

# Immigration Raids in the Wood River Valley

by Hannah Saona

During the 2007 Idaho legislative session, as Legislative Counsel for the ACLU of Idaho, I dealt with a handful of anti-immigrant proposals. Although many of the anti-immigrant bills presented in the Idaho Legislature in 2007 did in fact pass, I couldn't help but think that, compared to other states, things weren't that bad in Idaho.

That isn't to say that the anti-immigrant sentiment sweeping the nation does not exist in Idaho. You can see it every day in letters to the editor around the state. However, other states have been hit much harder with state-wide anti-immigrant measures. For example, in Colorado, in 2006, the state legislature passed 19+ anti-immigrant bills. In addition, reports continue to come in from across the country of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids in homes and business, small and large, in which many undocumented and documented workers are swept up and detained.

I couldn't help but think that we had been lucky here in Idaho, relatively speaking, of course.

Things changed in mid-September when we experienced what I believe to be the first major immigration raid in Idaho this year. On Monday, September 17, we received word from a colleague that pre-dawn ICE raids were being conducted in Hailey, Ketchum, and Bellevue. The stories started coming in and most of the staff spent all day on the phone trying to assess the situation and what role the ACLU of Idaho could play in ensuring that individual rights were not being violated.

What we discovered was that ICE sent a specialized unit from Boise to the Wood River Valley in search of undocumented individuals who had previously received final orders of deportation but had refused to comply with such orders. The raids took place at homes and businesses in Ketchum, Hailey, and Bellevue and resulted in the arrest of 22 individuals from

Peru and México. Many more were emotionally affected.

Most disturbing are the stories of those involved. One woman explained how ICE agents came to her home and pounded on her door at 6:30am. When her teenage son went to answer the door, they pushed their way into her home armed with guns, tasers, and flashlights. They pushed her son on the couch and shined their flashlights in her daughters' faces. She reports that the agents never presented a search warrant and finally left after they could not locate the individual for whom they were searching. The woman and her family are U.S. citizens.

This is just one story of the many we have heard from the Wood River Valley. Others told of their doors being knocked down, being tricked by ICE agents, and of friends and family members leaving their homes to live in the surrounding mountains for fear of further raids.

## Know Your Rights!

Without being there during the raids, it is hard for us to know what exactly took place at each home. What we do know is that citizens and non-citizens alike have rights. When faced with ICE raids and questions from law enforcement, please remember the following:

- ICE and other law enforcement agents cannot search your home unless you give them permission or unless they have a search warrant issued by a judge. If law enforcement agents come to your home, do not open the door unless they have a search warrant.
- If the agents do have a search warrant, you have the right to review the warrant. The warrant must specify in detail the places to be searched and the people or things to be taken away.
- You have the right to remain silent and may refuse to answer any questions.

Lying to the government is a crime but remaining silent is not.

- If you are arrested, you have the right to an attorney. Repeat your request of an attorney to every agent that tries to question you.
- You have the right to ask for the officer's name and/or badge number. If law enforcement agents enter your home without your permission and without a search warrant and/or you are treated badly, you will want this information.
- Never sign anything without reading, understanding, and knowing the consequences of signing it. It is best to have an attorney review any documents with you before signing.

This list of rights is not exhaustive. For more information about your rights when faced with ICE raids or when questioned by ICE or other law enforcement agents, please contact the ACLU of Idaho!

# Coalition Partner Calls for Immigration Reform

by Leo Morales

As I sit in my office during the late hours, every now and then the phone rings. A thought goes through my mind. "Should I pick it up? Is it the telemarketers trying to sell me something?" As the phone continues to ring, I can't resist the thought that it may be a legitimate call from a community member needing some help. After all, I do give out the organization's toll free number whenever I do an interview on the radio or conduct a public presentation. Still, most of the time when I pick up the phone, it's the telemarketer trying to sell me satellite dish services.

Over the past several months, however, calls coming in during business hours or late at night have been different. These new calls are all similar. The individual on the other end is someone who speaks Spanish and they begin like this, "Habla español." I reply in Spanish, "Yes I do, how can I help you?" The individual then proceeds, "My husband was stopped by the police for failure to signal before turning. He was arrested, put in jail, and now they tell me that immigration is going to deport him. I called this telephone num-

ber because they told me you can help me." As I listen to the caller plea for help, some even with tears and a terrified voice, I know that this is another family being torn apart. Unfortunately, there is not much I can do to stop the deportation and the pain for this family. How will this wife and her children deal with the situation?!

This scenario reflects real life situations that are becoming more common in communities across the nation as Congress continues to delay reforming our broken immigration laws. In absence of some kind of path to citizenship, millions of immigrants in the country with no legal immigration status face deportation, regardless of how much they have contributed to society. It doesn't matter that they pay their taxes, attend church, go to school, have jobs, and are good neighbors. The simple fact is that under the current system, they are deportable.

As a nation of immigrants, this country has historically faced similar situations with every large group of immigrants deciding to make the United State their new home. As in the past, Congress is now grappling with what to do. Congress

passed the infamous Chinese Exclusion Act in the 1800s and repealed it during the 1940s. Congress set national quotas in the 1920s and in 1986 passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) to deal with the growing population of undocumented workers. The latter reform set sanctions for employers if they continued to hire undocumented workers, but enforcement against employers became very rare. Instead, immigration enforcement went after the workers who were less likely to defend themselves.

In today's world, enforcement continues to target workers, and every now and then, Immigration and Custom Enforcement prosecutes certain employers for added media publicity. But in addition to raids, Congress and the Department of Homeland Security are considering and implementing enforcement tactics that affect not just undocumented immigrants, but all Americans. The CLEAR Act and the REAL ID Act are two prime examples of far reaching policies proposed to solve the complex issue of immigration. The CLEAR Act would authorize state and local police to implement immigration law

in local communities across the nation. The REAL ID Act, if implemented in 2008, will reconfigure how driver's licenses are issued and lead us down the road toward a national identification card. Both of these policies affect immigrants and non-immigrants alike.

Enforcement in Idaho has intensified, particularly as counties like Ada and Canyon have signed memoranda of agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to house undocumented immigrants in local jails until immigration officials are able to deport them or transfer them to a different holding facility outside the state. Idaho's enforcement capacity was increased this Spring as more federal dollars and agents were allocated. Through community anecdotes, we have also learned of high surveillance and enforcement from local police. While police in Idaho have not been deputized to act as immigration officials, several have taken the freedom to go beyond their call of duty and have started to ask questions about immigration status. In some instances, police have cited immigrants

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