

Sign Letter to President Asking that He End Secure Communities

Dear Colleague,

I am deeply concerned that the administration's approach to immigration enforcement is hurting our communities by making it more difficult for local law enforcement to do their primary job of keeping our communities safe. A recent DHS task force on Secure Communities has found that the program sows mistrust of police, which then makes it harder for local law enforcement to cooperate with immigrant communities because of their growing inability to reassure immigrants that they are not also enforcing immigration law.

By implementing Secure Communities uniformly across the country we are further entangling law enforcement with immigration enforcement, even in places where local law enforcement feels they can best do their jobs by remaining completely separate from immigration enforcement actions. We need to allow local law enforcement to do their jobs as they feel is best, not alienate them from the communities they serve by making them de facto immigration agents.

In addition to raising concerns about the impact of Secure Communities, the letter also expresses concern about the fact that our immigration detention system makes it difficult for people to get a fair hearing on their case by separating them from their families and limiting access to legal assistance. Because of these concerns, I ask that you join me in sending a letter to President Obama asking that he end the Secure Communities program.

A copy of the letter is below, please contact George Sullivan in my office by email at george.sullivan@mail.house.gov or by phone at 5-4361 if you have any questions or would like to sign on to the letter.

Sincerely,

José E. Serrano
Member of Congress

Dear President Obama,

As Secure Communities continues to expand, we write because we have been deeply troubled by the implementation of the program since its inception. We were further concerned when the Department of Homeland Security undermined the ability of states to opt out of the program by unilaterally terminating all Memoranda of Agreement with State Identification Bureaus across the country. Now, the recently released report of the task force established by DHS to review Secure Communities has led us to conclude that the program must immediately be terminated.

The task force report confirms the concerns we have been raising for more than a year. It makes clear that Secure Communities sows mistrust of the police and other uniformed personnel, thereby making our communities less safe. The broad scope of the program means that immigrants, both documented

and undocumented, are afraid to cooperate with police officers, because doing so may lead to deportation of themselves or their families. This understandable reticence makes it harder for the police to investigate crimes that happen in our communities.

In addition to the impact on law enforcement, this program of wholesale removals hurts our communities by funneling immigrants into an unjust deportation system that fails to offer due process protections. When detained, individuals are not afforded a right to counsel and are often transferred to remote locations for detention, which severely limits their access to resources to help them fight their cases. This patently unfair system needs to be seriously reformed, not expanded through fatally-flawed programs like Secure Communities.

Immigrants are an integral part of the communities we represent. They go to our schools, work in our businesses, pay taxes, serve as the primary breadwinners in their families, and help to give our communities their unique character. Our communities continue to be damaged by this growing collaboration between police and immigration enforcement.

We urge you to immediately stop Secure Communities. We cannot make our communities safer by tearing them apart.