

**Testimony of Congressman David Davis**  
**House Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees,**  
**Border Security, and International Law**  
**July 24, 2008**

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I appreciate the opportunity to testify before this Committee on the effects illegal immigration has on communities in East Tennessee. I also thank you for your interest in the story of Lora Costner, a constituent of the First Congressional District of Tennessee and resident of Cocke County who will also testify here today.

Illegal immigration places a heavy burden on our country and our taxpayers. No more a problem limited to those counties along our borders; even Appalachia must face this threat to our economy. Families in Cocke County directly suffer from the effects of illegal immigration and our government's inability to enforce our laws. I encourage this Committee to take Ms. Costner's story of identity theft by an illegal immigrant as a indication of just one of the many damaging effects of lack of immigration enforcement.

Many immigrants come to Hamblen County to work in the poultry processing industry. Much like the raid in Iowa generating this hearing, the parent company of the Hamblen County plant's operation in Cincinnati, Ohio and their Chicago headquarters were subject to ICE raids. The illegal immigrant who stole Ms. Costner's identity used that information to gain employment at the Morristown poultry plant.

This hearing asks how we move forward with our immigration policy in light of these raids on the poultry industry. One of the best tools the Department of Homeland Security has to enforce our immigration laws is the 287(g) program. This program allows local law enforcement agencies to partner with ICE on illegal immigration matters. ICE trains local law enforcement in immigration law and the local agency is given authority to enforce those laws. Metro Nashville/Davidson county Tennessee has been operating under a 287(g) agreement for some time now. The Nashville community has seen the benefits of the federal/local partnership through improved enforcement of our immigration laws.

You would be hard pressed to find a community who would benefit more from such a partnership than Hamblen County and Morristown, Tennessee. According to a University of Tennessee study, Hamblen County has one of the fastest-growing immigrant populations in the nation, Hamblen County's schools, hospitals, roads, and housing agencies are unable to keep up with the trend. The Hamblen County jail is overrun with citizens of other countries with no U.S. immigration status. These individuals are in Hamblen County illegally. If our immigration laws were enforced these individuals would be removed to their country of origin and barred from re-entry into the United States. Unfortunately the Hamblen County Sheriff lacks the authority to enforce these laws.

Hamblen County approached ICE to participate in the 287(g) program. Citing lack of resources and manpower, ICE could not agree to the partnership. It is imperative this Congress expand the 287(g) program to allow any willing community to participate.

I am privileged to serve on the House Committee on Homeland Security with oversight of the Department and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency. In 2007 the Committee took up legislation reauthorizing DHS. I offered an amendment in Committee expanding this program that failed for lack of majority on a 15-15 tie. The House Rules Committee by a vote of 8-4 refused to make this same amendment in order when the bill moved to the House floor. I have introduced the amendment as standalone legislation that has been referred to this Committee.

Also referred to this Committee is Congressman Shuler's SAVE Act. This legislation would authorize increases to all programs related to enforcement of our immigration laws. 190 Members of Congress have signed the discharge petition to bring Congressman Shuler's legislation to the floor. I would encourage action on this bill.

Finally, this Congress must again take up legislation reauthorizing the Department of Homeland Security giving guidance to ICE on immigration policy and law enforcement.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify here today and I look forward to the testimony of Ms. Costner.