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News Releases

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ICE arrests 18 in Maryland operation targeting criminal aliens charged with DUI

BALTIMORE - Last week in a three-day enforcement operation throughout Maryland, 18 immigration fugitives and immigration violators, almost all convicted of Driving Under the Influence (DUI), were arrested by officers with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO).

Of those taken into custody, 13 were immigration fugitives with outstanding orders of deportation, and two were previously deported aliens who returned to the United States illegally after being removed. Ninety-nine percent of the aliens arrested during the enforcement action also had criminal records, in addition to being in the country illegally. Their criminal histories included prior arrests and convictions for a variety of violations, including possession of drugs, possession of weapon, assault, forgery and theft.

"This targeted enforcement action is an example of ICE's commitment to tough law enforcement investigations that locate and arrest criminal aliens and ultimately remove those aliens from the United States that pose a threat to public safety in our communities," said Calvin McCormick, ICE ERO field office director in Baltimore.

The operation was spearheaded by ICE's Fugitive Operations Program (FOP), which is responsible for locating, arresting and removing at-large criminal aliens and immigration fugitives. ICE's Fugitive Operations Teams (FOT) give top priority to cases involving aliens who pose a threat to national security and public safety, including members of transnational street gangs, child sex offenders and DUI violators.

In fiscal year 2010, ICE's FOTs nationwide have made 30,787 arrests. More than 89 percent of those arrests involved immigration fugitives and aliens with prior criminal convictions. Locally, the Baltimore FOTs have made 756 total arrests in fiscal year 2010, surpassing the 683 total arrests made in fiscal year 2009.

The arrests were made in the following Maryland Cities: Adelphi, Annapolis, Baltimore, Edgewood, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Gwynn Oak, Hyattsville, Montgomery Village, Rockville, and Silver Spring.

The following are examples of the individuals arrested:

- A 44-year-old citizen of Mexico with multiple DUI convictions in Maryland and California was arrested in Gwynn Oak, Md. He was convicted in California of DUI and causing bodily injury and was sentenced to 60 days in jail and 36 months probation. A year and a half later he was convicted of hit and run/death or injury and was sentenced to 37 days in jail and 36 months probation. Later he was also convicted of false identification to a peace officer where he was sentenced to 180 days in jail and 36 months probation. In Maryland, he was convicted of DUI twice and was sentenced to two years in jail, of which 21 months was suspended for the first conviction. On the second conviction he was sentenced to one year in jail of which nine months was suspended with supervised probation.
- A 42-year-old El Salvadoran national convicted of DUI and sentenced to one year probation was arrested at his home in Rockville, Md. In addition to the DUI conviction, he has also been arrested for manufacture or delivery of a controlled dangerous substance, possession of a controlled dangerous substance with intent to deliver, and conspiracy to manufacture or deliver a narcotic. These charges are currently pending.

All 18 were arrested administratively for being in violation of immigration law and all are being held in ICE custody pending immigration removal proceedings or removal from the United States. The arrested individuals are nationals from the following countries: Bolivia, El Salvador, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.

ICE's Fugitive Operations Program is just one facet of the Department of Homeland Security's broader strategy to heighten the federal government's effectiveness at identifying and removing dangerous criminal aliens from the United States. Other initiatives that figure prominently in this effort are the Criminal Alien Program, Secure Communities and agency's partnerships with state and local law enforcement agencies under 287(g).

In fiscal year 2010, ICE set a record for overall removals of illegal aliens, with more than 392,000 removals nationwide. Half of those removed - more than 195,000 - were convicted criminals.