

NATIONAL IMMIGRATION FORUM PRESS RELEASE



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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY OR DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC RUIN? OVERSIGHT WELCOME

Washington, DC – *On Thursday, July 24, 2008 at 11 a.m., the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law will hold a hearing on "Immigration Raids: Postville and Beyond." The following is a statement by Ali Noorani, Executive Director of the National Immigration Forum, a non-partisan, pro-immigrant advocacy group in Washington.*

Two months after the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) conducted the largest immigration enforcement raid in the nation's history, devastating the community of Postville, Iowa in the process, the furor over DHS's misguided immigration enforcement continues. Today's oversight hearing addresses the range of due process violations and sleight-of-hand procedures used by DHS and the Department of Justice to transform undocumented workers into identity theft criminals with the stroke of a pen, using the threat of long jail sentences to coerce undocumented workers into taking deportation orders as the path of least resistance.

The Postville raid has confirmed for many that DHS' deportation-only policies destroy not only individual lives, but entire communities, leading to the conclusion that the Department of Homeland Security should more accurately be called the Department of Economic Ruin. Enforcement-on-steroids in the absence of real reform will not fix our profoundly broken immigration system or solve the problem of 12 million immigrants in the country illegally. We need genuine immigration reform that addresses the underlying problems of undocumented workers and all other workers alike. We also need balance in workplace enforcement that puts at least as much emphasis on enforcing labor and workplace safety laws and holds employers at least as accountable as unauthorized workers in such situations. We call on Congress to change the system before DHS actions destroy more communities and families.

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