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New York Advocates and Elected Officials Call Inspector General Report Inadequate, Call for End to Deportation Program

New York, NY (April 10, 2012): A broad coalition of New York advocates, along with elected officials, today criticized two recent government reports for failing to address fundamental problems with a federal mass deportation program and renewed calls for its immediate termination nationwide.

The Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General issued the reports after mounting criticism across the country from immigrant communities and advocates about the deportation program, known as “Secure Communities.” The governors of New York, Illinois, and Massachusetts have all rejected the program.

“The sole purpose of ‘Secure Communities’ is to funnel people into an unjust deportation system that only compounds the unfairness of the criminal justice system,” said Michelle Fei, Co-Director of the Immigrant Defense Project. “The Inspector General has completely missed the point that states like New York have made loud and clear: no deportation is justifiable under such a broken regime.”

“Although one report acknowledges the problems in the roll out of Secure Communities, overall, both reports miss the key point that the program itself is deeply and irreversibly flawed,” said Congressman José E. Serrano. “The basic structure of the program has led to innumerable problems and it is not fixable. As I’ve said so many times, Secure Communities must be terminated.”

“New York and other states have made clear that it wants to part whatsoever in this destructive program,” stated Javier Valdes, Co-Executive Director of Make the Road New York. “Our communities have been devastated enough. We don’t want ‘Secure Communities’ to work better; we need the program to end.”

“The federal government’s ‘Secure Communities’ program tears families apart, invites racial profiling, and creates distrust between police and communities,” said Udi Ofer, Advocacy Director of the New York Civil Liberties Union. “Cosmetic changes, like the ones proposed by the Inspector General, won’t fix Secure Communities. You can put lipstick on a pig, but it’s still a pig.”

“I have joined other elected officials and community leaders throughout New York and the country who have demanded an end to ‘Secure Communities’ for over a year now because of the many problems and dangers it poses to our communities,” said State Senator Gustavo Rivera. “Today I renew my calls for the program’s immediate termination.”

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.