

## Obama Administration Again Fails Immigrant Communities by Unilaterally Implementing the Flawed Secure Communities Program with no Input from State Governments

**New York, NY** — Disappointed and frustrated, New York advocates condemn Friday's announcement from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which brazenly announced its decision to bypass state governments and implement Secure Communities (S-Comm) and unilaterally terminate its Memorandum of Agreements (MOAs) with states. DHS' latest response to growing opposition to the program follows a series of widely criticized 'tweaks' the agency made to the program in June. Advocates and community organizations are calling for complete dismantling of the threatening and unjust Secure Communities program.

"This decision of the Obama administration to rescind all of the agreements and deny states the opportunity to opt out of Secure Communities sends a chilling message that immigration enforcement will respect no boundaries in its dragnet approach to detention and deportation," stated Valeria Treves, Executive Director of New Immigrant Community Empowerment. "Even though states such as New York, Illinois and Massachusetts have rejected Secure Communities, the federal government is removing the authority of these states to protect their own residents from these drastic measures and instilling fear and insecurity in immigrant communities."

"ICE's decision to now eradicate the very agreements that it had worked so hard to bully states into accepting demonstrates yet again the agency's lack of accountability to both the public and the state governments it supposedly wants to partner with," said Michelle Fei, Co-Director of the Immigrant Defense Project, one of the groups that led the efforts to end New York's participation in the mass deportation program. "This is a desperate move by a desperate agency, and only strengthens our case for ending Secure Communities nationwide."

The announcement comes just before a series of town hall meetings ICE scheduled in cities around the country, beginning in Dallas on Tuesday, and following in Los Angeles and Chicago among others. Betsy DeWitt, Executive Director of Families for Freedom, commented, "These meetings are nothing more than the administration's attempt to save face from severe backlash from community organizations and advocates nationwide. The announcement is a severe blow to immigrants and their families, and will more than likely come with heavy consequences to this administration in the next election."

"Obama's record-breaking one-million-plus deportations have been achieved through a fundamentally unjust system which denies the right to due process to most immigrants," said Mizue Aizeki, a community organizer at the Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrants Rights. "ICE incessantly invokes the supposed threat to public safety posed by what it calls 'criminal aliens.' This serves to mask the threat to civil and human rights embodied by ICE's ever-intensifying assault on immigrant families and communities."

"Secure Communities is an integral part of the FBI's efforts to create a large biometric database of information on citizens and non-citizens in the United States, threatening the privacy rights of all New Yorkers" said Udi Ofer, Advocacy Director of the New York Civil Liberties Union. "The Department of Homeland Security should respect the decision made by Governor Cuomo to keep Secure Communities out of our state, and to protect the rights of all New Yorkers."

Advocates agree that there is only one resolution to this matter. As stated by Ana Maria Archila, Co-Director of Make the Road New York, "DHS' recent decision to ignore criticisms of S-Comm is cause for great alarm—we will not allow the fear and destruction to continue. President Obama, the only solution at this time is end S-Comm and to stop the deportations."####

*The New York State Working Group Against Deportation is a broad coalition of domestic violence, immigrant rights, family services, labor, faith-based, civil rights, and community-based organizations that aims to stop Secure Communities and other deportation programs.*