



IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

CIS Report Gets Diagnosis Right, Cure Wrong ***Immigration Reform, Not Raids, Will Restore Dignity in Meatpacking Jobs***

March 16, 2009

Washington, D.C. - *The Center for Immigration Studies is issuing a report on the impact that the immigration-enforcement raids at Swift & Co. meatpacking plants in 2006 had on wages and working conditions for the company's workforce. In its attempt to advocate for the failed "enforcement-only" policies of the past, the report more effectively illustrates the need for comprehensive immigration reform, albeit unintentionally. The Immigration Policy Center's Director, Angela Kelley, issued the following statement:*

"The Center for Immigration Studies may not realize it, but the findings of its most recent report better highlight the need for comprehensive immigration reform rather than a regression back to the failed 'attrition through enforcement' tactics of the last administration. The report contends that after immigration raids at six Swift & Co. meatpacking plants, the company hired more authorized workers whose arrival contributed to a rise in wages and improved working conditions. We agree with CIS that all workers benefit from a documented workforce. However, we part ways with CIS on the best way to achieve that goal. CIS' preferred solution of raiding businesses around the nation and deporting 12 million people would not only tear apart innumerable families and communities, but would also be monumentally expensive and economically disruptive. According to one estimate, trying to deport every undocumented immigrant in the country would cost more than \$200 billion dollars over five years.

It is true that wages and working conditions will improve for all when there are no longer undocumented workers in the labor force who can be exploited. However, this is best accomplished by creating a path to legal status for the millions of undocumented workers already living in the United States. This would not only eliminate an exploitable workforce, but bring billions of additional dollars into the U.S. economy through increased tax revenue and consumer purchasing power. CIS' report may get the diagnosis right, but in immigration - just like medicine - a diagnosis isn't worth much without a viable cure."

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