



News Release

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IN LETTER TO WHITE HOUSE MORE THAN 100 GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS EXPRESS CONCERN OVER THE TREATMENT OF CHILDREN IMPACTED BY RECENT IMMIGRATION RAIDS

Washington, DC – The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the U.S., today released the text of a letter to President Bush signed by more than 100 Latino grassroots organizations expressing their deep concern over the short- and long-term impact of stepped-up immigration raids on the children in affected families. The organizations in the communities where these raids have occurred are often the first to respond to the humanitarian crisis created by these events. Below is the text of the letter:

President George W. Bush
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We, the undersigned Latino organizations, write to express our outrage and deep concern over the manner in which workplace raids have been conducted all across the United States in the past few months. As organizations that work closely with the communities that are directly impacted by these raids, we are often the first to respond to the immediate humanitarian crisis that occurs when a raid is conducted. Particularly, we are concerned about the raids' short- and long-term impact on children. There are approximately 3.1 million U.S. citizen children who have at least one undocumented parent, and there are 1.8 million undocumented children in the U.S. We believe that the U.S. must take the needs of these children into account and fix the broken immigration system that separates them from their parents.

Workplace raids leave a long-lasting impact, not only on the local economy, but on the children who are separated from their parents as a result of a raid. Recently, thousands of immigrant workers have been detained as the result of raids. Many of these workers are parents of young children, many of whom are U.S. citizens. While it is our understanding that single parents are occasionally released from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody to care for their children, there are many parents who are transported to ICE detention facilities far from their homes, and their family members have no ability to communicate with them.

In the aftermath of the raids, churches, schools, and social service agencies have scrambled to determine which workers have children, assess which children must be picked up from day care and school, find caregivers for the children, and provide basic health and nutrition services. In addition to providing basic necessities, advocates have encountered other problems trying to care for the children of detained parents. For example, after the Swift and Co. raids in

December 2006, advocates highlighted cases in which they were not able to interview parents to determine any special needs their children may have. It has also been difficult, if not impossible, for advocates to gather information about sick children who needed medication. Following the recent raid in New Bedford, Massachusetts, a dehydrated infant was hospitalized because her mother had not been able to breastfeed her. Family members or friends have been put in the difficult position of having to care for the children of detained parents, and teenage children have been placed in the unfortunate and unfair position of having to care for younger siblings on their own.

Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick correctly characterized the recent raids as a “humanitarian crisis.” Our children deserve better, and it is up to the Administration and Congress to deliver to them a sound immigration policy that does not result in parents being separated from their children. The time is long overdue for our nation to stop tearing apart these hardworking families and bring about real, comprehensive solutions to our immigration problems. We strongly urge you to work with Congress to bring about an immigration reform that will allow immigrant workers to work legally, American communities to prosper, and children to thrive.

cc: Michael Chertoff

Julie Myers

Sincerely,

Academia Cesar Chavez – Saint Paul, MN
Acercamiento Hispano de Carolina del Sur – Columbia, SC
AltaMed Health Services Corporation – Los Angeles, CA
Bridge Academy Charter School – Bridgeport, CT
Calexico Community Action Council – Calexico, CA
CARECEN – Washington, DC
Carlos Rosario School – Washington, DC
CASA of Maryland – Silver Spring, MD
CASA of Oregon – Newberg, OR
Center for Hispanic Policy & Advocacy – Providence, RI
Center for Training & Careers/WorkNET – San Jose, CA
Centro Campesino Farmworker Center, Inc. – Florida City, FL
Centro de Amistad – Guadalupe, AZ
Centro de la Comunidad – Baltimore, MD
Centro de Residentes Bolivianos – Madison, WI
Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe – El Paso, TX
Centro Hispano of Dane County – Cambridge, MA
CentroNía – Washington, DC
Centro Presente, Inc. – Cambridge, MA
Cesar Chavez Academy – Pueblo, CO
Cesar Chavez Dual Language Immersion Charter School – Santa Barbara, CA
Chicano Awareness Center – Omaha, NE
Chicano Federation of San Diego County – San Diego, CA
Coalition for New South Carolinians – Columbia, SC
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition – Denver, CO
Colorado Rural Housing – Westminster, CO
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc. – New York, NY
Community Child Care Center of Santa Clara County – San Jose, CA
Conexión Américas – Nashville, TN
Congreso de Latinos Unidos – Philadelphia, PA

Council for the Spanish Speaking – Milwaukee, WI
Del Norte Neighborhood Development Corp. – Denver, CO
Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation – Detroit, MI
Dolores Huerta Preparatory High School – Pueblo, CO
DRAW Academy – Houston, TX
East Las Vegas Community Development Corporation (ELV CDC) – Las Vegas, NV
El Centro de la Raza – Seattle, WA
El Centro de las Americas – Lincoln, NE
El Pueblo, Inc. – Raleigh, NC
Emigrantes Sin Fronteras – Phoenix, AZ
Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center – Miami, FL
Florida Immigrant Coalition – Tallahassee, FL
Gads Hill Center – Chicago, IL
Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials (GALEO) – Atlanta, GA
Hands Across Cultures – Española, NM
HELP – New Mexico, Inc. – Albuquerque, NM
Hispanic American Student Association (HASA), University of Central Oklahoma – Edmond, OK
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Minnesota – Minneapolis, MN
Hispanic Coalition of Florida – Miami, FL
Hispanic Committee of Virginia – Falls Church, VA
Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama – Birmingham, AL
Hispanic Women's Organization of Arkansas – Springdale, AR
HOLA – Hispanas Organizadas de Lake y Ashtabula (OH) – Painesville, OH
Hyde Square Task Force – Jamaica Plain, MA
Idaho Community Action Network – Boise, ID
Kentucky Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee Rights – Lexington, KY
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights – Chicago, IL
Information Referral Resource Assistance Inc. – Edinburg, TX
Instituto del Progreso Latino – Chicago, IL
La Casa de Esperanza – Waukesha, WI
La Casa Health Network, Inc. – Little Rock, AR
Latin American Coalition – Charlotte, NC
Latin American Community Center, Inc. – Wilmington, DE
Latin American Research and Service Agency – Denver, CO
Latin American Youth Center – Washington, DC
Latino Community Development Agency – Oklahoma City, OK
Latino Economic Development Corporation – Washington, DC
Latino Family Services – Detroit, MI
Latino Leadership – Orlando, FL
Latino Memphis, Inc. – Memphis, TN
Latinos for Education and Justice Organization – Calhoun, GA
Latinos United for Change and Advancement – Madison, WI
Law Offices of Navarro & Associates – Santa Ana, CA
Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care – Washington, DC
Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA) – Jackson & Biloxi, MS
Montebello Housing Development Corporation – Montebello, CA
Mujeres Latinas en Acción – Chicago, IL
NAF Multicultural Human Development Corporation – North Platte, NE
National Association of Latino Independent Producers – New York, NY
Near Northside Partners Council, Inc. – Fort Worth, TX
New Jersey Immigration Policy Network – Newark, NJ

NEWSED CDC – Denver, CO
Parent Institute for Quality Education – San Diego, CA
Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund – New York, NY
Repertorio Español – New York, NY
Rural Opportunities, Inc. – Rochester, NY
Salem/Keizer Coalition for Equality – Salem, OR
San Diego County SER/Jobs for Progress, Inc. – Oceanside, CA
SEA MAR Community Health Centers – Seattle, WA
Servicios de La Raza, Inc. – Denver, CO
Siete del Norte CDC – Embudo, NM
Southern Poverty Law Center – Montgomery, AL
Southwest Key Program, Inc. – Austin, TX
Spanish Speaking Citizens' Foundation – Oakland, CA
St. Matthew Immigration/Detention Committee – Baltimore, MD
Tejano Center for Community Concerns – Houston, TX
Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) – Nashville, TN
United Dubuque Immigrant Alliance (UN DIA) – Dubuque, IA
United Hispanic Americans, Inc. – Fort Wayne, IN
University of Wisconsin Latina/o Law Student Association – Madison, WI
Vecinos Unidos – Dallas, TX
Washington State Migrant Council – Sunnyside, WA
Watts/Century Latino Organization – Los Angeles, CA
Western Colorado Justice for Immigrants Committee – Grand Junction, CO