



Coalición de Derechos Humanos

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COALICION DE DERECHOS HUMANOS OPPOSES REPRESSIVE SENATE IMMIGRATION COMPROMISE

Costly and draconian proposal offers major defense and prison contractors billions of dollars to dramatically intensify and privatize border and interior enforcement, will increase migrant deaths, separates families, and expands the exploitation of temporary workers, without offering any meaningful lawful status to immigrants, nor solutions to the issue of migration

Public Statement to follow the Migrant Trail Press Conference

Wednesday, May 23, 2007

11:00am

El Tiradito Shrine

Tucson, AZ.- The Coalicion de Derechos Humanos (CDH), a longtime champion of human rights based in Southern Arizona, joins others across the country in decrying the immigration deal entered into by members of the Senate and the White House. "Not only does this bill continue to ignore the roots of mass migration, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, but it represents a drastic and frightening departure from our current system of family-based immigration petitions, and would plunge entire communities into an unprecedented police-type environment," declared Anna O'Leary, a member of the Coalicion. "That our public officials would just hand over billions of our tax dollars to major defense contractors with histories of abuse and corruption to create a senseless war-like zone on the border with Mexico and in our communities, while our cities across this nation suffer a lack of basic services, is nothing short of malfeasance," she continued.

Based on over 30 years of work with immigrants and refugees, CDH supports substantive and just immigration reform that demilitarizes the border regions, includes a real path to U.S. citizenship, reunifies families, halts worksite raids and detentions, protects labor rights and addresses the U.S. economic policies that force people across the world to migrate. "Given the enormous price tag of over \$30 billion and the terrible human cost of over 5,000 bodies of migrants recovered at the border since the inception of the 1994 southern border blockade strategy, we must stand up against this Senate bill, which would actually worsen the gruesome humanitarian crisis at the border since it expands the militarization strategy to even deadlier levels," stated Isabel Garcia, co-chair of CDH.

As set forth in this compromise, the paltry legalization and inherently exploitative temporary worker programs would not start until the government has hired 18,000 additional Border Patrol agents, provided

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funding for 27,500 detention beds per day, and built 370 miles of walls and 200 miles of vehicle barriers, as well as other military-style enforcement measures and structures. "The proposed probationary report-to-deport "Z" visa program is a set-up to severely limit legalization. It deceptively encourages immigrants to step forward, while at the same time subjecting them to a minefield of new policing measures that will result in millions being arrested, imprisoned and deported. This will only drive immigrant communities deeper underground," continued Ms. O'Leary.

"What many do not yet understand is that after completing 8 to 13 years on this probationary visa, not only must immigrants leave the country, but they must apply to re-enter based on a new 'merit' based system that would exclude them from permanent lawful status," she stated.

"It is unfortunate, but clear, that this so-called 'deal' provides the elite and corporate structure with everything they want, while selling out the civil, labor, and human rights of all of us, migrants and U. S. citizens," stated Ms. Garcia, "with massive numbers of disposable and exploitable temporary workers, as well as billions of dollars guaranteed to military contractors to 'police and control' ourselves, while our communities want for basic needs to be met."

CDH and its community and national allies will continue to call upon Congress to include immigrants as full partners in developing meaningful and just immigration policies, as well as economic policies that impact migration.

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