcement and reform to others. However, having spoken with countless families who are financially ruined and in desperate need of money for food, shelter, medicine, and other basic necessities, I respectfully request that the House Committee on Homeland Security take whatever action it can to provide those detained in the Mississippi raids of August 7, 2019, with temporary work authorization. Unless these people are permitted to earn money while awaiting disposition of civil administrative and criminal proceedings, hundreds of children, many of them American citizens, will face food scarcity, a winter without electricity, housing instability, and limited access to health care. Regardless of any differences of opinion we might have regarding politics or immigration policy, my prayer is that our shared humanity will unite us in the quest to make certain that serious harm does not come to these good people who have come to our country and demonstrated a work ethic and commitment to family that should serve as an inspiration for us all.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you for your testimony.

I now recognize Father Odel to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF FATHER ODEL MEDINA, PASTOR, ST. ANNE
CATHOLIC CHURCH, CARTHAGE, MISSISSIPPI**

Father MEDINA. Thank you.

Yes, my name is Father Odel Medina, a Catholic priest who belongs to the order of Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity and pastor of St. Anne Catholic Church in Carthage.

This parish is located in the diocese of Jackson where Bishop Joseph Kopacz is the leader.

First of all, I would like to thank the representative of Homeland Security Committee as well as Chairman Bennie Thompson and Ranking Member Mike Rogers for the opportunity to give my testimony.

My testimony is about the impact due to the raids that occurred August 7, 2019, in the community of Carthage. This community has been deeply affected because there are in Carthage many members of the Hispanic community that were working in the chicken plants where the raids took place.

These people, I can personally attest, are hard workers who contribute to the local, State, and National economy. These are people of family, they are people of faith, and they are—and they pay their taxes.

Many of them have lived in the United States 5 years or more or most of them have children that are citizens of the United States, children that are suffering from separation from their families due for their parents either being deported or are still in the detention center pending the deportation process.

The trauma of the children is too painful. They do not understand why their parents have been arrested. They said, my parents are not criminals. They are not bad people. They were working. Why does Immigration put them in jail?

I have with me a letter and a picture from 2 children whose father is still in detention center. I have permission to share this with you today. Their 13-year-old son wrote a letter begging to church to release his father by bail.

His father is someone that has been in the United States from 19 years old. Allow me to highlight part of the letter, and let me tell you, today, ironically, this father is going to present in front of the church.

The letter said, “Dear Church, I hope you understand me. My dad is a good hard worker that loves to live with us and loves to go to church. For us and for my grandparents, he usually works extra for also grandparents for food and supplies.

I don’t want him to leave me by myself with my mom and brother because it won’t be a complete family without him. He was always there for me. When I was sad he made me laugh. He also helped me with my math homework.

When I didn’t understand it, he was my best friend that always played with me. So please can you give us a bail for my dad?

We are so sad without him because as soon as we came home from school the day when the police caught my dad, we were waiting for him and then he called me on my phone and he said, ‘Don’t be sad that the ICE policemen have caught me. Pray for me, please.’

That is when I started to cry a lot. I started to pray with all my heart and feelings. So, please, let my dad be a citizen here because I need his love and careness with me. Thank you for reading this letter that I wrote with my heart. God bless you on everything you do and have.”

This is just one simple example of the reality of many families but also representatives, I believe these raids called National attention to urgent necessary to reform the immigration system.

The proof is that you are here as well. So let me tell you also this part of my testimony. When people heard about the raids they started calling me from all over the United States, people from many races and religions, like Jewish people in Florida that told me they know what it means to be under persecution and segregation. They said, please, let help.

African-American people told me, Father Odel, we know what it means to be segregated in the past. People from Chicago, California, and Virginia called me to say, Father Odel, this is not right. We need to do something. How can we help?

You can help me with money and assistance, I told them, but the best help is to change the immigration system. This is a phenomenon that people are aware that we need to do something.

This new generation of citizens, the children of these families, will never forget the ones that helped them and their families.

This is a National outcry and I believe many of these decisions are in your hands. I pray to God to give you the wisdom to resolve this issue in the right way.

In conclusion, thank you for—thank you again for giving me the opportunity to express my testimony on behalf of these people that all cry out for help, and I assure you my prayer because I know this is not easy to handle.

God bless you.

[The prepared statement of Father Medina follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FATHER ODEL MEDINA

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2019

I am Father Odel Medina of the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity and pastor of St Anne’s Catholic Church in Carthage, Mississippi, a parish located within the Catholic diocese of Jackson, Mississippi, which is overseen by Most Reverend Joseph Kopacz. On behalf of St Anne’s Catholic Church, the local Catholic community and the Catholic diocese of Jackson, I would like to thank the House of Representatives Homeland Security Committee, as well as Chairman Bennie Thompson and Ranking Member Mike Rogers for the opportunity to submit this written statement for the record and testify before the committee at this field hearing. In this statement, I will share the impacts of the recent immigration raids upon St Anne’s Catholic Church and the Carthage community as well as the Catholic Church’s perspective on immigration enforcement and family unity.

The August 7 immigration raids deeply affected St Anne’s Catholic Church and our community. I appear before you today to discuss the impacts on our community, particularly on families, and to offer some policy recommendations to prevent future family separations and devastations of this kind.

I. HUMAN CONSEQUENCES OF AUGUST 7 IMMIGRATION RAIDS

On August 7 Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the enforcement branch of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), conducted raids on 7 poultry plants operating in the Canton, Carthage, Forest, Laurel, and Morton com-

munities here in Mississippi.¹ It is estimated that 680 workers at these sites were apprehended by ICE. In the following days approximately 300 of these individuals were eventually released on “humanitarian grounds”² as almost all had small children who needed care. The additional roughly 400 people were sent to immigrant detention facilities located in Mississippi and Louisiana.

The impact of these immigration raids was and continue to be devastating to our community. Compared to other States in the southeastern United States, Mississippi does not have a large undocumented immigrant community. The Pew Research Center estimates that about 20,000 undocumented immigrants live in Mississippi, approximately 0.7 percent of the State’s total population and 35 percent of the immigrant population in 2016.³ But while the undocumented immigrant community may not be extremely large, it is an integrated community that has been living and contributing to our local economy, parish, and city for many years. To this end, it is estimated that 21 percent of undocumented adults in Mississippi have been in the country for 5 or more years, and their children, many of whom are U.S. citizens, represent 1.8 percent of elementary and high school students in the State’s public schools.⁴

I see the human dimensions of these statistics in my work at St Anne’s Catholic Church, where I am the pastor. There are many hardworking immigrant families who attend our church, contribute to the community, worked in the poultry plants and also are members of the parish who had lived in Carthage for many years. While some are documented, many of the parents of these family units are undocumented. Many have U.S. citizen children. Mixed-status families, such as these, where the parents may lack immigration status, but the children have legal immigration status and, in many instances, may be U.S. citizens is not new phenomena but instead represents an increasing immigration reality in the United States as we wait for larger immigration reform. Currently there are an estimated 4 million children living in the United States that are members of mixed status families.⁵ And it is these families who often suffer and did indeed suffer on August 7. By my count, I estimate that approximately 84 families from our parish have been negatively affected and, in some cases, still separated by the raids.

The day of the raids and several days after—I saw devastated children who were terrified and wondering about their parent’s whereabouts, worrying when their parents would return or if they would return at all.

These are the words of “Carlos”⁶ a child who experienced the traumatic separation that I mentioned. Carlos’s letter to a judge reflect his experience and feelings. (see attached letter from Carlos). Carlos is the son of parents that were both affected by the raids. Carlos’ mother was released with an ankle monitor leaving her unable to work. Carlos’ father remains in detention. Carlos’ father came to the United States 19 years ago at age 16. Both of Carlos’ parents are hard workers dedicated to providing a good life for their children and sending whatever funds they earned to their families in Guatemala who live in extremely poor conditions. Carlos’ father is also a dedicated leader at my parish, always volunteering to provide landscaping or maintenance assistance and is a member of the church choir. This family exemplifies so many of the families that I have the opportunity to minister to: Hardworking, family-oriented, community-focused. These families experienced hardship and trauma first-hand due to the raids.

But equally important to the human suffering that occurred because of the raids was the resiliency and the strength that was demonstrated by our community. Almost immediately, we understood the needs of families who have been impacted and started collecting supplies and resources that were being donated by the community. St Anne’s Catholic Church and several other organizations became organizing points for gathering donations. It was inspiring to see people turn to their faith and their

¹ Catherine Shoichet, 680 undocumented immigrants are arrested in Mississippi, CNN, August 8, 2019 available at <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/07/us/mississippi-immigration-raids/index.html>.

² U.S. Department of Justice, Numerous Previously Detained Aliens with Small Children Released on Humanitarian Grounds, August 8, 2019 Press Release available at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdms/pr/numerous-previously-detained-aliens-small-children-released-humanitarian-grounds>.

³ U.S. unauthorized immigrant population estimates by State, 2016, Pew Research Center, February 5, 2019, available at <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/interactives/u-s-unauthorized-immigrants-by-state/>.

⁴ Id.

⁵ Randy Capps, Michael Fix, and Jie Zong, A Profile of U.S. Children with Unauthorized Immigrant Parents, Migration Policy Institute, January 2016, available at <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/ChildrenofUnauthorized-FactSheet-FINAL>.

⁶ Name changed to protect confidentiality.

community places of worship for support and spiritual guidance. People sent items from all over: Water and groceries and baby supplies. In addition to the supplies collected the needs for the families is quite large: While some were released from ICE custody, many lost their jobs and are in removal proceedings now. Many have lost their jobs at the plant and are dealing with financial concerns and also psychological trauma affecting themselves and their children. But in the midst of this, some of the very people who had been picked up during the raid came back to St. Anne's to help assist us gathering donations. Literally some of those people most impacted stepped up to help others in their community. Leaders like "Maria": 23-year-old "Maria"⁷ came to the United States when she was 11 years old to join her mother. Maria attended school and learned to speak fluent English. Even though Maria was eligible for DACA, she did not have the financial resources for her application. Due to a lack of the proper documentation, she was unable to pursue higher education and instead pursued full-time employment at a poultry plant where she was working at the time of the ICE raids of August 7, 2019. As members of St. Anne Catholic Church, Maria and 2 other women affected by the raids approached me to see what they could do to help themselves and others who were affected. Even though the experience was extremely difficult, Maria's deep faith conviction led her to accept my invitation to take a leadership role in the response plan that I created. Maria's English and Spanish skills, her special organizational abilities and her steadfast spirit have helped to lead the entire St. Anne community through this crisis. Although her own immigration status is uncertain, Maria has not given up being there for the rest of the community.

Another member of the volunteer response team is a father of 5 children that were all born in the United States. "Luis"⁸ and his family have lived in the United States for 17 years. Luis is a skilled mechanic which was his job at one of the poultry plants. Luis was arrested on the day of the raids and was released with an ankle monitor. Luis and his family are dedicated and faithful members of St. Anne Catholic church. Luis is a well-known leader among the Hispanic community. He was one of the first to approach me to ask how he can help. In spite of the uncertainty of his own immigration situation, Luis never hesitated to offer assistance in providing resources for all the families that were affected. One thing that calls attention to Luis is that when donors and charities ask him what he needs, he always asks if they can find him a job because he does not want to be a burden on society or the government.

I highlight the stories of my neighbors and parishioners to remind lawmakers of the very human consequences that result from such actions like the August 7 raids. I am hopeful that today I can raise my voice on behalf of those who are now too afraid or to traumatized to speak about what occurred and how negatively it has impacted their lives, their families, and our community. But I also note that individuals like Maria and Luis are precisely the type of people we want in our community as they make us a better more integrated community.

II. CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING ON WELCOMING THE NEWCOMER

The Catholic Church in the United States has long advocated for and served immigrants and refugees. This missionary call comes from the perspective of our biblical tradition, which urges us to love, act justly toward, and identify with persons on the margins of society, including newcomers and those on the move, such as migrants and refugees. Our long experience as a pilgrim people in a pilgrim church has made us intimately familiar the experience of being with uprooted, persecuted, and imprisoned.

Many Old Testament narratives speak very directly to the reality of migrants and newcomers. Like many migrants, Jacob's son, Joseph was sold into involuntary servitude and trafficked to a foreign land, Egypt (Gen 37:18–36), where he became a devoted and trusted servant (Gen 39:1–6). After being falsely accused by his master's wife, he was imprisoned (Gen 39:11–20). Pharaoh ultimately found him "endowed with the spirit of God" and put him in charge of the land of Egypt (Gen 41: 37–41). Given a chance to succeed, Joseph more than fulfilled his responsibilities, by saving the people of Egypt and "the whole world" from the effects of a devastating famine (Gen 41: 55–57).

The Catholic Church has repeatedly spoken of the Gospel imperative to protect the rights of refugees, to promote the reunification of families, and to honor the inherent dignity of all migrants, whatever their status. Unfortunately, the modern U.S. immigrant enforcement system represents a far cry from solidarity or com-

⁷ Name changed to protect confidentiality.

⁸ Name changed to protect confidentiality.

munion. It divides us from our brothers and sisters and separates families. We are particularly concerned about family detention and the separation of families through enforcement measures which go against the basic tenets of Catholic social teaching.

This is not to say that we do not acknowledge the role of the Government in ensuring public safety and agree that those who are a threat to our community should indeed be a target of immigration enforcement and if necessary, detention. However, our teaching reflects that the role of the Government in undertaking efforts to secure its borders and enforce its laws should be humane and just. Enforcement like that which occurred in the workplace raids of August 7 contributes to the misconception that all immigrants are criminals and a threat to our unity, security, and well-being, and most disturbingly separates families, including U.S. citizen children from their parents while inflicting trauma and fear.

As a community member and leader who witnessed these traumatic effects on immigrant families and children, I urge you to consider our recommendations as set forth below.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

A. *DHS Must Observe and Implement Existing Policies to Protect Children During Raids from Undue Harm*

During the August 7 raids, hundreds of the individuals apprehended had school-age and in some cases under 5-year-old children who were either left at school or without adult care upon arriving home from school the day of the raid. This lack of coordination prompted educators, childcare providers and community volunteers to have to find ways to care for and comfort them and sparked National notice.⁹ While many of the parents have since been released from ICE custody on humanitarian grounds so that they can provide care for their children, there was no plan in place to ensure the well-being and care of the children the day and night of the raid. Some children were in the worst cases, left with strangers due to the lack of planning. ICE's own 2007 guidelines stipulate that before raids that will result in the arrest of 150 or more individuals, ICE should alert and coordinate with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Division of Immigration Health Services (DIHS) or with State and local social service entities (if DIHS is unavailable).¹⁰ While the Government states that it did engage in humanitarian releases based on inquiries of whether those apprehended had children and offered to provide cell phones for parents to contact their children,¹¹ this process was haphazard and still did not prevent several children from being left waiting anxiously for their parents after school. Notice to relevant State and local and appropriate child welfare contacts must always occur in these situations. While not condoning the raids themselves, it is vital that all existing policies and procedures should be followed to ensure that children are not more unduly harmed than what will be expected as their parents are being separated from them.

B. *Release Individuals Still Detained Due to the August 7 Raid and Enroll Them in Case Management-Focused ATD Programs*

While noting the continued concerns with the August 7 raids, I must turn to addressing the current reality of the families who have been continually separated due to the aftermaths of the raids or been financially destabilized due to raids. We as a community are still dealing with trauma, economic insecurity, and family separation. As it relates to the approximately 300 individuals remaining in detention, we urge that you reconsider this form of custody and instead consider enrolling those still detained, particularly the parents of children, on alternatives to detention, especially alternatives to detention that involve case management. Many of these individuals have strong community ties given their long-standing presence in the United States. As a result, these individuals have robust incentives to appear in immigration court, and their release to the community with individualized case management services is both appropriate and preserves family unity and human dig-

⁹Ray Sanchez, Their first day of school turned into a nightmare after record immigration raids, CNN, August 8, 2019 available at <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2019/08/us/mississippi-ice-raids-cnnphotos/index.html>.

¹⁰Guidelines for Identifying Humanitarian Concerns among Administrative Arrestees When Conducting Worksite Enforcement Operations, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2007 available at <https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ice-hum-guidelines.pdf>.

¹¹See U.S. DOJ, *supra* note 2.

nity.¹² Enrollment in an alternative to detention that utilizes case management will enable the individual to remain in the community at this time while still engaged in the on-going immigration process.

Community-based case management alternatives are effective at ensuring compliance, without using electronic monitoring.¹³ For example, the ICE Family Case Management Program (FCMP), that ran from January 2016 through June 2017, had compliance rates of over 99 percent with court hearings and ICE appointments, all at a cost far below that of detention.¹⁴ Additionally, allowing these individuals to still be present in their community and in their children's lives provides opportunity for family strengthening and stability.

C. REFORM THE LARGER IMMIGRATION SYSTEM TO RECOGNIZE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF IMMIGRANTS LIKE MY PARISHIONERS AT ST. ANNE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The larger immigration system in the United States is broken and must be fixed. The Catholic Church has long advocated for bipartisan meaningful legislative reform. But this effort must come now—as the human consequences of our broken immigration system continue to devastate our community and create a culture of fear. We must recognize the human dignity and contributions of immigrants who have lived, worked, and worshipped in our community and who are by every measure American but for immigration status. The families that I have served and ministered to at St Anne's have lived in our community for many years, they have American citizen children, they were paying taxes and supporting our local economy. We need to work together to find a way to modernize our immigration system to recognize the human dignity of those living here and find a way for them to move forward with their lives here in the United States without fear of being separated from their families.

III. CONCLUSION

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak about our vibrant and strong community and the incredible work of the St. Anne's Catholic Church parishioners. I urge you to remember the human consequences of what happened here with the August 7 immigration raids. We are still dealing with the fallout, but we are a strong resilient community. At St. Anne's Catholic Church and in the Diocese of Jackson we will continue our work to ensure that our community members and neighbours feel safe and welcome regardless of their immigration status. We welcome your support and urge you all to continue to give meaningful oversight to DHS enforcement policies and work for larger immigration reform.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. Very powerful testimony.

We now recognize Judge Slaughter-Harvey to summarize her statement for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF CONSTANCE SLAUGHTER-HARVEY, PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD, LEGACY EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION

Ms. SLAUGHTER-HARVEY. Thank you, Congressman Thompson, and I appreciate the presence of the other Members of Congress.

As a native Mississippian and as a long-time resident, I have seen changes in the political and legal system. I witnessed African-Americans beaten and degraded for exercising basic rights as Americans.

Shortly after my graduation, I filed lawsuits on behalf of victims and their families for brutality, beatings, and even death inflicted at the hands of police officers and other law enforcement personnel.

While we were not successful in many of these legal actions, I always hoped we served notice on the law enforcement officials.

¹² USCCB, et al., *The Real Alternatives to Detention*, June 2019, available at <https://justiceforimmigrants.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/The-Real-Alternatives-to-Detention-June-2019-FINAL-v.2.pdf>.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

But in recent years, and more recently, in recent months, it seems the notice was apparently not received. I appreciate your description of what happened in my home town of Forest following the raids.

But not only were the employees who were arrested surprised and caught off guard; most in the Forest and Morton communities of Scott County were actually surprised and quite disturbed.

The manner in which the raids was conducted was appalling and inhumane, to say the least. The poultry workers were treated as terrorists and animals. That upsets me.

But local law enforcement offices, as you will hear today, were themselves unaware of the raids and many expressed disappointment with the lack of notice.

When I first learned of the ICE raids, my heart dropped as I felt heat in my nose. I contacted CPS officials—that is Children Protective Services officials—and I represent that agency in Scott County. Our concern was what was happening to the children.

I was advised the day after that nobody in CPS in Scott County knew about the raids. There was no notice for State employees to take care of these children.

I was contacted by individuals who are beneficiaries of Legacy, our program, and one of the ladies called and said that she needed me to come over and talk to her child.

When I went over, he ran up to me and said, Ms. Connie, why do they hate my momma? The only thing I could do was grab him and tell him that his mother was loved.

My grandson, who is with me today, was also affected. He was in tears because one of the boys whose mother was arrested is his best friend. He sees what this country is coming to and there is no exception for an affliction of pain on children.

I am, and probably will remain, disturbed. My church, St. Michael's Catholic Church in Forest, was torn apart. At least 200 of our parishioners are still detained. That should not happen in America.

I don't want to get personal. I have submitted my comments to this panel. But there are many questions posed by community residents concerning the timing of the raids, the secrecy of the raids, the lack of planning and coordination of action, and the lack of compassion for the children whose families have been destroyed.

The efforts to terrorize certain citizens has been successful. They are now intimidated, afraid, and angry. These raids disrupted so many lives in my community, and for that I am extremely resentful.

Many families have been destroyed and probably will never recover. I am sad that our children were subjected to this type of Gestapo action.

Gentleman and lady, what a damning and shaming indictment.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Slaughter-Harvey follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CONSTANCE SLAUGHTER-HARVEY

NOVEMBER 7, 2019

My name is Constance Slaughter-Harvey, and I am founder and president of the Legacy Education and Community Empowerment Foundation, Inc. in Forest, Scott

County, Mississippi. Our mission is to empower our children and families in order to empower our communities. I also serve as Scott County Youth Court Prosecutor. In that capacity, I represent the MS Department of Child Protection Services.

As a native and life-long citizen of Mississippi, I have seen changes in the political and legal arenas. My heart ached when I witnessed African Americans beaten and degraded for exercising basic rights as Americans. Shortly after my graduation from the University of Mississippi (Ole MS) School of Law in 1970, I filed many lawsuits on behalf of victims and their families for brutality, beatings, and even death inflicted at the hands of police officers and other law enforcement personnel. While we were not successful in many of those legal actions, I always hoped we served notice on the law enforcement systems. In recent years, it seems the notice was apparently not received.

On the morning of August 8, 2019, I sensed that our past efforts had been in vain when hundreds of persons were thrown to the ground, handcuffed, and arrested with no notice as to why they were being arrested. According to several friends who were arrested and detained and later released, as well as friends whose family members are detained in Natchez and Jenner, they were not informed of the charges against them when they were forcibly removed from their employment. Most were not informed of charges until their court appearances weeks later. This procedure runs contrary to our legal guarantees.

Not only were the immigrants surprised and caught off guard, most in the Forest and Morton communities of Scott County were surprised and disturbed. The manner in which the raid was conducted was appalling and inhumane. The poultry workers were treated as terrorist and animals. Local law enforcement officials were unaware of the raids and many expressed disappointment with the lack of notice.

When I first learned of the ICE raids, my heart dropped as I felt heat on my nose. I contacted CPS officials who had been contacted by the local schools regarding children whose parents were arrested. I was also advised that none of the CPS staff was alerted by their supervisors until later that night when CPS workers were contacted to come to a local facility to check on children whose parents were arrested and detained. When they arrived, there were several children who were being care for by relatives.

The following day, I was contacted by relatives of Legacy Change Agents who are enrolled in Legacy's Mentoring Programs. They asked that I meet with them to console the minors. When I arrived, they rushed up and hugged my neck, and asked if their parents were going to be sent away. Several of these Legacy children are still disturbed because their fathers remain in detention. Others are crying that their fathers will not ever return. Two mothers of our Legacy Change Agents were arrested and later returned to the plant. They wore leg monitors and the children remain fearful that their mothers will be taken away again.

The initial reaction from the local communities in Scott County was shock and concern for the children whose parents were arrested without having an opportunity to arrange for the care of their children. Regardless of political persuasion, most residents were uncomfortable with the process. While many expressed they did not support immigrants breaking the law, they felt that many had been in Scott County and Mississippi for more than 10 years, and had become a vital and contributing part of our community. The children are integral members of the school families and have relationships with other students who are not immigrants. They are leaders in the academics, sports, and other school activities. They have become a part of our community fabric and make contributions in all walks of life. In fact, my grandson's friend's mother was arrested. Tears were shed by both of these youth. Even at early ages, they question the motives of officials orchestrating the raids. My heart aches to see these youth affected to the extent they may lose hope for a future where justice and fairness are extended to all persons.

At least 200 members of our church community, St. Michael's Catholic Church, remain in jail as a result of the raids. The vast majority of our parish membership is Hispanic and their absence is visible in all facets of the church's operations. Many of these parishioners work long and hard to support the church as well as the local economy. They, along with other immigrants, carry their loads in our towns and contribute significantly to our local economy. The raids have affected the local economy and the absence of workers and their financial investments are quite noticeable.

The local churches and organizations immediately responded to the crisis following the arrest of detainee family members. The United Methodist Church was among the first to respond and was joined by other churches and missions. The Food Network in Morton, St. Michael's, and the Baptist Association have also been instrumental in providing assistance. The United Methodist Trinity Mission continues to provide humanitarian assistance with distribution of food, donated by var-

ious organizations and persons, and payment of utilities and rent. The community support has decreased slightly over time but there are several churches and organizations that continue to provide assistance.

We have been fortunate to have legal assistance from local and out-of-State lawyers. Legal assistance clinics were held at Legacy's office, Trinity Mission, St. Michael's, and San Martin's Catholic Churches. Many detainees arrested during these raids have had initial court appearances in Federal court, including the Legacy Change Agents and their families. Legal assistance is being provided and coordinated through the MS Center for Justice and other legal entities.

There are many questions posed by our community residents concerning the timing of the raids, the secrecy of the raids, the lack of planning and coordinating these actions, and the lack of compassion for the children whose families have been destroyed. Additional concerns are the lack of prosecution of employers who hired the immigrants without checking their citizenship status, and the failure to provide detainees with notice as to the specific criminal charges.

Unfortunately, the efforts to terrorize Hispanic immigrants have been successful and the majority, some of whom have their papers and are legal, remain intimidated.

These raids disrupted many lives in our communities. In fact, many families have been destroyed and may never recover. I am saddened for our children that this type of gestapo action has returned to our State. What a shaming indictment.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much for your testimony.

I now recognize the gentlelady, Ms. Lewis, to summarize her statement for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF LORENA QUIROZ-LEWIS, LEAD ORGANIZER,
WORKING TOGETHER MISSISSIPPI, MISSISSIPPI IMMIGRANT
COALITION**

Ms. QUIROZ-LEWIS. Thank you, Chairman Thompson, and Members of the House Homeland Security Committee for the opportunity to testify today and for holding this field hearing here in Mississippi to shine a light on the devastating impacts of the August worksite raids.

My name is Lorena Quiroz and I am the immigration project lead organizer with Working Together Mississippi. I have been working, along with many others, to support families in crisis in response to the aftermath of the raids.

Three months later, this work is on-going. Today, I am sharing a few stories from impacted individuals and families. Many of these individuals could not be here today with us, some because they are afraid and some because they are still in detention. But their stories must be told.

August 7, 2019, was the first day of school in Mississippi. We heard the news that ICE detained 680 people at poultry plants in the central part of the State and sprung into action.

Many kids would return home from school to find one or both of their parents gone that day. For those who were detained in the raids, recounting the brutality of the officers is painful.

One individual said, we were treated like animals. We were told we weren't coming back home. Why do they hate us so much?

Another woman was in her car when an ICE officer approached her. He forcibly removed her from the car after cutting her car's—her seatbelt with a knife and then threw her on the ground.

She begged the officer to let her call her children but he moved her inside with the rest of the detained workers.

After the chaos of the raids, people were transferred to detention centers in the region. The story of a woman, who will refer to as

L, demonstrates the many issues in detention from language access to treatment of detainees.

L is still detained 3 months later, despite having 3 children at home who are in the care of a neighbor. L speaks Mam, 1 of 3 ancient dialects that many of those detained speak. She speaks just a little Spanish.

She did not understand the questions that were asked during the raid. She was detained in Mississippi and then transferred to Louisiana. Her health has deteriorated.

She eats only once a day and is in constant pain due to a chronic ailment. When I went to visit her with her children, her 5-year-old didn't recognize her and was afraid to speak to her.

Families continue to scramble to find their loved ones. Over half of the person's detained were released. Others were sent to 2 detention centers in Mississippi and Louisiana. We began to search for the detained by conducting intakes, but noticed that days later we weren't able to trace these detainees.

More detention centers began popping up. Individuals detained went from being held in 2 detention centers to now spread across 13 different detention centers hours apart.

The trauma that these raids have caused is something that will outlast even the legal cases. Children did not sleep for days after the raids and still cry every night because their mom is not there to put them to sleep.

I know a teenager who missed several days of school due to her anxiety and depression, teased by classmates about her family being deported.

There is a great need for counseling and trauma-informed care. But our mental health system is not equipped to handle these cases.

We have very limited capacity and there is only one bilingual licensed trauma counselor in the entire State. One. She is working around the clock to provide services and to train licensed clinicians that are not bilingual on trauma or cultural competency while also trying to get them interpreters.

This community and these families are hard-working and proud people. They often work 10 to 12 hours a day enduring horrendous working conditions. Workers tell stories of sexual harassment, lack of bathroom breaks, and child labor. Many of these families have been a part of our community for years, even decades.

They have purchased homes, cars, opened bank accounts, plan rodeos, attend a church, held quinceañeras, even became business owners.

We can address the immediate crisis before us caused by the anti-immigration policy of the current administration. This work must be done while we continue to create new and welcoming immigration policies that effectively put people on a pathway to citizenship and create safe and better paying working environments.

What needs to happen next? Individuals detained should be released and reunited with their families. The Government should immediately provide documentation on the whereabouts of all still in detention.

Additional funding and resources for mental and other health-related issues are needed. A long-term crisis fund should be established with public and private dollars.

We must end work-site raids and enforcement activities that tear families apart. Congress must hold DHS and ICE accountable for its actions and fight to hold the line against DHS's growing budget.

Money for enforcement activity only results in the devastation of our communities and lasting trauma. Our families deserve to be united and free in their own communities.

Chairman Thompson, if we work together to address these issues we can move forward and build a welcoming community in Mississippi.

[Speaking foreign language.]

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Quiroz-Lewis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LORENA QUIROZ-LEWIS

NOVEMBER 7, 2019

Thank you, Chairman Thompson and Members of the House Homeland Security Committee, for the opportunity to share my testimony here today, and for holding this field hearing here where so many people were impacted by the huge worksite raids in August.

My name is Lorena Quiroz and I am the Immigration Project Lead Organizer with Working Together Mississippi (WTM), a State-wide organization that is committed to building a non-partisan, institutionally-based vehicle of civic engagement in Mississippi. In my role with WTM, I coordinated the organizing response to the raids in relationship to 3 of our members: Catholic Charities, the Catholic Diocese of Jackson, and the Mississippi Center for Justice.

In the aftermath of the raids here in August, I have been working with our community to support impacted families. I will share a few stories from impacted individuals and families that I have spoken with over the last 3 months across the region. Many of these individuals could not be here with us today. Some because they are afraid, and some because they are still detained 3 months later. I'm here because their stories must be told.

THE VIEW FROM THE GROUND ON AUGUST 7

August 7, 2019 was the first day of school here. As soon as we heard the news that Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) had detained 680 people at 6 different poultry plants in the central part of the State, we sprung into action, knowing that many kids would return home from school to find one or both of their parents gone. This was the case of a 13-year-old who pleaded on camera, "I want my mom."

Neighbors sprung into action to help out and to try to explain the unexplainable to young kids that their parents weren't coming home.

Recounting the brutality of the raids is painful. One impacted individual said, "We were treated like animals, like criminals taunted by the ICE officers. We were told we weren't coming back home. Why do they hate us so much? If only they knew, we left our families and friends, we came here so that our children could have a chance at a better life."

One woman, "M," recalls being pushed to the floor, and being made to kneel and held at gunpoint.

Another woman told us of being in her car when an ICE officer asked for her papers. He forcibly removed her from the car after cutting her seat belt with a knife, and then threw her to the ground, tying her hands very tightly. She begged the officer to let her call her children who were in school but he moved her inside with the rest of the detained workers.

After the workers were arrested at this particular plant, she described how they were all put on a bus and told they were going somewhere where their fingerprints would be taken. The officers teased her and the other workers by offering water which none of them could drink because their hands were still bound. This mom of two young kids was terrified and felt sick. She had just worked a night shift and

felt like she was going to faint. She is still scared of what will happen to her and her children.

THE VIEW FROM DETENTION

After the chaos of the raids, people were transferred to detention centers in the region without access to interpreters. The majority of people detained speak a language other than Spanish or English, and couldn't fully understand the directions they were given during the raid or the questions being asked—especially questions about whether there was someone at home to care for children. This language barrier resulted in children being left in the care of friends, extended family and neighbors. And while in detention, people were asked to sign documents that were not translated and without the help of an interpreter to understand the documents in their own language. Most submitted to authority without any hesitation or understanding of their rights.

I worked directly with the family members to try to locate those detained and access basic information about their cases, and to help them set up visits to the detention centers.

"L's" story illustrates many of these issues in detention. She is still detained 3 months later despite having 3 children at home. Thanks to a neighbor, her children are cared for, but still there is a worry that the neighbor could be detained or that the children will be taken away. L speaks Mam, which is 1 of 3 ancient dialects that many of those detained speak—and she speaks just a little Spanish. This language barrier makes communication very difficult and so she did not understand the questions that were asked during the raid. First she was detained in Mississippi and then was transferred to Louisiana. Her health has deteriorated while she has been detained—she eats only once a day and is in constant pain due to a chronic ailment. When I went to visit her with her children, her 5-year-old didn't recognize her and was afraid to speak to her. I have submitted for the record many other letters and stories recounting horrible conditions in detention that demand this Committee's oversight.

In the last 3 months, so many families have been scrambling to find their loved ones. Over half of the persons detained were released, and the others were sent to 2 detention centers in Natchez, Mississippi and Jena, Louisiana. As a community with organizers and attorneys, we began the search for the detained by conducting intakes and we began to notice that days later we weren't able to trace these detainees. Detention centers began popping up in different parts of Mississippi and Louisiana, so that individuals detained in the raid went from being held in 2 detention centers to now spread across 13 different detention centers.

To say that communication with loved ones is a challenge is an understatement. The barriers seem insurmountable and they continue to multiply. The disappearance of family members to another detention center is traumatic and expensive because planned visit dates can no longer happen with the transfers and phone calls for a week cost more than an average phone bill. The Mississippi Immigrant Coalition has been helping offset some of these costs, but bills are on-going and there's a limit to the amount of funding available.

LASTING TRAUMA

Families are living in fear, depressed and anxious. The trauma that these raids have caused is something that will outlast the legal cases and maybe even the lives of those detained.

I have heard about children who did not sleep for days after the raids and still cry every night because their mom is not there to put them to sleep. The impact on children in high school should not be overlooked. I know of a teenager who missed several days of school due to her anxiety and depression, and was also teased by classmates about her family being deported. Other children in high school have told me that they are required to attend truancy detention after school because they missed so many days of school. They are being forced to pay for something they had no control over because of the atmosphere of fear that was created after the raids. In addition to fear, others were would not stop crying, still others had no parents at home to help them get ready for school.

There is a great need for counseling and trauma-informed care, but our mental health system is not equipped to handle all these cases. We have very limited capacity and there's only one licensed trauma counselor in the entire State. One. She is doing her best to write reports for attorneys, to schedule appointments for children, teen groups, and to make referrals. She is working around the clock to provide services and to train licensed clinicians that are not bilingual on trauma or cultural competency, while also trying to get them interpreters.

We can do better than this. We need more support to handle this humanitarian crisis caused by the worksite raids.

NOW WHAT?

These are hardworking and proud people. They often work 10 to 12 hours a day enduring horrendous working conditions. The smell of the plants remains in their nostrils even after work hours. They are forced to pay for their own safety equipment and work tools. Workers tell stories of sexual harassment. They tell of not being able to take bathroom breaks. They have often been humiliated verbally abused. Child labor has also been a part of the work life of these plants.

Many of these families we're talking about today have been working here for years, even decades. They're a part of our community and contributors to our economy. They've purchased homes, cars, opened up bank accounts, planned rodeos, attended church, held quinceañeras, even became business owners.

Hundreds of families lost their only source of income after the raids, which has impacted the economic fabric of this community. Many of the people released have ankle monitors and are no longer able to work. Churches and community and advocacy groups have rallied together to raise money to help out with basic needs. Volunteers give up their time to be able to help distribute humanitarian aid and provide help with utilities. There's so much more to life than this—but children no longer have birthday parties and families no longer gather together—our community sacrifices the beauty of life that brings people together because they are simply trying to survive each day.

My question as a U.S. Citizen and an immigrant myself from Ecuador is: Can't we do better? Can we not live up to the religious values of our diverse traditions that call for us to welcome the stranger? Can we not live up to the American tradition of welcoming the huddled masses yearning to be free?

I say that we can. The following are some suggestions that can be implemented and funded by public/private partnerships. These partnerships can deal with the immediate crisis before us caused by the anti-immigrant policies of our current administration. This work must be done while we continue to create new and welcoming immigration policies. Policies that welcome those who contribute to rebuilding and bringing new life to these rural communities. Policies that create a legal pathway for those who are willing to do work that others do not want to do, and policies that create safe and better-paying working environments.

Here are my brief suggestions:

- Individuals detained in the raid should be released and allowed to reunite with their families.
- Transparency and accountability from DHS is critical. The Federal Government should immediately provide documentation on the whereabouts of all still in detention.
- Funding and resources for mental and other health-related issues facing these families and their children should be developed with governmental and private participation.
- Interpreters should be trained and made available to schools, mental health professionals, law enforcement personnel, and legal service workers.
- A long-term crisis fund should be established with public and private dollars.

Here in Mississippi, we can see how this level of harm and devastation could have been prevented. And we also know that while the scale of what happened here is large, it is not an isolated set of events, but part of the increased enforcement efforts under this administration. We must end worksite raids, and enforcement activities that tear families apart leaving communities struggling to survive. Congress must hold DHS and ICE accountable for its actions and treatment of our community members—our families, friends, and neighbors—by holding investigations and demanding answers. This hearing is the first step. Congress must also fight to hold the line against DHS's growing budget. Money for more enforcement activity only results in the devastation of our communities and lasting trauma. Our families deserve to be united and free in their own communities and we will all work together to fight for that day to come. Chairman Thompson, I believe if we work together to deal with the issues I have just raised, we can move beyond this crisis and build a welcoming community in Mississippi.

Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. I thank the witnesses.

[Applause.]

Chairman THOMPSON. I thank the witnesses for their testimony. I will remind each Member that he will have 5 minutes to question the panel.

I now recognize myself for questions.

Mr. JOHNSON, given your work in the U.S. Attorney's Office and the work with these families, is your testimony here that there was some discretionary authority that could have been exercised with respect to this raid?

Mr. JOHNSON. It is, Congressman Thompson.

The Department of Justice publishes a Justice Manual recognizing that we don't prosecute cases criminally in each instance where there may be a technical violation of the law and they provide specific guidance that makes clear that simply because a Government lawyer believes a crime may have been committed and even if they believe they can prove it in a court of law, the manual says that the prosecution must also serve a substantial Federal interest and they must assess whether there is an adequate non-criminal alternative to prosecution.

Prosecutorial discretion in our system is vitally important. U.S. Attorney Hurst said in the aftermath of these raids that we are a country of immigrants but we are also, and more than that, a country of laws, as if he and the Department of Justice had no choice but to prosecute every matter they thought might be a violation.

That is not the case. To the extent that that is what he intended to communicate, the Department of Justice Justice Manual speaks to the contrary.

Chairman THOMPSON. Father Medina, can you give this committee your experience in contacting or attempting to contact ICE on behalf of some of the families that you were working with?

Father MEDINA. Well, the day of the raids I tried to reach them to see where the people were and I didn't have any access. Actually, nobody knew where the people were. We went to the office—ICE Homeland Security office here in Jackson. Nobody were there. So I didn't have any result trying to reach them.

Chairman THOMPSON. So your testimony is that the day of the raid those individuals who might have had an interest in what was going on didn't have anybody to talk to?

Father MEDINA. No. I went to the office of ICE Homeland Security and it was locked. So they moved to someplace else, I believe in airport or Army facility, and they were—they have the people. So I—

Chairman THOMPSON. Ms. Harvey, as I understand it, part of the requirement or the protocol is that—and we will get to it with our next panel—but ICE officials are supposed to, like, notify school districts, human service people that they are preparing this.

This was the first day of school.

Ms. SLAUGHTER-HARVEY. This was—

Chairman THOMPSON. So are you aware of any notification that occurred in Scott County?

Ms. SLAUGHTER-HARVEY. I am aware that it did not occur. Several employees at the Mississippi Department of Children's Services—Children's Protective Service—were caught off-guard, were absolutely shocked.

In fact, their supervisors were not notified. The principals and the superintendents in 5 public schools in Scott County, one went on television and stated that he had absolutely no knowledge of what happened and his efforts to contact someone responsible—those efforts were in vain.

Chairman THOMPSON. So, basically, those children in the custody of the school district at the time of the raids—the school district didn't know what was going on?

Ms. SLAUGHTER-HARVEY. No idea. No idea, and what happened is that because of the confusion the students whose parents were arrested did not come to school the next day.

Chairman THOMPSON. Yes.

Ms. SLAUGHTER-HARVEY. They were traumatized.

Chairman THOMPSON. Mr. Johnson, you wanted to say something?

Mr. JOHNSON. I did not, your Honor.

Chairman THOMPSON. Oh.

So, Ms. Lewis, can you give the committee some of your experience with trying to make contact with ICE on behalf of some of the people we are talking about here today?

Ms. QUIROZ-LEWIS. Many of the problems arose because of the language barrier. A lot of people assumed that the folks that were arrested spoke Spanish. But their language—it is a different language they speak, at least 3 or 4 different languages.

So reaching out to us, even that in itself was a little bit complicated and there are no interpreters that speak the indigenous language here in the State of Mississippi.

So that was difficult trying to find. We also had intakes done and then as they moved around in detention centers we just kept losing people, kept—we couldn't trace anyone.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

I will yield to the gentlelady from Houston for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, first of all, let me thank you for holding this probably one of the most significant hearings that the Homeland Security Committee has held and it is attributable to your leadership and I am grateful to be in your community at this time.

It is very difficult to assess and to provide my outrage in a short period of time. But let me say that this is one of the most or maybe the most cruel and inhumane forms of government action that I have seen in a very, very long time.

[Applause.]

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I am so grateful for the astute leadership of all of you as panels and, certainly, I want to acknowledge the leadership of Dr. Constance Slaughter-Harvey because she captured the connection of how the criminal justice system can be used as it relates to colored people and we become the product of that system.

Mass incarceration is an example. Lynching is an example of the use of one's race or background to oppress them.

So let me quickly get to my questions and say that I hope out of this hearing many of us propose a variety of remedies. But let me try to go to Mr. Johnson.

If I don't get to all of you—I am very grateful, Father Medina, for your leadership. I come from the Houston-Galveston diocese and we are always engaged in these issues dealing with our brothers and sisters.

But let me specifically go to you, Mr. Johnson—Professor Johnson, former U.S. Attorney. There is something about value when you get into a case. Could be a DA raid where you shut down a major cartel linkage or a major meth operation, and you assess the value.

Six hundred and eighty workers—303 of them were released. That is almost half that didn't need to be arrested at all, to be honest, and 32 of those 303 individuals, including 18 minors, were released on-site.

Tell me if you, in your work, would analyze the effectiveness of that kind of raid as it relates to resources and relates to results. I want to get to Ms. Quiroz-Lewis so if you could, very quickly.

So when we at the Federal Government give money to the DOJ, this is wasteful. Those who might have been relevant as a danger to the community could have been picked up if they were known to be workers quietly at home or at work.

Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. Congresswoman Jackson Lee, all I will say is you are absolutely right. I find this a shocking use of DOJ resources. They brought in 600 Federal agents, Congresswoman, to arrest 680 people.

The amount of money spent, the manpower, committed to arresting people who have been working in these communities for years and decades, have been law-abiding citizens is troubling.

There are issues that the Department of Justice could and should address. They make these decisions to the exclusion of other law enforcement priorities and opportunities.

So we are spending time arresting these good people and locking them up in our jails when we have real problems, and I would be very concerned, Congresswoman Jackson Lee, if I was—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you.

So that is an investigation that we need to initiate either out of Homeland and some of the responsibilities.

Let me quickly ask 2 questions to Dr. Constance Slaughter-Harvey and then to Ms. Quiroz-Lewis.

I understand, Ms. Quiroz-Lewis, if you and then—that many of these are Guatemalans. I don't know if many people know that a lot of Guatemalans came here. I think it was an earthquake just some months back.

But in any event, a lot of issues are going on in Central America. But they have an indigenous language. I want you to be able to just pierce into that how difficult it is for their due process rights to be exercised when no one can communicate, and they may perfectly have a legitimate reason and right to either seek asylum after the fact or some other remedy.

To you, Doctor, if you could comment on the idea of when the laws are misused against people of color who don't have rights or the wherewithal to defend themselves.

Ms. Quiroz-Lewis.

Ms. QUIROZ-LEWIS. Yes, and I spoke about L. It was very difficult for me to communicate with her, and she spoke Spanish. So I can just imagine what it was like hearing the orders in the language that she wasn't familiar with.

Also, when she was arrested she couldn't understand what was going on, signing papers which she couldn't read of a completely different language.

We say that people understand in the language of their heart. That is the language that they learn at home. So everything is confusing.

Then they get yelled at in a different language because people assume that they speak Spanish. There is 4 different indigenous languages.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Right.

Ms. QUIROZ-LEWIS. Calling people to interpret in the court we have to find court interpreters from all over the country because there is such a limit—such limited resources.

So this has been excruciating even for the folks that are doing organizing work to doing the legal intakes to make sure that everything that they—that they are receiving they are understanding accurately, because one word can really cause a serious mistake in the due process in the legal and then also to obtain resources for them.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Doctor.

Ms. SLAUGHTER-HARVEY. Yes, ma'am.

Madam Congressman, it is a nightmare—it has been for many years—to provide quality legal services to individuals who cannot communicate.

We could not communicate in Mam. Some of us can't communicate in Spanish, and to advise an individual of their Constitutional rights or basic rights that we would extend to anyone in our language when they cannot understand is a travesty.

We found that in this particular instance, many of the detainees, most of whom were Guatemalans, had no earthly idea as to what was being said. None whatsoever. None of the agents, as I understand it, could speak Spanish and definitely not Mam.

The individuals who were speaking Mam when they were brought before our Federal judge, she was kind enough to have an interpreter from California on the line.

The other individuals who speak Spanish were in the dark. It was only the individual who could speak Mam that could help these individuals.

So it is really—as I said, it is an indictment on our system.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the Chairman. I thank the witnesses. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

We will—and I will say this again at the end—we will probably have some questions based on some of the answers that we have had from the witnesses today and we will get back to you.

We will now recognize the gentleman from Houston, Mr. Green, for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would like to thank the witnesses for appearing today and I want to compliment all of the many people who have taken the time to be here.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, we have these field hearings across the country and your constituents have demonstrated that this is of interest to them and that means a lot to me, personally, and I think to the committee as a whole.

Let us not make the mistake of assuming that what ICE imposes is not the will of the President.

Ms. SLAUGHTER-HARVEY. All right. All right. All right.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. I think we have to acknowledge that when the President says this is a deterrent that this is something that is coming from the White House and it is difficult to imagine how a President can see children separated from their parents—babies—and still say that this is a deterrent.

[Applause.]

Mr. GREEN of Texas. It is difficult to imagine. It is a very painful thing to have to grapple with these issues. But let us do so.

Attorney Johnson, you indicated that these people were not a threat. Let us for the record now place evidence in the record of what you say.

Is it true that there were no gangs of Latinos that were threatening and terrorizing the people in this area? Is this—is this the case? No gangs, Attorney Johnson?

Mr. JOHNSON. That is true, Congressman Green. One hundred percent true.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Father, are you aware of circumstances in the area? Would you agree that there were no gangs?

Father MEDINA. Not at all.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Your Honor.

Ms. SLAUGHTER-HARVEY. Yes, sir.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Any gangs that you have heard of terrorizing people—Latinos?

Ms. SLAUGHTER-HARVEY. No, sir. I work as a youth court prosecutor in Scott County and it has never come to my attention, not to my desk, that there were any gangs, Latino or Hispanics, in Scott County.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Ms. Quiroz-Lewis.

Ms. QUIROZ-LEWIS. No, sir. I work directly with the families and the youth organizing and none of that is present.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Now, there are those who would say that the persons arrested were a drain on the economy—that they—they are the reason that your unemployment rate may not be at someplace comparable to the National average.

Were they a drain on the economy, Attorney Johnson?

Mr. JOHNSON. To the contrary, Congressman Green. They are a vital part of an industry that creates \$3 billion of revenue each year in Mississippi alone.

In addition, you do not hear Mississippians clamoring for the jobs that these people held and have held for quite some time.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Father.

Father MEDINA. I am sorry. I didn't follow you.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Are they a drain on the economy? Did they take up services that others would have benefited from but for them being here?

Father MEDINA. Of course, I believe that the local economy and National economy is—they are giving a lot to the local economy and the National economy. They are hard workers.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Thank you.

And Judge?

Ms. SLAUGHTER-HARVEY. Quite the contrary. Hispanics and Latinos in Scott County work hard. They have many skills. But they are not appreciated when it comes to compensation.

The chicken plants where most of them are employed have suffered because no one would take the jobs that they took.

So no, sir, they are not a drain. In fact, just the opposite.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Ms. Quiroz-Lewis.

Ms. QUIROZ-LEWIS. No, sir. One of the things that I witnessed when we accompanied our victims to their bail bond hearing, one of the first things they asked the judge is, can I work—can I go back to work, even until I am asked to leave this country? I just want to work.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. National studies have shown that those persons who are part of the immigrant community have lower crime rates than the general population and some of it has to do with the fact that they want to stay out of the view of the constabulary.

Have you found that the crime rate in the community has been higher, just based on your anecdotal evidence, Attorney Johnson?

Mr. JOHNSON. I think the crime rate in this community is exceedingly low. You will hear from Sheriff Lee, who will confirm that.

One of the troubling things, as you know, Congressman Green, is they are so concerned about being caught up in the system that they under report when they themselves are victims of crimes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Let me just move quickly.

If you agree with Mr. Johnson—Attorney Johnson—would you kindly just extend the hand into the air so that I can build a record?

Let the record reflect that all of the persons on the panel have agreed that the crime rate is low.

Let me close with this. I appreciate what you do as persons associated with NGO's, various community organizations. This is not going to be easy. But what you are doing today will make it better for us to do something to make a change.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The gentleman yields back.

[Applause.]

Chairman THOMPSON. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Memphis, Tennessee, for 5 minutes.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I would like to commend your representative here. Representative Thompson is most respected in Washington. He is Chairman of an important committee and his holding this hearing is important. I appreciate him inviting me here.

I also want to reference, you know, it is not necessarily a derision when he said that he thinks of Memphis as being a part of Mississippi.

Mississippi has given us many of our greatest cultural artists who have left Mississippi—Elvis and B.B. King and a lot of others have left Mississippi for Memphis. Mississippi has given Memphis many of its finest citizens and we have given DeSoto County some of our worst.

[Laughter.]

Mr. COHEN. Memphis is known in song as “Memphis in the Meanwhile” of John Hiatt or “Long Distance Information, Get Me Memphis, Tennessee.” Mississippi, I can only think of Nina Simone. But Nina Simone was thinking of an old Mississippi that Judge Slaughter-Harvey remembers.

Judge Slaughter-Harvey, is that connection with the old Mississippi that Nina Simone sang of similar to what we have with immigrants, that there are efforts by—in this State that are antagonistic toward others—toward people of color?

Ms. SLAUGHTER-HARVEY. I would say that if not the same maybe a little worse. It is really disheartening to look at some of the officials who are responsible for guaranteeing basic rights and notice how they look at the immigrants, how they treat them, and how they speak to them.

I can identify with the disrespect and the inhumanity because I was treated in a similar way but not nearly as bad. I knew my rights as an American citizen. These individuals don’t know their rights.

I could demand my rights. I could fight. They can’t. So I could protect myself. They can’t.

Mr. COHEN. Let me remind everyone of the fact that on June—well, it wasn’t June, it was April 5, 2018 there was a raid in Bean Station, Tennessee, which at the time was the largest workplace raid in our Nation in nearly a decade, and it was so similar to this one it is eerie.

I have my notes from a hearing we had concerning that. We wrote Secretary Nielsen, probably to deaf ears, and Commissioner Kautter and it was similar with the way the children were treated—they were traumatized—and the actions, and the fact that the employer was not arrested. This was a meat processing plant. But the employer was not arrested but the employees were.

It makes me think that what this was—what did Tennessee—Mr. Johnson, you said why Mississippi. I suspect why Mississippi and why Tennessee is because this is red meat—red meat—that Trump is throwing to his base to say, look, I am for you, and it is why—

Mr. JOHNSON, do you think that might have been why it happened here?

Mr. JOHNSON. I certainly believe that might have been why it happened here because there is no other good explanation, Congressman Cohen.

There has not been any sense in Mississippi that we are at risk in any way, that our communities are endangered in any way. So what else might it be but the dictates of an administration that hasn’t learned the lessons of history, that when you round up peo-

ple based on the color of their skin or their country of origin, we always look back in horror and shame.

Mr. COHEN. You mentioned the previous U.S. Attorney. Was that an Obama appointee?

Mr. JOHNSON. It was an acting U.S. Attorney who had begun at the end of the Bush administration and then was carried over into the beginning of the Obama administration.

Mr. COHEN. Bush is starting to look pretty good.

[Laughter.]

Mr. JOHNSON. I have said that more than once, to my surprise.

[Laughter.]

Mr. COHEN. You know, I am sorry of what occurred here and it is similar to what happened in Tennessee, and I think it is a de-meaning of America.

The economy here, and Father Medina, you might know, or Ms. Lewis—I don't know, but in Morristown, Tennessee, which is far to the east, this hurt the economy of Morristown.

Has this hurt the economy here in Mississippi as well?

Ms. QUIROZ-LEWIS. Yes.

Father MEDINA. Yes.

Ms. QUIROZ-LEWIS. Very much so.

Mr. COHEN. It has?

Ms. QUIROZ-LEWIS. Yes, sir.

Mr. COHEN. The policy of this administration is to use these raids, theoretically, to deter immigration along our Southern Border.

Does this, do you believe, in any way at all diminish the people in Central America who want a better place to not come here?

Mr. JOHNSON.

Mr. JOHNSON. They are driven by the human spirit and I don't think anything is going to stop the effort to better your situation and help your children.

Mr. COHEN. So you don't think they read the Jackson Clarion Ledger down there in Guatemala?

[Laughter.]

Mr. JOHNSON. Or paid any attention to it.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back.

Let me thank our panel of witnesses. You have been excellent. I will allow a Member who might have another question if they want.

But let me make a couple comments. You know, a lot of the people who ICE detained never got a—never got their check, and we have been struggling, trying to make sure that wherever those individuals are, they should have received a paycheck.

So we have been working the various agencies to try to make sure that that happens. One of the things we hear around the country is that companies take the lost wages and keep them, and so the families never receive the checks.

So we are trying to work with local officials to make sure that those families, in fact, receive whatever earnings that they were due, and that is a challenge.

The other thing is because we are a nation of laws, we can treat people better than what these raids signify and I think this hearing is trying to elevate that.

I have, for the record, it cost—this is the—it cost \$478,000 to conduct that 1-day raid. That is a significant amount of money.

We are still trying to get some of the other costs. But those are dead salary costs that it cost for that raid. That is a lot of money, and we think that while the people were doing their job, that discretion, because I have seen businesses that are no longer open because their customers are no longer around, and that is part of that economic concern that Congressman Green talked about, and others.

So I think if the individuals impacted have not been a threat to the community, then the community should have been engaged in whatever you did.

So we will hear in our next panel of witnesses what actually took place. I look forward to it.

Any other questions?

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, if I could just ask Mr. Johnson, does he have a record of how many children are still separated from their parents.

Either Ms. Quiroz-Lewis or Mr. Johnson, do you have any knowledge?

Mr. JOHNSON. We have attempted to come up with a number, Congresswoman. We think the number of children affected overall exceeds 1,500 children.

Many children may have one parent present but another parent is still incarcerated, detained, as Ms. Quiroz recognized.

Chairman THOMPSON. There is an outstanding letter to ICE asking for that.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So we will get to ask that again. Do you have any numbers?

Ms. QUIROZ-LEWIS. Yes. No numbers, but we have several families that we are working with and it just complicate things so much because they are American citizens—these children—and then trying to reunite them if they get deported causes a myriad of problems. So there is just a lot of suffering still.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. Let me thank the panel.

Mr. Johnson, do you want a closing statement?

Mr. JOHNSON. If I may add one thing.

I think we would be remiss, all of us would be, if we didn't recognize that we are part of a larger coalition—the Mississippi Immigration Coalition.

It is dangerous to attempt to list everyone but I think, your Honor—Congressman Thompson—it is important for everyone to recognize the hard work of organizations like MIRA, Bill Chandler, and Patricia Ice who have worked in this field for a very long time; El Pueblo Mississippi, the Mississippi Center for Justice, the Southern Poverty Law Center, ACLU, SEIRN, FWD.us, the clinics at Ole Miss Law School, Bob Hildreth, who gave generously to our bond fund. We spent over \$400,000 of privately-raised money to try to bond out at this point about 60 people; Catholic Charities of the Jackson diocese, the faith communities from these communities

and countless, countless volunteers who have gotten nothing back from this and who are still compelled to work.

This has been a huge effort and we are not equipped to handle this. We are doing the best we can, but it has been a team effort and I wanted to mention those organizations.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

Let me thank our panel of witnesses again. Your testimony will be included in the record. The record will be kept open for 10 days. So you might have some questions and we ask that you get back to us with your answers.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Chairman THOMPSON. We are now going to ask our second panel of witnesses to please come forward.

[Pause.]

Chairman THOMPSON. We are going to start our second panel of witnesses. I welcome the second panel of witnesses.

Our first witness, Mr. Jere Miles, is a special agent in charge of the New Orleans Field Office for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement of the Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. Miles has worked with ICE Homeland Security Investigations for over 10 years and has a impressive record. Welcome.

Next, we have the Honorable Michael Lee, who currently serves as a sheriff for Scott County, Mississippi. The sheriff's law enforcement duties include keeping the peace within the county in addition to serving as the county's jailer and keeping a jail docket. He currently lives in Forest, Mississippi. Welcome.

Last, Dr. William Trully serves as the mayor of Canton, Mississippi. Canton was 1 of the 6 cities where the site of an ICE raid on August 7. He was elected to office in 2017 but began working in the public interest at the age of 16. He is accompanied at the table with the superintendent of Canton Public Schools, one of the districts located.

Without objections, the witnesses' full statement will be inserted in the record.

I now ask each witness to summarize his or her statement for about 5 minutes, beginning with Mr. Miles.

**STATEMENT OF JERE T. MILES, SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE,
HOMELAND SECURITY INVESTIGATIONS, IMMIGRATION AND
CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND
SECURITY**

Mr. MILES. Chairman Thompson, distinguished Members of the committee, thank you for opportunity to be here before you.

Chairman THOMPSON. Hit your mic.

Mr. MILES. I am sorry. Sorry about that, sir.

Chairman Thompson and distinguished Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss HSI's work site enforcement strategy, which consists of a 3-pronged approach: Enforcement, criminal arrest of employers, administrative arrest of employees, compliance, Form I-9 employment eligibility verification inspections, civil fines, and suspension and debarment, and outreach of the ICE Mutual Agreement between Government and Employers program.

Homeland Security Investigations is the Department's primary criminal investigative agency and it is focused on disrupting and dismantling transnational criminal organizations.

As the sole investigative agency, we combine customs and immigration authorities. HSI investigates and enforces more than 400 Federal criminal statutes that protect our Nation's trade, travel, financial, and immigration systems.

HSI special agents use this authority to investigate all types of cross-border criminal activity and work in close coordination with our Federal, State, local, Tribal, and international partners in a unified enforcement strategy to secure the United States.

Today, I would like to speak about our successful efforts in conducting targeted law enforcement operations. We do not conduct raids, sweeps, or checkpoints. Any such reports create panic and place communities and law enforcement personnel in unnecessary danger.

Groups falsely reporting such activities are doing a disservice to those they claim to support.

HSI utilizes Form I-9 inspections across a wide spectrum of industries throughout the United States. HSI refers for suspension and debarment from Federal Government contracting individuals and businesses that commit serious, criminal, or civil offenses or engage in fraud or other seriously improper conduct.

The ICE Mutual Agreement between Government and Employers program is a voluntary partnership with the private sector that offers training to strengthen the integrity of employers' work forces and curb employment of unauthorized workers.

The IMAGE program seeks to promote principles of ethical business conduct and prevent the deliberate hiring of unauthorized workers through employers' self-governance.

As ethical and diligent employers begin to adopt the IMAGE best practices, HSI will be able to more efficiently enhance its focus on unscrupulous employers and egregious violators of the Nation's immigration laws.

HSI prioritizes its criminal work site enforcement investigations by focus on the most egregious violators, which include employers that mistreat or exploit their workers based upon their unlawful status, aid in the smuggling of their alien work force into the United States, create false identity documents or facilitate document fraud, utilize unauthorized workers as a business model, and/or knowingly and willfully hire unauthorized workers.

HSI continues to prioritize the protection of our Nation's critical infrastructures and key resource sectors and industries by ensuring that unauthorized workers do not have access to sensitive facilities or information.

On August 7, 2019, HSI executed 8 Federal criminal search warrants and 7 Federal civil search warrants. These warrants were the result of an approximately 18-month investigation that was initiated pursuant to tip line leads against the companies involved.

Today, I will attempt to explain it in the time allotted to me. HSI worked diligently to develop a comprehensive plan to address the concerns that came out of previous activities of this size or nature.

HSI conducted coordination meetings first on a biweekly and later a weekly basis among all of our participating partners as well

as ICE enforcement and removal operations leading up to the execution of the operation.

Each search location was given its own supervisory group to manage detention decisions at a local level to minimize the detention period of those determined to be amenable to some type of humanitarian release.

There were 32 such cases to include 9 minors that self-identified on scene. HSI preassigned personnel to make phone calls to the impacted schools after the operations began.

We also set up a friends and family telephone hotline, which provided custody information to relatives and friends of individuals who were detained in connection with this enforcement operation. This hotline provided information to 343 callers.

HSI has dedicated more than 24,000 investigative hours to this case, seized more than 850,000 documents, 61 digital devices, and more than 22 terabytes of data.

To date, there are 119 indictments for criminal activities and the identification of more than 400 individuals using previously-issued Social Security Numbers. That is ID theft.

These investigations continue. I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you and share HSI's efforts to conduct targeted work site enforcement actions and discuss our continued commitment to utilize our full complement of authorities.

I thank you for the support you provide HSI as we execute our mission and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Miles follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JERE T. MILES

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2019

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished Members: Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations' (HSI) worksite enforcement strategy, which consists of a 3-pronged approach. We utilize: (1) Enforcement (criminal arrests of employers and administrative arrests of employees); (2) compliance (Form I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification inspections, civil fines, and suspension and debarment); and (3) outreach (the ICE Mutual Agreement between Government and Employers program).

As the largest investigative agency within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), ICE HSI investigates and enforces more than 400 Federal criminal statutes to include criminal provisions found within the Immigration and Nationality Act under Title 8 and U.S. customs laws under Title 19, as well as general Federal crimes under Title 18, and the Controlled Substances Act under Title 21. HSI Special Agents use this authority to investigate all types of cross-border criminal activity and work in close coordination with our Federal, State, local, Tribal, and international partners in a unified interior enforcement strategy to secure the United States.

Today, I would like to assure you that ICE HSI conducts targeted law enforcement operations. Any reports of arbitrary enforcement actions create panic and place communities and law enforcement personnel in unnecessary danger. Any groups falsely reporting such activities are doing a disservice to those they claim to support.

INTRODUCTION TO WORKSITE ENFORCEMENT/INTERIOR ENFORCEMENT

On November 6, 1986, President Reagan signed into law the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, creating both a path to legalization for many individuals in the country unlawfully, and employer sanctions provisions prohibiting the knowing employment and hiring of unauthorized aliens. It also required verification of worker identity and employment eligibility to reduce employment as a motivating factor for future illegal immigration. The employer sanctions provisions further

changed with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1990 and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. ICE HSI has devoted considerable resources to bringing administrative sanctions against unscrupulous employers and arresting and administratively removing undocumented workers once these workers are subject to a final order of removal. In 2007, ICE HSI modified its strategy to incorporate criminal investigations and prosecution of unscrupulous employers or employers who commit egregious violations, and in some cases, seizure of assets derived from unlawful employment schemes. ICE HSI continues to use this strategy, utilizing a 3-pronged approach of enforcement, compliance, and outreach. Interior enforcement, including workplace enforcement, is inherently tied to border security and without a sustained and focused worksite enforcement effort that addresses the pull factor of illegal employment, our ability to change the paradigm of border security will be limited.

Enforcement

ICE HSI prioritizes its criminal worksite enforcement investigations by focusing on the most egregious violators, which include employers that mistreat or exploit their workers based upon their unlawful status, aid in the smuggling of their alien workforce into the United States, create false identity documents or facilitate document fraud, utilize unauthorized workers as a business model, and/or knowingly and willfully hire unauthorized workers. ICE HSI continues to prioritize the protection of our Nation's critical infrastructures and key resource sectors and industries by ensuring that unauthorized workers do not have access to sensitive facilities or information. Presidential Policy Directive 21 identifies 16 critical infrastructure sectors: Chemical; Commercial Facilities; Communications; Critical Manufacturing; Dams; Defense Industrial Base; Emergency Services; Energy; Financial Services; Food and Agriculture; Government Facilities; Healthcare and Public Health; Information Technology; Nuclear Reactors, Materials and Waste; Transportation Systems; and Water and Wastewater Systems.

Compliance

Employers are required by law to verify the identity and employment eligibility of all new hires and to attest that to the best of their knowledge, their employees are authorized to work in the United States. To ensure that employers are complying with the law, ICE HSI utilizes Form I-9 inspections across a wide spectrum of industries throughout the United States. ICE HSI refers for suspension and debarment from Federal Government contracting individuals and businesses that commit serious criminal or civil offenses, or engage in fraud or other seriously improper conduct. A debarment period is proportionate to the seriousness of the offense and is generally for a period of 3 years. Longer periods can be imposed in cases where there is egregious misconduct. Individuals and businesses subject to suspension and debarment are excluded from doing business/participating with the Federal Government, acting as representatives or agents of other contractors, and as individual sureties.

Outreach

The ICE Mutual Agreement between Government and Employers (IMAGE) Program is a voluntary partnership with the private sector that offers training to strengthen the integrity of employers' workforces and curb employment of unauthorized workers. The IMAGE program seeks to promote principles of ethical business conduct and prevent the deliberate hiring of unauthorized workers through employer self-governance. As ethical and diligent employers begin to adopt the IMAGE best practices, ICE HSI will be able to more efficiently enhance its focus on unscrupulous employers and egregious violators of the Nation's immigration laws. Employers who sign an IMAGE agreement are deemed certified upon completion of these requirements: Enrolling in E-Verify; establishing a written hiring and employment eligibility verification policy to include internal Form I-9 audits at least once per year; and submitting to a Form I-9 inspection.

STAKEHOLDERS AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

ICE HSI works closely with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Department of Justice, Immigrant and Employee Rights Section to discuss and resolve issues that affect each other's authorities, policies, and guidance. This strong working relationship allows the agencies to informally and proactively find common-sense solutions to complex worksite enforcement issues. ICE HSI also provides presentations to non-Government entities (e.g., American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), trade associations, grower associations, State and local government agencies, civic groups, and labor organizations). ICE HSI disseminates important in-

formation on changes to the law or policy and our current worksite enforcement efforts. ICE HSI believes that these presentations promote transparency, provide clarity of our mission and foster trust and confidence regarding our worksite enforcement efforts.

THE MISSISSIPPI INVESTIGATION

On August 7, 2019, ICE HSI executed 8 Federal criminal search warrants and 7 Federal civil search warrants. These warrants were the result of approximately 18 months of investigation that was initiated pursuant to several Tip Line leads against the companies involved. It was during the execution of these search warrants that ICE HSI detained 680 unauthorized aliens and encountered 18 that were determined to be minors (less than 18 years of age) who were released as soon as their age was verified.

ICE HSI worked very hard to develop a comprehensive plan to address the concerns that came out of previous activities of this size or nature. ICE HSI conducted coordination meetings—first on a biweekly and later a weekly basis, among all of our participating State and local law enforcement partners, as well as, ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) leading up to the execution of the operation. Each search location was given its own supervisory group to manage detention decisions at a local level to minimize the detention period of those determined to be amenable to some type of humanitarian release, such as the minors that were identified on scene; there were 32 such cases. ICE HSI pre-assigned personnel to make phone calls to the impacted schools after the operations began and as detainees advised of the existence of their children or families. We also set up a friends and family Telephone Hotline, which provided custody information to relatives and friends of individuals who were detained in connection with this enforcement operation. This hotline provided information to 343 callers.

In all, ICE HSI dedicated more than 24,000 investigative hours to this case, and seized more than 850,000 documents and 61 digital devices with more than 22 terabytes of data. To date, there are 119 indictments for criminal activities and the identification and interview of 8 victims of identity theft (unauthorized aliens were using SSNs belonging to the victims). These investigations continue.

CONCLUSION

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your continued support of ICE HSI and its law enforcement mission. ICE HSI is committed to conducting these enforcement operations every day in locations around the country as part of the agency's on-going efforts to protect the Nation, uphold public safety, and protect the integrity of our immigration laws and border security. The men and women of ICE HSI conduct themselves with the utmost professionalism and integrity as they execute their duties. Those we encounter will continue to be treated humanely and respectfully.

I appreciate your interest in this important issue and look forward to your questions.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you for your testimony.

I now recognize Sheriff Lee to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MIKE LEE, SHERIFF, SCOTT COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

Sheriff LEE. Mr. Chairman and Members of this committee, it is an honor and a privilege to be invited to appear before you to discuss the recent immigration enforcement actions in Scott County.

I am Mike Lee. I am sheriff of Scott County. I have been since 2007. I previously served as chief of police for the city of Forest for 10 years and have nearly 30 years of law enforcement career enforcement.

I have lived in Scott County all my life. As the highest-ranked law enforcement officer in Scott County, I am responsible for policing our entire county.

For a perspective of our county, Scott County is east of our capital city, Jackson. The county has approximately 28,000 residents.

The most recent Census data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau states that approximately 11.5 percent of our citizens identify as Latino.

We have had Latino workers in Scott County since the 1990's. Cook Foods employs over 3,000 people, some of which are immigrants. Latinos constitute a large work force in Scott County and are important to our economy.

Those workers have become a part of our community. Their children attend local schools and participate in local sports. The feedback I have received from our citizens is that folks admire Latino communities—our Latino community's work ethic and their commitment to family.

In my role of sheriff, I do not believe Latino workers present a danger to our community. I base that on the fact that I have not seen a spike in crime as a result of Latino individuals living and working in our county.

Currently, my jail, the Scott County Detention Center, is holding approximately 125 inmates. Only 3 of those 125 inmates identify as Latino and 1 of those 3 is actually a Scott County resident.

This, in my opinion, is the best evidence of the lack of impact Latino workers have had on Scott County's criminal justice system.

Simply put, the Scott County Sheriff's Department has not had problems with the Latino community.

I previously mentioned Cook Foods. Cook is one of Scott County's largest employers. On August 7, 2019, of course, Cook Foods was one of the plants in the State of Mississippi Federal immigration officials raided.

Nearly 250 employees were arrested at Cook Foods by immigration officers.

First, let me say that as sheriff, I swore an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the constitution of the State of Mississippi.

I stand behind our Federal officers and in no way am I criticizing the hard work of enforcing our immigration laws. However, I feel that the actions on this day could have been handled better had my agency been prepared in advance.

My office had no notice of the raid and, therefore, was taken by surprise. After the raids, my office, the school system, local citizens, all had to step up to care for many of the children whose parents were arrested.

Children of those arrested had nowhere to go for hours once school let out. The first parents to return to Scott County did not arrive until 11 p.m. that night.

Thanks to our schools, local citizens that included my wife and daughter, and my department, we were able to care for those children during the interim.

However, forewarning of the action or while the action was fore-going would have allowed my office to be better prepared for the problems left in the wake of the raid.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this morning.
[The prepared statement of Sheriff Lee follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MIKE LEE

NOVEMBER 7, 2019

Mr. Chairman and Members of this committee, it is an honor and a privilege to be invited to appear before you to discuss the recent immigration enforcement actions in Scott County. I am Mike Lee, the Sheriff of Scott County and been sheriff since 2007. I previously served as chief of police for the city of Forest for 10 years and I have nearly 30 years as a career law enforcement officer. I have lived in Scott County all of my life. As the highest-ranked law enforcement officer in the county, I am responsible for policing the entirety of Scott County.

For perspective, Scott County is east of our capitol city Jackson. The county has approximately 28,000 residents. The most recent census data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau states that approximately 11.5 percent of our citizens identify as Latino.

We have had Latino workers in Scott County since the 1990's. Koch Food employs over 3,000 people some of which are immigrants. Latinos constitute a large work force in Scott County and are important to our economy. Those workers have become a part of the community in Scott County. Their children attend local schools and participate in local sports. The feedback I have received from Scott County citizens is that folks admire our Latino communities work ethic and commitment to family.

In my role as sheriff, I do not believe Latino workers present a danger to our community. I base that on the fact that I have not seen any spike in crime as a result of Latino individuals living and working in Scott County.

Currently, my jail is holding approximately 125 inmates. Only 3 of those 125 inmates identify as Latino and 1 of those 3 is a Scott County resident. This, in my opinion, is the best evidence of the lack of impact Latino workers have had on the Scott County's criminal justice system. Simply put, the Scott County Sheriff's Department has not had problems with the Latino community.

I previously mentioned Koch Foods. Koch is one of Scott County's largest employers. On August 7, 2019, Koch Foods was one of the plants in the State of Mississippi that Federal immigration officials "raided". Nearly 250 employees were arrested at Koch Food by immigration officers.

First, let me say that as sheriff of Scott County, I swore an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the constitution of the State of Mississippi. I stand behind our Federal officers and in no way am I criticizing their hard work enforcing our immigration laws. However, I feel that the action could have been handled better had my agency been prepared in advance.

My office had no notice of the "raid" and, therefore, was taken by surprise. After the raids, my office, the school system, and local citizens had to step in to care for many of the children whose parents were arrested. Children of those arrested had nowhere to go for hours once school let out. The first parents to return to Scott County did not arrive until 11 o'clock PM. Thanks to our schools, local citizens which included my wife and daughter and my department, we were able to care for those children during the interim. However, forewarning of the action would have allowed my office to better prepare to handle the problems left in the wake of the raid.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this morning.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Chairman THOMPSON. The Chair recognizes Dr. Truly for his statement for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF WILLIAM TRULY, JR., MAYOR, CANTON,
MISSISSIPPI**

Dr. TRULY. My name is William Truly, practicing physician and mayor of the city of Canton. I certainly want to recognize Congressman Lee and thank you for all of the good deeds that you have done not just for the State of Mississippi, for this Nation.

Congressman Thompson, we are aware of your contributions to this Nation, and Congressman Green and Congressman Cohen, we thank you for being here, here in our State.

I have with me today, who is not testifying but who is with me, the superintendent of schools of the Canton Public School District, Mr. Gary Hannah. I also have with me my chief of police, Mr. Otha Brown and I also have with me my fire chief, Mr. Kenneth Pierce.

What happened on the day of the raid was supposed to have been a surreptitious clandestine act perpetrated by ICE. I want to take you back to August 7, 2019, when without warning, notice, or acknowledgement, ICE invaded the city of Canton and raided Peco Poultry for the purpose of identifying and documenting undocumented immigrants who work at Peco Foods.

There were 7 poultry industries in the State of Mississippi that were raided by ICE for the purpose of accomplishing an intended mission.

As the mayor of the city of Canton, I was never noticed or informed about the preplans an imminent raid of one of our businesses here in the city of Canton.

My discovery was accidental, as a consequence of a citizen informing me that ICE was on Fulton Street at Peco's, carrying workers away by handcuffs and who were transported to the National Guard Armory in Flowood, Mississippi.

I approached one of the ICE officers and introduced myself as the mayor of the city of Canton and requested to speak with whomever was in charge for the purpose of trying to understand and assess what was occurring in my city.

It was at that time I was able to visualize only Hispanic workers being placed on buses for the purpose of being transported to a site, which was unknown to me at that time.

To my knowledge, no African-American workers were arrested or transported. My chief of police, Otha Brown, the superintendent of education, Gary Hannah, and the director of the Department of Human Services were never informed.

It is my understanding that at the time that the raid took place that some of the individuals were documented with appropriate papers.

This was the first day of school and the children of these individuals who were arrested and transported to an unknown site to be processed—the children were still in school and the children returned home not knowing that their parents had been arrested.

The Hispanic population in the city of Canton are not gang members. They are not rapists. They are not murderers, but folks who work and pay taxes, purchase goods, take care of each other and their families.

It is my understanding that at Pecos Foods there were at least 125 to 130 Hispanic employees who were arrested that resulted in an acute loss of 125 to 130 Pecos workers.

I do not know the economic loss to Pecos nor do I know the economic loss or impact of this raid to the city of Canton. But I do know that it was an economic impact.

Throughout the State of Mississippi there were 7 poultry industries that were raided, 680 people arrested. Thirty of those were released.

This was a terrifying moment for those individuals who weren't arrested that included the separation of parents from children, it

is my understanding that nothing was in place for the children of the arrestees to be safe, protected, and secured.

No social services, including DHS, were noticed or placed on notice to target children who were going to be separated from their parents.

I am of the opinion that when ICE raids or invades a community or a target in that community, at least the mayor and the governing authorities, the chief of police, the superintendent of schools, and the director of human services should be placed on notice.

It was a terrifying experience for the arrestees and a puzzling experience for me and for my community.

Congressman Cohen talked about Nina Simone. A lot of people in here are too young to remember Nina Simone. But when she was talking about that record "Mississippi Goddam" she was talking about *Plessy v. Ferguson* as well as the *Board of Education—Brown v. the Board of Education*.

She was talking about the Little Rock Nine. She was talking about mayors being blocked out of the University of Mississippi. She was talking about Schwerner, Goodman, and Chaney.

She was talking about the atrocities of humanity and man's inhumanity to man. She was talking about brutality and apartheid during the days of yesteryear.

You asked the question, "Have things changed?" I hope so.

I thank all of you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Truly follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLIAM TRULY, JR.

NOVEMBER 7, 2019

On August 7, 2019 without warning, notice, or acknowledgment, ICE had invaded the city of Canton and raided PECO Poultry for the purpose of identifying and documenting undocumented immigrants who worked at PECO foods. There were 7 poultry industries in the State of Mississippi that were raided by ICE for the purpose of accomplishing an intended mission. As the Mayor of the city of Canton I was never noticed, or informed about the pre-plans and imminent raid of one of our businesses here in the city of Canton. My discovery was accidental as a consequence of a citizen informing me that ICE was on Fulton Street at PECO poultry carrying workers away by handcuffs and who were transported to the National Guard Armory in Flowood, MS. I approached one of the ICE officers and introduced myself as Mayor of the City and requested to speak with whomever was in charge for the purpose of trying to understand and assess what was occurring in my city. It was at that time I was able to visualize only Hispanic workers being placed on buses for the purpose of being transported to a site which was unknown to me at that time. To my knowledge, no African American workers were arrested or transported. My Chief of Police Otha Brown, the Superintendent of Education Gary Hannah and the director of the department of human services were never informed. It is my understanding that at the time that the raid took place that some of the individuals were documented with the appropriate papers. This was the first day of school and the children of these individuals who were arrested and transported to an unknown site to be processed were still in school and returned home not knowing that their parents had been arrested. The Hispanic population in the city of Canton are not gang members, rapist, or murderers, but folks who work, pay taxes, purchase goods, take care of each other and their families. It is my understanding that at PECO Foods there were at least 125 to 130 Hispanic employees who were arrested that resulted in an acute loss of 125 to 130 PECO workers. I do not know the economic lost to PECO's nor do I know the economic lost or impact of this raid to the city of Canton. Throughout the State of Mississippi there were 7 poultry industries that were raided, 680 people arrested, and 300 of those were released. This was a terrifying moment for those individuals who were arrested that included the separation of parents from children. It is my understanding that nothing was in place for the

children of the arrestees to be safe, protected, and secured. No social services, including DHS, were placed on notice to target children who were going to be separated from their parents. I am of the opinion that when ICE raids or invades a community and/or a target in that community at least the mayor and the governing authorities, chief of police, the superintendent of schools, and the director of department of human services should be placed on notice. It was a terrifying experience for the arrestees and a puzzling experience for me as the mayor and for this community.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Chairman THOMPSON. I yield myself 5 minutes for questioning. Sheriff Lee, your testimony was as a chief law enforcement official in Scott County you received no advanced notice of the ICE raids we are talking about here.

Sheriff LEE. No, sir. I received no advanced notice nor did I receive any notice while the raids were continuing.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you.

Mayor, your testimony as the mayor of Canton that your conversation with the superintendent of education and your chief of police and fire chief, that there was no notification.

Dr. TRULY. That is correct, sir.

Chairman THOMPSON. So Mr. Miles, what does the policy for ICE say about notification?

Mr. MILES. To be honest with you, Mr. Chairman, we don't have a policy that says we are obligated to notify anyone.

Chairman THOMPSON. So I want to enter into the record a letter from Matthew Albence, who is deputy director, senior official performing duties as director for ICE, and let me tell you what he said in his letter of September 7.

He said the school districts contacted during this operation include Covington, Jasper, Jones, Wayne, Lauderdale, Smith, Newton, Scott, Madison, Rankin, Clarke, Quitman, Leake, Laurel, and Forrest Counties.

So somebody is wrong.

[Laughter.]

Chairman THOMPSON. I will enter this into the record.

[The information follows:]

Office of the Director

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
500 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20536



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

SEP 17 2019

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman
House Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson:

Thank you for your August 9, 2019 letter to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) regarding the worksite enforcement operations conducted in Mississippi on August 7, 2019.

ICE is responsible for upholding the laws enacted by Congress. Among them is the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which requires employers to verify the identity and employment authorization of all individuals they hire. These laws help protect jobs for U.S. citizens and others who are lawfully employed, eliminate unfair competitive advantages for companies that hire an illegal workforce, prevent exploitation of workers, and strengthen public safety and national security.

ICE uses a three-pronged approach when conducting worksite enforcement operations: 1) compliance, through I-9 inspections, civil fines, and referrals for debarment; 2) enforcement, through the criminal arrest of employers and the administrative arrest of unauthorized workers; and 3) outreach, through the ICE Mutual Agreement between Government and Employers program to instill a culture of compliance and accountability.

On August 7, 2019, the ICE Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) office in Jackson, Mississippi, conducted a worksite enforcement operation at multiple locations within their area of responsibility. This operation began well over one year ago, based on information received indicating that multiple companies in the area were knowingly hiring and employing unauthorized workers without proper work authorization. Based on the investigation, probable cause was established to obtain multiple criminal and civil search warrants on seven chicken processing plants. The evidence obtained from these search warrants is currently being reviewed in conjunction with the Department of Justice in pursuance of initiating further criminal charges.

ICE HSI continuously reviews best practices, provides training to its workforce, and updates internal policies with regard to conducting worksite enforcement operations. The 2007

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The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
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guidelines referenced in your letter, which include the use of the Division of Immigration Health Services, are outdated and have been superseded with updated guidelines to ensure humanitarian factors are identified at the earliest possible juncture for individuals who are arrested on administrative charges. These humanitarian factors may include: serious medical conditions that require special attention, pregnant women, nursing mothers, juveniles encountered working at a facility, and persons who are the sole caretakers of minor children or seriously ill relatives. More than 600 officers and agents involved in the operation were provided with operational plans and participated in pre-operational briefings. The operational plan included having an ICE HSI Senior Manager on site at all locations to triage potential humanitarian or emergency situations. Emergency medical services, ICE HSI trained Tactical Medics, and a Victim Witness Coordinator were also available to assist in the operation.

Due to operational security concerns, ICE HSI did not coordinate with social services or any schools prior to this operation. After the execution of the warrants, Michael Hurst, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi, notified Jess H. Dickinson, Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Child Protective Services, of the operation. Additionally, ICE HSI contacted county school districts to confirm enrollment and parentage of the children in question. The school districts contacted during this operation included Covington, Jasper, Jones, Wayne, Lauderdale, Smith, Newton, Scott, Madison, Rankin, Clarke, Quitman, Leake, Laurel, and Forest counties.

During enforcement actions, ICE Directive 11064.2, *Detention and Removal of Alien Parents or Legal Guardians*, instructs ICE personnel to "remain cognizant of the impact enforcement actions may have on a lawful permanent resident or U.S. citizen minor child(ren)." The policy instructs ICE personnel to accommodate, to the extent practicable, an apprehended parent or legal guardian's efforts to arrange for childcare for their minor child(ren), absent any indications of child abuse or neglect. If the parent or guardian is unable to make child care arrangements, or if there is indication of child abuse or neglect, the policy instructs ICE personnel to contact the local child welfare authority or law enforcement agency. ICE HSI established a 24-hour toll-free hotline for family members of those arrested to address questions about their detention location, status, and the removal process. This hotline operated in English and Spanish and was publicized through the ICE Office of Public Affairs. The hotline received a total of 343 calls, all of which were resolved.

ICE HSI made available more than 120 Spanish speaking officers to communicate with the detainees. More than 2,000 meals and 2,000 bottles of water were on site to ensure the detainees had food and water. Subsequent to apprehension, and at multiple points during post-arrest interviews and processing, all detainees were asked if they had children present in Mississippi, who was caring for their children, and if they had a spouse or another parent or guardian who would be able to care for the child in the event the detainee was not released. Of the 680 individuals arrested, 377 were detained and 303 were released. Of the 303 individuals released, 32 (which included 18 juveniles) were released on site due to humanitarian concerns. The additional 271 individuals were processed expeditiously and returned to the point of apprehension in order to be reunited with their child or other dependent. ICE HSI is unaware of any children who were left behind without a caregiver.

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Page 3

Thank you again for your letter. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact the ICE Office of Congressional Relations at (202) 732-4200.

Sincerely,



Matthew T. Albence
Deputy Director and
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director

www.ice.gov

Mr. MILES. But is there a question, Mr. Chairman, because I have a list of all the names we contacted at those school districts.

Chairman THOMPSON. Well, if you have them, you need to provide them to the committee.

Mr. MILES. Then I am more than happy to provide them.

Chairman THOMPSON. So have you—did you contact the Scott County Sheriff's Department?

Mr. MILES. Never said I did, sir. But I did say—

Chairman THOMPSON. Wait. Wait. Hold on.

Mr. MILES. We did say we contacted the school districts.

Chairman THOMPSON. Hold on. Hold on.

Now, I will ask the question. You just answer. All right.

So did you contact the Scott County Sheriff's Department?

Mr. MILES. No, sir. We did not.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you.

Mr. MILES. But we did contact the school districts.

Chairman THOMPSON. Did you contact the Madison County School District?

Mr. MILES. Yes, sir. Assistant Superintendent Ellen Aregood.

Chairman THOMPSON. What about the Canton School District?

Mr. MILES. Canton doesn't seem to be on here. It seems like we only contacted county school districts.

Chairman THOMPSON. So if I told you that Peco Foods is located in the Canton School District—

Mr. MILES. Then I would say it was an oversight.

Chairman THOMPSON. It was an oversight?

Mr. MILES. That is correct.

Chairman THOMPSON. OK. But you did not contact them?

Mr. MILES. On the list that I have, there is no reflection of a Canton School District being contacted.

Chairman THOMPSON. Well, so what social service agencies did you contact?

Mr. MILES. We didn't contact any social service agencies but it was my understanding that the United States Attorney's Office spoke to someone in the social service agency. But I don't remember their name.

Chairman THOMPSON. Who told you that?

Mr. MILES. The United States Attorney.

Chairman THOMPSON. Who? The United States Attorney?

Mr. MILES. Yes, sir. The United States Attorney. He was in our office in Jackson, Mississippi during the day of the raid, the same as me, all day long.

Chairman THOMPSON. So he told you he talked to somebody?

Mr. MILES. Mm-hmm.

Chairman THOMPSON. But you don't know who?

Mr. MILES. I don't remember the name. I don't remember the name that he gave me.

Chairman THOMPSON. So have you gotten any information about the companies who had the individuals employed?

Mr. MILES. I am sorry. What do you mean?

Chairman THOMPSON. Well, in turn, you performed the work site raids?

Mr. MILES. No, sir. I did—we did 8 criminal search warrants and—

Chairman THOMPSON. OK. You were there?

Mr. MILES [continuing]. And you asked me if I got any information about the companies. In my testimony, I entered that we seized 850,000 documents and we seized 22 terabytes of information. That is not needed to prove that people are here illegally, sir.

Chairman THOMPSON. So what is needed?

Mr. MILES. Pardon me?

Chairman THOMPSON. What is needed? If you say that is not needed—

Mr. MILES. That is—that is our investigation against the other—the other allegations in the investigation.

Chairman THOMPSON. What other allegations?

Mr. MILES. The one that you keep alluding to, sir, whether we are investigating a company or not.

Chairman THOMPSON. Well, I am just trying to get to the information.

Mr. MILES. And—

Chairman THOMPSON. Now, I will ask the questions and I hope you will be civil with your response.

Mr. MILES. I am doing the best I can.

Chairman THOMPSON. And you are not doing too good. So—

Mr. MILES. Are you saying that I am lying? Because I—

Chairman THOMPSON. Well, no. I am saying you are not responding. I didn't say you were lying. And so—

Mr. MILES. But you asked me what—you asked me what we got there, sir, and I told you what we got there. I got 850,000 documents.

Chairman THOMPSON. No, look. I will ask the questions—

Mr. MILES. OK.

Chairman THOMPSON [continuing]. And you just answer only when you are asked a question.

Mr. MILES. OK.

Chairman THOMPSON. No editorializing. OK. Thank you.

Sheriff, you have been in Scott County all your life. One of the things we are trying to do with this hearing is determine whether or not the people who were arrested were threats to the community, had they created any problem, and I think your testimony has pretty much said these are good people.

Am I correct?

Sheriff LEE. Yes, sir. The workers that—pretty much let me make sure I am making this clear. But the workers that were taken, primarily if not all—they may have criminal records unknown to me but were good hardworking people.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you.

I yield to the gentlelady from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, thank you so very much and let me thank all the witnesses. Let me thank Mr. Miles, Sheriff Lee—greetings from my sheriff in Houston. I work extensively with law enforcement.

Mayor, of course, let me give greetings from my mayor in Houston, Mayor Sylvester Turner. I know that you all have probably interacted, and thank you for your leadership along with the superintendent.

Let me be very clear. This hearing is not, Mr. Miles, intended to not recognize the legal apparatus of the United States of America dealing with the question of law and immigrants.

We are a Nation of laws and we are a nation of immigrants. But I do want to pointedly try to raise some concerns and I want you to take it in the spirit that I am—have responsibility of oversight, as the Chairman has brought us here for this hearing.

So let me find out, did you find any high-dollar target amongst the 608 persons that you wrapped up and raided?

Mr. MILES. I would ask you to clarify what do you mean by high-dollar target.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Some persons that were involved in major criminal activity, somebody that you had been looking for for decades, years months. You find anybody in that group?

Mr. MILES. To date, no, ma'am. We have not found anybody—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. All right. You released—my time is short—you released about 303 individuals immediately. So that shows that they either had some basis of being able to get out. Is that correct?

Mr. MILES. We released them for humanitarian reasons. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Well, but they—that means that they were not—well, you said even with humanitarian reasons they are too dangerous to release. That was—that was the case. Is that correct?

Mr. MILES. That is correct.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. How long have you been in ICE? How long have been an ICE officer?

Mr. MILES. I have been an ICE officer since its inception in 2003.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So under the Obama administration for 8 years you were able to do your job. Is that correct?

Mr. MILES. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Did you do any—did you do a raid of this type? I know that under the previous administration there were deportations. I am not asking that question. A raid of this type during those 8 years, just you in particular.

Mr. MILES. No, ma'am. Those 8 years I was in Mexico.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. All right. But you did not engage in one—

Mr. MILES. No, not in Mexico.

Ms. JACKSON LEE [continuing]. Whether you were in Mexico or the United States. So this raid came under, as has been indicated, this administration. Didn't get any high-dollar target, used a half a million dollars in 1 day's work almost, as I understand the numbers. Is that correct?

Mr. MILES. It was my understanding that the numbers that we provided were the costs for the total investigation. I would have to go back and look at that.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. But you have to go back.

Now, do you have the precise numbers of children that are still not reunited with their family?

Mr. MILES. No, ma'am. I don't have that number.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Do you realize how indicting that answer is? Do you realize that we who are in this room are parents? I would imagine you might be.

I don't want to project. But you may have relatives, nieces and nephews. But we are looking at families here. For me to sit here as a mother and have the answer that you do not know the answer to the question how many are not yet reunited, let me make an official request. I think the Chairman has already had a letter.

Again, I want to know the numbers of children that are not yet reunited with their family members. Will you provide that to us, sir?

Mr. MILES. I will do everything in my power to get you the number you requested.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me—because of the circumstances, let me thank you so very much.

I promote the working of Federal law enforcement with local law enforcement, Sheriff. How devastating is it for your department out on the streets dealing with protecting this community not to know about this raid?

How devastating, how piercing it is in terms of relationship with your Federal law enforcement, which I know you work with very well?

Sheriff LEE. Yes. We work with all Federal agencies and welcome all Federal agencies in and work well with them, too.

I assume that when these raids were done the need for secrecy was felt to keep them from local law enforcement so that, for lack of better terms, word did not get out, and I understand that.

But if our office could have been notified after these raids or during these raids, we somewhat could have been able to easily handle the situation we had after the schools let out.

I wish I had a monetary amount to know how much Scott County citizens spent with the Sheriff's Department to know how much money we lost trying to make sure that children were in the right places and trying to play catch up.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you.

Doctor, would you, as mayor—we believe in local officials being apprised and respected in our Federal efforts.

What did that do to you in your community and the responsibilities you have as mayor? Everybody calls the mayor.

Dr. TRULY. Well, we have a responsibility to keep people safe. When you have ICE coming in and raiding your community there is always the potentiality for escalation—escalation that perhaps the outcome may not be good.

I am under the impression that our health department, our ambulance, our police chief, our fire chief, and all of those who are—who have an interest in protecting folks need to know that a situation like this has occurred in your town and there is always a risk for a negative outcome.

There is always traffic jams. There are always problems. So I think that we just need to know. I think that—I think that a policy or some kind of guidelines need to be instituted by Congress of letting at least the chief of police know, some kind of—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Do you think the policies, Mayor, were cruel?

Dr. TRULY. Ma'am?

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Do you think the policies were cruel in terms of how mothers—

Dr. TRULY. I think so. I mean, we—it is almost like an agency came and they took over our town.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I am sorry?

Dr. TRULY. It is like an agency came in and took over our town and we didn't know anything about the agency coming in. It is just they came into town without any collaboration, without any corroboration or acknowledgement.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank you, Mayor.

Just, Mr. Miles, did you arrest any companies so far right here in this community? Have you charged any of the employers? Have you charged any of the employers?

Mr. MILES. No, ma'am. To date, we have not charged any of the employers.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. You have not charged any of the employers?

Mr. MILES. No, ma'am.

[Laughter.]

Ms. JACKSON LEE. That warrants me taking off my glasses, Mr. Chairman. I just want to put this in the record. I am concluding. Thank you, sir.

The *Federal Register*—if I could put into the record, the *Federal Register* of July 1, 2019, Mr. Chairman, Volume 84, Number 126, it will evidence that a facility for unaccompanied children in Carrizo, Texas, is empty.

But they have been allotted \$300,800,000 to retain unaccompanied children and they have been allotted \$50 million for the first crunch, and that facility is now empty.

So I just want to contribute that for the concept of the failed policies that we are now putting—having a hearing for.

With that, I yield back. I ask unanimous consent to put it in the record.

Chairman THOMPSON. Without objection.
[The information follows:]

consensus recommendations, under the *Better Respiratory Equipment using Advanced Technologies for Healthcare Employees* project (Project BREATHE), to improve respiratory protective equipment used by healthcare workers. These earlier consensus recommendations will be modified as NIOSH develops the consensus recommendations for the project New Generation PAPRs.

This project seeks to improve respirator tolerability, comfort, and other functional characteristics, while maintaining a level of protection equivalent to or greater than current standards. The design changes contemplated in this project could increase compliance with respiratory protection guidelines and standards among healthcare workers.

John J. Howard,
Director, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[FR Doc. 2019-13958 Filed 6-28-19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4163-15-P

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Administration for Children and Families

[CFDA Number: 93.676]

Announcement of the Intent To Issue One OPDIV-Initiated Supplement to BCFS Health and Human Services Under the Standing Announcement for Residential (Shelter) Services for Unaccompanied Alien Children, HHS-2017-ACF-ORR-ZU-1132

AGENCY: Unaccompanied Alien Children's (UAC) Program, Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
ACTION: Notice of intent to issue one OPDIV-Initiated Supplement to BCFS Health and Human Services, San Antonio, Texas under the UAC Program.

SUMMARY: The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), announces the intent to issue one OPDIV-Initiated Supplement to BCFS Health and Human Services, San Antonio, Texas in the amount of up to \$300,800,000. ORR announces the issuance of the first installment for 60 days in the amount of up to \$50,000,000.

ORR has been identifying additional capacity to provide shelter for potential increases in apprehensions of Unaccompanied Alien Children at the

U.S. Southern Border. Planning for increased shelter capacity is a prudent step to ensure that ORR is able to meet its responsibility, by law, to provide shelter for Unaccompanied Alien Children referred to its care by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

To ensure sufficient capacity to provide shelter to unaccompanied alien children referred to HHS, ORR is requesting that BCFS provide up to 1,300 temporary shelter beds at Carrizo Springs, Texas over a graduated timeframe.

DATES: Supplemental award funds will support activities until January 31, 2020. The first installment will support activities for 60 days.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephen Antkowiak, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Division of Unaccompanied Alien Children Operations, 330 C Street SW, Washington, DC 20201. Phone: 202-260-6165. Email: stephen.antkowiak@acf.hhs.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: ORR is continuously monitoring its capacity to shelter the unaccompanied alien children referred to HHS, as well as the information received from interagency partners, to inform any future decisions or actions.

ORR has specific requirements for the provision of services. Award recipients must have the infrastructure, licensing, experience, and appropriate level of trained staff to meet these requirements. The expansion of the existing program and its services through this supplemental award is a key strategy for ORR to be prepared to meet its responsibility to provide shelter for Unaccompanied Alien Children referred to its care by DHS and so that the U.S. Border Patrol can continue its vital national security mission to prevent illegal migration, trafficking, and protect the borders of the United States.

Statutory Authority: This program is authorized by:

(A) Section 462 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, which in March 2003, transferred responsibility for the care and custody of Unaccompanied Alien Children from the Commissioner of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to the Director of ORR of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

(B) The Flores Settlement Agreement, Case No. CV85-4544RJK (C.D. Cal. 1996), as well as the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-457), which authorizes post release services under certain

conditions to eligible children. All programs must comply with the Flores Settlement Agreement, Case No. CV85-4544-RJK (C.D. Cal. 1996), pertinent regulations and ORR policies and procedures.

Karen Shields,
Senior Grants Policy Specialist, Division of Grants Policy, Office of Administration.
[FR Doc. 2019-13992 Filed 6-26-19; 4:15 pm]

BILLING CODE 4164-45-P

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Administration for Community Living

Intent To Award a Single-Source Supplement for the National Center for Benefits Outreach and Enrollment

ACTION: Notice.

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) announces the intent to award a single-source supplemental to the current cooperative agreement held by the National Council on Aging (NCOA) for the National Center for Benefits Outreach and Enrollment (NCBOE). The purpose of the NCBOE is to provide technical assistance to states, area agencies on aging, and service providers to provide outreach and low-income benefits enrollment assistance, particularly to older individuals with greatest economic need for federal and state programs. The administrative supplement for FY 2019 will be for \$390,861, bringing the total award for FY 2019 to \$11,390,861. With this supplemental funding, NCOA will develop specialized training and tools around integrated care models that can be used by SHIPs, MIPPA grantees, and other partners of ACL like Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) to expand the NCBOE's outreach and education efforts targeting older adults with the greatest economic need. This includes reaching out to current MIPPA grantees to evaluate their needs and to determine what the grantees believe would be helpful and conducting other stakeholder group meetings(s) to discuss what should be created around these integrated care models. Stakeholders could include MIPPA and other ACL grantees, health plans, CMS, and other non-federal partners. Additionally, NCOA will continue, expand, and complete the work they are currently undertaking with the NCBOE award without disrupting services.

Chairman THOMPSON. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MILES, would you, for the record, just state your official title, please?

Mr. MILES. Yes, sir. I am the special agent in charge for Homeland Security Investigations out of New Orleans, Louisiana.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. How long have you held this post, please?

Mr. MILES. Since 2018. March 4 was my official date of report.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. As it relates to this raid, how long did you participate in the planning of it?

Mr. MILES. How long did I participate in the planning of it?

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Yes.

Mr. MILES. I probably got involved with the planning of it in June 2019.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. So you were there for an extensive amount of time?

Mr. MILES. There is no good way to answer that question, sir. The best I could say is we had meetings on a regular basis because, again, my office is in New Orleans. So most of the planning occurred in Jackson. I would travel over for the meetings as appropriate.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Did you—did your plan work pretty much as you intended?

Mr. MILES. I would say that our plan worked well. To sit here and say that it was a perfect plan would not be—

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Not perfect, but it worked well?

Mr. MILES. Yes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. So you planned to have 10 phones for 680 detained people?

Mr. MILES. Eleven. Yes, sir.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Eleven phones?

Mr. MILES. Yes, sir.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Understanding that people would have to contact relatives, have children picked up, but you decided on 11 phones for 680 people?

Mr. MILES. That is correct, sir.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. And you planned to separate the children from their parents?

Mr. MILES. No, sir. We planned to arrest people that were violating Federal law.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. In the process did you contemplate—I am sure you did—that some of these persons would have children?

Mr. MILES. Yes, sir. We did.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. So you had to plan to separate them or you were going to plan to keep them together. But the evidence is such that you separated them. Is this true? Does the evidence show that you separated children from their parents? It does.

Mr. MILES. I would argue that if you are going to use the definition of the word separating, no, we did not because the word separate insinuates that the children were with them. The children were not with them. The children were in school.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Well, let me ask you this. Were they able to go home to their children that evening, a good many people?

Mr. MILES. No, sir. Like anybody that gets arrested for a crime in the United States they don't go home.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. The Government has many definitions, but when a parent can't go back to a child and the child is expecting the parent, in my world that parent is separated from the child.

Mr. MILES. As is with anybody that is arrested in the United States, sir.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Thank you.

Mr. MILES. Any person in your district—

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Is it—is it true—is it true that you separated mothers who were breastfeeding?

Mr. MILES. My understanding is that we received reports of that and none of those reports ever bore out.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Well, I have got evidence from my reports indicating that at least 3 mothers who were breastfeeding were separated from their babies.

Mr. MILES. I would—we will take that evidence as well, sir, because the report that I received I responded to.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. There is also—there is a person in this room who spoke to me this morning and indicated that she is aware of a mother who was separated who was breastfeeding.

Mr. MILES. My argument to that would be then bring the mother, because that is the only way we work with testimony. We don't work with second-hand testimony.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. So, now, let us see if we can summarize.

You planned this raid. As a result of the raid, parents were separated from their children. As a result of the raid, mothers who may or may not have been breastfeeding were separated from their children.

As a result of the raid, you had 11 phones for some 600 persons who were going to need to contact people, and as a result of the raid you, on the first day of school—on the first day of school separated parents from their children in the sense that those parents were not there to pick up their children on the first day of school.

Did you plan to do this on the first day of school?

Mr. MILES. We planned to do it on August 7.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Was it unknown to you that August 7 was the first day of school?

Mr. MILES. I would say that yes, it was unknown to me that it was the first day of school.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Well, then is it—is it the case then that you did not plan well?

Mr. MILES. Again, I think we planned well for the fact that it was a day of school.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Did you conclude—you said you planned well. Are you concluding that you planned well by, on the first day of school, implementing this raid in this area? So you planned well? If you planned well, you did what you said you were going to do.

Mr. MILES. Well, my thing would be what is the difference between the first day or the tenth day of school? The parents are still not going home. We planned for that. We—

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Well, here is the difference, I am proud to tell you but I wish the superintendent could tell you. But I am going to tell you what it is.

Those children, many of them, are going to school for the first time. It is the first day for a lot of first graders. These babies—these babies are expecting their parents to be there for them when they return home. Babies ought not be separated from their parents, Mr. Miles. Babies ought not be separated.

[Applause.]

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Miles, my time is up but I have got to say this to you. I don't believe that you believe that this was a very good deterrent. I don't believe it. But I want you to say it. Do you believe that this was a very good deterrent?

Mr. MILES. Deterrent to what?

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Deterrent in the sense that the Chief Executive Officer of this said it was a good deterrent—your boss, the President.

Mr. MILES. So am I allowed to editorialize now—

Mr. GREEN of Texas. You are allowed to tell me whether or not you think this was a good deterrent.

Mr. MILES. I actually do believe it was a good deterrent.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. That is unfortunate, because taking babies from mothers is not the deterrent that this country wants to be known for. We are a better country than this, to borrow a phrase from my colleague, Mr. Thompson.

[Applause.]

Mr. GREEN of Texas. We are a better country, Mr. Miles. We are a better country.

I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman from Texas yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, to Mayor Truly—

Dr. TRULY. Yes, sir?

Mr. COHEN [continuing]. You and Congressman Thompson and the sheriff here and Mr. Johnson and judge are indications that Mississippi is better, and I know Mississippi is better. It couldn't have been worse, but it is much better.

But when I see the shootings at the Emmett Till sign and when I see the Klan being observed there, I worry about some of the elements that still exist in Mississippi and I am sure you do as well.

[Applause.]

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Miles, does your jurisdiction include Bean Station, Tennessee?

Mr. MILES. It does not now, sir.

Mr. COHEN. Did it in—when the raid occurred there?

Mr. MILES. It absolutely did.

Mr. COHEN. Were there any—was the employer there charged with any offenses?

Mr. MILES. To my understanding, one of the employers there has pled guilty and has been sentenced to 18 months.

Mr. COHEN. One?

Mr. MILES. That is correct. But he was the CEO.

Mr. COHEN. All right. The raid was because of IRS irregularities. None of the people who were arrested other than him had IRS problems, did they?

Mr. MILES. To be honest, sir, I don't know what happened before my tenure here.

Mr. COHEN. I am talking about in Bean Station.

Mr. MILES. No, I know when you are talking about, sir. It was before my tenure here.

Mr. COHEN. OK.

Mr. MILES. I didn't take over—in my own paper, I reported March 4 but I didn't actually show up until late April. This occurred before I showed up.

Mr. COHEN. I got you.

Mr. MILES. So I wasn't in the planning or any of it.

Mr. COHEN. Let me ask you this, and this is a question that you, hopefully, have some information from. We have heard—it has been reported to me that immigration organizations that come to Tallahatchie to help detainees—that people detained from raids are kept separate from the asylum population. Do you know if that is true or not?

Mr. MILES. I don't know, sir. That would be a question for enforcement and removal operations as they manage all of our detention population.

Mr. COHEN. OK. So you are not familiar—this would be—how many of the people seeking asylum or seeking immigration judges while detained in Tallahatchie would again beyond your knowledge?

Mr. MILES. That is correct, sir.

Mr. COHEN. Let me go back to what Mr. Green was asking you. First on a school day and not knowing it was the first day of school, I can kind-of understand you might have other things in mind.

But in the future you might want to take that into consideration and the raid could have been a week earlier when school was not in session and it would have been just as effective as not and, yet, the parents would have been home. So maybe in the future take that in consideration.

Do you know how many of the people that were arrested here in Mississippi had previous violent criminal histories?

Mr. MILES. I do have a number for previous criminal histories.

Mr. COHEN. How about violent criminal history?

Mr. MILES. I am looking right now.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. MILES. I think we have 6 domestic violence, 1 rape, 2 battery, 1 resisting arrest and—

Mr. COHEN. Resisting arrest is not a felony.

Mr. MILES. I wouldn't know, sir. It is a State crime. In the State I was in, resisting arrest is a felony.

Mr. COHEN. Where? In Louisiana it is a felony for battery?

Mr. MILES. No, sir. I was a deputy sheriff of South Carolina for 8 years.

Mr. COHEN. OK.

Mr. MILES. South Carolina, resisting arrest was a felony.

Mr. COHEN. Resisting arrest is different than just a battery, though. I might have missed the—

Mr. MILES. Exactly. I thought you said resisting arrest wasn't a felony. No, I am sorry. Then battery could be a felony. It depends upon the battery.

Mr. COHEN. Well, let us not get into all those technicalities. Not many of the people had violent crimes?

Mr. MILES. That is correct.

Mr. COHEN. How many of those people are still incarcerated? Do you know?

Mr. MILES. I would not have that number, sir. Again, the detention is run by our enforcement and removal operations.

Mr. COHEN. OK.

Sheriff Lee, I want to commend you on your position and your State. You reflect well on Mississippi and I am real happy Forest is spelled with one R. I had to check that out.

Sheriff LEE. Yes, sir.

Mr. COHEN. That is good.

Sheriff LEE. Yes, sir.

Mr. COHEN. How has this affected your city economically?

Sheriff LEE. Economically, we have—what was alluded to, I believe, by the Chairman earlier, we have businesses that are there for our Latino community.

These businesses act within the laws and there are no problems with those, and some of those stores that are near where Cook Foods is in Scott County are either in the process of closing down or have completely closed down.

Mr. COHEN. Mayor, how did this affect Canton?

Dr. TRULY. Well, it has had a negative impact on the city of Canton. When you have that many people who are arrested, those individuals purchase goods. Many of them purchase homes. As a consequence to a lack of income, that is not going to happen.

Mr. COHEN. What was your medical specialty or what is your medical specialty?

Dr. TRULY. Family medicine. Family—

Mr. COHEN. As a family practice doc, how do you think this psychological effect on children will last with them, if it will? Is it a temporary thing or is it a long—a lifelong—

Dr. TRULY. Oh, it is ad infinitum.

Mr. COHEN. So that can't be taken away? That is going to affect those children forever?

Dr. TRULY. That is—yes.

Mr. COHEN. Let me follow up with Mr. Miles.

Mr. Green's question about do you think this was an effective deterrent and you said it was, why do you think this is a deterrent to folks wanting to come across the border and to come to the United States?

Mr. MILES. I think it is an effective deterrent because a lot of the people that are coming here are coming here for economic reasons, and when we start telling them that coming here illegally to get employment is not going to work, it will deter them from coming here.

I think that what happens is we confuse the argument of asylees and economic immigration, and there is a vast difference.

I spent 7 years in Mexico. I spent 7 years working with the Mexican government, the Guatemalan government, looking at immigration, looking at cartels.

So I am telling you that when we take away some of the economic incentive it is going to have an impact. I think one of the witnesses previously made a comment of do they read the *Jackson Herald*. No, they don't.

But the people that move them here, that is a whole other underground industry. They know and they tell them, and then they say, come now—don't come now—don't do this, because it is—again, it is a huge industry, and the fact that we are sitting here and we are talking about it in these terms about how it is not dangerous to Mississippi, fine.

There are 400 stolen IDs there of these innocent employees. You keep saying they haven't committed a crime. They are law-abiding

citizens. They stole the IDs of 400 U.S. citizens. Four hundred U.S. citizens. Where is their voice?

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Miles, you have got a tough job and there is some poem, I guess, that is about the military not to reason—ours is not to reason why, ours is but to do or die, and you are kind-of put in that spot. You don't make the policy but you have to carry it out. I understand that.

But I also think that going after employers, and you mentioned in response to Mr. Chairman Thompson that you got all this data and I hope you use the data to get the employers, because if the employers, who are really the root of the problem, don't have an incentive to hire the folks and they won't have that incentive if they are arrested like the gentleman was or the man was or woman or whoever in Bean Station, then you are not going to have that problem and it seems like that is the place you should concentrate your activities.

Mr. MILES. Representative Cohen, that is exactly what we are doing. That is why this case was started 18 months ago, for the purpose of going after the highest level we can get to. That is what HSI does. We are not satisfied with going after the low-level people.

But as I am assuming that all of you understand, it is a lengthy process to build a criminal prosecution. We serve search warrants. That is one step in the building of a criminal investigation.

It is not the final step. It is not the first step. It is a step. Unfortunately, it is a very visible step and we come under a lot of criticism for it.

Then 7 months from now, a year from now, when we finalize the investigation there will be nobody thanking us for it.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, sir, and I appreciate your service.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

The gentlelady from Texas has a question.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I want to follow up on that previous line of questioning.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I am going to say we thank you for your service. I think I acknowledged the fact that this is a Nation of laws and a Nation of immigrants as well.

Let me, again, focus on the collective results even though this is still going somewhat through the process. I see a sign back there—I think I can read it—by one of the mothers, one of the members of the community. It says, we need the whole family, and I think that is what her sign is saying.

So I believe she is talking about to keep the family together and children should not be separated. So I cannot emphasize enough that you must give us the numbers, if you will, of the children still unaccompanied.

The second is to deal with I am baffled by the purpose of this raid because the number of agents could have as well found these individuals in their respective homes over a period of time, and at the same time—at the same time that you were doing this raid the President of the United States announced another cruel act of indicating to cities across America that he was getting ready to raid across this country, and that means that mayors and police persons had to try to address the panic.

I think it was earlier said it interferes with law enforcement because no one wants to give information as to whether they are victimized if they are in that community or to be able to help if they see some crime being perpetrated.

So you were being victimized yourself by this announcement that really petered out, unless they are going to do it around—on Christmas Day. Maybe that is when they are going to do it next.

In Houston, Texas, our churches open the doors as an effort to make sure that people were protected not against, ultimately, being brought to a response but for the fear of raids at 1 and 2 in the morning or whenever they would be.

My question to you, as you were saying that there was some value to it—but my question to you, I understand the military adheres to the rules and the orders of the commander-in-chief.

But ICE is a civilian organization and in America civilian Federal workers and others have rights. If someone in your organization came and said this is not the right way to do this, this is not effective, this is cruel, it is inhumane, tears are coming to my eyes, I am a parent, how would that person be responded to?

Would you send that person's information up to Washington? Would it get to the Secretary of Homeland Security?

Would the President be aware that some of the very people that are working under these cruel policies feel offended and that they don't work? Would that happen?

Mr. MILES. I would say that I—yes, I would relay that information to my chain of command. That is what I would do with any complaint that a worker brought forward to me.

But I will say this, if I am permitted, is that it is one thing to sit here and say this is cruel, this is this, this is the other.

But it is the law, and the Congress writes and enacts the law. We don't. The problem with looking at us and saying, you should exercise discretion, I honestly believe it puts too much power in the hands of the police, do you not?

Because if you want us as a unit, as a group, to go—we'll not enforce the law, that is not really what we are designed for. It is designed for you to change the law.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Miles, I—first of all, let me just say this Chairman has allowed you to answer any question.

You have rights here and I welcome your answer. But I beg to differ with you. It is not Congress's policy to separate families and mothers from children.

That is the policy of the President of the United States. That is not our policy. It is not our policy.

[Applause.]

Mr. MILES. I didn't say it was. I said it is a criminal law to come into this country illegally.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. No. Well—

Mr. MILES. It is a criminal law to steal the ID of 400 U.S. citizens.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. We had the policy as a misdemeanor. This administration has altered it to be a felony.

But let me finish my—just this last question, Mr. Chairman. So we didn't create that policy.

But at the same time, it was not our policy. The law is one thing, but to implement the law in certain ways is another thing.

There is no prohibition for agents to go knock on doors of people who they know where they are or to indicate to the employer, we need 10 people to come out from the job. There is nothing that stops you from doing it. It might take longer.

But let me—let me finish my line of questioning to you. That person would not be retaliated against, right, who decided to say enough is enough, because I know these people come from places where they are being decapitated and murdered. So their information would go up. Is that my understanding?

Mr. MILES. If someone came and filed a complaint, said they didn't want to do this job, yes, ma'am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Finally, it is my understanding that to date there have been no major crimes solved except for the immediacy of immigration laws, but no major crimes have been solved out of the 608 persons that were rounded up, now 303 taken out. Is that correct, to date?

Mr. MILES. Four hundred cases of identity theft, ma'am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Pardon me?

Mr. MILES. Four hundred cases of identity theft.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I don't—I don't diminish that. But what I am saying—

Mr. MILES. But is that not a serious crime?

Ms. JACKSON LEE. But I am saying that—

Mr. MILES. But is that not a serious crime? You are asking if there is a serious crime.

Chairman THOMPSON. Just a—just a minute now.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I have the time.

Chairman THOMPSON. She has got to ask the question before you can answer it.

Mr. MILES. But she did. She asked if it is serious crime and 400—identity theft is a serious crime, no?

Chairman THOMPSON. Mr. Miles, OK. Just calm down.

Mr. MILES. I am very calm, sir.

Chairman THOMPSON. No, just—then be quiet.

Mr. MILES. Oh, OK. So that is different. I will be quiet. But it is not calm down. I am very calm.

[Laughter, applause.]

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me say this, Mr. Miles, because you won't get me on the record saying that identity theft is not important or serious. All of us have been in law enforcement, me from the perspective of being a former judge in a municipal court and as well being involved with this committee, in Judiciary, for a very long time.

So what I am saying is you made no major massive bust of some syndicate or crime issue. Individual cases like that are important. Now, just getting that—yes or no, you did not bust any major crime syndicates. Is that correct?

Mr. MILES. No, ma'am. We did not bust any major crime syndicates.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So, Mr. Chairman, let me just say—I am not sure if this is the time that we are supposed to respond to closing or I yield back, but I would certainly like to make a few points.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The Chair will recognize the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Thank you, again, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Miles, in your letter—pardon me, your testimony—your written testimony you indicate that ICE and HSI conducts targeted law enforcement operations. Is that correct?

Mr. MILES. That is correct, sir.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. To conduct a targeted law enforcement operation requires that you do some advanced investigation. Is that correct?

Mr. MILES. Yes, sir. That is correct.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. It would cause one to assume that you knew that at these various locations there would be persons who would be in violation of the laws that you were enforcing. Is this correct?

Mr. MILES. That is correct, sir.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. If you knew that there were persons who were in violation of the laws, namely, immigrants, you would also have some evidence that employers were in violation of the law as well.

Mr. MILES. Sir, that is a complicated question that you can't answer with a yes or no question.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. It is not a complicated question, Mr. Miles.

Mr. Miles, if you know that the employees are there and that you have got an E-verify system and you are going to arrest the employees, you have evidence that the employers are also in violation of the law, Mr. Miles. You have that evidence.

[Applause.]

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Now, I walk you through it—I walk you through it with intentionality, Mr. Miles, because here is what happens.

You indicated that you wanted to take away the economic incentives and you do that by coming in and taking the undocumented persons, have them do a perp walk, show some of that on television, and then you can somehow deter persons in your mind—you think you can anyway—but you don't have a perp walk for the employers. They don't get arrested. You don't handcuff them and take them away.

[Applause.]

Mr. GREEN of Texas. You are still investigating them. Isn't it true that you have not arrested an employer—there is no employer jailed for this? Is this true? You said it was earlier, Mr. Miles.

You need not think long. Sophisticated sophistry is not going to be available today. Is it true that there are no employers incarcerated?

Mr. MILES. It is true. There are no employers incarcerated.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. None. This happened months ago.

Mr. MILES. That is true.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. You knew before you came that laws were being broken but you picked on the undocumented persons to the exclusion of the employers, who were supposed to check the E-verify system.

Mr. Miles, this is not the way we treat people in the United States of America.

[Applause.]

Chairman THOMPSON. Gentleman yields back.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for inviting me here. I have learned a lot. It has been a privilege to be in Tougaloo, this famous institution.

I have to get back to Memphis. I have got a day's worth of folks waiting in my office starting at 3 o'clock and I got to meet with them. So I am off to Memphis.

Chairman THOMPSON. Yes. Well, let me thank you again for coming down. Your presence has meant a lot to us. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Chairman THOMPSON. So we will have, in the interest of time, a wrap-up.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me, Mr. Chairman, thank you so very much.

Again, I must emphasize to Mississippi what a major asset Chairman Thompson has been to the securing of this Nation. We do not take a back seat on this committee.

Every day, we walk into the Homeland Security room—meeting room we know the daunting responsibility we have to all of the witnesses here to care for this Nation.

To all of those who are here, I know that amongst you are patriots, men and women who have served in the United States military. I was just recently in a hearing or in a meeting dealing with the unfortunate treatment of immigrant military personnel.

So we are being guided by policies that really have no basis in substance. They are skewing the Constitution and the way we have matched immigrants and laws and citizens.

Mr. Miles, you are on record saying no employer has been arrested. That is why my question was whether or not if there was a SAC—a Special Agent in Charge—or a ICE officer agent who came and said this is patently unfair, I would hope that their message would get to Washington, to us, to the Secretary, and maybe, ultimately, to the person who has been the implementer of these cruel and unworkable policies that are impacting families and children.

The President needs to know that in the places beyond the boundaries of Washington none of his policies are working. There is no border wall. He is cruelly separating children.

[Applause.]

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Families are being, if you will, not reunited and I don't know whether or not you are making the Nation safe with these particular policies. I am not suggesting your work does not make us safe.

So I hope that you can convey that there is a great deal of disturbance around this issue. No employer arrested, children—not able to give us the numbers of those still separated.

The idea that we want to promote from Washington is cooperation with local officials, school districts, superintendents, and now you are saying to us or we are seeing here—I am embarrassed.

That these local officials have a responsibility—the sheriff even admitted that you could have investigations that may not need an immediate information out.

But while it was going on the mistreatment of the mayor when he asked an agent what is going on, and an agent cutting a seat-belt—anybody with a weak heart might have passed out right there, and it was a woman.

So I want to close my remarks by an apology to these families. I have enough dignity to apologize on behalf of the United States and not diminish—

[Applause.]

Ms. JACKSON LEE [continuing]. And not diminish the men and women who work for Homeland Security and I will not take a back seat to my advocacy for those individuals.

But I am willing to apologize because this is a ill-conceived, cruel, inhumane, and ineffective way to govern our immigration laws.

If you have suggested that I have, as a Member of Congress, written some law that gives the permission for separation of children, there is no print to that. It is the way it is enacted. Policies are what causes that.

So it is my intent, Mr. Chairman, to put into the record “Nobody Opened the Door” rally—neighbors’ rally—during an ICE raid in Houston, Texas.

I ask unanimous consent.

Chairman THOMPSON. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

ARTICLE FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES SUBMITTED BY HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

‘NOBODY OPENED THE DOOR’: NEIGHBORS RALLY DURING AN ICE RAID IN HOUSTON

By Manny Fernandez and Kerry Lester, July 15, 2019.

HOUSTON.—The immigration raid early Monday morning at the El Paraiso Apartments in Houston was not exactly a major victory for law enforcement. It was foiled, in part, by 19-year-old Kaylin Garcia.

Shortly before 7 a.m. Monday, Ms. Garcia was sitting in her car near her family’s apartment, in a largely Hispanic section of southwest Houston about 15 miles from downtown. She saw four Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents walk by—one dressed in camouflage fatigues and the others wearing black T-shirts and bullet-proof vests. They were knocking on apartment doors. She took a picture of the agents with her phone, posted it to her Facebook page and notified some of her neighbors.

At least one of her neighbors saw Ms. Garcia’s picture and heard about her warnings—the family slid the chain closed on their door. When the agents knocked on the door, the family—an undocumented Honduran man and his wife, along with their American-born children and another relative—kept silent and never opened it. After a minute or two, the agents left.

“I wasn’t scared,” Ms. Garcia said. “I was scared for my neighbors.” She added, “Nobody opened the door.”

The anticipated large-scale ICE raids aimed at rounding up at least 2,000 migrant parents and children appear to have run into similar problems in other parts of the country. With widespread publicity about the raids, many undocumented migrants have been counseled to avoid opening their doors. Neighbors, immigration lawyers and migrant rights advocates are issuing warnings when any ICE agents are spotted. Following any report of a raid—real or rumored—the news media descends within minutes: At El Paraiso in the afternoon, Ms. Garcia spoke to a pack of television and newspaper reporters who had converged on the complex.

President Trump said on Monday that the raids that began over the weekend were “very successful,” though it wasn’t clear what operations he was referring to.

Immigrant lawyers and advocacy groups reported only scattered raids that seemed to result in relatively few arrests.

“Many, many were taken out on Sunday; you just didn’t know about it,” Mr. Trump told reporters at a White House event. “It was a very successful day, but you didn’t see a lot of it.”

In the suburbs northeast of Atlanta, immigrant advocates reported at least two encounters with ICE agents. In one of them, they said, immigration agents were involved in a vehicle pursuit of two people; the two eventually ditched their car outside a chiropractic clinic and fled on foot, said Adelina Nicholls, director of the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights. In another case reported to her group, immigration authorities reportedly stopped a white van with an unspecified number of passengers.

The Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee reported that ICE officers surrounded a car in Minneapolis on Monday morning and when the occupant apparently locked the doors, officers busted out the back window, unlocked the doors and dragged the person out. Their account was based on witnesses who spoke to members of the committee when they arrived on the scene a short time later.

“We then took pictures of the damaged window on the car of the man who had been detained,” the group said in a statement. “You can see how all the glass fell into the car filling his child’s car seat. He left his work bag in the front seat and his coffee mug in the holder still steaming with hot coffee.”

ICE officials have not officially commented on the raids, and did not confirm any reports on their operations. It was not clear whether the incidents reported involved the administration’s latest plan to deport recently arrived migrant families, or were routine operations targeting various people with deportation orders. The agency arrested 158,581 immigrants overall in the 2018 fiscal year, an 11 percent increase from the previous year.

Across the country, many undocumented immigrants were staying home and avoiding public places.

In Chicago, the normally bustling Discount Mall in the heart of the city’s mainly Latino Little Village neighborhood stood eerily quiet on Monday, as it had over the past several days because of fears of ICE encounters. “There’s hardly people here no more,” said Krisandra Ruvalcaba, a store owner, as she organized shelves of religious statues and paintings, Guns N’ Roses T-shirts, blankets and shoes—with few customers around to buy them.

Regina Kang, whose family owns the nearby Viva Fashion store, said a number of her employees had failed to show up for work. “They tell me, ‘I can’t come in,’” she said. “I’m understanding about it, it’s a scary time.”

People exchanged information about the ICE operations on a Facebook page. One person posted: “Please Help, Friend with restaurant in MA needs to train staff & terrified workers how to deal with ICE. Resources?”

Susana Salgado, a manager at Centro Romero, an immigration and family service center on Chicago’s North Side, said teachers had spent the past week teaching students at their summer program what to do should ICE agents come to their door. “We tell them to be careful when they answer, even if they think, ‘Oh, it’s the pizza delivery guy,’” she said. “These children have had the same training as we give to adults.”

At the El Paraiso Apartments in Houston, Ms. Garcia, her neighbors and even workers at the complex said they were proud to have had a hand in making ICE’s job more difficult on Monday morning. Still, though ICE officials declined to discuss the details of their operation at the apartment complex, residents and workers said they believed a few people were taken away.

“I knew it was going to happen, but I didn’t think it was going to happen here,” said Odilia Leija, the property manager. “I started making out a letter for my residents, letting them know they don’t have to open their doors, making sure they look out their windows before they open doors. They’re all working people. We do criminal background checks. We got good residents.”

The family who had been warned by Ms. Garcia sat together in their living room on Monday afternoon, still rattled, even hours later, by the knock on the door that morning.

A 21-year-old cousin who lives with the family was the one who heard the agents—they knocked on the door two or three times, he said, and announced: “Please open the door. This is ICE.”

“I didn’t say anything,” said the man, who, like the rest of the family, was fearful of having his name published. “I was silent. Everyone else was silent, too.” After a minute or two, he said, they left.

"I was a little bit afraid," said the man, who had just been released in June from an ICE detention facility in Texas. "I wasn't so much afraid for myself, but I was afraid for my cousin, who is undocumented."

The couple's 9-year-old son wanted to go outside and see the TV cameras, but his parents were reluctant, deciding against going outdoors at all—for how long, they couldn't say. "We're not going to leave," said the husband, who works in construction. "They could come back later. I canceled everything."

Eventually, the couple allowed their son to leave the apartment. He went around the complex knocking on neighbors' doors—in this case, to hand out fliers to the neighbors, in Spanish, advising them of their rights in case the ICE agents came back.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I ask unanimous consent for an article in the *Chronicle*, "Houston Congresswoman Said Undocumented Immigrants Could Seek Shelter in Churches During Raids." I ask unanimous consent.

Chairman THOMPSON. Without objection.
[The information follows:]

ARTICLE FROM THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE SUBMITTED BY HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE
HOUSTON CONGRESSWOMAN SAID UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS COULD SEEK SHELTER
IN CHURCHES DURING ANNOUNCED ICE RAIDS

By Lara Korte, July 13, 2019.

U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee met with faith leaders in Houston on Saturday to invite undocumented immigrants to seek refuge in churches, mosques and synagogues and call on religious organizations to open their doors ahead of Sunday's anticipated deportation roundup by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers.

"It is to my dismay that I have to come home to find many of those who live in my jurisdiction, my constituency, are panicked, frightened and in fear of their lives," said Jackson Lee, a Houston Democrat. "I say to the Federal authorities that you are well aware and on notice that you are not able to come into a church and demand anyone that is a representative of the faith to give anyone to anyone."

Jackson Lee gathered with faith and local leaders Saturday afternoon at the Living Water International Apostolic Ministries in Houston. The ministry, along with half a dozen other churches, announced it would shelter undocumented immigrants Sunday who fear they are in danger of being taken by ICE.

"We want to be a beacon of light for those who may be in fear. So when I got the call, I couldn't do anything but accept," said apostle Robert Stearns, leader of Living Water. "There is nothing strange to us in doing this. This is our heart and our passion."

Immigrant communities in Houston and cities across the country have been preparing in the past week for the deportation raids that Federal officials say will start Sunday. The operation will target some 2,000 undocumented immigrants. *The New York Times* reported this week that the raids could also include "collateral" deportations—the removal of undocumented immigrants that were not the target of the raids but happen to be there when they happen.

ICE officers are, technically, allowed to enter "sensitive locations" such as churches, schools and hospitals but generally try to avoid doing so.

"Enforcement actions may occur at sensitive locations in limited circumstances, but will generally be avoided," according to the ICE website. "ICE officers and agents may conduct an enforcement action at a sensitive location if there are exigent circumstances, if other law enforcement actions have led officers to a sensitive location, or with prior approval from an appropriate supervisory official."

It is not clear if the churches will face legal consequences for sheltering undocumented immigrants from deportation. Stearns, with Living Water, said his church is not trying to break the law, but rather do what it believes to be right.

"We need the president to understand that there are some areas that we're duty bound to do," Stearns said. "We're just trying to sustain those who need to be sustained until Congress and him can get some things together and get some things sorted out."

Jackson Lee's office did not immediately respond to questions about potential legal repercussions.

Cesar Espinosa is the executive director of Familias Inmigrantes y Estudiantes en La Lucha, a group that advocates for immigrants and social justice in Houston.

Espinosa said many immigrants are fearing for their lives and safety ahead of Sunday and could be looking for a place of refuge.

“As long as we can remember, the church has always been a sanctuary for people who are fleeing persecution,” Espinosa said.

Texas Republicans have continually criticized Democrats’ stance on the border crisis and deportation operations. On Saturday, U.S. Rep. Dan Crenshaw, a Houston Republican, tweeted what he called a summary of Democrats’ immigration plan: no border wall, no asylum reform, decriminalization of improper border crossings and not enforcing deportation orders.

“Seriously, ask yourself: is that your position?” Crenshaw wrote. “Most Americans say no.”

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And another about the mayor of the city of Houston weighs in on an expected ICE raid. None of this is to violate the law. It is only to recognize that we can enforce the law. [The information follows:]

TRANSCRIPT FROM ALL THINGS CONSIDERED SUBMITTED BY HON. SHEILA
JACKSON LEE

HOUSTON MAYOR SYLVESTER TURNER WEIGHS IN ON EXPECTED ICE RAIDS

July 11, 2019.

Houston is one of ten cities preparing for ICE raids this weekend. NPR’s Audie Cornish speaks with Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner about how the raids could affect his city.

AUDIE CORNISH, HOST: We’re joined now by Houston, Texas, Mayor Sylvester Turner. His city is one of 10 preparing for the possibility of ICE raids this weekend. Welcome to the program.

SYLVESTER TURNER: Well, thank you for having me.

CORNISH: So what was the effect of having advanced notice on this?

TURNER: Well, I think, certainly, families are concerned that—it has enhanced the anxiety level of people within my city. Families are concerned about being separated from their loved ones. And, quite frankly, it impacts, adversely, public safety as well because we rely on immigrants and others to report when crimes are being committed in their neighborhoods or where they may be living. And so it has had an adverse effect there. And then people are shying away from public services—things that they need for themselves and for their family members, so I can’t quite see the upside. But we certainly can see the downside of the publication of these advanced raids.

CORNISH: What kind of guidance have you given your law enforcement personnel? Is there a possibility that—yes, let me just end there. What guidance have you given your law enforcement personnel?

TURNER: Well, let me just say that we have repeatedly said that Houston Police Department is not ICE. We are not going to be participating with ICE on these type of raids. Now, it’s one thing—let me separate some things out. If we are talking about people with criminal records, people who have committed violent crimes, people who have felonies, people who are members of gangs like MS-13, that’s one thing ‘cause we certainly don’t want those individuals in our city, period, OK?

CORNISH: But how are you going to make that distinction in a raid situation? I mean, are officials doing anything to shield people from possible arrest?

TURNER: Well, with respect to people who are here like DREAMers and people who have been here for quite some time or people who have come to this country because they are seeking better opportunities, that’s a different class. And we’re advising people that they do have due process rights. They do not have to answer the door. They do not have to let anybody into their home. And we encourage people to call the Immigration Rights Hotline—1-833-468-4664.

CORNISH: The Trump administration has argued that these raids are meant to act as a kind of deterrent. If you have a crisis, as we are seeing on the border, and there are people in the country illegally, shouldn’t the government be stepping in to try and solve that problem?

TURNER: Well, I think there’s a better way to do it. We do need comprehensive immigration reform. You can’t do this on a State-by-State, city-by-city basis. That’s not going to do it. There are problems in many of these countries outside of the United States. We need to address those problems in those particular countries where people are coming from. For us in the city of Houston, I mean, this is the most diverse city in the United States. One of four Houstonians is foreign-born. And, quite frankly, we are not in the habit of separating families; parents from their

children. So again, it's one thing if the focus of these raids is on people with criminal records, people who've have committed violent crimes, people who are part of gangs. That's one thing. But if we're simply talking about deporting people who have been here for quite some time, that their crime is only coming here to seek a better way of living or to provide a better opportunity for their families, that's a different situation.

CORNISH: You've mentioned the separation of families. What concerns do you have about the potential for that? Is there any kind of provision the city can make, especially in the case of maybe small children?

TURNER: Well, what we are simply doing as best we can is to make sure that people know their rights. They are—regardless of how you got here when you came to this city or any other in the United States, you do have due process rights. And we want to make sure that people know what their rights are.

CORNISH: Does any of this undermine the attempt of cities like yours to be kind-of sanctuaries, so to speak?

TURNER: Well, this is a welcoming city. City of Houston is a welcoming city. We're very diverse. We seek every day to be very inclusive. Let me just say I don't think this does anything to deter people from coming here. And it doesn't create public safety—enhance public safety right here in the city of Houston.

CORNISH: Sylvester Turner is the mayor of Houston. His city is one of 10 where ICE raids are to happen this weekend.

Thank you for speaking with ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.

TURNER: Thank you. Thanks for having me.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. But we do not have to be perpetrators of injustice and we do not have to duplicate those adversaries in places where many of us know—despotic leadership like Russia.

We don't have to be Russia. We can be the United States of America, a great country, respecting you and all of you.

[Applause.]

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I yield back. I thank you for having us in this hearing and we have a lot of work to do in Washington, DC.

I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Houston, Texas.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to compliment you for bringing this hearing to this college. I compliment you because, Mr. Chairman, I have been in Congress since 2005 and, to be very honest, there are not many Chairpersons who would hold this hearing about this topic at this time.

You deserve an expression of appreciation. I compliment you. I compliment you, Mr. Chairman. I compliment you. I compliment you.

[Applause.]

Mr. GREEN of Texas. I want to close with this. There were indications that the immigrants were not—are not a threat, that there was not a local request for aid and assistance. There was no invitation from the local constabulary to have this take place.

It seems to me that in targeting we ought to at least, before we perfect a raid of this type, talk to the local sheriff.

He might have information about the crimes that are being committed. Talk to the mayor. He might have an opinion about the crimes that are being committed.

So I just hope that this will help us and you as you proceed with future endeavors. My hope is that you will give some consideration to the local population before you do this again.

I will close with this. I love my country. I say the Pledge of Allegiance. I sing the National Anthem. Nobody is going to say that I am not a patriotic American with any degree of credibility.

As a patriotic American, as you are, Mr. Miles, as you are, Mr. Lee—Sheriff Lee—as you are, Mayor, I say to you this kind of behavior is totally unacceptable. It is unacceptable.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. Let me thank my colleagues for coming to Mississippi for this hearing. I want to thank the people who came today to the hearing. Your presence speaks volumes for your interest in this issue.

I am convinced that, over time, we will fix this problem. As all my colleagues have said, we are a greater country than this. We should not under any circumstance separate children from their parents.

I am a grandparent. I know how precious young people are. I would not take pride in this country that separates its children. We are better than that.

So I know people have a job to do and it is a difficult job. But you can do it with compassion, and I think it is the compassion, or lack of, in this situation and some others that causes us concern.

So we will continue to conduct rigorous oversight. We will get back to the witnesses on it.

I have some statements I would like to acknowledge for the record from the Southern Poverty Law Center, the National Immigration Law Center, the Mississippi Immigrants Right Alliance, the Mississippi Immigrants Right Alliance Legal Project, Mississippi Center for Justice, Center for Law and Society, Community Change Action, Southeast Immigration Rights Network, as well as testimonies from people who are still incarcerated who share their letters with us.

[The information follows:]

STATEMENT OF KELLI GARCIA, IMMIGRATION POLICY COUNSEL; BRANDON JONES, MISSISSIPPI POLICY DIRECTOR; JULIA SOLORZANO, STAFF ATTORNEY; AND MEREDITH STEWART, SENIOR SUPERVISING ATTORNEY, SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

NOVEMBER 7, 2019

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the committee, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) respectfully requests that this statement be made part of the record for the November 7, 2019 hearing, “Immigration Raids: Impacts and Aftermaths on Mississippi Communities” in Tougaloo, Mississippi.

Founded in 1971, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is a civil rights organization dedicated to advancing and protecting the rights of people of color, the poor, and victims of injustice in significant civil rights and social justice matters. Our Immigrant Justice Project represents low-income immigrants in employment and civil rights cases across the Southeast.

For years, the SPLC has been advocating for and litigating on behalf of poultry workers throughout this region. In 2013, the SPLC released *Unsafe at These Speeds: Alabama’s Poultry Industry and its Disposable Workers*, a landmark report that describes how poultry workers often suffer significant injuries and illnesses due to unsafe conditions in the plants. The SPLC is also currently representing workers from a meatpacking plant in Bean Station, Tennessee who in April 2018 were subjected to the largest workplace immigration enforcement action in nearly a decade.

I. THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S AGGRESSIVE WORKSITE RAIDS TERRORIZE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

On August 7, 2019, just days after a gunman targeted immigrants in El Paso, killing 22 people, the U.S. Government sent armed agents into workplaces throughout Mississippi as part of an ICE operation that culminated in 680 arrests. Workers were handcuffed and loaded onto buses headed to a National Guard armory, their futures uncertain. Children throughout the State came home from their first day of school to learn that their parents had been taken away.

This was not the first time that ICE used unnecessary and brutal force under the Trump administration to arrest vulnerable and often exploited workers, wreaking havoc on communities and terrorizing families. In October 2017, then-acting Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Thomas Homan, instructed ICE to quintuple workplace enforcement actions in 2018.¹ Contrary to the previous administration's worksite enforcement policy, which generally only targeted employers, Homan noted that ICE would approach enforcement differently than in the past by going just as aggressively after already vulnerable employees.² Shortly thereafter, in early 2018 ICE raided 98 7-Eleven stores in 17 States and the District of Columbia. During those raids, ICE arrested 21 workers for civil immigration violations.³ The magnitude of the raids continues to grow. In 2018, ICE conducted half a dozen large-scale worksite raids, arresting a total of nearly 1,000 workers.⁴ ICE has also been engaging in smaller worksite operations throughout the country (i.e., less than 50 arrests).⁵ So far in 2019, ICE has conducted multiple large-scale and smaller worksite raids, arresting over 2,500 workers, including the 680 workers arrested on August 7 in Mississippi.⁶

This aggressive approach to the workplace is consistent with the administration's approach to immigration more generally with the promulgation of morally and legally questionable policies such as the Muslim Ban, Family Separation, and Remain in Mexico. The fallout from the Trump administration's workplace enforcement tactics has been as devastating as the administration's border policies.

II. THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S TARGETING OF VULNERABLE WORKERS HARMS WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES

The Trump administration's recent raids have targeted low-wage workplaces where workers are more likely to be subject to wage theft, health and safety violations, and discrimination. However, instead of protecting the workers' rights and holding the employers accountable for taking advantage of a vulnerable workforce, the Government is arresting and deporting the worker-victims. This will only increase exploitative practices in industries already known for rampant labor violations and will harm all workers by lowering labor standards.

Illinois-based poultry supplier Koch Foods, 1 of the 7 companies targeted by the August 7 Mississippi raids, settled a multi-year lawsuit in 2018 brought by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) on behalf of more than 100 workers at the Morton, Mississippi. The primarily Latinx workers alleged serious labor violations including intimidation, harassment, sexual and physical assault, and exploitation.⁷ According to the EEOC, supervisors at Koch touched Latina employees, made sexually suggestive comments to Latina employees, hit Latinx employees and charged many of the Latinx employees money for normal everyday work activities. Latinx employees who complained about the unlawful treatment faced re-

¹Tal Kopan, *ICE chief pledges quadrupling or more of workplace crackdowns*, Oct. 17, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/17/politics/ice-crackdown-workplaces/index.html>.

²See *id.*

³United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), *Raids on Workers: Destroying Our Rights*, 36, available at <https://www.scribd.com/document/22576349/UFCW-Raids-on-Workers-Destroying-Our-Rights>.

⁴Holly Straut-Eppsteiner, National Immigration Law Center., *Worksite Immigration Raids Terrorize Workers and Communities Now, and Their Devastating Consequences Are Long-Term*, Apr. 11, 2019, <https://www.nilc.org/2019/04/11/worksite-immigration-raids-terrorize-workers-and-communities/>.

⁵See *Acosta v. Southeastern Provision, LLC, et al.*, 3:19-cv-00150 (E.D. Tenn. filed Apr. 29, 2019).

⁶American Immigration Lawyers Association, *Announcements of ICE Enforcements*, <https://www.aila.org/infonet/ice-announcements-of-enforcement-actions#2019>.

⁷Mica Rosenberg & Kristina Cooke, *Allegations of Labor Abuses Dogged Mississippi Plant Years Before Immigration Raids*, Aug. 9, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-koch-foods/allegations-of-labor-abuses-dogged-mississippi-plant-years-before-immigration-raids-idUSKCN1UZ1OV>.

tialiation including being fired from their jobs.⁸ Southeastern Provision, LLC, the Tennessee plant targeted for immigration enforcement in 2018, similarly had a history of labor abuses. In August 2018, the Tennessee Occupational Safety and Health Administration (TOSHA) levied over \$40,000 in fines on Southeastern Provision, one of the highest fines ever imposed by the agency. Of the 27 citations, 23 were categorized as “serious” because of the risk of physical harm or death to the workers.⁹ In April 2019, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) sued Southeastern Provision for wage theft.¹⁰

Poultry processing plants, like those raided in Mississippi, have a long history of exploiting immigrant workers. Immigrant workers are the backbone of the poultry industry; they do this incredibly difficult work under dangerous conditions, contributing millions of dollars to Mississippi’s economy. The SPLC found that three-quarters of the poultry workers they interviewed for the 2013 report, *Unsafe at These Speeds*, described suffering some type of significant work-related injury or illness.¹¹ Long hours, loud noises, dangerous machinery, dangerous chemicals and floors that are often slick with water and raw chicken scraps make poultry plants particularly dangerous. Despite many factors that lead to undercounting of injuries in poultry plants according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2017, poultry workers experienced twice as many work-related injuries and illness compared to all U.S. workers.¹²

Because of the brutal working conditions and low pay, the poultry industry has struggled to find workers. Many new poultry workers leave within just days or weeks of starting at poultry processing plants. Rather than improving conditions and pay, though, the poultry industry began explicitly recruiting Latinx immigrants.¹³ In the 1990’s, the Morton, Mississippi poultry processing plant, B.C. Rogers, which was eventually sold to Koch Foods, created the “Hispanic Project,” establishing an office in the Miami area and sending a recruiter to Brownsville and McAllen, Texas to recruit Latinx immigrants.¹⁴ Although the project lasted only a few years, thousands of workers arrived from Cuba, Mexico, Guatemala, and other Central American countries.¹⁵ In Scott County, the Latinx population increased by more than 1,000 percent between 1990 and 2000.¹⁶

These immigrant Latinx workers are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, including wage theft and harassment. Yet, rather than protecting workers, the Trump administration has employed military-style tactics to terrorize immigrant communities. These practices will drive this already vulnerable workforce even further into the shadows, emboldening exploitive labor practices and lowering standards for all workers.¹⁷ In fact, ICE’s swift detention and removal of workers in the past has

⁸ Equal Opportunity & Employment Commission, Press Release: Koch Foods Settles EEOC Harassment, National Origin and Race Bias Suit, Aug. 1, 2019, available at <https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/8-1-18b.cfm>.

⁹ WATE.com, Owner of Grainger Co. Slaughterhouse Fined \$41K for Hazardous Working Conditions, Aug. 25, 2018, <https://www.wate.com/news/local-news/owner-of-grainger-co-slaughterhouse-fined-41k-for-hazardous-working-conditions/>.

¹⁰ See *Acosta v. Southeastern Provision, LLC, et al.*, 3:19-cv-00150 (E.D. Tenn. filed Apr. 29, 2019).

¹¹ Alabama Appleseed & The Southern Poverty Law Center, *Unsafe at These Speeds: Alabama’s Poultry Industry and its Disposable Workers*, Mar. 1, 2013, 3, available at <https://www.splc.org/20130228/unsafe-these-speeds#summary>.

¹² Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Injuries, Illnesses, & Fatalities, Table 1. Incidence rates of nonfatal occupational injuries & illnesses by industry and case types 2017*, https://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/osh/os/summ1_00_2017.htm (last visited Nov. 4, 2019).

¹³ Charles Bethea, *After ICE Came to Morton, Mississippi: About one in ten of the city’s residents was jailed or fired after raids at local chicken plants. But for most, Morton is Still Home*, *The New Yorker*, Oct. 31, 2019, available at <https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/after-ice-came-to-morton-mississippi>.

¹⁴ Alissa Zhu et al., *Chicken Plants Lured Them: Feds Jailed Them. How Mississippi’s Immigration Crisis Unfolded*, *Clarion Ledger*, Sept. 18, 2019, available at <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2019/09/18/illegal-immigration-mississippi-ice-raid-poultry-industry-immigrant-workers/2100785001/>

¹⁵ Bethea, supra note 11.

¹⁶ Zhu, supra note 12.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Kati L. Griffith, *Laborers or Criminals? The Impact of Crimmigration on Labor Standards Enforcement* (2014), <https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=2059&context=articles>; Dave Jamieson, *Donald Trump’s Crackdown On Undocumented Immigrants Is Silencing Exploited Workers*, Mar. 8, 2017, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/trump-immigrant-worker-abuse_n_58c03352e4b054a0ea66eef0; Sam Levin, *Immigration Crackdown Enables Worker Exploitation*, *Labor Department Staff Say*, Mar. 30, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/mar/30/undocumented-workers-deportation-fears-trump-administration-department-labor>.

hampered investigations by Federal labor agencies after raids.¹⁸ In April this year, for example, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) sued the owner of the Bean Station, Tennessee meatpacking plant for wage theft on behalf of the same workers the Government arrested 1 year earlier in the raid.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the Government has already deported many of the worker-victims, which could complicate the DOL's efforts to hold the employer liable through its Federal lawsuit.

The Trump administration's worksite raids have wreaked havoc on local communities by targeting vulnerable, low-wage workers. The Mississippi communities affected by the August 7 raids continue to deal with the aftermath. Approximately 1 in 10 Morton residents were detained or fired as a result of the raid.²⁰ Families who were already living paycheck to paycheck are scrambling to pay rent or medical care. For many of the families, their sole wage-earner was detained or is currently unable to find work in the wake of the raids.²¹ People are afraid to leave their homes. Children who came home from their first day of school to discover a parent missing are afraid to return to school.²²

III. CONGRESS MUST DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY FROM ICE

Worksite raids damage communities, harm children and families, and leave workers vulnerable to exploitation. Congress must hold ICE accountable for the unnecessary harm worksite raids have caused. Congress should continue to call for cuts to funding for ICE, including reducing funding for the operations of Homeland Security Investigations. Congress should obtain information about how and why specific worksites were targeted, how the raids were conducted, and what steps ICE is taking to ensure that exploited workers can cooperate with investigations into unlawful labor practices and receive backpay or money due to them. Finally, Congress should enact legislation that increases work permits and protections for immigrant workers and includes a pathway to citizenship for immigrant workers and their families.

STATEMENT OF JESSIE HAHN, LABOR & EMPLOYMENT POLICY ATTORNEY, NATIONAL IMMIGRATION LAW CENTER

NOVEMBER 7, 2019

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the committee, the National Immigration Law Center (NILC) respectfully requests that this statement be made part of the record for the November 7, 2019 hearing, "Immigration Raids: Impacts and Aftermaths on Mississippi Communities" in Tougaloo, Mississippi.

The National Immigration Law Center (NILC) is a nonpartisan National legal advocacy organization that works to protect and promote the rights of low-income immigrants and their family members. Since its inception in 1979, NILC has earned a National reputation as a leading expert on the intersection of immigration law and the employment rights of low-income immigrants. NILC's extensive knowledge of the complex interplay between immigrants' legal status and their rights under U.S. employment laws is an important resource for immigrant rights coalitions and community groups, as well as National advocacy groups, policy makers, attorneys, legal aid groups, workers' rights advocates, labor unions, Government agencies, and the media. NILC is also currently representing workers from a meatpacking plant in Bean Station, Tennessee who in April 2018 were subjected to the largest workplace immigration enforcement action in nearly a decade.

HSI'S MASSIVE WORKPLACE RAIDS CAUSE LONG-TERM COMMUNITY HARMS

On August 7, 2019, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) carried out a series of devastating worksite immigration raids in Mississippi, arresting 680 workers and leaving many children without their parents when class was dismissed during their first day back at school. These terrorizing raids have devastating con-

¹⁸ United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), *Raids on Workers: Destroying Our Rights*, 36, available at <https://www.scribd.com/document/22576349/UFCW-Raids-on-Workers-Destroying-Our-Rights>.

¹⁹ See *Acosta v. Southeastern Provision, LLC, et al.*, 3:19-cv-00150 (E.D. Tenn. filed Apr. 29, 2019).

²⁰ Bethea, *supra* note 11.

²¹ Maya Primera, *Months After ICE Raids, An Impoverished Mississippi community is Still Reeling*, Oct. 13, 2019, <https://theintercept.com/2019/10/13/ice-raids-mississippi-workers/>.

²² *Id.*

sequences for all community members, both immigrant and native-born. They go against everything our country should stand for.

As the Trump administration's Department of Homeland Security has ramped up aggressive interior immigration enforcement activities, the role played by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), a division within ICE, has come under increasing scrutiny. While HSI tries to make the public think that it focuses primarily on National security and transnational crime, it is responsible for the ramp up of worksite enforcement. Under Trump, ICE has vowed to increase worksite enforcement activities "4 to 5 times," and resumed engaging in highly militarized and coercive large-scale worksite immigration raids. In fact, over the course of 2018, it conducted several high-profile operations in Florida, Tennessee, Iowa, 2 locations in Ohio, Nebraska, Minnesota, 2 locations in Texas, Arkansas, and North Carolina. Most recently, in August 2019, HSI engaged in the largest single State workplace enforcement operation in its history when it arrested 680 immigrant workers at 7 poultry plants near Jackson, Mississippi.

The Federal agents who descended on Mississippi poultry plants that day created chaos and deep pain in the lives of the families impacted, forever changing these communities. The long-term consequences of raids conducted by ICE are harming communities beyond the people ICE specifically targets, including children. Worksite raids of any magnitude are devastating for families and entire communities. The people impacted by these harmful raids are workers, parents, friends, neighbors & vital parts of our communities. Communities where ICE conducts massive worksite raids will suffer devastating consequences for years to come. This type of military-style raid, in which agents use unnecessary force to detain workers at their jobs unexpectedly, causes deep psychological and physical trauma for workers, their families, and their communities. They are designed to instill fear in immigrants, undermining their safety and ability to thrive.

Worksite raids are a violent and widely condemned enforcement tactic that tear parents away from unsuspecting children, cause profound psychological harm, destabilize local communities, and generally undermine all workers' job-related rights. While HSI has attempted to legitimize its use of worksite raids by claiming they are criminal investigations, the vast majority of the workers detained are administratively arrested on civil immigration violations, and in most cases the employers are not criminally charged.

During the spring and summer of 2018, disturbing patterns emerged in HSI's conduct of its worksite raids. Multiple news reports, and HSI's own enforcement operation plan, described that while helicopters circled overhead and local law enforcement blocked nearby roads, HSI agents stormed worksites as heavily-armed guards secured all exits. In the utter chaos that ensued, unsuspecting workers were subjected to excessive force, intimidated by police dogs, thrown to the ground, assaulted, had guns pointed at their heads, and were subjected to racist and degrading comments from HSI agents. In Ohio, plainclothes HSI agents initially lured a group of workers into a breakroom using boxes of donuts before surrounding them and arresting them. In multiple raids, HSI agents racially-profiled workers, rounding up brown-skinned workers without asking for identification or immigration status information—which resulted in false arrests of U.S. citizens who were then held unlawfully, in some cases for hours or days.

Predictably, such enforcement brings deep trauma to those directly impacted by it and also terrifies the larger immigrant community. For many workers and their loved ones, the raids have led to serious mental, emotional, and physical health complications that continue to cause suffering 3 months later. Whenever there is a worksite raid, children suffer immensely. Many children still suffer from night terrors and severe anxiety, not knowing if their parents will still be there when they return home from school. After a devastating raid in Tennessee, the ripple effects spread across the region, with neighbors scrambling to care for children who had been left stranded without parents for hours and families sleeping in churches for days out of fear of ICE coming to their homes. The day after that raid, 550 children failed to show up to local schools.

This kind of immigration enforcement has a profoundly destabilizing effect on the well-being of the children whose parents are unexpectedly torn from them, causing severe anxiety and depression, poor sleeping and eating habits, inability to focus in school, and constant fear of separation from other family members. The impact isn't limited to the children whose parents were detained the day of the raids—the raids instilled fear in every child of immigrants, particularly in these communities but around the country as well. This is only exacerbated by the residual economic harm, leading to long-term financial instability, housing insecurity, and food insecurity.

In the aftermath of the raids, the community in Mississippi came together to pick up the pieces, showing its strength and care for its neighbors by immediately com-

ing together to support the families that were impacted. Their neighbors—in many cases, residents who have lived in Mississippi for more than a decade—went to work expecting a normal day and were instead ripped away from their families and out of their communities. These workers were active participants of vibrant communities.

While HSI has engaged in criminal investigations of employers since its formation, the use of large-scale worksite raids to target workers for arrest and deportation was discontinued after 2008 due to the widely-documented harms and the havoc these operations cause. In public statements, HSI has attempted to justify its increased participation in worksite enforcement as necessary to “build another layer of border security” and “reduce the continuum of crime that illegal labor facilitates.” In reality, HSI is making the decision to engage in the most aggressive, violent form of enforcement it can take at worksites because the real purpose of the raids is to target workers for deportation while creating a media spectacle designed to intimidate immigrant communities into “self-deporting.”

While ICE attempts to downplay the brutality of its enforcement tactics—going so far as refusing to refer to them as raids—the reality across the country is that ICE is trying to change the way we live by making people afraid of engaging in routine activities because of anticipated or recent ICE enforcement in their communities. In diverse communities—whether in rural East Tennessee, northern Texas, or the rural poultry plants of Mississippi—ICE is harming not just the individuals it sweeps up in its arrests but the children who are suddenly separated from a parent, caregiver, or breadwinner, the school teachers struggling to meet the needs of traumatized students, and the health care providers who now see their patients both facing more health challenges but even more afraid to seek help.

HSI represents that its worksite enforcement activities are designed to target employers for the most egregious violations of immigration law, but their words are not supported by their actions. In fact, 2018 saw the lowest number of Federal indictments and convictions of managers for unlawful hiring offenses in the last 10 years. In addition, of the 779 criminal worksite arrests that HSI did make in 2018, 85 percent were of workers and 15 percent were of employers. HSI has expended far greater resources in pursuing criminal charges against workers—usually for nonviolent unlawful re-entry charges unrelated to the criminal investigation that prompted the raid and only identified after HSI took the workers into custody and fingerprinted them (see examples from the raids in Tennessee; Sandusky, Ohio; and Canton, Ohio).

HSI also alleges that its investigations help combat the exploitation of workers, but that couldn't be further from the truth. HSI's worksite enforcement activities force immigrant workers into the margins and damage communities, making workers more fearful of deportation and more vulnerable to gross exploitation by employers. When HSI's own investigation of the Tennessee employer turned up wage and hour and safety violations on the job, it did not refer those violations to the proper authorities (who opened investigations only after the employees filed complaints).

CONGRESS MUST ACT TO HOLD DHS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE COMMUNITY HARMS
CAUSED BY ICE RAIDS

Congress must hold Government agencies accountable for their actions. As details have emerged from these massive raids in Mississippi, we know that ICE agents racially profiled Latino workers and approached this like a military-style operation, using force to antagonize and detain hundreds of members of the community. ICE worksite raids cost taxpayers millions of dollars each year, and damage communities and local economies in the process. This waste of money is made worse by Trump's xenophobic agenda. When ICE is given a blank check and no accountability, we are enabling them to act with impunity. It's incredibly dangerous to pour indiscriminate taxpayer dollars into a Government agency that has little to no oversight.

Right now, DHS continues to operate under a “Continuing Resolution” due to disputes in Congress regarding appropriations for DHS. Senate Republicans want \$5 billion diverted from the Labor and Health and Human Services budget to provide additional money for the President's border wall. As we have seen time and time again, Trump will use the deadline of the current Continuing Resolution, which expires on November 21, 2019, as an opportunity to try to hold the paychecks of Government workers and essential services hostage to his xenophobic demands. Members of Congress should remember that under this administration, DHS has acted with impunity and ignored the will of Congress by dramatically overspending its budget and then demanding Congressional bailouts. This increased spending is directly tied to the community harms that are being documented in today's hearing.

For example, in early 2019, the Government shutdown ended when Congress passed a bill that included a clear direction to drive down ICE's bloated daily detention population from 49,060 to 40,520 by the end of fiscal year 2019 (Sept 30, 2019). Instead, by the end of July 2019, ICE had reached a historically unprecedented number of 55,000 people jailed daily for civil immigration violations. We urge Members of Congress to fight for meaningful spending cuts in detention, deportation, and border militarization, as each of these pieces of the immigration enforcement system are at the heart of community harms and interior enforcement-related family separation and criminalization. We also urge Members of Congress to end ICE and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) fiscal mismanagement by including stronger guardrails in future spending bills.

In addition, there are currently several bills open for co-sponsorship that would mitigate the harms caused by ICE's raids:

- H.R. 3451, The Help Separated Children Act, is focused on ICE practices, including allowing parents to make decisions about their children's care after apprehension and before deportation. It includes protections to ensure that ICE does not interrogate children present during an enforcement action or force them to translate, and requires sensitivity training for all agents.
- H.R. 3452, The Help Separated Families Act, is focused on ensuring that the child welfare system has protocols in place to ensure children are able to reunify with detained or deported parents.
- H.R. 1011, The Protecting Sensitive Locations Act, would codify, expand, and strengthen existing policies regarding ICE enforcement at sensitive locations, including expanding the list of sensitive locations to include courthouses, public libraries, and food banks. It also adds more accountability measures for ICE arrests.
- H.R. 2415, the Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act, which would end private immigration detention, end mandatory detention, protect vulnerable populations and institute humane detention standards.
- The Protect Our Workers from Exploitation and Retaliation (POWER) Act, which will soon be re-introduced by Rep. Judy Chu, expands eligibility for U visas to workers involved in certain labor disputes, allows for employment authorization and stays of removal for workers involved in certain labor disputes, and ensures that workers detained during ICE raids cannot be removed from the United States before labor agencies have an opportunity to gather evidence from them regarding labor violations by their employers.

We can be a country with immigration laws that also treats people with heart and with fairness. Immigrants are a vital component of our workforce and communities, and worksite raids such as these undermine their safety and ability to thrive. We all benefit when everyone in our community has the opportunity to be safe, healthy, and successful.

STATEMENT OF BILL CHANDLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MISSISSIPPI IMMIGRANTS RIGHTS ALLIANCE (MIRA)

RE: ARRESTS AND DETENTION OF SOME 680 POULTRY WORKERS IN CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI

For nearly 20 years since the Mississippi Immigrants' Rights Alliance (MIRA) was founded by an alliance of faith, labor, community activists, and immigrants, the organization has fought to protect and expand the rights of migrants and immigrants who reside or want to reside in Mississippi. MIRA has served people from more than 70 countries and from every continent on the globe.

When the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was imposed in 1994, it removed tariffs protecting small farmers in Mexico. As a result, hundreds of thousands of Mexican farmers were forced off their land. The food processing industry took advantage of their desperation of those small farmers. The industry recruited some of them to work in poultry plants in Mississippi.

Later, the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) had the similar impact of driving people off their lands to make way for agribusiness operations. Individuals were deprived of food and shelter in those Central American countries. Many were indigenous (Indians) from rural areas in their countries.

Many people are fleeing because of NAFTA and CAFTA agreements. They come to the United States seeking survival, safety, dignity, homes, the warmth of communities, hope for a better life for their families, and a future for their children. They are fleeing not only poverty but also persecution because of the violence of competing gangs and cartels that are meeting the insatiable appetite for the consumption of illicit drugs in the United States.

Family values and a strong work ethic were once touted by Mississippi's politicians as a positive virtue. For these "crimes," however, 680 breadwinners were arrested on August 7, 2019, at 7 poultry plants in central Mississippi. An additional 100 workers were terminated from employment at another plant. Mothers and fathers were torn from children, who were severely traumatized on their first day of the school year.

Just as we did after the 2008 Howard Industries raid in Laurel, Mississippi, where 592 electrical workers were arrested, immediately following the August 7 immigration raids, MIRA mobilized to provide emergency relief intake centers. Since MIRA's initial response, a coalition fund, to which MIRA contributes, has been established. The relief system works in conjunction with 5 churches in the affected communities.

It has to be recognized that the true intent of our Nation's immigration laws are not to facilitate migration to the United States—they have been enacted to manipulate a captive workforce. During the 19th Century, Chinese workers were recruited to help build the railroads in the West, as African slaves were laying track from the East. When the Chinese were not needed anymore, the Chinese Exclusion Act was enacted during the 1880's. This was accompanied by white supremacist hysteria. Similar immigration laws were enacted throughout the 20th Century, which targeted Mexican workers, and workers from Central America and other countries.

Some recommendations to address the August 7 raid that will make immigration into the United States more humane:

1. Repeal employer sanctions, and ensure that hiring an undocumented worker is not "harboring." Enacted in 1986, this law has not sanctioned many employers, but it has caused the detention and deportation of hundreds of thousands of migrant workers.
2. Remove the cap and backlog for U-Visa applications for victims of crimes. Reports from victims of the raid indicate that the majority of those detained were women and that many had been sexually abused and should have relief against deportation.
3. Increase the funding for the Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Fund special programs for labor law enforcement in which immigrants are concentrated, especially in the poultry industry. Injuries and diseases are rarely investigated. Stories from several families tell of worker injuries, illnesses, and stories of contaminated chickens that are processed and sent to market for consumption by consumers.
4. Make threats to undocumented workers to discourage a worker from exercising rights under the National Labor Relations Act an unfair labor practice. Neither back pay nor any other monetary damages shall be denied, as a result of a complainant or plaintiff's immigration status. Require that discrimination shall be prohibited and shall be included in the terms and conditions of employment.
5. End electronic worker verification systems like E-verify, and other means of enforcing "work authorization" and employer sanctions.
6. Indigenous communities should have the right to use their languages and their cultural practices. In general, indigenous communities should have the right to materials in their native languages about immigration laws and legal proceedings.
7. Review existing trade agreements to determine how they have contributed to the displacement of communities, by increasing poverty and the economic pressure to migrate. The review should include public Congressional hearings. These hearings should be open to testimony from community organizations, unions, immigrant and human rights organizations, faith-based entities, popular organizations from the countries affected, and environmental organizations.
8. Eliminate arbitrary, indefinite, or mandatory detention or other forms of abusive treatment and detention practices that separate family members. Implement humane alternatives to detention that allow for release on reasonable bond or their own recognizance before an individualize hearing.
9. End the privatization of the detention system—the large majority of detention facilities used in Mississippi and Louisiana are private for-profit facilities—by canceling the contracts to these private contractors, the Federal Government will be forced to assume its responsibility to respect the human rights of those charged with immigration violations.

10. Preempt any State or local law that discriminates against an individual based on immigration status or that imposes sanctions on any individual or entity based on the immigration status of its clients, employees, or tenants.

11. Eliminate all agreements between the Department of Homeland Security and local, county, or State law enforcement agencies. Repeal 287g. Clarify that the authority to enforce Federal immigration law lies solely with the Federal Government.

12. Repeal any Federal law that may bar States from issuing driver licenses to undocumented immigrants.

13. Ensure the due process rights of immigrants in detention, deportation, or removal proceedings. This will include access to legal representation, fair trials, meaningful and expedient judicial review. End racial, ethnic, and religious profiling, and other forms of illegal searches and seizures.

14. Ensure judicial procedures take into account the impact of deportation on family and community members, as well as on the individual.

15. Require ICE agents to exercise discretion in arresting people for immigration violations, especially in cases that involve children or other vulnerable members of the immigrant population.

Arresting and firing undocumented workers will not decrease unemployment. No undocumented worker has ever closed a plant, sent a job out of the country, or laid people off to boost profits. Arresting or firing an undocumented worker does not create a single job. We need to create jobs, not raid work places. Interestingly, in Mississippi, a recent employment report showed that the counties with the highest unemployment rates were the counties with the least immigrant workers. Those counties with the lowest unemployment rates had the largest number of immigrants. Immigrants create jobs and businesses.

Employer sanctions, part of immigration law, make it a crime for undocumented people to work. The raid in early August 2019 of Mississippi's poultry plants, not only hurt the 680 workers, it also traumatized their families and the communities where they lived. Their neighbors, black and white, protested to the local media about their shock and disgust. The raids occurred on the first day of school, which should be a happy time for school children. All Department of Homeland Security workplace raids should immediately cease.

The United States spends more money on immigration, than all other Federal programs combined. Our tax revenue is being used to violate basic human rights. There is no place for racism and xenophobia under the law. These are just a few of the changes that would take us in a direction for fair and just immigration reform. We appreciate the committee's decision to bring this hearing to Mississippi.

STATEMENT OF L. PATRICIA ICE, DIRECTOR, MISSISSIPPI IMMIGRANTS RIGHTS ALLIANCE (MIRA) LEGAL PROJECT

NOVEMBER 5, 2019

AUGUST 7, 2019 ICE AND HSI WORKSITE ENFORCEMENT RAIDS IN MISSISSIPPI

I have worked as a full-time immigration lawyer in Mississippi for the last 20 years. I have also been a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) for more than 21 years. I am the current leader of the AILA African Diaspora Interest Group (ADIG). My immigration law career began in my home State of Michigan in 1994, when I took my first immigration cases. I began my Mississippi immigration law practice in 1999 in Scott County, Mississippi, working alongside missionaries who requested my assistance with immigrant families and their cases in Morton and Forest. In my job as an immigration lawyer I help immigrants and their families apply for immigration benefits resulting in the acquisition of temporary and permanent residence, as well as citizenship through naturalization. I have also assisted immigrants with their removal (deportation) defense cases in the Memphis and New Orleans immigration courts. In addition, I have represented immigrants in their affirmative asylum cases in asylum offices in Chicago, Houston, and New Orleans. Today, it is believed that almost 10 percent of the population of Scott County has been arrested, detained, and/or deported as a result of U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)/Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) worksite enforcement raids across central Mississippi on or about August 7, 2019 that netted 680 individuals and resulted in the termination of jobs of another 100 or so individuals. It is important to note that these senseless raids affected thousands of individuals across Mississippi and the country at large. I am outraged and feel personally violated by

these raids due to my involvement in many of the raid-affected immigrant communities for the last 20 years. I, along with my colleagues at the AILA, hereby condemn the raids for the following reasons:

- The administration conducted what is reportedly the largest single-State worksite enforcement raid in U.S. history on August 7, 2019, in Mississippi at various poultry processing plants. Before that, in August 2008, Mississippi was the scene of the largest worksite enforcement raid at the Howard Industries ballast plant in Laurel where approximately 592 workers were arrested.
- Conducting massive raids on worksites has proven to be an inhumane, destructive, and ineffective way to enforce immigration law.
- These “shock and awe” tactics do nothing more than stoke fear and intimidation and are a waste of law enforcement resources that should be focused on protecting communities rather than tearing them apart.
- The ripple effect of these raids extends far beyond those who were arrested.
- Their children, their co-workers, their houses of worship, their neighbors, the businesses they support, and the entire community, have experienced a trauma that will last for decades. More than 10 years after the fact, I am still working on a case of a Howard Industries arrestee.
- This raid was launched with no regard for the fundamental principles of due process that are the foundation of the American justice system.
- The administration descended on small, remote towns where legal assistance is almost non-existent, separating families with no plan or consideration for what would happen to the children, how people will find each other, or get the help they need.
- What our country requires is a pathway to legal status for those who have lived and work in communities around the Nation for decades, raising families, and contributing to our shared prosperity.

The Mississippi raids of August 7 were carried out in a horrific way, specifically with no thought of how to protect children of the arrestees who are mostly U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents. This was one of the worst aspects of the raids. Children, separated from their parents again, by Homeland Security. At his press conference following the raids, U.S. Attorney Mike Hurst of the Southern District of Mississippi, made references to notifying school officials and other Government agencies regarding the raids. Reports from those officials indicated otherwise and that schools were caught off guard. The Pew Research Center reported in 2016 that Mississippi has one of the smallest populations of undocumented immigrants in the country, about 20,000 by their count. Why Mississippi was chosen to conduct the largest worksite enforcement raids (2008 and 2019) in the United States is a mystery. Mississippi is also a State with a small overall population that is largely rural and agricultural at just under 3 million inhabitants. The State has the largest black population in the country which is nearly 40 percent of the total. There is a lot of interaction between the black and immigrant populations and a lot of intercultural marriages. I have assisted many couples in those marriages to attain lawful permanent residence and citizenship for their immigrant loved ones. Due to its highly racist past, the black population in Mississippi is extremely vulnerable to untold discrimination, along with the immigrant population which is largely Latino. The deep institutional racism that still exists in Mississippi adds fuel to the fire of discrimination against immigrants who often have darker skin and sometimes marry those and create families with native-born U.S. citizens with darker skin.

I would like to see a complete end to immigrant detention and facilities in the United States. But note that Mississippi has few long-term detention facilities and most immigrants arrested here are sent to Louisiana and housed long-term there in for-profit prisons if not granted bond or parole. DHS is building new detention facilities in Louisiana as I write this, and is set to have more than 15,000 detainees there soon in private, for-profit prisons. Putting Mississippi immigrants in detention facilities in Louisiana makes it difficult, if not impossible, for immigrants to maintain relationships with family members and friends, and with Mississippi-based immigration attorneys who they may already know. Immigrants without legal representation in the immigration courts are likely not to prevail in their immigration cases. For me, it is usually a 24-hour+ trip to see one detained immigrant in Louisiana or to attend another immigrant’s hearing at the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or the Executive Office of Immigration Review Immigration Courts (EOIR). I am often forced to spend the night at an expensive hotel in New Orleans or Memphis in order to attend early morning hearings outside of Mississippi. But more seriously, I have recently had to stop representing detained immigrants altogether due to the distances I have to drive to reach them and the high costs of lodging when I get there. The MIRA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and we just do not have the financial resources or time to travel to remote de-

tention facilities and EOIR courtrooms in Louisiana and Tennessee on a regular basis. Therefore, we have chosen to focus and work mostly on affirmative administrative immigration cases.

There is a need to open full-service USCIS adjudication offices in Mississippi, to make immigration courts independent, and to put immigration courts in this State. For years, the Nation's immigration courts have been plagued by systemic problems that have severely undermined their ability to deliver just and fair decisions in a timely manner. Housed within the DOJ, the immigration court system is vulnerable to Executive branch interference—a structural flaw which the current administration has exploited and which undermines the very integrity of the system. Under-resourced for years and now burdened by inefficient policies, the court system is struggling to manage a growing backlog of over 1 million cases. To ensure the immigration courts can operate with the integrity needed to ensure a fair process, Congress must create an independent immigration court system under Article I of the Constitution that is separate from DOJ. In addition, DOJ and EOIR, which administers the immigration courts, should rescind policies such as case completion quotas that are now part of judges' performance reviews, that have stripped judges of judicial independence and made it more difficult for them to rule on cases in a fair, consistent, and efficient manner. DHS is hurting the American economy businesses and families by failing to operate an efficient USCIS and court system.

Since 1998, when I moved to Mississippi, there has never been a USCIS adjudication office in the entire State, with the exception of a short period of time following Hurricane Katrina in 2005 when a few USCIS officers were detailed here while their damaged offices were being re-built in New Orleans. USCIS's constant refrain for lack of a full-service office in Mississippi is that it is not economically feasible to put an office here. Every year I used to ask the USCIS district director, based in New Orleans, to put a full service USCIS office here. Her answer was always no. Likewise, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR) that runs the Immigration Courts and that works in tandem with DHS (USCIS and ICE/HSI) has also refused to open an immigration court in Mississippi. USCIS and EOIR cause immigrants, their families, and their lawyers to often drive 3 to 5 hours one-way to get to a USCIS office or Immigration Court in Louisiana or Memphis. In the alternative, the DHS has chosen to fund almost full-service ICE and HSI offices in the State, making it convenient to arrest, detain, and deport immigrants in Mississippi but not help immigrants receive the benefits to which they are entitled or a fair day in court.

I am asking the Members of the House Homeland Security Committee to take into consideration my ideas, and those of AILA, and to use their oversight authority to implement some of the suggestions made above and to stop DHS from carrying out raids in our State that do nothing but inflict damage and pain for all involved.

In review, Congress should work to do the following:

- Outlaw worksite enforcement and other egregious raids in Mississippi and the country;
- Close all for-profit and other immigrant detention facilities in the United States;
- Bring a full-service USCIS adjudication office to Mississippi;
- Create an independent immigration court system under Article I of the Constitution that is separate from DOJ and EOIR; and
- Bring one or more of those independent immigration courts to Mississippi.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF AMELIA S. MCGOWAN, SENIOR ATTORNEY, JACKSON OFFICE,
MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR JUSTICE

NOVEMBER 7, 2019

INTRODUCTION

I am Amelia S. McGowan, a senior attorney with the Jackson office of the Mississippi Center for Justice and an adjunct professor of law at Mississippi College School of Law, where I direct the State's only law school immigration clinic. I thank Chairman Thompson and the Members of the House Homeland Security Committee for holding this hearing to investigate the impacts and aftermath of the August 7, 2019, ICE raids on Mississippi communities.

The Mississippi Center for Justice ("MCJ") is a nonpartisan, nonprofit civil rights legal organization that was founded in 2003 in Jackson, Mississippi. It was formed to provide a home-grown and home-owned legal capacity to advance racial and eco-

conomic justice in the State of Mississippi. In 2005, MCJ became the Deep South affiliate of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a National civil rights legal organization formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to involve the private bar in providing legal services to address racial discrimination. MCJ's role in marshaling legal assistance and advocacy for unrepresented and invisible victims of Hurricane Katrina drew the attention of Congressional oversight committees on 6 occasions, including this committee in July 2009. In 2018, MCJ expanded its work into immigration law, and has provided pro bono immigration representation, outreach, and advocacy on behalf of immigrants throughout our State since that time. MCJ is only one of a small handful of Mississippi non-profits providing immigration legal representation to Mississippi immigrants, and is the only one focusing on asylum and immigration appeals.

I am a native Mississippian and have practiced immigration law for nearly 10 years. I also hold a Master's degree in Latin American Studies and am fluent in English and Spanish. During my career, I have focused my practice, teaching, and research primarily on asylum and immigration appeals—before the immigration courts, local asylum offices, the Board of Immigration Appeals, the Fifth, Ninth, and Eleventh Circuit Courts of Appeal, and the U.S. Supreme Court—and represent a number of asylum seekers in central Mississippi. Recognizing the tremendous access to justice gaps that exist for immigrants in our State, I have also worked over the past several years to train and recruit volunteer attorneys to represent Mississippi immigrants in removal proceedings.

MCJ'S ROLE IN THE AUGUST 2019 RAIDS RESPONSE

Immediately after the August 7, 2019 raids, MCJ began coordinating a Nationwide pro bono response to assess the immigration legal needs of the approximately 680 immigrants arrested that day.¹ We prepared and disseminated an on-line legal volunteer survey, receiving over 500 responses within days. At the same time, drawing from our disaster response work after Hurricane Katrina, as well as our existing ties with local immigrant communities and pro bono attorneys, we organized and staffed weekly legal clinics to assess legal needs in the affected communities. Through these clinics, MCJ staff and volunteer attorneys met with community members and conducted hundreds of intakes, both of individuals who had been arrested and released on August 7, as well as family members of individuals who had been transferred to criminal or immigration detention.

For the hundreds of Mississippi immigrants transferred to immigration detention, primarily in Louisiana, MCJ worked with a team of area organizations and attorneys, including the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), attorney Jeremy Jong, and Immigration Services and Legal Advocacy (ISLA), to visit raid victims in detention to conduct intakes and assess legal needs and bond eligibility. These attorneys and organizations worked tirelessly to provide screenings and consultations for raid victims spread throughout the area's many detention centers. At the same time, MCJ and these partners, named above, coordinated with the Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC), Lawyers for Good Government, Project Corazon, Pangea Legal, Centro Legal de la Raza, various law school immigration clinics, and other private attorneys and firms to provide pro bono bond representation to detained immigrants who were eligible for bonds but were unable to hire private counsel.

Once our detention team was in place, MCJ began focusing on the cases of the approximately 300 immigrants who had been released on the day of the raids but still faced removal proceedings in Memphis or New Orleans, as well as possible criminal charges and civil fines. Our staff contacted each non-detained family/individual to assess continued immigration legal needs. At the same time, we contacted the attorneys on our volunteer list to assess availability/capacity to take cases and began matching community members with attorneys. Currently, MCJ has placed approximately 55 individuals with pro bono counsel.

OBSERVATIONS

"Where was the judge he'd never seen? Where was the high court he had never reached?"—Franz Kafka, The Trial.

The largest State-wide raid in United States history did not occur in a vacuum. In addition to the raid's immediate effects described by my colleagues, hundreds of those arrested on August 7 also now face lengthy removal proceedings to determine their fate in this country. They now face the threat of a lifetime of separation from

¹Amelia S. McGowan, "After terrifying ICE raid, Mississippi is still fighting back," *USA Today*, 3 Oct. 2019, available at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/policing/spotlight/2019/10/03/terrifying-ice-raid-mississippi-still-fighting-back/3790692002/>.

their families, homes, and communities, and removal to countries where they may be persecuted, tortured, or killed. And even though many impacted immigrants may have strong defenses to stay in the country, they now face a convoluted and adversarial legal process that is increasingly unjust and hostile toward them.

Through my long-term immigration work with asylum seekers in central Mississippi, I know that the majority of the hundreds of individuals arrested on August 7 are indigenous Guatemalans and many have claims for protection under U.S. law. Many fled Guatemala during or shortly after the country's 36-year civil war, in which over 200,000 Guatemalans were killed or disappeared.² According to Guatemala's Commission for Historical Clarification, which investigated the thousands of human rights violations following the war, "the violence was fundamentally directed by the State against the excluded, the poor and above all, the Mayan people, as well as those who fought for justice and greater social equality."³ Of the 42,275 victims identified by Commission, 83 percent were Mayan.⁴ While the cease-fire officially ended the war in 1996, the legacies of the violence remain, as indigenous Guatemalans continue to face widespread discrimination, forced evictions, severe poverty, and continued state-backed violence.

These atrocities hit many raids-impacted individuals in profound and terrifying ways, forcing them to seek protection in the United States, and eventually to make a home in Mississippi. During one legal clinic in Canton, one community member recounted witnessing the Guatemalan military rounding up and shooting his family members in front of him when he was a small child. He reported experiencing flashbacks when ICE agents stormed his workplace. A young woman, whose grandparents had also been murdered by the Guatemalan military in the 80's, had to flee her country last year when the government permitted a mining company to excavate in a predominantly indigenous community, forcibly displacing nearly all of the town's residents.

While many community members may have strong claims to asylum (or the related protections of withholding of removal or protection under the Convention Against Torture) on that basis, recent attempts to erode these well-established safeguards and to criminalize the lawful act of seeking asylum severely undermine the rule of law in our country. For many, these protections, along with the due process rights guaranteed to all and that are fundamental to the rule of law in our country, are little more than an illusion and undermine the integrity of our entire legal system.

For one, on the day of the raids, over 300 community members were detained and transferred to immigration detention facilities—many run by private prison companies known for egregious human rights violations—throughout the region.⁵ Detained immigrants are far from their families, friends, and communities, where they spend weeks or months as prisoners while attempting to navigate the labyrinthine removal process alone, far removed from legal access or support. The imprisonment of so many immigration detainees in rural, isolated areas is by design. Far from access to legal resources and proof that can support their cases, detained immigrants continue fighting for their lives in removal proceedings while detained in these isolated prisons. Many do so with severe physical or emotional trauma from the persecution or torture they fled.

Moreover, all immigrants in removal proceedings, whether detained or not, will face considerable barriers in the proceedings themselves. If they want to apply for an immigration benefit, they must complete a detailed application, all in English, and translate all proof (which may include medical records and police reports) into English. The Government does not provide assistance with completing these forms, so applicants, who often have no financial resources, often do not speak English, and are often not familiar with the U.S. legal system, must rely on their friends or relatives or vie for assistance from overextended non-profits, many of whom still charge unreachable fees.

If the individual successfully completes the application, they then face a daunting (and adversarial) hearing in Immigration Court, which is an administrative body under the Department of Justice. Although immigrants in removal proceedings have

² Commission for Historical Clarification—Guatemala, *Guatemala: Memory of Silence*, available at <https://hrdag.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/CEHreport-english.pdf>, p. 17.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ For a non-exhaustive list of reports (including several prepared by the U.S. Government) chronicling rights abuses in U.S. immigration detention centers, please see National Immigrant Justice Center, "Recent Reports Documenting Abuse and Corruption in U.S. Immigration Jails, April 2019," available at https://www.immigrantjustice.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-files/no-content-type/2019-04/A-Better-Way-report_APPENDIX_detention-reporting-bibliography_April2019.pdf.

the right to counsel, an attorney will not be provided at the Government's expense, so applicants must either hire a private attorney or locate an attorney or non-profit who is willing to take on the case for free. Because non-profits who handle asylum cases for free are rare, however, and certainly cannot meet the need, applicants are often forced to proceed alone. During these proceedings, which can span hours, applicants must explain in great detail the legal defense that would permit them to remain in the United States. This often requires that they recount their fears of returning to their home countries, reliving the trauma that they fled, and be knowledgeable in the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of U.S. immigration law. Given the shortage of immigration judges and the rural nature of immigration detention centers, if the person is detained, these hearings are frequently conducted by video, with the judge appearing from a court hundreds of miles away and often with a poor video connection.⁶ To make matters worse, with increasing pressure on Immigration Judges to meet Government-established "case-completion" quotas, asylum hearings in immigration court become, as one Immigration Judge described it, "death penalty cases in a traffic court setting."⁷

Even for those with the strongest claims and who have counsel, their chances for success may be non-existent from the beginning. According to data from Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), some area Immigration Judges boast a 98–100 percent denial rate.⁸ These rates would be unheard of in other areas of law. This is in large part because immigration courts lack meaningful independent review: Both the immigration courts and the first level of appellate review, the Board of Immigration Appeals, are under the control and influence of the Department of Justice, often rubber-stamping the Attorney General's own agenda. Applicants do not obtain independent judicial review—to the Federal circuit courts—until their second appeal, which is out of reach of many immigrants, given the scarcity of attorneys who handle these cases for free and the length of time they take. Therefore, even Immigration Court and Board of Immigration Appeals decisions that blatantly violate the law often go completely unchecked. For this reason, MCJ has prioritized immigration appellate representation.

This is the legal reality facing the hundreds of Mississippi immigrants arrested on August 7. Given these barriers, countless community members, who may otherwise have strong claims may fall through the cracks and be forced to return to persecution, torture, and even death.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the foregoing observations, the Mississippi Center for Justice respectfully urges you to take the following steps:

- (1) We respectfully urge you to defund and eliminate the civil immigration detention system (which includes the Adams County Correctional Center and the Tallahatchie County Correctional Facility) that has separated hundreds of Mississippi families and communities;
- (2) We respectfully urge you to monitor and hold accountable the Immigration Courts and the Board of Immigration Appeals, to ensure they are complying with constitutional due process guarantees, as well as protections established by statute and treaty obligations;
- (3) We respectfully urge you to establish an immigration court system that is independent of the Department of Justice;
- (4) We respectfully urge you to forego the removal of any individuals who have not had the opportunity to consult with an attorney and/or exhaust all potential legal claims relevant to the raid and their employer, as well as any immigration benefits for which they may qualify.

⁶Stephen Franklin, Miriam Annenberg, and Ankur Singh, "Video hearings in immigration court are harming immigrants' cases," *Pacific Standard*, 2 Jul. 2019, available at <https://psmag.com/social-justice/video-hearings-in-immigration-court-are-harming-immigrants-cases>.

⁷Maria Sacchetti, "Immigration judges say proposed quotas from Justice Dept. threaten judicial independence," *Washington Post*, 12 October 2017, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/immigration/immigration-judges-say-proposed-quotas-from-justice-dept-threaten-independence/2017/10/12/3ed86992-ae1-11e7-be94-fabb0f1e9ffb_story.html; Immigration Judge Dana Leigh Marks, "How a 'dire' immigration court backlog affects lives," *PBSNewshour*, 18 Sept. 2017, available at <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/dire-immigration-court-backlog-affects-lives>.

⁸Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC)—Syracuse University, "Immigration Judge Reports—Asylum," TRAC Immigration, available at <https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/judgereports/>.

STATEMENT OF THE CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY (CLASP)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2019

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security, we thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record for the November 7 public field hearing on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) workplace raids.

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) is a National, nonpartisan, anti-poverty organization advancing Federal, State, and local policy solutions that work for people with low incomes. We conduct research on the impact of immigration enforcement policies on children and families and advocate for policies that mitigate the harm to children impacted by enforcement actions. As experts on child development and immigration policy, we are gravely concerned with the long-term harm that the August Mississippi worksite raids have inflicted on hundreds of children, many of whom are U.S. citizens, as well as the broader community.

On August 7, 2019, ICE arrested 680 hardworking people in a series of worksite raids in small communities in central Mississippi. In a matter of hours, parents, friends, neighbors, and other integral community members were ambushed at their place of work, arrested, and separated from their loved ones. The raids—which targeted chicken-processing plants whose parent companies have been the subject of several Federal investigations in the last decade—represent the largest single-State enforcement action in nearly 10 years.¹

The immediate impact to children was obvious: Terrified children got off school busses in the afternoon to empty houses. Babies and toddlers were stranded at child care without parents to pick them up. Teachers, child care providers, and volunteers scrambled to devise emergency plans for children with nowhere else to go. Churches, food banks, and immigrant-rights organizations were forced into crisis mode to meet families' immediate needs and locate loved ones who were detained by ICE.

We urge the committee to consider the critical testimonies of those who are living with the consequences of these massive workplace raids and act to ensure that these types of operations cease, and that the well-being of children be held paramount in all immigration enforcement actions. We also call on Congress to urge the Department of Homeland Security to release all those still detained so that they may pursue their options for immigration relief near their legal representatives and families. It is clear children, families, and Mississippi communities will be grappling with the aftermath for years to come.

LARGE-SCALE IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS ARE HARMFUL TO CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

A large and growing body of research details how large-scale worksite raids affect children. In the immediate aftermath, there is intense fear, worry, and confusion as families' lives are thrown into chaos. This increased instability is an added stressor for children who just had their worst nightmare come true. Children may have trouble eating and sleeping or become anxious, withdrawn, clingy, or angry. Previous research shows that the longer children remain separated from their parents, the more their mental and physical health suffers.²

More than half of those arrested during these raids remain in detention, and several have been deported, including parents of U.S. citizen children.³ Children who are separated from a parent as a result of deportation face irrefutable harm, whether they remain in the United States without a parent or are forced to leave the only home they know to relocate abroad with a deported family member. It's important to note that the majority of the families impacted come from indigenous communities in Guatemala, which raises concerns about the extent to which families are able to access the assistance they need to prepare to have their children accompany them to Guatemala. Furthermore, research shows that there are significant chal-

¹Denham, Hannah. "What We Know about the 5 Companies Targeted in the ICE Raids in Mississippi." *The Washington Post*, August 2019, www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/08/08/what-we-know-about-five-companies-targeted-mississippi-ice-raids/.

²Chaudry, Ajay, et al. *Facing Our Future: Children in the Aftermath of Immigration Enforcement*. Urban Institute, 2010, www.urban.org/research/publication/facing-our-future; Capps, et al. *Paying the Price: The Impact of Immigration Raids on America's Children*. The Urban Institute, 2007, webarchive.urban.org/publications/411566.html; "Digital Commons at Michigan State University College of Law," digitalcommons.law.msu.edu/facpubs/index.3.html.

³Bethea, Charles. "After ICE Came to Morton, Mississippi." *The New Yorker*, The New Yorker, 31 Oct. 2019, www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/after-ice-came-to-morton-mississippi.

allenges to ensuring that children are able to enroll in school or health care once in Guatemala.⁴

As the months stretch on, hardworking Mississippi families will likely tumble into poverty. Immigration enforcement often removes a primary breadwinner, slashing families' incomes by half or more.⁵ Parents left behind generally struggle to make ends meet and need on-going support to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads—particularly those who are ensnared in on-going deportation proceedings.⁶ Some teenage children are forced to drop out of school and begin working full-time or take on additional caregiving responsibilities for younger siblings in order to keep their families afloat. Already, it has been reported that families impacted by the Mississippi raids are facing housing and food challenges.⁷

LARGE-SCALE IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS PUT A STRAIN ON LOCAL PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Large-scale worksite raids also further put further pressure on already overwhelmed and under-resourced educational and social service providers. On the day of a raid, it is often teachers and child care providers comforting terrified children and making care arrangements for those whose parents are unable to pick them up.⁸ Educators also bear the added responsibility of addressing children's increased need for mental health resources and other supports over time. Similarly, community resources like food banks and emergency financial assistance may struggle to meet families' on-going needs in the long term.

Many students impacted by the Mississippi raids have missed numerous school days, which creates consequences for the students, schools, as well as other children in the classroom. In our 2017 research on the impact of immigration enforcement on young children, we heard from early childhood providers and educators that children are picking up on the stress of their classmates, regardless of whether their parents are immigrants.⁹ Our research also found that immigration enforcement is creating significant strain on providers who are grappling to connect parents and students to information and resources while also trying to meet the demands of all the children they serve.

AT A MINIMUM, ICE MUST FOLLOW ITS OWN HUMANITARIAN GUIDELINES FOR WORKSITE ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

The Government-imposed disaster on Mississippi communities earlier this year was worsened by the fact that ICE did not appear to fully implement its own guidelines to identify humanitarian concerns among immigrants who are arrested during worksite enforcement operations.¹⁰ These "humanitarian guidelines" were created in 2007 under the Bush administration specifically to mitigate the harm of worksite raids on children and communities.

The guidelines clearly state that during worksite enforcement actions involving 25 workers or more, ICE agents are expected to identify and consider for release certain vulnerable populations in a timely manner. Individuals who should be considered for release include people who are sole caregivers of children; have serious medical conditions; are pregnant or nursing; or are caretakers of disabled or seri-

⁴Children in Harm's Way: Criminal Justice, Immigration Enforcement, and Child Welfare. First Focus and The Sentencing Project, 2013, <https://firstfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Children-in-Harms-Way.pdf>.

⁵See for example: Chaudry, Ajay, et al. *Facing Our Future*, The Urban Institute, 2017, www.urban.org/research/publication/facing-our-future; Capps, Randy, et al. "Deferred Action for Unauthorized Immigrant Parents: Analysis of DAPA's Potential Effects on Families and Children." Migration Policy Institute, 2017, www.migrationpolicy.org/research/deferred-action-unauthorized-immigrant-parents-analysis-dapas-potential-effects-families; Warren, et al. *Mass Deportations Would Impoverish US Families and Create Immense Social Costs*. Center for Migration Studies, 2017, cmsny.org/publications/mass-deportations-impoverish-us-families-create-immense-costs/.

⁶Fields, Samantha. "What Are the Economic Impacts of ICE Raids?" *Marketplace*, 2019, www.marketplace.org/2019/08/22/the-economic-consequences-of-ice-raids-are-far-reaching/.

⁷Bethea, Charles. "After ICE Came to Morton, Mississippi." *The New Yorker*, October 31, 2019, www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/after-ice-came-to-morton-mississippi.

⁸Lopez, William, et al. "Educators: The Unsung Heroes Supporting Immigrant Families in Wake of ICE Raids." *The Hill*, August 13 2019, <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/457146-educators-are-the-unsung-heroes-supporting-immigrant-families-in-the-wake>.

⁹Cervantes, et al. *Our Children's Fear: Immigration Policy's Effects on Young Children*. Center for Law and Social Policy, 2018, www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/our-childrens-fear-immigration-policys-effects-young-children.

¹⁰"Guidelines for Identifying Humanitarian Concerns Among Administrative Arrestees When Conducting Worksite Enforcement Operations." National Immigration Law Center, <https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ice-hum-guidelines.pdf>.

ously ill relatives. ICE is also expected to coordinate with State or local social service agencies to help identify people who qualify for humanitarian release. At minimum, ICE is supposed to notify the heads of State social service agencies that a worksite action is imminent so that they be prepared to respond and ensure that children are safe. These precautions acknowledge that is irresponsible and reckless to carry out such massive operations without taking every possible step to ensure that children are not unnecessarily separated from their parents and social service agencies are not carrying the burden of response alone.

While immigration officials claim that parents were among the first to be released, many were not released until the day after the raid took place.¹¹ And it is clear that ICE did not take any precautions to ensure that children were not left alone without a caregiver. Reports from school leadership and child welfare officials in Mississippi suggest that they were completely blindsided by the August raids, which took place on the first day of school in many communities.¹² News reports showed children stranded overnight at a local gym, sleeping on the floor, and crying for their parents.¹³ Others were reportedly going door-to-door looking for their parents when they got off the school bus to an empty house. Several days after the raids, State Child Protective Services were still receiving reports that children had not been reunited with their parents.¹⁴

If the raid was indeed being planned for more than a year—as ICE officials claim—there is simply no excuse not to put these safeguards in place. CLASP demands an end to family separation in all its forms and condemns the administration's relentless attacks on immigrants and people of color, which are imposing immeasurable trauma on a generation of children. At minimum, ICE must be held accountable to enforcing the safeguards it has in place.

CONGRESS MUST TAKE ACTION TO ENSURE ICE MITIGATES THE HARM OF IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT ON CHILDREN

The significant impact of the Mississippi raids demonstrates the critical need for Congress to expand protections for children, families, and communities impacted by enforcement actions. We urge Congress to pass the Humane Enforcement and Legal Protections (HELP) for Separated Children Act (H.R. 3451), Coordinating Care for Children Act (S. 2256), and Help Separated Families Act (H.R. 3452). These bills are aimed at mitigating the harm to children impacted by interior immigration enforcement. The first 2 are focused on ICE practice, including allowing parents to make decisions about their children's care after apprehension and before deportation, including protections to ensure that ICE does not interrogate children present during an enforcement action or force them to translate and requires sensitivity training for all agents. The latter bill is focused on ensuring that the child welfare system has protocols in place to ensure children are able to reunify with detained or deported parents.

We also encourage Congress to pass the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act (S. 2097/H.R. 1011), a bill which would codify, expand, and strengthen existing policy that restricts ICE agents from carrying out enforcement actions in places deemed "sensitive," such as schools, hospitals, and places of worship. The bill would expand the policy to include other locations such as courthouses, public libraries, and food banks; restrict ICE from carrying out enforcement actions within 1,000 feet of a sensitive location; and add more accountability measures.

Finally, it's important to recognize that the significant increase in resources to ICE in recent years (including to Homeland Security Investigations, the agency which carried out the Mississippi raids) coupled with reduced discretion to consider whether individuals detained are parents to children or have long-term community

¹¹ Campbell, Larrison. "In Record-Breaking Workplace Raid, Immigration Officials Claim Parents Released First." *Mississippi Today*, August 12, 2019, <https://mississippitoday.org/2019/08/08/in-record-breaking-workplace-raid-immigration-officials-claim-parents-released-first/>.

¹² Pittman, Ashton. "As ICE Raided, Children Cried and Educators Scrambled." *Jackson Free Press*, 21 Aug. 2019, <https://www.jacksonfreepress.com/news/2019/aug/21/ice-raided-children-cried-and-educators-scrambled/>.

¹³ Helmore, Edward. "They Cry for Their Parents': Mississippi ICE Raids Spur Pleas from Children." *The Guardian*, August 8 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/aug/08/mississippi-ice-raids-children-video>; Fowler, Sarah. "Where are Mom and Dad? School on Standby to Help Children in Aftermath of ICE Raids." *Clarion Ledger*, August 7 2019, <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2019/08/07/what-happens-children-people-detained-ms-ice-raids-immigration/1947642001/>.

¹⁴ Zhu, Alissa. "Mississippi Child Services: Some Children Still Not Reunited with Parents After ICE Raid." *Clarion Ledger*, August 12 2019, <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2019/08/12/mississippi-ice-raid-agency-says-some-children-still-without-parents-immigration/1987877001/>.

ties has had serious, often long-term consequences. Thus, we also urge Congress to cut funding to ICE for enforcement actions and ensure any funding includes specific guardrails to hold ICE accountable and minimize the harm to communities.

We thank you again for the opportunity to submit this written statement for the record. Should you have any questions regarding this statement, please do not hesitate to reach Wendy Cervantes, Director of Immigration and Immigrant Families[.]

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CHANGE ACTION AND THE FAIR IMMIGRATION REFORM
MOVEMENT (FIRM) ACTION

NOVEMBER 7, 2019

The Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM) Action and Community Change Action write to support and commend the House Homeland Security Committee for holding the field hearing, *Immigration Raids: Impacts and Aftermath on Mississippi Communities in Tougaloo, Mississippi* on November 7, 2019.

Community Change Action is a national organization whose mission is to build the power and capacity of low-income people, especially low-income people of color, to change their communities and public policies for the better. FIRM Action, a project of Community Change Action, is the largest national immigrant grassroots coalition, led by 44 member organizations across 32 States.

On Wednesday, August 7, 2019 a series of worksite enforcement raids at chicken processing plants took place across Mississippi. The raids, led by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), resulted in the arrest of nearly 700 individuals and caused chaos and unnecessary family separations, harming children, their families, and communities. Following the raids, stories of violations of workers' rights, abusive ICE agents, and the lack of due process emerged. As families were left to grapple with missing parents, friends, neighbors, and relatives began to take in the children of detained workers. The communities in the different Mississippi towns where the worksite raids were conducted had to rally together and support each other in the aftermath of nearly 700 people being detained during the raids.

Community Change Action sent staff to Mississippi in the aftermath of the raids to help with rapid response. This work included community information sessions; intakes and directing families to legal resources; and organizing in communities to make sense of the devastation that was taking place, what to expect in the weeks and months to come, and how to prepare and respond to the specific needs of different towns and communities. The rapid response work with community members posed some difficult challenges. First, many of the individuals affected by the raids spoke indigenous Guatemalan languages creating barriers for service providers. Additionally, the raids spread across a large region of the State, slowing down the rapid response efforts because of the long distances required to travel in between the impacted communities.

We are encouraged that the House Homeland Security Committee is holding a field hearing in Mississippi to hear first-hand about the worksite raids on August 7, the devastating impact on families, and the challenges they continue to face. Given the challenging political moment, it is critical that this committee question the motives and actions of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and specifically ICE and ICE Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). The committee must also hold these agencies accountable for their conduct in carrying out the raid and detaining hundreds of individuals—some who remain detained to this day. In line with holding these agencies accountable, we also ask Members of this committee to re-evaluate the funding being allocated to these enforcement agencies and DHS as a whole. We remain convinced that it is dangerous and irresponsible to provide further funding to agencies like ICE and CBP to carry out these harmful enforcement actions that tear communities apart.

The FIRM Network is committed to reimagining our immigration system through our Roadmap to Unity and Freedom, a vision for our country grounded in the belief that our families should be united and free. As part of this vision, we imagine an immigration system that protects immigrant workers and allows them to work safely in this country while pursuing a pathway to citizenship. All with the peace of mind that they will not be separated from their families. The painful threat of detention, deportation, and family separation has only become more and more real under this current administration. The havoc wreaked on nearly 700 workers and their families only demonstrates the urgency to create a stable and permanent path to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants living in the United States. Additionally, these solutions cannot be at the expense of others in our communities or further criminalize migration.

We hope to see a continued focus on holding DHS accountable for its actions in Mississippi and throughout the country, and we encourage the committee to demand answers to the questions that arise about DHS's conduct on August 7 and conduct in detention centers in the weeks that followed.

Worksite enforcement raids are just one of the many enforcement actions that send chills through immigrant communities and result in separated families. These raids must end and workers and their families must be protected. FIRM Action and Community Change Action will continue to push for permanent policy protections for all individuals, anchored in keeping communities and families together. This is a necessary first step to providing families with the reassurance that they can be together and free in this country.

STATEMENT OF EVELYN A. SERVIN, PREVIOUS MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY HOTLINE COORDINATOR, MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR, SOUTHEAST IMMIGRANT RIGHTS NETWORK

NOVEMBER 7, 2019

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the House Homeland Security Committee, the Southeast Immigrant Rights Network respectfully requests this statement included in the record for the House Committee on Homeland Security Field hearing: "Immigration Raids: Impacts and Aftermath on Mississippi Communities in Tougaloo, Mississippi.

I am Evelyn A. Servin and live in Russellville, Alabama. I am currently employed by the Southeast Immigrant Rights Network (SEIRN) as the membership and communications coordinator. SEIRN is comprised of 32 immigrant-led grassroots groups as well as local, State, and regional organizations working together to lift up the voices and leadership of immigrant communities in the Southeast. SEIRN creates and holds spaces for immigrant leaders, organizers, and allies to come together, build relationships and strengthen collaborations to defend immigrant communities against policies that criminalize them, separate them from their loved ones, and seek to deprive them of their dignity and their humanity. We are a movement pollinator that centers directly-impacted grassroots leaders and their families, uplifts their stories and leadership, offers tools to build their resilience, and helps them connect to a broader movement for collective liberation.

On August 7, 2019, SEIRN, along with the rest of the country, watched in disbelief as horrifying news unfolded across social media: several poultry processing plants in central Mississippi were being surrounded by more than 600 ICE agents, helicopters were flying overhead, all exits to the properties were closed off, and hundreds of community members were being detained by ICE. SEIRN's co-directors, Nayely Perez-Huerta and Mónica Hernandez, immediately mobilized the network's resources in order to bring organizing support to Mississippians. SEIRN coordinated a regional organizing effort and brought 77 Southeast organizers into Mississippi to assist the communities that were shaken to their cores by these raids. In collaboration with other non-profit organizations, community organizers, and volunteers from Mississippi, SEIRN helped organize a rapid response relief effort to address the humanitarian crisis that resulted from the raids. This included helping families locate their loved ones in detention, assessing their humanitarian needs, coordinating legal intake clinics, and launching a rapid response Community Hotline.

Wednesday, August 7 was the first day of the new school year and hundreds of children and youth left their homes full of excitement, joy, and promise. That same morning, many of their parents were detained at their workplaces, violently torn apart from their children, spouses, and communities. And that afternoon many of those children and youth returned home to an empty house, full of fear, sadness, and despair. Children could not comprehend the magnitude of this raid and why their parents were not home to welcome them on their first day of school. Little girls and little boys looked for their parents and found none; they called for their parents and when no response came from their "mami" and "papi" cried themselves to sleep in deep sorrow.

On Thursday, August 8, approximately 300 workers were released from detention at dawn. Cries of happiness for some and tears of sorrow for others, whose loved ones were still detained, could be heard loud and clear. The desperation amongst the community never ceased to exist. No one knew who to contact to get information about their family members who had not come home. Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, friends were missing from Forest, Canton, Carthage, Laurel, and Morton, Mississippi. Who do you call when the Government sanctions the kidnapping of your family and community members? You call people that see how

wrong and harmful these raids are. People from all across this country, coast-to-coast, wanted to help these families and offer assistance to these children torn apart from their parents by our violent system.

In order to connect the families with the necessary support and information, SEIRN launched a rapid response Community Hotline to connect families with the appropriate resources. The hotline was staffed by volunteer organizers from all over the Southeast: Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi. Its operational hours for the first month were 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Currently, the hours have been reduced to 8 hours a day from Monday-Friday and 4 hours a day on Saturday and Sunday. The hotline opened its lines to receive calls early Thursday morning on August 8. Due to technical difficulties, dozens of calls were missed. However, the call log was pulled, and the numbers were retrieved. Over the next 2 days, 132 calls were returned. In addition, we received about 20 calls each day. After the first round of weekly legal clinics assessing legal needs in the different towns slowed down, the community lines steadily increased to an average of 30 calls per day. Since August 8, we have received over 3,548 calls and have talked to families for 14,209 minutes.

From August 10 until October 27, I took over the role of coordinator for the Community Hotline. At times, the hotline team consisted of less than 3 or 4 people. All of us were stretched very thin as we covered the hotline's hours and met the financial and emotional needs of these impacted communities. We faced great challenges finding volunteers with proficient enough Spanish to take calls. Moreover, the primary language of most of the detained workers and their family members is not Spanish; they are from rural towns in Guatemala where Mayan indigenous languages, such as Chuj, K'iche', and Mam, are spoken.

We have callers seeking different and multiple types of assistance. Many families are lost in limbo not knowing which type of legal assistance they need; family members seek legal help for those still in detention, for those who have been released, for criminal prosecution charges—or a combination of all 3. Callers also request rent assistance, financial assistance, utilities assistance, food assistance, commissary deposits, bond assistance, criminal summons, humanitarian grievances, and to ask numerous questions as they try to get a better grasp of what awaits them. We have many families still looking for their loved ones. As ICE constantly transfers individuals from detention facility to detention facility and delays updating their data systems, loved ones remain lost in the detention and the incarceration system.

I would like to share with the committee some examples of the calls the hotline operators receive daily since August 8. These are the stories we hear multiple times a day, every day, several times a week . . . they are real accounts of affected Mississippian families, and they exist because our Government allows ICE to terrorize families all across the Nation. Brokenhearted, we listen to callers who are desperate and confused. Reading these stories does not even begin to convey the fear and sadness these Mississippian families still feel.

We have had troubled mothers calling from Guatemala several times a week, spending their last quetzal to try to make an international call to reach us and beg us to find their children. An 80-year-old grandfather tirelessly begged us to locate his youngest grandson and connect him via phone because he knew he was going to pass away without seeing or speaking to him one last time. One father called and asked for legal help for his son; he shared that he had lost the opportunity to teach him how to drive because he is very young, still a boy to him.

Another caller told the operator that he, a roommate in their small shared house, was taking care of 3 kids because their mother was detained. The kids were used to him and would cry every time somebody mentioned taking the kids elsewhere. A husband called asking for legal assistance for his wife as his baby girl of 8 months kept crying every day seeking her mother's touch and everyone needed her back home. One brother called every other evening for 3 consecutive weeks looking for his lost brother. Without a rest, we searched the on-line ICE locator system, called every detention center, and his younger brother could not be found.

This past week, current operators shared that callers are now screaming at them in despair because they cannot find an answer to their legal situation. One pregnant lady screamed at an operator because she needed food and housing assistance, and she did not have a means to transport herself to one of the local churches offering help. A wife called and asked for commissary assistance right away. Because it may take up to 10 days to receive a commissary deposit in certain detention centers such as Richwood, she yelled at the operator begging her to deposit the money immediately. At the end of the call, she asked the operator to delete any information the operator had collected and that if she needed our help she would call again tomorrow after attempting to help her husband herself.

A very frustrated brother called and was very upset about not getting information about court dates or when his brother is going to be released. A new mother was extremely upset because her husband's bond was rejected. She had reached her limit and had a breakdown. She yelled about how unfair everything was and how much she and the baby needed him. She had her baby alone and her husband has never seen their new child. We cried together . . . that's all that could be done.

My small team of dedicated operators already know the voices of the family members calling. That's Jose, Eulalia's brother. Oh, it's Emilia, the wife of Marcos. We have learned their stories and shared in their grief and been witness to their resilience. We share all the resources available but wish we could give more. Humanitarian and financial assistance from non-profits and religious organizations has dwindled down and resources are becoming scarce. Frustration and angst levels continue to climb, as well as fear, as time passes and there seems to be no clear ending to their situation.

These situations and stories are all part of the increased persecution of immigrant families to meet quotas, to meet numbers, to make private prisons more profitable. Immigrant detainees are imprisoned in rural, isolated areas as a strategy to deter access to legal and community resources. The Mississippi raid was a big show of force by the current administration, a gaudy misuse of Government resources causing real harm and real consequences to thousands of Mississippians. And now, these families are losing hope each day and are breaking down silently in the background.

After all the suffering we have heard and seen, we cannot continue to allow ourselves to be desensitized. The Southeast Immigrant Rights Network respectfully urges the following action steps and suggestions to be taken:

- (1) We urge you to exercise prosecutorial discretion and immediately release those individuals who are still detained, so that they may pursue their options for immigration relief near their legal representatives, families, and local resources;
- (2) We urge you to provide individuals with meaningful access to the courts and legal counsel, including timely and confidential meetings with legal representatives and regular access to a legal library with updated legal materials;
- (3) We urge you to forego the removal of any individual who have not had the opportunity to consult with an attorney and/or exhaust all potential legal claims relevant to the raid and their employer, as well as any immigration benefits for which they may qualify;
- (4) We urge you to hold ICE accountable for the unnecessary harm worksite raids have caused. We ask Congress to exercise prosecutorial discretion, by granting relief such as parole, continued presence, or deferred action, to those individuals whose rights were violated during their arrests, pursuant to the 2011 ICE Victim's Memo;
- (5) We urge you to obtain information about how and why specific worksites were targeted, how the raids were conducted, and what steps ICE is taking to ensure that exploited workers can cooperate with investigations into unlawful labor practices and receive back pay or money due to them;
- (6) We urge Members of Congress to continue to call for cuts to funding for ICE and CBP, including reducing funding for the operations of Homeland Security Investigations. Reaching record levels under this administration, ICE expanded its enforcement and detention operations and funded more raids operations;
- (7) We urge Members of Congress to cosponsor the Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act and the forthcoming New Way Forward bill—both of which would address mandatory detention laws that keep people locked up without due process, many of whom are picked up in enforcement operations like the Mississippi raid;
- (8) We urge Members of Congress to enact legislation that increases work permits and protections for immigrant workers and includes a pathway to citizenship for immigrant workers and their families.

LETTERS SUBMITTED BY CHAIRMAN BENNIE G. THOMPSON

November 3, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I am a father and I want to share my experience. I was arrested in the raids in August in Mississippi. It is my first time and it is very difficult for me because my family and I are suffering so much. When I was arrested, I left my wife who is pregnant and my 3 year old alone. When I speak

with my son over the phone, he starts to cry and asks me to come back home and it breaks my heart. I had never been arrested and the worst is that while being in ICE's hands, I have been physically and morally injured by an ICE officer. Here we are treated like animals. They feed us at 2am for breakfast, at 9am for lunch and at 2pm for dinner. We get fed very little food, its raw or sometimes half cooked. If someone gets sick, the medical attention is the worst. A couple weeks ago I was injured by an ICE agent, and I asked to see the doctor because he actually choked me by the neck with both hands. The pain in my neck and in my head lasted days and while I made a couple of requests, I was never given an appointment.

My wife just gave birth to our baby, our second boy, and I am still here locked up and they are living alone. My wife forgotten, without work and with two small children. That's very difficult for me. Also, I live with so much fear that ICE could retaliate against me because I still see them here in the jail.

[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

November 4, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
*Committee on Homeland Security, U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford
House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: When the raid in Mississippi happened in Canton on August 7, 2019, I was working in the plant and I was arrested that day. Now I am here detained in Richwood Correctional Center 18 Pine Bayou Circle LA 712020 and I have been 4 months detained.

I still haven't gotten any information about my court date and the immigration officers from the center aren't giving us the medicine we need. They aren't giving us much food either. They don't give us soap to wash our hands nor to wash clothes etc.

We want for you to help us be released from detention. My wife is not working and I have two children. No one is taking care of them economically or taking care of them and that is why I need to be released. I need for you to help me be released. We haven't done any crimes for them to keep us for such a long time. They have us imprisoned for a long time. My family is upset because I have been detained for such a long time. Thank you so much I am very grateful.

My name is [redacted].

October 19, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
*Committee on Homeland Security, U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford
House Office Building Washington, DC 20515.*

[This letter was provided by a group of Cuban asylum-seeking detainees held in the same facility along with 80 of the Mississippi poultry workers detained during the August 7 raid, to testify regarding detention conditions following the raid]

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: With the following letter we the Cubans are sharing our testimony to declare the reality and the injustices that we have lived through at the Richwood Correctional Center. The majority have been in this facility since the 24th of April, 2019, where we have been victims of racism, discrimination and psychological mistreatment from the prison guards. We have been witnesses of violence on the part of ICE against immigrants. Our objective from this letter is to describe and build consciousness with other organizations and entities so that they stand in solidarity with the situation we are living in this prison. We are all under heavy psychological stress because we have been detained for so long. The processes are slow and ICE is not following the court decision of the 5th of September 2019, continuing to deny parole to 100 percent of people who request for a revision of their case. Notices and official rejections are not delivered and in all this time ICE officials have not interviewed any detainees for parole. We all have sponsors in the community who vouch for us and that will be responsible for our well-being during our immigration process. These are people who have status in the country, meaning they are residents and citizens.

We all have a national IDs, our birth certificates and you can see that we have a clean record. Many of us have professional degrees and have the evidence for it. With this evidence, we prove that we are not a flight risk. We are demonstrating that we are ready to be integrated into American society. In this facility our Cuban brother Roylan Hernandez Diaz died tragically in a solitary punishment cell on the 15th of October 2019. We declare that his death was a product of the stress that

ICE inflicted on him by not granting him parole, and detaining all of us for a very long time in this place. Our fallen brother arrived in this prison on June 13, 2019, he submitted his own parole request and it was denied. He had a condition in his colon that many times was obvious and he expressed it to ICE but neither they nor the medical staff of this facility paid any attention. Roylan's death is clear evidence of the grave and sad situation in which we are living due to the incorrect strategies applied by ICE in this place. The day after our beloved Cuban brother died, a Honduran man, Manuel, who happens to be homosexual, attempted to kill himself in solitary confinement. In the lunchroom 20 Cuban detainees protested, writing messages on their shirts demanding prompt release from this place. ICE officials and guards from the jail attacked the protesters and injured many of them. Also in Bunker A, ICE agent Tunkara choked and injured a migrant from Guatemala who came from the raid in Mississippi because he did not agree to sign the parole advisory notice without consulting with his lawyer. We declare that our situation is provoking an emergency of deep and critical depression and we need your help since there is so much stress that those detained feel this could cause an imminent tragedy. We hope that this letter reaches someone's heart and that you have mercy on us.

We are here to share the injustices we face in this place:

[Redacted.]
 [Redacted.]
 [Redacted.]
 [Redacted.]
 [Redacted.]
 [Redacted.]
 [Redacted.]
 [Redacted.]
 [Redacted.]

November 4, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
Committee on Homeland Security, U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I am [redacted] from Guatemala. I was apprehended by ICE with my wife who is detained in Jena LA. We have lost everything because there is no one to help us get out. I have no communication with my wife. I am detained in Richwood Correctional Facility. I don't know how she is doing, if she is well or not. They don't give us medicine here—I have put in requests but they don't respond and when we ask for toilet paper they yell at us. Toothbrushes too. I beg that you can help me and my wife to get us out of this place.

[Redacted], Canton, MS,
 Detained in Richwood, Louisiana.

November 3, 2019

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
Committee on Homeland Security, U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I am detained in Richwood Correctional Center and I was detained in the Mississippi raids. Here in the jail, we feel sad because we are not being treated well. We are treated like animals. We don't get soap to bathe, we don't get to go to the doctor.

We don't even have a schedule for food. They take us at 2am to eat breakfast. And sometimes the food has bugs, maggots, and hair in it. We can get sick this way.

We are worried about our families, who are facing eviction and don't have food to eat. And we don't know how to get out of here—some of us don't have court until January 7. We are in here and our children don't have anyone to care for them. We ask for you to help us be released from this place. We aren't criminals, we came to build a life here in this country with our families.

Thank you.

[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

November 3, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC
20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: Today, on the third of November, I have been detained for 3 months. I was among those arrested in the Mississippi raid. The reason I am writing to you is to let you know about the terrible conditions that we are living in. There is an excessive number of detainees in the unit, and the food supplied is awful. Because of that we have to buy food from the prison commissary but there is only one microwave oven for a hundred of us. It's like that with everything—you can't get prompt medical attention if you're sick, and our court dates are far off in the future. For that reason people here fall into deep depression.

Due to the above I would like to respectfully want to bring your attention to this situation and proceed to improve the situation in this correctional facility. We have family waiting for us: wives, children, parents, single mothers. We are not criminals. The only thing we were doing was working for a better quality of life.

Thank you very much,
[Redacted].

November 2, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
H2-176 Ford House Office Building, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC
20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I have been detained for 3 months now. In each one of the detentions, I have witnessed the mistreatment of the detainees and bad conditions that we are exposed to.

I was detained in the raids in Mississippi. I had been living in the United States for 11 years. I arrived in the Richwood Correctional Center on August 28. Ever since I arrived to this place, I have seen mistreatment and racism by the majority of the guards. We are faced with bad nutrition and bad hygiene, and this had evidently affected us. We are suffering from physical and emotional exhaustion, and the medical attention offered is deficient.

This brings about situations that affect the rest of us, such as the suicide of one of the detainees. There have also been various other suicide attempts due to the constant stress that we are exposed to daily. Nobody does anything, and nobody seems to care about our circumstances. They fumigate us as if we were animals and as animals they treat us.

It is my hope that this complaint reaches to someone who is willing to help us to leave from this never ending hell that ICE has subjected us to, without having committed any Federal crime.

Our hope is to have our basic human rights respected. We sincerely hope that your can help us.

Signed this 2d day of November, 2019,
[Redacted].

November 3, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC
20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: Due to violence, I was forced to leave my country. I have been working in the United States for over 10 years. I was detained in the raid of August 7 of this year. I am waiting for my court date and the miracle to get my freedom. I have my wife who is not working and my 5-year-old son who needs my care. His pediatrician and this teacher told us that he needs a psychologist due to the fact that he cannot speak.

The mistreatment we receive here does not worry me, what worries me is my family. I was the provider and the one who took my son to the therapies he needs. There is no one to take him to therapy in my absence.

This is all. Thank you.
[Redacted].

November 3, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC
20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: My name is [redacted]. I have already been in this detention center for 3 months.

I requested medical services three times here and still have not been seen. I am still sick. My throat hurts. Toilet paper is not available, nor is soap or shampoo. If we request for some of these items, they get angry. We only have one microwave for more than 100 people. We really need to get out of here. I am the head of the family. I have children here and my wife does not work. She needs to pay the rent and the bills, but she does not have the money for food, and I was detained in the raid in Mississippi.

I want for you to do something about this situation so that we can leave this place as soon as possible.

Thank you so much for helping us.

Signed on November 3, 2019,

[Redacted].

November 3, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC
20515.

Dear CHAIRMAN THOMPSON,

On August 7, 2019, when there was a raid in Canton, Mississippi, I was just walking when I got arrested. Now I am detained here in Richwood Correctional Center, 180 Pine Bayou Circle, Richwood LA 71202. I have been here for almost 4 months. I was at the court on October 31. When I was there they gave me another court date for January 10, 2020.

Why are they detaining for so long if I have not committed any crime. I am very concerned for my 4 children and my wife who is not working. Nobody is providing for them. That is why I am so worried for my family. And they too, feel very sad for me.

That is why I am sending this letter to you, so that you can help me leave this detention.

I thank you very much,

My name is: [Redacted].

November 3, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC
20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: My name is [redacted] and I am detained in Richwood, Monroe, LA 71202

I am depressed because of the separation from my children and my family, that is, my wife and my grandchildren, who love me. I am desperate because of the mistreatment, the raw food—sometimes with hair in it—and the medicine that I take for my diabetes. The medicine is not at the right time: sometimes it is too early, sometimes too late, they do not have a fixed schedule. Sometimes they do not let us out in the yard; there is just one microwave for 100 people that are here, that is not enough. The beds in the dormitory are very rusted, as well as the drawers where we put our lunch in the commissary, they are very rusty. That is why I respectfully ask you to take action on this matter.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Redacted].

November 3, 2019, Richwood Center, Louisiana.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC
20515.

Subject: What is happening to us here in jail.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: We do not have a schedule for meals or for medicine. They treat us very badly, they bathe us like dogs, and they take us breakfast at 2 in the morning. Also, they do not wash clothes with soap or bleach. The bathroom is very dirty, they do not give us toilet paper or soap to shower, until they feel like giving it to us. When someone is sick, they do not take him to the doctor. They treat us badly.

I am suffering and my family too. I do not have the money to pay for my families' rent and meals. This raid ruined my life and my families. I want to get out of this place sooner because my family does not have enough to eat. Please, help us.

[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

Sunday, November 3, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I am Honduran and have been detained by ICE in the city of Richwood, Louisiana. The reason [for this letter] is because we are not treated well and the jail where we are is in bad condition. I have a family that is worried because I have been detained for 4 months. I am one of the people who was arrested during the raid at the Peco Company in Canton, Mississippi. I think I have been detained too long, since I am not any kind of bad person, and that is why I am concerned. Maybe my family is worried because they haven't heard anything from me, and because I was the only person from my family in the United States. I have a father to support, since I was the one who worked to send money home to my country, and now my family is sad. And I'm sad, too, because some of my friends already went to court and they refused to set a bond, and the courts are making others wait until January 2020 for their hearing. And we haven't committed any crime, and that's why I am asking for your help. It isn't fair for us to be detained this long, since our only crime is being immigrants. This is why we hope that you can help us get set free, or help us with a bond. I want you to hear us, because the time we've had to wait is making me desperate. Also, when we get sick they don't give us the right medicine for the illness, and that's why I hope you will help us.

[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

November 3, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: Because of the raids on 8/7/2019, my family members have been left crying.

There are three girls that are now alone and without their father.

Because their father was picked up in Morton Mississippi, they are suffering and don't have money to pay their bills and rent.

I'm suffering here in jail since my daughters are alone, and I have also gotten sick from thinking about them so much. I've gotten sick here, and they won't even give medicine out for headaches. And my daughters are suffering greatly; they all have asthma.

Thank you.

[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

November 3, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: My reason for telling you right now, here in the Richwood Jail Center in Louisiana, part of the Mississippi raids on August 7, 2019.

Here we are suffering from thinking about our children outside. We want to leave so we can see them because we aren't delinquents, criminals, rapists and thieves. We come to work hard for our lives in this country, with our families, to work and get ahead to seek a better future.

We want you to help us get out of this prison. We are just being detained here for no good reason, and some of us also have been given until January 7 for our court date, and that's a long time away. We don't know when we will be able to

leave here. Our families are worried about us. Many of us do not have money to pay rent, bills, water, light and food, and our families are sad.

Here in this prison we are treated bad—they don't give you soap to bathe with, tooth paste or medicines. You find bugs and hair in the food and they don't cook it well, serving it pretty raw to us. And some of us have gotten sick with sores on our heads and they don't give us any medicine.

We want you to help us. Thank you for helping us.
[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

November 3, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC
20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: The motive of this letter is to talk about us here at the detention center in Richwood, Louisiana, as part of those detained in the Mississippi raids. They treat us badly here in the jail. They treat us like animals. They don't provide medical care, or soap for all of us. Also, we don't have set schedules for meals or anything, and sometimes they take us at two in the morning to eat breakfast. The food that they serve us sometimes has insects, flies, and hairs. We can get sick in these conditions. Some other folks come and give us water that has something that causes rashes in the body. We are scared of this illness, and some of us have already contracted it. We are also worried about our families, and their ability to pay for rent, bills, and food. We don't know when we are going to leave this place. They have given some of us a court date on January 7. That is a long time. We are worried about our families and our children on the outside. We want you to help us to get out of here. We are not criminals or delinquents, we came here to fight for a better life for our families.

Please and thank you.
[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

November 3, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC
20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: We were arrested during the raids. The motive of this letter is the following:

First, we are detained here at the following address: 150 Pine Bayou Circle, Corrections Center, Richwood, Louisiana, 71202.

In the first place, they are treating us like criminals, and we are not criminals. For example, we don't have any type of schedule for meals, and we eat rice and beans every day. And it is not fair that they do that. If one person gets sick, from some type of allergy that they might have, they make us all shower. And not all of us are the same. Some of us get sick because the metals and the metal bars around us are rusty. The jail is old. The bathrooms do not work well, we all have to shower together, and they do not clean the bathrooms. There is only one microwave for every 100 people to heat water or something else. They do not give us medicine, and when someone is sick, they don't take us to the nurse right away. Sometimes they take 3 or 4 days, or even more in some cases.

[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

November 4, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC
20515.

Held in Detention From Richwood Correctional, Unit A From the Raid on August 7, 2019.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: With tears in my eyes I write this testimony. Locked up for 3 months experiencing the absence of my family that I love so much. My little daughter that was born with Downs syndrome, my wife facing the economic emergency of paying all the bills, and me, living badly, eating badly. When I get sick, they never give me medicine. There is no medical attention. My fellow detainees are trying to take their own lives and some have already taken their own lives. We're in a jail with no hygiene. The beds are dirty, they barely give us toilet paper. Sometimes we want to call but there's no way to do it. We miss our families.

Blessings to all.
 [submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

November 3, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

Hello, good evening, my name is [redacted] I address you with much respect. The purpose of this letter, is to explain my situation, since I was detained in the Mississippi raid. I'm single but they say that being single they say that I don't have the right to be in the United States. I think that they're wrong since I've already spent half my life here in the United States, and I'm used to this country. I have dreams like every person being held here. I don't think that I'm less than the ones that have families, there are many like me but we all have someone to fight for, maybe not here but in our countries, maybe providing for a sick mother or giving them a better life or whatever it is. That's what I think. Here in prison they take away your rights as a person, the situation here is awful to the point that there are people that lose their life and turn to suicide. That's very painful for their families.

The food is awful, it's not healthy at all, and the medical attention is even worse. They don't have a place that's equipped to care for a person that's seriously ill since they don't have the appropriate training. I'll tell you a case of one of the detainees from the raid. He had never suffered anything like it, now he suffers from attacks because of so much anxiety. Recently he suffered another after knowing that he wasn't getting out soon and that his next court date would be in 2 months. Too much time, and that's why he suffered the attack. People from this prison didn't know what to do since they're not prepared for this type of situation. As for me, I say that this system is very wrong. Thank you for your attention . . .

[Redacted]

November 3, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: My name is [redacted].

I live in Laurel Mississippi and I was arrested in the raid. All of this that I'm going through is very difficult for me and for my family. I have two children that are suffering because of me not being at their side. Being locked up here is very difficult since I've gone 3 months without seeing them, and here they treat one as if one is worthless. We're not criminals. I'd give anything to be with my family. My girl is 3 years old and my boy is one. They depend on me. I'm currently detained in Richwood Correctional Center since August 28. Since I arrived here I've suffered psychologically, the food is awful and the living and hygiene conditions are not favorable, the medical attention is not good. Since I arrived, I've suffered racism from the officers. This has affected me very much since the separation from my children is weighing on me heavily.

[Redacted].

November 4, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I was detained the 7 of August in the raid that happened in Morton, Mississippi, and they aren't setting a bond for my release. Also my mother is sick and I don't have much communication with them. I am sad because we don't know when they will free us to be with my mother and father. I'm detained in Richwood Correctional Center, Louisiana. The day I entered here they started treating me badly, because when we have needs here sometimes they take care of us and sometimes they don't. Also they serve us uncooked food and it has made me sick.

Thank you for everything you do for us, may God bless you in your efforts.

[Redacted].

October 19, 2019.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC
20515.

Petition to the United States Congress—Washington, DC

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON/DEAR REPRESENTATIVE OF JACKSON MISSISSIPPI: With utmost respect I address myself to you in order to inform you that I was detained during the raid that took place on August 7, 2019 in Morton, MS. I am currently being detained in the state of Louisiana at the Richwood Correctional Center, 180 Pine Bayou Circle, Richwood, LA 71202.

In this prison, if you have a medical problem they don't even have basic medications to address the problem. If any serious problem were to happen, it would not be of my own doing.

I have been held in this jail, deprived of my liberty, for two months and twelve days to date. I have not yet received any notice of a hearing date in immigration court.

I have a prior asylum case currently in immigration court, after receiving my credible fear determination.

I complied with seven check-ins and three court dates in New Orleans and Perla, MS. I submitted myself to a fingerprint scan for Immigration in Jackson, Mississippi and the results were positive proving I have a clean record.

I also had a check in scheduled on August 8, 2019, which I was not able to attend because I had been detained in the aforementioned raid, even though I informed the immigration agents of the check-in. I would also like to let you know that I have a wife and children who depend on me. I am currently unaware of their situation.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

October 19, 2019, Richwood Correctional Center.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC
20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I write you this letter anonymously as I fear reprisals against me. I am a 22-year-old Cuban. I have been under the custody of I.C.E. for 5 months, which have been the worst 5 months of my life. Never, since I left my country had I felt like an animal. Since the first day, I have witnessed situations of violence, discrimination, and racism. Little by little this situation has started to affect my self-esteem and mental health. I can't fathom such mistreatment just for arriving here and wanting another opportunity at life. Less than a week ago, a Cuban friend committed suicide. He was undergoing pressure, uncertainty, desperation, negative feelings, all that are pervasive daily in the minds of each and every one of us.

I must stress the fact that many of the people who are here with me have come to the US precisely trying to escape conditions in our countries, and we are again finding here: physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, and to be detained without a criminal cause. The conditions in this detention center are the worst. At Richwood Correctional Center, which is also known by the detainees as the "Cemetery of Living Men", we know how we came in, but will not know how we will leave. I have witnessed violence against the detainees by the I.C.E. officers and the personnel that is supposedly taking care of us.

We have no rights, not even to ask for toilet paper. Winter is approaching and temperature is dropping, and we have not received any warm clothing nor blankets. When asked about when we will have access to these items, we are told to go buy them at the commissary. And there are people who don't have any money for a simple telephone call.

Following this process I am in, I have been under the torture of I.C.E., where even complying with all the requirements necessary to be freed, they have denied my freedom twice justifying it by saying that "In Louisiana we don't give parole, because we don't feel like it."

Who has the right to refuse my liberty just because I want an opportunity at life? Who has the right to treat us as dogs in a pound? I.C.E. represents the Nazis of the 21st Century. We are now the Jews locked up in concentration camps waiting for a date, and what for? Who knows? We are tired of having our rights as human beings violated.

We ask and beg for a ray of hope that will help us to be freed from this endless hell. But this inferno is also being experienced by those outside who see how our minds and bodies are being worn out. It will be an indelible image and a trauma that we will never be able to overcome completely. Here we only receive responses such as: "We didn't invite you to our country."

We do have the desire to resist, but we are also exhausted. Nobody knows what is going on, but it is due time for the world to know what it is like in I.C.E. concentration camps.

This is it, from a 22-year-old young man who wants to live.
[submitted anonymously due to concerns about retaliation]

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
Committee on Homeland Security, U.S. House of Representatives, H2-176 Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: My name is Jose Rafael Gonzalez. I live in Morton, one of the poorest regions in Mississippi. I have lived in Mississippi for 17 years and have grown to see this place as my new home. I know most of the residents in the small town of Morton and consider them family and friends. I was saddened to see what happened to many of them during the recent raids.

On 2002, I came to Mississippi from Veracruz, Mexico, to help my family. I was sad to leave my family in Mexico, but I came because of necessity. There were no jobs or opportunities in Mexico.

When I first arrived, I found a job at Koch Foods cutting and processing poultry. I worked there for 12 years. It was a very oppressive workplace. I was paid low wages, suffered discrimination, and the supervisors constantly pushed us to cut and process more and more poultry on the line. I was forced to leave my job after speaking up to my supervisor. I was suspended from work in retaliation and was not allowed to come back.

After leaving Koch Foods, I went to work at several other poultry plants, and continue this work today. From my experience working at poultry plants, I know firsthand that workers are scared to speak up about the abuse and unsafe conditions at work. Many workers are not paid what they are owed or would suffer accidents, since our work cutting poultry is dangerous.

Many workers are scared of speaking up about these conditions, because the supervisor or owner might fire them or call ICE. Many are scared because they don't have papers and don't think they have rights. Bosses and supervisors routinely use workers' immigration status to silence them. They hire workers who don't have papers, so they can humiliate and abuse them.

The recent ICE raid was devastating to our community. Many people I know lost their jobs and were detained. Some were deported to other countries. These workers were unjustly targeted. They just wanted to work and help their families. ICE did not have to come here and do this to us.

I think these raids were unjust. These raids are going to silence even more workers in the future and make it harder for workers who are facing abuses at work to speak up. I have been telling workers to not be afraid, that we need to speak up and share our experiences. We cannot be afraid and need people in Washington and other places to hear our voices.

What happened in Morton and in Mississippi was unjust and caused a lot of damage. The people of Mississippi were left traumatized.

Thank You.

Chairman THOMPSON. We have redacted some of the information. But their stories on what they have gone through since August is gut-wrenching, at best.

I want to thank, again, all of our witnesses. You shared the information. We take this back. We take it seriously. We will do all we can and, hopefully, we will fix some of this. But we need to get it on the record.

So, again, the Members of the committee may have additional questions for you and we ask that you respond expeditiously in writing to those questions.

Hearing no further business, the committee stands adjourned.

[Applause.]

[Whereupon, at 1 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

QUESTION FROM CHAIRMAN BENNIE G. THOMPSON FOR LORENA QUIROZ-LEWIS

Question 1. The committee appreciates the various personal statements and stories of affected individuals you provided. Are there any additional stories from affected individuals that would be helpful for the committee to have for better context and insight into the effects of these raids on Mississippi communities?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN BENNIE G. THOMPSON FOR JERE T. MILES

COORDINATION

Question 1. During the hearing and in letters received by the committee, you testified that ICE agents contacted a number of school districts during the August 7 operation. However, you also stated that it was an oversight that did not contact the Canton school district where a targeted chicken plant is located. How did ICE determine which schools to contact? What was the time frame for contacting schools to notify them of the operation?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 2. In the aftermath of the August 7 worksite enforcement actions, did ICE coordinate with the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services on any tips received through the hotline established by ICE for these raids to ensure all children were accounted for? Any Sheriff's or other law enforcement agency? Why or why not?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

OPERATIONAL DECISIONS

Question 3. ICE Directive 11064.2, Detention and Removal of Alien Parents or Legal Guardians, directs ICE personnel to "accommodate, to the extent practicable, an apprehended parent or legal guardian's efforts to arrange for childcare for their minor child(ren), absent any indication of child abuse or neglect."

- What procedures were in place to ensure caregivers were given the ability to make alternate arrangements for their children during the August 7 operations?
- How many people made use of this procedure?
- The media reported only 10 phones were available for the 680 workers that were arrested to make alternate arrangements and you testified that there were 11 cell phones available. How did ICE determine the number of phones needed for the operation? How were these phones distributed across processing sites? How much time were individuals allowed to use these phones?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 4. According to ICE's press releases, over 600 agents and officers participated in the August 7 raids. What method was used to determine the number of agents and officers needed? Was ICE aware of the number of individuals that could potentially be arrested?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 5. A substantial number of the migrants arrested are from indigenous populations in Guatemala, many of whom don't speak Spanish very well or at all. In the year-long investigation into these companies, when did ICE become aware that a large number of indigenous Guatemalan workers were employed at these plants?

- Ms. Lorena Quiroz testified that the indigenous Guatemalans had problems understanding directions from ICE during the raids and could not understand questions they were asked about children. Besides the 120 Spanish-speaking agents ICE deployed to Mississippi, what accommodations were made for indi-

viduals who spoke indigenous languages to ensure they understood the questions being asked by ICE agents?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 6. Did ICE conduct any screenings for other labor violations such as human trafficking during the operation?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

TARGETING OF WORKERS

Question 7. In the past, ICE has typically prioritized worksite enforcement in industries involving critical infrastructure or companies with egregious violations. Generally, how does ICE prioritize different industries and workplaces for targeted enforcement actions now? How are targets selected?

- How are enforcement priorities set in the context of worksite enforcement actions? How are targets for worksite enforcement actions selected?
- How does the targeting of poultry plants in Mississippi fit those criteria?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 8. Prior to the start of the operation, how many individuals were directly targeted for arrest? How many people were picked up as collateral arrests?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

ICE TARGETING TECHNOLOGY

Question 9. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, ICE appears to be increasingly relying on surveillance technology to target individuals for arrest and deportation. For example, in the search warrants used for the Mississippi raids, ICE referred to a program named FALCON Tip Line (FALCON-TL) as a source for information used to execute these warrants. The committee understands that FALCON-TL is a system that connects manually entered “tips” from the public with various law enforcement databases and other open-source data through FALCON Search and Analysis (FALCON-SA). This process then creates leads for ICE personnel to use in investigations and other operations.

- What kind of information is needed before a “tip” can be entered into FALCON-TL?
- How is the information gleaned from FALCON-SA used in investigations of individuals targeted for arrest? What Government, open-source and/or commercial databases such as CLEAR are searched in FALCON-SA as part of this process?
- Please provide the committee with a list of all tips that were logged by ICE personnel and entered into FALCON-TL related to the August 7 workplace raids in Mississippi.

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

