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Groups Condemn Merger of Criminal Justice & Immigration Systems

The Day After Cities Begin Process to Opt-Out from Secure Communities, 500+ Groups Demand President Obama End Police/Ice Collaborations

WASHINGTON – Citing systemic problems within both the immigration and criminal justice systems, 500 groups from across the country, including the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLO) today delivered a letter to President Obama demanding that he end the merger of immigration enforcement with criminal justice. The three-page letter expressed concerns and presented proof that the Obama administration's increased reliance on local law enforcement to arrest, detain and deport immigrants has exacerbated existing problems in the criminal justice system.

According to Pablo Alvarado, executive director of NDLO, "The letter we deliver today is a clear statement that the Arizona-like policies the president is intent on nationalizing must be stopped. How large must the chorus of denunciations grow before the president joins us in a sensible immigration policy that legalizes instead of criminalizes the millions who are here contributing to our country?"

According to the groups, "The merger of immigration enforcement and local criminal justice agencies is not only bad public policy, it also sabotages local law enforcement agencies' core mission of protecting public safety by undermining the trust of the communities they serve. It discourages people from turning to the police when they need to, even to report crimes. It undermines public safety by diverting scarce resources away from local policing and focuses them on false threats from people who look or sound foreign."

Secure Communities, 287(g), and the Criminal Alien Program – the Obama administration's signature immigration enforcement programs – all rely on heavy involvement from and cooperation with local law enforcement to siphon immigrants into the immigration enforcement and detention system and, ultimately, through deportation proceedings.

“President Obama cannot sue the state of Arizona on the one hand and spread similar policies known for racial profiling on the other,” explains Sarahí Uribe of NDLO. “In Florida, North Carolina, and all across the country, president Obama’s police/ice collaborations are creating Arpaios in all of our backyards.”

“Yesterday the cities of Arlington, VA and Santa Clara, CA both [unanimously voted to opt-out](#) of these programs exactly because of the devastating facts stated in the letter sent today,” continued Uribe. “The Obama administration needs to do what city councils began yesterday. End police/ice collaborations.”

To read the letter addressed to President Obama and view the full list of organizations that have signed on, visit: <http://bit.ly/crimmigration>

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