

To:
Senator John Cornyn
Senator Ted Cruz
Representative Lloyd Doggett
Representative Lamar Smith
Representative Michael McCaul
Representative Roger Williams
Representative John Carter

CC: Senate Judiciary Committee

Dear Texas Representatives

We the undersigned organizations appreciate your work with colleagues in the House and Senate in promoting a comprehensive immigration reform bill.

However, we are deeply concerned that an immigration reform bill could lead to an expansion of costly and ineffective immigration enforcement dragnet programs. We are in particular concerned about an expansion of "Operation Streamline" and federal felony prosecutions of border-crossers, and other immigration enforcement programs, including Secure Communities, which continue to flood jails and detention centers with those who should not be locked up, including domestic violence and crime victims and people with minor, if any, criminal records.

These policies are promoting the unnecessary growth of private prisons at a time when crime is down nationwide. Lucrative contracts for 13 "Criminal Alien Requirement" (CAR) prisons only serve the interests of private prison profiteers, not public safety.

When it was introduced in 2005, "Operation Streamline" triggered a dramatic increase in misdemeanor prosecutions of people who cross the border without authorization and greatly escalated felony prosecutions (punishable by up to 20 years in federal prison) of those who cross the border after a past deportation. These prosecutions represent a significant departure from the normal practice of treating unauthorized migration as a civil violation.

In 2011, unauthorized entry and re-entry were the two most prosecuted crimes in the federal judicial system - more than murder, robbery or financial fraud. These prosecutions are fueling the explosive growth in numbers of Latinos in prison. Latinos now make up more than 50 percent of all those sentenced to federal prison despite making up only 16 percent of the US population.

The federal government has spent an estimated \$5.5 billion incarcerating undocumented immigrants in the criminal justice system for unauthorized entry and re-entry since 2005, above and beyond the \$2 billion per year it has spent on the civil immigration detention system. Much of the aforementioned \$5.5 billion has been channeled to for-profit private prisons with deplorable conditions.

Immigration reform should not benefit private prison corporations at the cost of immigrants and taxpayers alike. We believe that immigration reform should not expand "Operation Streamline" and "CAR" prison contracts, nor rely on programs like Secure Communities, but rather end them.

Signed,

Austin Immigrant Rights Coalition
Grassroots Leadership
Texans United for Families
Texas Civil Rights Project
Texas Criminal Justice Coalition

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