



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on the Judiciary
Bob Goodlatte, Chairman

The Testimony of
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The Strength and Fortify Enforcement Act (H.R. 2278)

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Good afternoon. Thank you, Chairman Goodlatte, Ranking Member Conyers, and all the members of the committee for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Randy Krantz. I am the Commonwealth's Attorney for Bedford County, Virginia and have been prosecuting for 21 years with a concentration in violent crimes.

It has been said, all politics are local. Likewise, all crimes are local; including crimes committed by illegal immigrants. Interior immigration law enforcement is a pressing issue not only for Virginia, but all states and communities. There is one specific area that I would like to address: the local community impact and risk of forgoing the deportation of illegal immigrants who are chronic criminal offenders.

Often, we hear news stories about illegal immigrants who are deported only after committing unquestionably heinous crimes, such as murder or rape. Prosecutors see illegal immigrants pass through the criminal justice system for less serious crimes that still pose a significant risk to public safety. Specifically, illegal immigrants continue to endanger society after adjudication because they are too often released directly back into the community. This is one reason why H.R. 2278 is so important: it will strengthen local law enforcement and prosecutor's ability to protect and serve their jurisdictions through enhanced communication, cooperation, and coordination with our Federal colleagues.

One of the most prevalent scenarios we are faced with in our communities are sex crimes committed against children. The U.S. Department of Justice via financial and logistical support to local communities has helped establish state-wide and regional task forces where local law enforcement is better positioned to identify, apprehend, and prosecute sex offenders. H.R. 2278 would greatly enhance our capabilities by barring entry of illegal immigrant sex offenders who fail to register as required by law.

Another prime example of local community endangerment is the crime of DUI (Driving Under the Influence). Illegal immigrants who are repeat DUI offenders are permitted under current law to stay in the United States, only to continue to drive under the influence of alcohol and kill or seriously injure innocent people.

The consequences are tragic, but preventable. In 2007, Adam Babb was struck head on in Bedford County by a drunk driver named Abel Ramos. Mr. Ramos is an illegal immigrant who was a convicted DUI offender. Additionally, Mr. Ramos had prior convictions for driving with a suspended license and manufacturing counterfeit Virginia driver's licenses. Adam sustained extensive injuries, including a torn aorta and ruptured intestines, which would have proven fatal but for expert medical care. Adam also sustained nearly one million dollars in medical expenses as a result of 80 days in the hospital and elbow reconstruction surgery.

Even with Adam's extensive injuries and Mr. Ramos' subsequent conviction for driving under the influence and vehicular maiming, Mr. Ramos was not eligible for deportation.

Some of the members may also recall a local story from August 1, 2010 when Carlos Montano, an illegal immigrant, struck and killed Sister Denise Mosier in Prince William County while driving under the influence of alcohol. Notably, prior to this incident, Mr. Montano was arrested *twice* for driving while intoxicated and was even reported to federal immigration authorities. Yet, Mr. Montano remained in the United States because immigration officials were unable to deport him.

Similarly, in Virginia Beach on March 30, 2007, illegal immigrant Alfredo Ramos struck and killed 17-year-old Alison Kunhardt and 16-year-old Tessa Tranchant; Mr. Ramos' blood alcohol content was three times the legal limit at the time of the crash. Unsurprisingly, Mr. Ramos was no stranger to law enforcement. Before the crash, he had been arrested three times,

including charges for DUI.

These stories are just a glimpse of the problems we face in Virginia and communities across the United States because of repeat offenders who are illegal immigrants. If HR2278 had been in effect at the time of each of the above defendants' final convictions, they would have been eligible for deportation and would not have posed a continuing threat to the safety of our citizens. The furtherance of any goal is met with hard work and determination, but moreover it is done by the utilization of available tools. In order to confront the dangers associated with illegal immigrants who are repeat offenders and harm innocent Americans and the criminal justice system; local authorities must be allowed to act. As a Commonwealth's Attorney, it is of paramount importance to allow us to protect and serve our fellow citizens and keep our communities safe.

The SAFE Act will significantly strengthen the ability of the dedicated local, state, and Federal law enforcement officers and prosecutors to collaborate with each other in fulfilling our duties to our fellow citizens.

Thank you,

Randy C. Krantz,

Commonwealth's Attorney

Bedford County, Virginia