

For Immediate Release

Secretary Janet Napolitano Testifies Before Congress
Outlines Enforcement Program, Looks Forward to Immigration Reform

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Washington D.C. - Today, the Senate Judiciary Committee held an oversight hearing with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano. The Secretary's [opening statement](#) reiterated her view that immigration enforcement is a necessity, but that enforcement alone is not a solution for our broken immigration system. Secretary Napolitano [noted](#), "We can no longer perpetuate a status quo that is unacceptable for workers, employers, law enforcement, faith leaders, and America as a whole. We must seize this moment to build a truly effective immigration system that deters illegal immigration, provides effective and enduring enforcement tools, protects workers from exploitation and retaliation, and creates a tough but fair path to legalization for the millions of illegal immigrants already here."

Despite her commitment to both enforcement and legalization as part of a comprehensive approach to immigration reform, some lawmakers, commentators, and activists are calling for a continuation of the same enforcement-only approach to unauthorized immigration that has failed to work for two decades. In the fanciful view of enforcement-only advocates, forcing 12 million unauthorized men, women, and children out of the country is not only practical, but would somehow benefit the U.S. economy. In reality, though, an intensification of the enforcement-only approach to unauthorized immigration would be enormously expensive and would remove productive workers, consumers, and taxpayers from the economy in the middle of a recession. One [study](#), for instance, estimates that removing all undocumented immigrants from the country would result in the loss of roughly 2.8 million jobs and a decline in the Gross Domestic Product of \$245 billion. This is not exactly a recipe for economic recovery.

"Secretary Napolitano is looking forward, but her opponents are looking backwards to tired old tactics that haven't worked," said Mary Giovagnoli, Director of the Immigration Policy Center. "She is drawing upon her experience to move forward, but that entails a shift in thinking and comprehensive immigration reform. We can all agree that the current system isn't working, but some offer solutions while others offer the same old ideas."

The time is ripe for a [comprehensive solution](#) to our broken immigration system that looks to the future, rather than clinging to the failed enforcement-only strategy of the past. Not only does comprehensive reform represent a practical and humane way of dealing with the large unauthorized population in our country, but it would [boost our economy](#) as well. Rather than scapegoating immigrants for our current economic woes, we should acknowledge their economic contributions and their potential to help rebuild our economy.

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For more information contact Wendy Sefsaf at 202-507-7524 or wsefsaf@immcouncil.org