

## **Vigilantes At ICE**

In recent months, ICE enforcement against the undocumented increased sharply - notable ICE raids include: Universal Industrial Sales, Inc. in Utah (February), Micro Solutions Enterprises in California (February), Resort in Virginia (April), and the Pilgrim's Pride Raids in Texas, Florida, Tennessee, Arkansas, and West Virginia (April). ICE has also made numerous unpublicized raids, several of them warrantless (and of doubtful legality). During these ICE raids, unlawful detentions of children, mentally ill individuals, and even US Citizens have occurred. Congress's concern about the ongoing ICE raids prompted the House Immigration Subcommittee to hold a hearing on February 13, 2008 entitled "Problems with ICE interrogation, detention, and removal procedures", [testimony at the hearing highlights numerous systemic abuses plaguing ICE](#).

Essentially, ICE seems determined to try out the anti-immigrationists's pet "attrition thru enforcement" theory (aka mass deportation), not that it will ever work. Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Congress created the huge 15,000+ employee agency that is ICE, with full support from the US public, primarily to ensure that another 9/11 did not happen ever again. Hounding busboys and gardeners is not ICE's core mission, something Congress would do well to remind ICE about, perhaps during the FY 2009 appropriations bill. By squandering away valuable national security resources on harassing the undocumented, ICE appears ready to accept full responsibility for the next terrorist attack on US soil. Al Qaeda is our enemy, Mexican workers are not, something apparently not clear to those at ICE.

So far, the Office of Professional Responsibility at ICE has proven incompetent and/or powerless to stop the crisis of abuses at ICE. We believe that Congress should appoint an independent ombudsman with a roving brief and significant authority to ensure that ICE remains on target, and does not frivolously jeopardize our national security in chasing dishwashers. There already exists a CIS Ombudsman, and Congress could just roll-in ICE oversight responsibilities into that office, or create a parallel ICE Ombudsman office with similar reporting responsibilities. Occasional oversight is not enough, systemic abuse must be met by systemic change, we urge Congress to consider an independent ombudsman for ICE.

We welcome readers to share their opinion and ideas with us by writing to [editor@ilw.com](mailto:editor@ilw.com)