U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

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News

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ICE Enforcement in Arizona
Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO)

During an average week in 2010, ERO officers:

- Respond to 31 law enforcement agency calls that result in 121 arrests
- Prosecute 29 foreign born individuals for criminal immigration violations
- Arrest 251 foreign born individuals for immigration violations
- Remove more than 1,500 foreign born individuals from the United States, 567 of whom have criminal convictions

ERO programs and initiatives in Arizona include:

- The Joint Criminal Alien Removal Task Force (JCART) which searches for at-large criminal aliens living in Arizona. From Oct. 1, 2009 through July 31, 2010, JCART officers made 206 arrests, 152 of whom were convicted criminal aliens.
- The Law Enforcement Agency Response (LEAR) unit, which is a dedicated unit of ICE agents focused on providing assistance to law enforcement requests for assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. From Oct. 1, 2009 through July 31, 2010, LEAR responded to 951 calls from more than 70 law enforcement agencies resulting in the arrest of 3,632 illegal aliens.
- The Violent Criminal Alien Section (VCAS), which works with the U.S. Attorney's Office to seek felony prosecution of criminal aliens who illegally reenter the United States after they have been deported. In the first ten months of this fiscal year, the VCAS unit has generated 886 prosecutions.
- Detention management and removal operations, which helps maintain the integrity of our immigration system by ensuring compliance with immigration proceedings. The Phoenix Field Office maintains approximately 3,000 detention beds in Arizona, which are normally at 95 percent capacity, and occupied by individuals from approximately 80 different countries.
    - In FY 2008, ICE removed 76,450 aliens from Arizona, 15,156 of whom were convicted criminals.

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- In FY 2009, ICE removed 81,429 aliens from Arizona, 23,550 of whom were convicted criminals.
- Through Aug. 2 of FY 2010, ICE removed 66,035 aliens from Arizona, 24,950 of whom were convicted criminals.

Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)

During an average week in 2010, HSI agents:

- Arrest five people on charges related to human smuggling.
- Investigate 3 drop houses, rescuing an average of 15 people in each house
- Inspect the employment records of 526 people working for Arizona companies
- Discover 53 people working unlawfully for Arizona companies
- Seize 1 ton of marijuana, $104,000, 4 weapons and 5 vehicles

HSI significant investigations and initiatives in 2010
Operation In Plain Sight

- Culminating in a statewide takedown with 47 criminal arrests, Operation Plain Sight was the largest human smuggling investigation in ICE history. The investigation began with commercial shuttle companies transporting smuggled aliens from Tucson to Phoenix on Interstate 10. Eventually, ICE expanded the investigation to include human smuggling operations in Nogales, Tucson and Phoenix with tentacles stretching across the United States.

Drop House Response Group (DHRG)

- ICE established the Drop House Response Group in Phoenix to proactively seek out human smuggling organizations operating in the Phoenix area. So far this fiscal year, the DHRG has made 31 criminal arrests, rescued 276 aliens from drop houses and seized more than $23,000 from human smugglers.

Worksite Enforcement

- ICE audited 59 Arizona businesses, resulting in the inspection of 21,587 Forms I-9. Of the 21,587 Forms I-9 inspected, agents determined that 2,177 employees presented "Suspect Documents." 25 businesses were served a Warning Notice and 23 were served a Notice of Compliance based on the results of the Form I-9 audits. ICE is currently preparing several Notices of Intent to Fine for other business audited in FY10. In FY 09, ICE fined six Arizona companies with fine notices totaling more than $270,000.

Illegal Drug Program

- ICE established this cooperative program with the Government of Mexico to seek prosecution under Mexican law for marijuana smugglers caught at Nogales ports of entry. So far, ICE has referred 24 cases with 28 defendants to the Mexican Government for prosecution. Four defendants have been convicted and are serving 10-year prison sentences. Two of the remaining cases have been dismissed and 18 are still pending.

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RAC Ajo

- ICE opened a new, permanent office in Ajo, Ariz. to provide criminal investigative support at the Lukeville Port of Entry and to further constrict the ability of smuggling organizations to maintain or establish operations along the important transportation corridor stretching from the border into Phoenix.

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