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**U.S. Immigration
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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

News Releases

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Secretary Napolitano and ICE Assistant Secretary Morton announce that the Secure Communities Initiative identified more than 110,000 criminal aliens in its first year

WASHINGTON - Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Assistant Secretary John Morton today announced that ICE's Secure Communities initiative-a partnership with local law enforcement agencies that uses biometrics to identify and remove criminal aliens-identified more than 111,000 criminal aliens in local custody during its first year.

"Secure Communities provides our local partners with an effective tool to identify and remove dangerous criminal aliens who pose a threat to public safety," said Secretary Napolitano. "We will continue to expand these partnerships to provide a force multiplier for ICE's immigration enforcement efforts across the country."

"Access to timely and accurate information about state and local arrests is critical to identifying dangerous criminal aliens," said Morton. "By utilizing unique biometric information Secure Communities dramatically increases the accuracy of criminal alien identifications."

The results announced today are the product of enhanced interoperability between DHS' US-VISIT and the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division criminal biometrics program-technology that streamlines information sharing to enhance public safety.

Secretary Napolitano and Assistant Secretary Morton also announced today that the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department will be the next jurisdiction to participate in Secure Communities-joining 95 jurisdictions across 11 states that currently utilize Secure Communities.

Since its inception in October 2008, Secure Communities has identified more than 11,000 aliens charged or convicted with Level 1 crimes, such as murder, rape and kidnapping-1,900 of which have already been removed from the United States-and more than 100,000 aliens convicted of Level 2 and 3 crimes, including burglary and serious property crimes.

At today's announcement, Secretary Napolitano and Assistant Secretary Morton projected that Secure Communities will have a presence in every state by 2011 and be available to every law enforcement agency in the nation by 2013. Currently, DHS prioritizes the deployment of Secure Communities to jurisdictions with the highest volume of dangerous criminal aliens.

"Secure Communities is one of the programs that enhance our efforts to keep the peace in the largest urban area in Texas," said Harris County Sheriff Adrian Garcia. "My department was the first local law enforcement agency in the country to adopt the program. Now, a year later, we continue to use it as a technological 'safety net' to help identify inmates who, having been placed in my custody for allegedly committing a crime under state law, may also be illegal immigrants."

Secure Communities operates jointly between DHS, the Department of Justice and participating law enforcement partners to automatically check the digital fingerprints of individuals arrested and booked at the local level against DHS' biometrics-based immigration records in addition to FBI databases-allowing ICE to take appropriate action to ensure that dangerous criminal aliens are not released back into communities.

-- ICE --

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 five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

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