



MEDIA ADVISORY

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS COALITION LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO REPEAL MANDATORY DETENTION

The Advocates for Human Rights joins call for Dignity, Not Detention on 15-year anniversary of controversial immigration law

Minneapolis / St. Paul, MN (Sept. 28, 2011) On September 30, 1996, Congress enacted the Illegal Immigration and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA), a sweeping immigration law requiring the detention of thousands of people without discretion, parole, or meaningful access to judicial review. Mandatory detention is a driving force behind the rapid expansion of immigration detention: already over 200,000 immigrants are impacted by mandatory detention each year. Detained in a web of hundreds private, federal, state, and local jails, including the Ramsey, Sherburne, Carver, and Freeborn County jails in Minnesota, immigrants routinely are detained for weeks or months without any meaningful judicial review of whether they should be released. People detained in immigration custody are not serving criminal sentences. Too often, their detention exacerbates symptoms of torture and trauma they suffered before coming to the United States.

Event 1: Teleconference on Thursday, September 29th, at 10 a.m. CST

At the teleconference, there will be an announcement of the launch of the “*Dignity, Not Detention*” campaign calling on Congress to repeal all laws mandating the detention of immigrants. The announcement marks the 15-year anniversary of the passage of IIRIRA, the legislation that launched today’s mandatory detention regime. Speakers on the call will include the wife of a legal permanent resident from Singapore who was detained under mandatory detention laws and threatened with deportation; experts in the field of immigration detention; advocates from Florida and New Jersey to speak out against the expansion of the detention system; as well as a representative from the faith community.

Conference call-in number: 712-432-0075, password: 852449

Event 2: Detention Center Vigil on Sunday, October 2nd, at 2:30pm CST

“Dignity, Not Detention” and a call for the end of arbitrary detention in the United States will be the focus of the October 2nd Vigil at the Ramsey County Adult Detention Center. The October 2nd Vigil is part of an ongoing series of vigils organized by the Interfaith Coalition on Immigration. The Vigil will be led by The Advocates for Human Rights.

Location: Ramsey County Adult Detention Center, 425 Grove Street, St. Paul.

For more information please contact:

Ellen Van Iwaarden
Director of Development & Communications
(612) 746-4677
evaniwaarden@advrights.org

Michele Garnett-McKenzie
Director of Advocacy
(612) 746-4685
mmckenzie@advrights.org

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The Advocates for Human Rights is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion and protection of internationally recognized human rights. With the help of hundreds of volunteers each year, The Advocates investigates and exposes human rights violations; provides representation to immigrants and refugees who have suffered human rights abuses; trains and assists groups that protect human rights; and works through education and advocacy to engage the public, policymakers, and children in human rights work. The Advocates for Human Rights holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations. www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org