



# “THE ALIEN AMONG YOU”

## A IMMIGRATION ADVOCACY NETWORK

The Episcopal Church  
Office of Government Relations

ISSUE 2, DECEMBER 2008

### The Detention of Immigrants

#### The increase use of detention of immigrants

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#### Inside this issue:

Facts about detention	2
Episcopal Church and migration	2
Resources & More information	3
Visiting Detention Centers	3
Family Detention	4
Children in Detention	5
Stories and experiences: Maine and Washington	6
A Personal Account:	7

The expansion of the detention of immigrants has created a new era in the enforcement of immigration laws in the history of the United States, having significant consequences for immigrants, their families and the immigration system as a whole. Men, women and children can be detained for days, months or even years while their right to stay in the United States is decided in court. The use of detention has expanded dramatically making immigration detention the fasted growing form of incarceration.

**Detention on the Rise:** The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is responsible for detaining immigrants and referring them to the correct legal proceedings. In fiscal year 2008 DHS detained approximately 350,000 immigrants, with an average of over 30,000 people detained in any given day in one of approximately 300 facilities. Many are vulnerable populations such as asylum seekers, torture victims, pregnant women, families and the elderly who pose no threat to the community or public safety. According to the Washington Post this means that “with roughly 1.6 million illegal immigrants in some stage of immigration proceedings, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) holds more

inmates a night than Clarion hotels have guests, operates nearly as many vehicles as Greyhound has buses and flies more people each day than do many small U.S. airlines.”<sup>[1]</sup>  
**Detention Facilities:** ICE uses several kinds of detention facilities to house people detained for immigration-related violations. More than 40% of immigration detainees are held in hundreds of local jails all across the United States. Detention of immigrants has become a highly profitable business for county jails, state prisons, and private corporations. The massive use of detention raises questions about its nature, its cost, its effectiveness and particularly about the treatment of immigrants in detention.  
**Lack of Standards:** Currently there are no binding uniform detention standards that cover humane treatment of immigrant detainees. We now see the consequences in arbitrary punishment, solitary confinement, shackling, neglect of basic medical and mental care, denial of outdoor recreation, lack of access to phones, and verbal, physical and sexual abuse. The detention standards are not binding under the United States law or regulations, making them practically unenforceable. There have been numerous problems related to the lack of

adequate and timely access to medical and mental health care, the most extreme being cases of death due to failure to provide healthcare in detention. The lack of a real mechanism of control, oversight and accountability is a major issue for such an extensive detention system that affects so many.

**Alternatives to Detention:** Detention should be used after considering other alternatives, particularly in cases that do not present risk and in the cases of vulnerable populations. Alternatives include release on parole, supervised release, and community based programs. The U.S. Government has focused on restrictive alternatives, such as electronic monitoring and curfews. Detention should never be mandatory, indefinite or punitive in nature. As part of our work we need to create awareness about the problems with the present detention system and advocate for a system with enforceable standards that are humane and adequate protections for vulnerable populations. In this Newsletter issue you will find resources to obtain additional information about detention and tools to become more involved in your community. You will also find stories and experiences of different churches and parishes in relation to detention.

**FACTS ABOUT DETENTION**

\*Men, women and children can be detained for days, months or even years while their right to stay in the United States is decided in court. Persons appealing a removal decision or applying for asylum status may also be detained until their cases are settled.

\*The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is responsible for detaining immigrants and referring them to the correct legal proceedings. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the part of the DHS responsible for the investigation, arrest, detention and deportation of non-citizens.

\*Detention for violations of immigration law is the fastest growing form of incarceration in the United States. More than 300,000 people were deported in 2007, and over 30,000 people are locked up in immigration detention on any given day in 2008.

\*ICE uses several kinds of detention facilities, including:

1. Service processing centers (SPCs), which are owned and operated by ICE;
2. Contract detention facilities (CDFs), which are owned and operated by private-sector

businesses on behalf of ICE;

3. Facilities operated by state and local government entities that contract with ICE through intergovernmental service agreements (IGSAs); and
4. Facilities operated by the Federal Bureau of Prisons and Office of Refugee Resettlement.

\*The average cost of detaining an immigrant is \$95 per person/ per day. Alternatives to detention are effective and significantly cheaper, with some programs costing as little as \$12 per day. These alternatives to detention still yield an estimated 93% appearance rate before the immigration courts .

**Total and Average Daily Immigration and Customs Enforcement Detentions, 2001 to 2007**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>Total Number Detained</b>	209,000	202,000	231,500	235,247	237,667	256,842	311,000
<b>Daily Average</b>	20,441	20,282	21,133	21,919	19,619	21,450	30,000

Individuals from Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala accounted for 59 % of all bed days in detention centers in 2006, up from 49 % in 2005 and 39 % in 2001.

Individuals from Mexico alone accounted for 26 % of all bed days in 2006 while Salvadorans were second with 12 %

(Source: Migration Policy Institute)

**The Episcopal Church on Migration Issues: "The Alien Among You" Part II**

**RESOLUTION: A017-2006**

*Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church deplore any action by the Government of the United States which unduly emphasizes enforcement, including militarization of the border between the United States and Mexico, as the primary response to immigrants entering the United*

*States to work; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Episcopal Church undertake a campaign to educate Episcopalians as to the plight of refugees, immigrants, and migrants, which will include information about the root causes of migration; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this campaign call the Church to commit to*

welcoming strangers as a matter of Christian responsibility, to advocate for their well being and protection and to urge its members to resist legislation and actions which violate our fundamental beliefs as Christians, including the criminalization of persons providing humanitarian assistance to migrants.

## DETENTION RESOURCES & MORE INFORMATION

### Know Your Rights Manual for Adult Detainees - Midwest (Nat'l Immigrant Justice Ctr)

<http://www.immigrantjustice.org/resources/immigrants/detaineerresources/know-your-rights-manual-for-adult-detainees.html>

### Immigration and You: A Manual for Children

<http://www.immigrantjustice.org/resources/immigrants/detaineerresources/know-your-rights-manual-for-detained-children.html>

### What to Do if You Are Arrested or Detained by Immigration

[http://www.nilc.org/ce/nilc/to\\_do\\_if\\_arrested\\_2007-08.pdf](http://www.nilc.org/ce/nilc/to_do_if_arrested_2007-08.pdf)

### Detention Watch Network

c/o Center for Community Change  
1536 U Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
Ph: (202) 339-9354  
[www.detentionwatchnetwork.org](http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org)

### Death in Detention

NY Times Reports  
[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/i/immigration\\_detention\\_us/incustody\\_deaths/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/i/immigration_detention_us/incustody_deaths/index.html)

Washington Post series on Careless detention:

#### Series Careless Detention Washington Post

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/immigration/index.html>

#### Graphic: Deaths at ICE Facilities

At look at where deaths occurred in ICE facilities between 2003 and 2008

### The business behind the detention of immigrants

<http://www.businessofdetention.com/>  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2008/10/04/AR2008100402434.html>  
<http://immigration.investigativeprojects.com/>

### Detention Conditions

NILC and the ACLU of Southern California for the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, "U.S. Immigration Detention System: Substandard Conditions of Confinement and Ineffective Oversight", May 2007

[http://www.nilc.org/immlawpolicy/arrestdet/UNspecialrapporteur\\_presentation\\_2007-05-03.pdf](http://www.nilc.org/immlawpolicy/arrestdet/UNspecialrapporteur_presentation_2007-05-03.pdf)

ACLU, "Conditions of Confinement in Immigrant Detention Facilities", June 2007  
[www.aclu.org/pdfs/prison/unsr\\_briefing\\_materials.pdf](http://www.aclu.org/pdfs/prison/unsr_briefing_materials.pdf)

Report: Conditions at the NW Detention Center are inhumane and violate international law and the U.S. Constitution. One America and Seattle University School of Law. <http://www.hatefreezone.org/downloads/Detention%20Center%20Study.pdf>

## Visiting Detention Centers

Find out about organizations which coordinate ongoing visits to detainees, such as:

### Virginia State: volunteer CAIR Coalition

The Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition (CAIR Coalition) provides services to the immigrant advocacy community in the greater Washington, DC metropolitan area. CAIR brings together community groups, pro bono attorneys, volunteers and immigrants to work for a fair and humane immigration policy. Legal representation is pivotal for vulnerable immigrant families in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. CAIR provides individuals and organizations representing immigrants with education and training services, public policy development leadership, forums for sharing information, legal support services and other empowerment programs.

For volunteer inquiries or other questions about how you can help, please call them directly at (202) 331-3320.

<http://www.caircoalition.org/>

### Elizabeth Detention Center

[Interfaith Refugee Action Team-Elizabeth \(IRATE\) and First Friends](#)

First Friends is an organization of volunteers who visit people detained at the Elizabeth Detention Center (EDC). Many detainees know no one in the United States, so a First Friends visitor may be their only link to the outside. First Friends provides training sessions so prospective volunteers understand what to expect when visiting detained refugees at the Elizabeth Detention Center. New visitors will be matched with a more experienced visitor who will accompany them on their first visit(s).

[Sojourners Detention Visitation Project of the Riverside Church](#)

Visits persons held in Elizabeth NJ Detention Center, where more than 300, non-criminal immigrants are being held, many with no relatives or friends nearby.

Contact: [sojourners@theriversidechurchny.org](mailto:sojourners@theriversidechurchny.org)

### IMPORTANT BILLS ON DETENTION 110TH CONGRESS:

- \* IMMIGRATION OVERSIGHT AND FAIRNESS ACT H.R 7255 INTRODUCED BY REP. ROYBAL-ALLARD
- \* PROTECT CITIZENS AND RESIDENTS FROM UNLAWFUL RAIDS AND DETENTION ACT S.3594 INTRODUCED BY SEN. MENENDEZ
- \* DETAINEE BASIC MEDICAL CARE ACT OF 2008 HR 5950 INTRODUCED BY REP. LOGFREN
- \* SECURE AND SAFE DETENTION AND ASYLUM ACT S3114 INTRODUCED BY SEN. JOE LIBERMAN

## FAMILY DETENTION

As part of its stepped up enforcement of immigration laws the U.S. Government sometimes detains entire families, not just the immigrant in question while his/her right to stay in the United States is decided in court. Currently, the Department of Homeland Security has two detention facilities for families awaiting resolution of their legal status. The detention of families in prison-like facilities raises many ethical and moral questions. Even though there has been significant controversy about family detention, in June 2008 DHS solicited proposals for the construction of up to three new detention centers that would hold up to 600 parents and their children.

On its website ICE states that its intention is to avoid releasing the head of household but also preserve family unity: “the facility provides an effective and humane alternative to maintain the unity of alien families as they await the outcome of their immigration hearings or the return to their home countries”<sup>11</sup>. This policy also works as a mechanism to end the “catch and release” policy, where people do not show up for their hearings.

Texas Center: ICE opened the T. Don Hutto Family Residential Facility in Taylor, Texas in May 2006 to accommodate alien families in ICE custody. This facility is operated by Corrections Corporations of America (CCA), the largest private contractor of detention facilities for immigrants. T. Don Hutto, a former prison, can hold up to 512 detainees in 11 pods with 20 to 30 cells per pod. The number of detainees per cell/room varies; generally they place a couple of children with their parent depending on age and gender. Each cell has either a single cot or bunk beds; cribs are brought in if needed.

The Detention Watch Network (DWN) reports that stress, anxiety, and depression are the most common health issues for detainees at this facility. ICE gives the county \$1 a day per detainee while CCA receives approximately \$180 per detainee per day.

Pennsylvania Center: The second family detention facility is Berks Family Shelter Care in Leesport, Pennsylvania. It opened in 2001. This facility, a former nursing home, has 84 beds and dorm style rooms. Children over six years old sleep separated from adults with other children in their age range. Children under six remain with their mother (or father if no mother is present). This facility is operated by Berks County under a contract from DHS. The county receives \$194 per person per day from DHS for the first 60 detainees, and a fixed rate of \$5.20 per person per day beyond that. In addition, DHS pays for all medical and educational costs. Unlike T. Don Hutto where families wear uniforms, in Berks they are permitted to wear their own clothing.



Detention room at T. Don Hutto Family Residential Facility in Taylor,

Criticism of Family Detention Centers: Several organizations have criticized the treatment of and detention of families, particularly children held at the facility in Texas. In 2007 the ACLU filed a lawsuit against ICE for the treatment of children in detention. A 2007 ACLU lawsuit against ICE resulted in changes in the way that ICE operates family detention facilities and the issuing of family detention standards. However, while an improvement, these standards are based on those for criminal inmates, not for families in civil procedures.

The use of detention for families in prison-like facilities in the name of family unity is alarming. The U.S. Government should provide alternatives to these facilities which are not an appropriate environment for families and children.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ice.gov/pi/news/factsheets/huttofactsheet.htm>

**THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY HAS TWO DETENTION FACILITIES FOR FAMILIES AWAITING RESOLUTION OF THE MIGRATION LEGAL SITUATION. THE DETENTION OF FAMILIES IN PRISON LIKE FACILITIES RAISES MANY ETHICAL AND MORAL QUESTIONS.**

**CHILDREN IN DETENTION: the Guadalupe Art Program - San Diego, CA**

“These are good kids, Reverenda, they all have good hearts. They come looking for work so they can help their families, you know, the American dream,” declares Carlos, a probation officer who stops talking because he is overwhelmed with emotion. Failing to control his emotions he tries to lighten the mood by jokingly referring to himself as a cry-baby.

Carlos is a Latino/American who has walked into our Spanish-language service. I notice he is deep in prayer and thought. He is a probation officer employed at a detention center for undocumented youth. He shares that he always wanted to work in juvenile hall with troubled youth, hoping to make a difference in their lives. He is moved to tears to see day after day the reality of our failing immigration laws. “We are all children of God” he says. I try not to join the tearfest and yet I remember that this is not the first time I am so moved by these children; I take a deep breath and tell them all how brave they are. I am especially moved by these children

right after communion when they return to their chairs, turn around, and humbly kneel on the floor with their heads bowed and their hands raised to the sky, pleading to God to hear their prayers.

These are children from all over the world (with the exception of Mexico; Mexican children are usually deported right away because we are so close to the border) awaiting a judge’s decision for deportation. Children come from Russia, Asia and especially Latin America. Many come looking for work and expect to feed and support their families. Others come looking to be reunited with a parent who left them with relatives at a young age.

One young man from Guatemala begins to cry, begging me to help him. He has just been informed that he will be deported back to his county. A victim of Hurricane Mitch, which destroyed his home, he was the oldest male and chose to make the dangerous journey in



**Jose Luis (Guatemala) first communion**

order to support his family. “I can’t go back! I can’t fail them. My family is depending on me,” he pleads.

A young girl from Ecuador tells of her long journey by herself to the U.S./ Mexican border, only to have the “coyote” who was driving a van full of immigrants to Los Angeles fall asleep at the wheel. The van runs off the road and flips, which caused her head injuries.

**By Rev. Mary Moreno Richardson**

*THE GUADALUPE ART PROGRAM*



The Guadalupe Art Program is a bilingual spiritual empowerment workshop for Latino/a youth. Focused on the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the most ubiquitous icon in Latino culture, participants explore, develop, and deepen their spiritual lives through art, music, and dance. Using the image of Guadalupe as their model, they paint themselves into her corona, thereby placing themselves within her loving aura. In doing this, they have the opportunity to explore their own sacred beauty. The program has been offered at the detention center.



**7 year old girl (El Salvador). When asked about the sword she drew through her heart, she answered “I’ll take it out, when I find my Mommy”**



**The art work of a young Chinese girl whose family lives in Mexico**



**A 6 year old boy (El Salvador) with his painting**



**The youth write and create their own play of their journey “El Norte”**

**The Reverend Canon Mary Moreno Richardson serves as a chaplain for undocumented youth and victims of human trafficking in San Diego County. She is the creator and director of The Guadalupe Art Program. She can be reached at [marencotty@cox.net](mailto:marencotty@cox.net).**

## Stories from the Purepecha community in the State of Washington

Immigrants from all over the world are affected by the increased enforcement of immigration laws; some of these immigrants belong to communities that are particularly vulnerable. Three members of a large indigenous community of Purepecha, Mexico, in the state of Michoacan, spoke with me about the struggles they face as a consequence of this increased enforcement after having migrated to Auburn, Washington. The Diocese of Olympia has been deeply involved in advocacy, outreach to the immigrant community and providing support of families who have been severely impacted by ICE over the past two years.

### **“The only thing I wanted was to work”**

Josefina, a 41 year old single mother of three children, migrated from Purepecha to the U.S. six years ago. She has worked at fast food restaurants and at a fish factory. In July 2008 she and her sister were stopped by ICE agents while walking back from work and were asked for their documentation. She told them that she did not have documentation and she and her sister were taken to an office where they were processed. Her sister was detained and transferred to the Northwest Detention Center while she was released because she had three children in her care. “They released me under the condition I return the next day so they could put an electronic monitor (ankle bracelet)” Josefina explained. She returned the next

day, as requested, and since that day she has an electronic bracelet attached to her leg and she is unable to work. She explained that this is a terrible situation for her and that the ankle bracelet is uncomfortable and that she feels traumatized. Having the ankle bracelet is not only physically uncomfortable but its batteries must



be recharged each day meaning that she must plug it in to an outlet and not move much so that it may recharge. It also causes discomfort which makes it difficult to sleep. Even worse, it is also stigmatizing causing her to feel embarrassment and ashamed. As a result, Josefina now only wears long pants in order to cover the bracelet so people cannot see it. Every month a probation officer, contracted by ICE, makes an unannounced visit to her house to check up on her and the electronic bracelet. Josefina explained that she

has become sad and depressed due to this and that the situation is negatively affecting her children.

Another member of this community that has been affected is Fabiola, who came to the US in 2001. She is 28 years old and is a single mother. Earlier this year she found a job at a race track but was detained by ICE in a raid at her workplace on her first day of work even though they were looking for other individuals. She was taken to an office in the race track facilities where she was processed by ICE for not having documentation. While in the office she repeatedly explained that she is a single mother with a 3 year old daughter at home. Fabiola was transferred to the Northwest Detention Center where she was handcuffed and spent 5 days in detention and was finally released at 11:00 PM. “I observed a lot of mistreatment and abuse and insults of people by ICE agents” she recalls. Fabiola was released after paying a \$3,000 bond and is waiting for her day in court.

The indigenous community is working collectively to organize itself to provide better protection, information and to respond to the needs of a population that has been caught in a failed immigration system, explains Antonio, a community based organizer of the Purepecha community in Auburn. Antonio describes the situation as desperate and points out that one of the major needs is to find legal representation for those affected.

## The Micah Project in Portland, Maine

My name is the Rev. Virginia Marie Rincon and I am the Hispanic Missioner for the Episcopal Diocese of Maine. My work with refugees and immigrants began the first day that I arrived in Portland, Maine in the year 2000. I still remember the day when I saw four fellows walking down the street with a look of despair on their face. I remember pulling over and getting out of the car and simply introducing myself to the weary and confused fellows waking up to a night in the park. The four men told me that they had been working the Blueberry fields for months and that their boss refused to pay them and during the night had driven them to this town called Portland where they knew no one. All they wanted was food, and bus fare to go back home. In 2003, immigration agents entered Portland, Maine and raided home, buses, and businesses owned by immigrants. For weeks, people were afraid to go to their jobs, medical

appointments and walk on the streets. It took the collaborative efforts of many organizations to calm the waters of fear. But the injustice continues. The numbers of Latino detainees continues to increase in the Cumberland county Jail. In 2007, in order to meet the demands at the detention center we began the Micah Project, which was funded by the Episcopal Migration Ministry. The goal of the project is to assess the needs of the detainees and their families. A visit to the detention center includes the collection of data for referral and pastoral purposes. It is unfortunate, but I have seen many families torn apart and severely affected because of the immigration debate and undeniable racial profiling. A pastoral visit is no longer a moment of prayer but a prayerful week of finding food for the family, filling out housing applications and making phone calls to their families in



their country of origin. Confusion, fear and psychological trauma are now a daily struggle for most of the women and children affected by the immigration issue. The Micah Project is a small glimmer of hope in a big problem. I pray that our efforts will create a ripple effect for justice and that the voices of the voiceless can be heard. Micah 6 verse 8: What does God require of us but to do justice, love kindness and to walk humbly with our Lord.

**By Rev. Virginia Rincón**

## A Personal Account: Detention at the North West Detention Center

St. Michael's Church is located in downtown Yakima, Washington. The City of Yakima is located at the Northern part of the Yakima Valley, a valley that, thanks to an irrigation system, is rich and fertile for producing apples, cherries, pears, grapes, hops, and asparagus. The growers are heavily dependent on the labor of farm workers. The greatest numbers of Latino immigrants in the Diocese of Spokane are in the Yakima Valley. In the past year the local ICE office has increased its workforce and we are all living in fear that major workplace raids will begin in our neighborhood.

I first became aware of the existence of the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, WA through conversations with Diane Aid and her advocacy work at the Jubilee Center at St. Matthew/San Mateo in Auburn, WA. All of this became a reality in September when one of our members was detained by the ICE and incarcerated at the Northwest Detention Center for twelve days. His violation was that he came to the United States sixteen years ago with his family at the age of eight and they had no documentation to do so. While awaiting David's case to be heard in court at the facility, we heard six cases before his. It struck me that without legal council and the support of family and friends, most of the people before him had given up and agreed to deportation. Furthermore, they had no idea how long they would be held at the detention center.

### David's Story

A month and a half ago I was detained by ICE and placed in the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington where I saw the real face of American laws. In this place I learned that if you are undocumented (or illegal, as we are called) you have nothing to protect you, no power no rights, no voice. It is a system that doesn't care if you have a job or a family at home waiting and depending on you. It is a system that is so unjust that it doesn't even recognize, let alone care, what you have contributed to this country. This system is only in place to criminalize and discriminate.

When I was first detained at the Canadian border while leaving the USA to travel abroad, five or six Immigration Officers immediately and forcefully put my hands behind my back. It seemed to me that they were happy to have "caught an illegal." It made me feel like I had committed murder or something worse. A bit later it got worse; I was handcuffed and tied around the waist with chains that attached to the hand-cuffs and went all the way to my feet. (After being questioned for a long time and signing many papers, I was



transported to a holding center in the nearest town. There, the guards were very intimidating, yelling and pushing me from one place to the next. Later that day, I was transferred to NWDC. We arrived late at night and two of us were placed in a cold concrete room where we slept on the floor. At around 3:00 a.m. I was questioned again and had an x-ray taken of my stomach to make sure I didn't have drugs inside me which made me feel like a criminal. They asked me many times if I wanted to sign a voluntary deportation form. All I said was that I wanted a court date. As soon as I was "cleared" I was put in D2 holding cell, where I would be spending the next two weeks, sharing six toilets, six showers, and five sinks with at one point over ninety men.

The first couple days were a challenge. I was in shock that this was actually happening to me after sixteen years of being in this country. Sixteen years of good grades in school and college, of hard work and community volunteering. My only thought was "What did I do wrong?"

However, D2 taught me a lot. I learned that if you don't have money to purchase a phone card or someone to visit you and buy you a phone card, you are not allowed a phone call. So many people couldn't call their family even to let them know where they were, much less call an attorney to ask for help. Pretty soon, I started talking to cell mates and learning their stories. I learned that some people in there were detained at work, in raids, and had no money and had not talked to anyone for months. One man and his wife were picked up in Mt. Vernon, WA, on their way home from a long day of picking berries. He told me they were stopped by a road block that was set up. It had been two months since he had seen his wife (who was somewhere, he thought, in the NWDC) or spoken to anyone outside. He told me they had a 3 month old baby

whom they had taken to the baby-sitter the morning they were detained. He didn't know what to do. It was heart breaking to see an adult break down and even worse to know I couldn't help.

The more I asked people about their stories, the more I learned how unjust this system is. I learned that it didn't matter whether you've been in the States for thirty years, own your own business, or if you'd only been here one week as a farm worker. If you're 60 years old or 16 years old, whether you are from Libya, Israel, Guatemala, Honduras or Canada, it is clear that the system doesn't care. What was certain is that those who had been there for a month or more were really depressed and would try to sleep all day to pass the time. Some of them were on anti-depressants because they tried to commit suicide.

After ten days, I had my court hearing and was given bail. The only reason for this was because I had hired an attorney the second day I was supposed to be out by 3:00 p.m. the day of the hearing, but, for some reason or other, no one could find my paperwork. I spent two and a half more days in

**"I'M STILL HAVING NIGHTMARES AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK AND WONDER ALL THE TIME IF I WILL GET PICKED UP AGAIN"**

D2, waiting. I think this place is meant to keep you in, and even after your bail is paid, they do their best to keep you as long as possible. The day that I was released, I spent nearly 4 hours in a holding cell. When they let me go, they took all my I.D. – my Mexican passport, my drivers license, my birth certificate – and said I would be getting a court date in the mail.

Now, it's seven weeks later and I'm still trying to re-gain the twelve pounds I lost from the stress and lack of nutritious food. I'm still waiting for a court date and worrying how I am going to pay the attorney. I'm still having nightmares at least twice a week and wonder all the time if I will get picked up again. To make it worse, when I tell people about this place and what happened to me, they have a hard time believing that a place like this exists in America; that "we" could do such things to people. And so I write this to tell people about my story and with the hope that someone with rights hears and shares it with others so that some day places like NWDC no longer exist

**By The Rev. Ernest S. Harrelson**

## The Detention of Immigrants

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CALL YOUR SENATORS  
AND REPRESENTATIVE  
AND LET THEM KNOW  
THAT YOU SUPPORT  
COMPREHENSIVE  
IMMIGRATION REFORM!

## Legislative Updates



**CR FISCAL 2009:** President Bush signed into law the fiscal 2009 stopgap continuing resolution that will fund most of the government until early next year, after his presidency ends. One of the few agencies that was funded for the full year, however, was the Department of Homeland Security, which got \$40 billion for its budget in the year beginning October 1 (an increase of \$6 billion from the previous year). Some of the immigration-related spending in that budget includes: An increase in the budget for ICE of \$254 million, for a total of \$5 billion. This includes an additional \$71 million for 1,400 additional detention beds, bringing the total to 33,400. The total for detention and removal operations is nearly \$2.5 billion. \$5.4 million is allocated for the 287(g) program (training local law police to enforce immigration laws). Customs and Border Protection receives \$7.6 billion, including funding for 4,361 new hires. Appropriated funds for US-

CIS total \$101.7 million, but \$100 million of that is for the E-verify electronic worker verification program.

**SSI Extension For Refugees Signed Into Law:** Refugees and other humanitarian immigrants Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits will be extended to nine years instead of seven.

**Positive measures enacted this year (from the National Immigration Forum):**

- \* [S. 3606](#), the Special Immigrant Non-minister Religious Worker Program Act, extends the Religious Worker Program through March 6, 2009.
- \* [H.R. 5571](#) extends for five years a program that allows for a waiver of the two year foreign-residence requirement (after graduating) for eligible physicians, if they are coming

to work in a medically underserved area.

- \* [S. 2840](#) establishes a timeframe on citizenship applications filed by members of the armed forces and their dependents and will smooth the naturalization process for some members of the military and their spouses by setting up a liaison between the FBI and USCIS to expedite communications between the two agencies.
- \* [H.R. 5501](#), the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act, included a provision that repealed the statutory ban on entry for HIV-positive tourists and immigrants. The Department of Health and Human Services must now determine whether HIV infection is a "communicable disease of public health significance," that would lead to a bar to admission for persons with HIV.