

AILA -- ICE Raids Reveal Flaws in Current U.S. Immigration Policy

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Washington, DC (Vocus) December 13, 2006 -- "Raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials at meat-processing plants around the country yesterday clearly point out that our immigration system is broken and that America needs comprehensive immigration reform right now," said Carlina Tapia-Ruano, President of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). "By not having a reasonable immigration policy in place, we have created a system that practically begs for people to break the law."

AILA (www.aila.org) believes that what America needs is an immigration policy that allows companies to fill jobs with willing legal workers. A reasonable, orderly worker program would go far in helping to eliminate the dangerous human smuggling and border crossings that currently plague our system, and would also alleviate such related crimes as the use of false social security numbers. In addition, such a policy would significantly diminish illegal immigration by creating a legal avenue by which people could enter the U.S. -- something that barely exists today. In fact, current U.S. immigration law provides just 5,000 annual permanent visas for low-skilled "essential" workers, versus an estimated annual demand for 500,000 such workers.

"Once again yesterday's action by the federal government doesn't really address the deep problems plaguing our immigration system," stressed Tapia-Ruano. "AILA's hope is that when the new Congress convenes in January, it will act quickly and enact some type of comprehensive immigration reform."

AILA also calls upon ICE to ensure that the rights of the workers being rounded up are protected, and that attention be paid to the safety and welfare of those workers' children. "Please do not forget the tenets of due process that underlie our entire legal system, or the compassion and caring for the welfare of children that underpin American society," urged Tapia-Ruano.

Founded in 1946, AILA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that provides its Members with continuing legal education, information, professional services and expertise through its 35 chapters and over 75 national committees. AILA also advocates before Congress and the Administration, as well as provides liaison with government agencies in support of pro-immigration initiatives. AILA is an Affiliated Organization of the American Bar Association. <http://www.aila.org>

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