

## **Members of Congress Gain New Tool to Protect Constituents from Continuing Deportations with Guide Authored by Immigrant Rights Groups**

*Guide offers step-by-step process on how elected officials can assist families facing imminent separation through deportation.*

WASHINGTON D.C. - In a briefing hosted by Rep. Raul Grijalva earlier today which including 52 Hill staffers, United We Dream, PICO National Network, National Immigration Project, Immigrant Legal Resource Center and the National Day Laborer Organizing Network unveiled a first-of-its-kind Deportation Defense Guide to aid Members of Congress in advocating for the increasingly common experience of constituents placed in deportation proceedings.

With reform's prospects dimmed in Congress and the President's own action on immigration unnecessarily delayed, the guide, authored by the host organizations, pushes back against the record deportations have have persisted and led to more than 2 million people deported and countless families separated under the Obama Presidency.

"Many Congressional offices have played, and should play, a key role in ensuring that constituents facing removal are not unjustly separated from their families," said **Carolina Canizales**, United We Dream's Education Not Deportation program coordinator, "At times, it is only action from our elected officials that can prevent immigration authorities from ignoring their own procedures and deporting constituents without review or despite hardship it would cause.

"Advocacy for immigration reform starts by protecting the victims of current unjust policy," explains **Tania Unzueta**, organizer for the National Day Laborer Organizing Network. "This guide provides members of Congress with everything they need to know to keep the lives of their constituents from being disrupted by needless deportation."

As Rep. Gutierrez and others describe intractable opposition to immigration reform from House members, those elected officials who advocate for the inclusion of the potential beneficiaries of reform are turning their efforts both to the President to enact blanket relief as well as to aid individuals who are threatened with removal.

**Rep. Raul Grijalva**, issued the following statement:

"Every day that Republicans stonewall immigration reform, another 1,100 people are deported from our country. That's 1,100 families whose lives are entirely upended, and blame rests with everyone willing to stand by and let it happen.

"I refuse to be an idle witness to this ongoing tragedy, and I know many of my Democratic colleagues join me in wanting nothing more than to see it end. I'm proud to partner with *United We Dream*, *PICO National Network*, *NDLON*, *the National Immigration Project*, and the *Immigrant Legal Resource Center* today to provide a briefing on how we as Congressional leaders can stop deportations happening in our communities, and I look forward to the day when such a briefing will be entirely unnecessary."