



For Immediate Release

March 28, 2012

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**THE ADVOCATES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CONDEMNS
LATEST ANTI-IMMIGRANT HEARING IN CONGRESS**

[Minneapolis, Minnesota]. – While nearly 400,000 immigrants are incarcerated each year in an expanding archipelago of punitive and life-threatening detention centers, including Minnesota jails, Congress continues to deny the human rights crisis caused by mass, arbitrary detention. With appalling indifference to these human rights violations, Congressman Lamar Smith (R-TX) will convene a hearing this afternoon of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement cynically entitled “Holiday on ICE: The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s New Immigration Detention Standards.” The Advocates for Human Rights condemns the gross mischaracterization of this ongoing denial of due process and other severe human rights violations and calls upon Congress to repeal mandatory detention laws, which have driven the explosive expansion of immigration detention.

In a statement submitted for today’s hearing, The Advocates for Human Rights tells the subcommittee: “The title of today’s hearing seeks to suggest that people in the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) will be treated to a “holiday” at taxpayer expense because of ICE’s proposed detention standards. This offensive and misleading title ignores the desperate need for accountability, oversight, and sound policy that is based on considerations of public safety, cost effectiveness, and respect for human dignity, that has characterized the immigration detention system since 1996.”

Far from being “hospitality guidelines,” as Congressmen Smith has called them, the 2011 Performance Based National Detention Standards (PBNDS) fall short of providing the necessary protection for immigrants held by ICE. In 2009, after a scathing government report outlined the inhumane conditions and rampant fiscal waste in detention, the Obama Administration promised to address these problems in the only way possible: by moving away from locking up immigrants and towards new models of custody and supervision that reflect the “civil” nature of immigration proceedings. ICE’s latest standards abandon of that goal, continuing to rely on penal standards. Under the proposed standards immigrants will continue to be held behind bars, often hundreds of miles from their families, with minimal if any access to legal services, vulnerable to the same substandard medical care and abuses that have characterized ICE detention to date. Most important, the PBNDS are not enforceable or even legally binding, and there is no independent oversight of facilities to ensure compliance.

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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. Learn more at www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org.

*The **Detention Watch Network** is a national coalition of organizations and individuals working to educate the public and policy makers about the U.S. immigration detention and deportation system and advocate for humane reform. For more information visit <http://detentionwatchnetwork.org/>*