



News Release

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ICE provides \$2.5 million to Pennsylvania law enforcement agencies for their assistance in immigration investigation of Wal-Mart and contract companies

Thomas A. Marino, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, and Julie Myers, Assistant Secretary, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Thomas Corbett, Attorney General, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and Chief Mark Flynn, Honesdale Police Department today announced that two Pennsylvania law enforcement agencies that have received payments totaling more than \$2,500,000 from the Department of Homeland Security, payments representing shares of a landmark \$15 million global civil and criminal settlement arising out an investigation into the alleged hiring of illegal aliens by independent contractors who provided cleaning services to Wal-Mart stores throughout the United States from 1998 through 2003.

According to federal officials, the following agencies have received asset forfeiture equitable sharing payments as a result of their crucial roles in this joint five year investigation, which culminated in 2005:

Office of Attorney General, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania \$2,254, 511.30

Honesdale Police Department, Honesdale, Pennsylvania \$253,632.52

This asset sharing represents the culmination of this joint local, state and federal effort to investigate the alleged employment of undocumented aliens by various cleaning companies which formerly provided cleaning services to Wal-Mart stores throughout the United States. This investigation was conducted by ICE agents, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, with the assistance of the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office, and the Honesdale Police Department.

According to federal officials, the asset sharing announced today reflected the indispensable roles of these state and local agencies in this investigation. Federal officials noted that both the Honesdale Police Department and the Office of Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania played vital roles in the successful investigation of this immigration case.

The Honesdale Police Department was one of the first law enforcement agencies to bring this alleged employment of illegal aliens to the attention of the Department of Homeland Security, and provided essential support and assistance to the initial local aspects of this nationwide investigation. The Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office, in turn, worked with local and federal officials developing this local matter into a state-wide investigation, and ultimately into an investigation which was nationwide in its scope.

That nationwide investigation culminated on October 23, 2003 with a series of immigration

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enforcement actions at some 60 Wal-Mart stores in 21 states. In these enforcement actions, ICE agents arrested approximately 245 undocumented aliens employed by the cleaning contractors and put them in deportation proceedings.

ICE agents made arrests at Wal-Mart stores located in Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Following these enforcement actions, officials at Wal-Mart contacted federal authorities and entered into a civil settlement which included the payment of \$11 million through the United States Attorney's Office to the Treasury Forfeiture Fund for the purpose of promoting future law enforcement programs and activities in this field by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

In addition to this civil settlement, twelve Missouri-based cleaning contractor corporations were convicted of charges in federal court in Pennsylvania for their alleged involvement in the illegal employment of undocumented aliens in Pennsylvania and elsewhere between 1998 and 2002, and consented to the forfeiture of an additional \$4 million to the United States.

In announcing this asset sharing from these forfeited funds, Mr. Marino noted: "The partnership between local, state and federal law enforcement agencies is the key to our success protecting the public, and enforcing the law, including this nation's immigration laws. Here in central Pennsylvania we are fortunate to have outstanding state and local law enforcement partners like the Pennsylvania State Attorney General and the Honesdale Police Department, whose work we recognize today. Because of the hard work and dedication of these law enforcement partners, a major immigration investigation with nationwide implications for employers throughout the United States, was brought to a highly successful conclusion."

ICE Assistant Secretary Myers stated, "This investigation demonstrates what can be achieved when local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies work together in targeting employers that use cheap, illegal labor as a business model. Without the work of the Honesdale Police Department and the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office, this case would not have moved forward. We are pleased to recognize their substantial contributions to this landmark investigation."

"The arrests of more than 240 illegal aliens in 21 states sends a clear message to private contracting companies that hire these workers," Corbett said. "Law enforcement will not tolerate the employment of undocumented aliens by private contracting companies looking to save money by hiring cheap labor. Officials from every level of government will continue to investigate and pursue those who break the nation's immigration laws."

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.