

# California Legislature

STATE CAPITOL  
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

March 13, 2014



The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As the Chairs of each major Legislative Caucus in California, we are writing to you on a matter of grave importance to millions of residents we collectively represent. In recent years California has led the nation in adopting policies and approving legislation intended to assist our immigrant communities, including the thousands of DREAMers in our public schools. While these efforts have flourished so too have the Federal government's deportation programs. Indeed, since 2008 over 1.6 million immigrants have been deported and record numbers continue to be targeted. While we agree that it is in the national security interests of the United States to deport individuals with criminal backgrounds we urge you to utilize your Executive authority to reexamine all policies and programs that allow for the deportation of any law abiding undocumented individual who is working towards achieving the American Dream. Moreover, deportation proceedings should be halted for those non-violent individuals already in custody where there will be a severe impact to a spouse or children living in the United States.

According to the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) website, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has adopted "common sense policies that ensure our immigration laws are enforced in a way that best enhances public safety, border security and the integrity of the immigration system. As part of this approach, ICE has adopted clear priorities that call for the agency's enforcement resources to be focused on the identification and removal of those that have broken criminal laws, recently crossed our border, repeatedly violated immigration law or are fugitives from immigration court." On its face this guiding passage seems reasonable and appropriate. Regrettably, the real life application of these policies is broader than advertised and the consequences are extraordinary.

In our state we constantly hear from children who have seen a loved one hauled away by authorities, from parents who live in constant fear of arrest, and from local law enforcement who are shunned and considered the enemy. Case in point – recent news accounts detail situations where undocumented residents have been arrested by ICE following a visit to the local courthouse to pay a parking ticket or citation issued for driving without a valid license. The chilling effect of such actions is profound and will undoubtedly serve to deter the undocumented from paying their fines and contacting authorities when in need of assistance or protection. Moreover, these actions further the growing distrust that our residents, including those with legal status, have for all government officials and undermine our efforts in many important endeavors such as enrolling families under the Affordable Care Act. These federal policies

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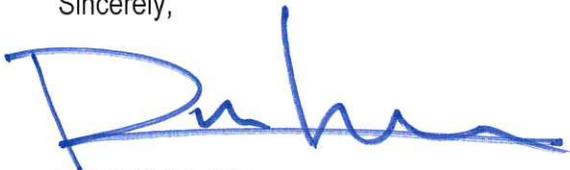
cannot continue without compromising public safety, exacerbating distrust of the government, and seriously undermining the social fabric of our immigrant communities.

Given the growing unlikelihood that comprehensive immigration reform will be passed by Congress this year, we implore your Administration to revisit these deportation policies and take into account their impact on children, families and local communities. In turn, administrative procedures should be bolstered to ensure the police powers of DHS and ICE are focused exclusively on those who pose a security threat and not those who are contributing to our society.

Please know we stand ready to assist you in any way possible to balance these complex security, community and social interests. We would also like to invite you to tour, on your next visit to California, one of our communities and hear firsthand from the families, law enforcement personnel and local leaders impacted by the current deportation policies. Your personal engagement will undoubtedly help restore the faith and trust in government that has been lost in too many of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact us at (916) 651-1535 if you have any questions, would like to discuss this matter further or if we can provide any assistance. We stand ready to help in any way possible.

Sincerely,



RICARDO LARA  
Senator, 33<sup>rd</sup> District  
Chair, CA Latino Legislative Caucus



HOLLY MITCHELL  
Senator, 26<sup>th</sup> District  
Chair, Legislative Black Caucus



PAUL FONG  
Assembly Member, 28<sup>th</sup> District  
Chair, Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus



BONNIE LOWENTHAL  
Assembly Member, 70<sup>th</sup> District  
Chair, Legislative Women's Caucus



RICHARD GORDON  
Assembly Member, 24<sup>th</sup> District  
Chair, Legislative LGBT Caucus

cc: Secretary Jeh Johnson, Department of Homeland Security  
Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr., State of California  
Members, California Congressional Delegation